

THE PROPHETIC WORD

**NEWSLETTER
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2005**



Pastor Randy Shupe



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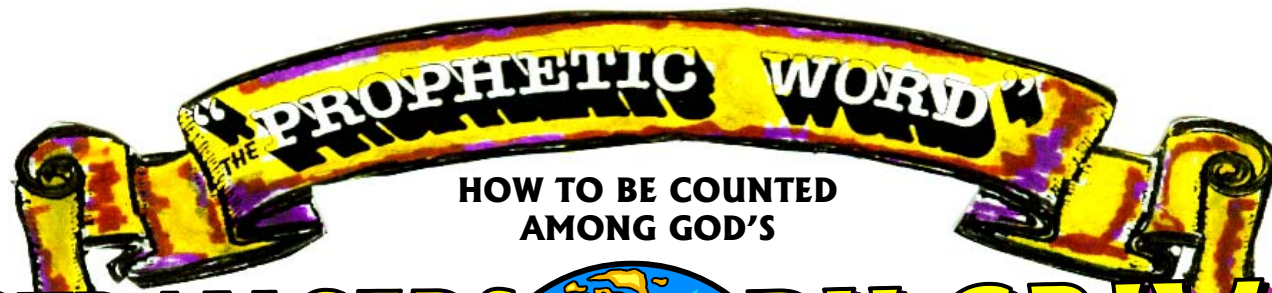
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STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON THE EARTH

**"BY FAITH, ABRAHAMSOJOURNED
IN THE LAND OF PROMISE
AS IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY....
FOR HE WAITED FOR THE CITY
WHICH HAS FOUNDATIONS,
WHOSE BUILDER AND MAKER IS GOD....**

**THESE ALL DIED IN FAITH,
NOT HAVING RECEIVED THE PROMISES,
BUT HAVING SEEN THEM AFAR OFF WERE
ASSURED OF THEM, EMBRACED THEM,**

**BUT NOW THEY DESIRE A BETTER,
THAT IS, A HEAVENLY COUNTRY.
THEREFORE GOD IS NOT ASHAMED
TO BE CALLED THEIR GOD, FOR HE
HAS PREPARED A CITY FOR THEM."**

Hebrews 11:8-15 excerpts

**AND CONFESSED THAT THEY WERE STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON THE EARTH.
FOR THOSE WHO SAY SUCH THINGS DECLARE PLAINLY THAT THEY SEEK A HOMELAND.
AND TRULY IF THEY HAD CALLED TO MIND THAT COUNTRY FROM WHICH THEY HAD COME OUT,
THEY WOULD HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO RETURN.**

The above passages were written to New Testament Christians as examples of what constitutes a life lived by faith. Hebrews 11 has come to be called "The Chapter of Faith." This chapter begins with the introduction, "Now faith is..." (Heb.11:1). Have you ever considered why this chapter begins in such a manner? It is because the previous chapter concludes with this well-known, but partially-quoted verse:

"NOW THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH..." Heb. 10:38

The rest of this verse goes on to warn those who "draw back" from living by faith that "God's soul has no pleasure in him," and that such a believer can even "draw back to perdition" (eternal misery) rather than going forward to "believing to the saving of the soul" (vs. 38-39). I draw your attention to these negative aspects to the mandate that "the just shall live by faith," to bring home the point that either a Christian follows a clear vision of faith set before him or he/she is in danger of being drawn back into worldly ensnarements that God initially delivered them from. It is needful to stress that there are obvious things that God has delivered us from and there are some that are not so obvious. For the sake of illustration, consider the "obvious" that the apostle Peter warns believers of:

"FOR IF, AFTER THEY HAVE ESCAPED THE POLLUTIONS OF THE WORLD THROUGH THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, THEY ARE AGAIN ENTANGLED IN THEM AND OVERCOME, THE LATTER END IS WORSE FOR THEM THAN THE BEGINNING. FOR IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER FOR THEM NOT TO HAVE KNOWN THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, THAN HAVING KNOWN IT, TO TURN FROM THE HOLY COMMANDMENT DELIVERED TO THEM. BUT IT HAS HAPPENED TO THEM ACCORDING TO THE TRUE PROVERB: 'A DOG RETURNS TO HIS OWN VOMIT,' AND, 'A SOW, HAVING WASHED, TO HER WALLING IN THE MIRE.' "

2nd Peter 2:20-22

The "pollutions of this world" are quite obvious. Chapter Three of Second Timothy and Romans 1:18-32 will enumerate some of them for you. This is not the subject matter of this newsletter. I want us to look at the not-so-obvious things that also can cause a believer to "draw back" from living a life of faith such as depicted by Abraham in our opening text. I want to elaborate on the subtle danger of becoming ensnared in "the affairs of this life" which can cause us to become very "mindful of the country from which we have come out." The cure is plainly stated above as becoming a people who "...confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Is this your confession of faith, and if not, why not? Are we as American Christians exempt from living such a life of faith as "strangers and pilgrims on the earth?"

**"NO ONE ENGAGED IN WARFARE ENTANGLES HIMSELF WITH THE AFFAIRS OF THIS LIFE,
THAT HE MAY PLEASE HIM WHO ENLISTED HIM AS A SOLDIER."** 2nd Timothy 2:4

I would like to stress to you that the contents of November and December's newsletters (2004) are important to consider as a foundational basis for what I am going to set before you now. You can read those newsletters presently on my website at "PastorRandyShupe.com." They are also included in the year-end 2004 newsletter booklet which you can order from us (\$7.95). In those two newsletters I sought to challenge the concept that Christians have a "moral Christian duty" to be politically active in "the affairs of this life." America is not a manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth, and we do not have a biblically-based commission to seize it for God. November's newsletter reveals the origin of such a false, politically-based brand of Christianity. It stems from the erroneous beliefs of the Puritans that America was divinely chosen to become God's "new Israel - a manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth." This false mandate has seriously hindered Jesus' true calling for all believers to:

**"SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD
AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS..."** Mat. 6:33

We are not lacking for a definitive description of what constitutes the Kingdom of God in the life of the believer. Paul tells us plainly:

**"FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT FOOD AND DRINK,
BUT RIGHTEOUSNESS, 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 THINGS WHICH MAKE FOR PEACE
AND THE THINGS BY WHICH ONE MAY EDIFY ANOTHER."** Romans 14:17-18

Clearly Paul is stressing that the Kingdom of God does not consist of pursuing PHYSICAL values such as "food and drink," but rather SPIRITUAL ones such as "...righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Note that it is the one who serves Christ in these things that is acceptable to God! Do you want your service to be acceptable to God? Then focus on the SPIRITUAL things of the Kingdom of God rather than on the PHYSICAL things of an earthly kingdom such as America! December's newsletter makes a lengthy comparison between the beliefs of the Puritans and the Pilgrims. It is "the Pilgrim way" (strangers and pilgrims on earth) that constitutes what is acceptable service to God! The Puritan emphasis on seizing an earthly kingdom is a false burden which is carried on today by multitudes of well-meaning Christians bearing the banner and burden of forming America into "One Nation Under God." Consider the two different "constitutions" (reason for being) of the PHYSICAL kingdom verses the SPIRITUAL kingdom:

PHYSICAL

OBJECTIVES:

**UNALIENABLE RIGHTS TO
LIFE
LIBERTY AND
THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS**

SPIRITUAL

OBJECTIVES:

**THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT
FOOD AND DRINK BUT
RIGHTEOUSNESS
PEACE AND
JOY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT**

One group indeed is going to require political activity to achieve and maintain its physically-based goals. Today's Puritan movement is still seeking those cherished, guaranteed, physical objectives in an earthly kingdom. However, which is the REAL Kingdom of God on earth? Which objectives produce Christians that "serve God acceptably?" It is the modern-day Pilgrims who embrace the kind of faith portrayed by Abraham on the previous page. Are today's Pilgrims "mindful of the country from which they have come out?" No, rather like Abraham, they "seek a better, that is, a heavenly country." They are a people of faith who "wait for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Therefore, they are a people who have seen the promises of God and are assured of them, and therefore they "...confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." God records of them today as He did before, "Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God..." Does that not plainly indicate that God IS ashamed of His people who continue to "call to mind the country from which they had come out" and have taken advantage of "the opportunity to return" to it under the religious guise of "returning it to its godly heritage" as the Puritans envisioned it? What has become of the call to "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness...?"

**"...DID YOU NOT KNOW THAT I MUST BE ABOUT MY FATHER'S BUSINESS?
BUT THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE STATEMENT WHICH HE SPOKE TO THEM." Luke 2:49-50**

Note Jesus' focus while on earth was: "...I must be about My Father's business." His parents did not understand that statement. Likewise, I believe much of American Christianity also does not understand what it means to carry forth this mandate to "be about My Father's business." American Christianity is guilty of "starting its own business." Is not what constitutes "Father's business" plainly stated throughout His Word for every follower of Christ? It was plain to Jesus, why is it not as plain to us? The Great Commission (Mat. 28:19-20) has become "the great omission" among Christians in this country. They are too busy with their own political agendas. We might ask from what resource are they getting their present agenda to seize an earthly kingdom by means of politically-based avenues? Is that what Jesus learned from His Father? Is that what Jesus taught His disciples? Hardly! Jesus reminds His disciples (and us) that:

"MOST ASSUREDLY, I SAY TO YOU, A SERVANT IS NOT GREATER THAN HIS MASTER; NOR IS HE WHO IS SENT GREATER THAN HE WHO SENT HIM. IF YOU KNOW THESE THINGS, HAPPY ARE YOU IF YOU DO THEM."

John 13:16-17

We will neither be happy nor successful Christians if we continue to ignore this basic governing principle and set out rather to achieve our own agenda of Christian priorities in this world. The most unhappy, frustrated and even angry Christians are those who are pursuing unbiblical priorities such as the anti-abortion, anti-pornography and anti-gay movements in earthly kingdoms such as America. Dear brethren, we have no such commission from the Father! This is vital: we are not to add to or take away from what is written in God's Word and He tells us why:

"YOU SHALL NOT ADD TO THE WORD WHICH I COMMAND YOU, NOR TAKE ANYTHING FROM IT THAT (IN ORDER THAT) YOU MAY KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD YOUR GOD WHICH I COMMAND YOU."

Deut. 4:2

Here is what God has commanded us to do as an expression of pure and undefiled religion:

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

James 1:27

Politically-based segments of American Christianity are propagating all kinds of man-made commandments such as the "anti-abortion, anti-pornography and anti-gay" movements that have no support in God's Word. These are the world's "spots." God's commandment is to "keep oneself unspotted from the world." We have no commandment to "remove the world's spots." We are not to add to what He has commanded. In seeking to "remove the world's spots," are we not being totally oblivious to the condition that Jesus and Paul said will mark the world in the prophesied "last days?"



**"AS IT WAS IN THE DAYS OF NOAH,
SO IT WILL BE ALSO IN THE DAYS OF
THE SON OF MAN...LIKEWISE AS IT
WAS ALSO IN THE DAYS OF
LOT...EVEN SO WILL IT BE IN THE
DAY WHEN THE SON OF MAN IS
REVEALED."**

Luke 17:26-30

**"BUT KNOW THIS, THAT IN THE LAST DAYS
PERILOUS TIMES WILL COME; FOR MEN WILL BE
LOVERS OF THEMSELVES, LOVERS OF MONEY...
BLASPHEMERS...UNTHANKFUL, UNHOLY,
UNLOVING, UNFORGIVING, SLANDERERS, WITHOUT
SELF-CONTROL, BRUTAL, DESPISERS OF GOOD,
TRAITORS,... LOVERS OF PLEASURE...FROM SUCH
PEOPLE TURN AWAY"**

2nd Tim. 3:1-4



Considering the above prophetic scenario painted by Jesus and Paul, is it not ludicrous to think that Christians in America will be able to arrest this downward moral spiral destined to swallow up the whole world? Consider the present "antigay" movement. Were there brazen parades of "gays" in the days of Lot?

**"...THE MEN OF SODOM, BOTH OLD AND YOUNG, ALL THE PEOPLE FROM EVERY QUARTER,
SURROUNDED THE HOUSE. AND THEY CALLED TO LOT... 'WHERE ARE THE MEN WHO CAME TO YOU
TONIGHT? BRING THEM OUT TO US THAT WE MAY KNOW THEM CARNALLY.'" Gen. 19:4-5**

What was the world like in the days of Noah?

**"THEN THE LORD SAW THAT THE WICKEDNESS OF MAN WAS GREAT IN THE EARTH, AND THAT
EVERY INTENT OF THE THOUGHTS OF HIS HEART WERE ONLY EVIL CONTINUALLY." Gen. 6:5.**

The "Last days" WILL BE just like the days of Noah and Lot—count on it! Although we are surrounded by all the signs of those days rapidly coming upon us, we have an ever-increasing flurry of idealistic, Christian-based, political activity to halt and arrest all of these end-time symptoms from overtaking this country. Are we going to prevent "gay-marriages?" Are we going to overturn "Wade vs. Roe" and thereby halt abortion? Are we going to clean up TV by organized boycotts? Is all that is needful for Christians is to unite corporately and get politically involved? Is the cure electing a Christian president to carry out a host of moral petitions and legal legislations? Is any of this reasoning in line with the Scriptures? Not at all!

"PONDERING PILGRIM PRIORITIES"

GOD'S WORD PERTAINING TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD:



**"NOW JESUS WENT ABOUT ALL GALILEE,
TEACHING...PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM..."**
Mat. 4:3

**"...JESUS BEGAN TO PREACH AND TO SAY,
'REPENT, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND.' "**
Mat. 4:17

**"...UNLESS ONE IS BORN AGAIN HE CANNOT SEE THE
KINGDOM OF GOD...HE CANNOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF
GOD...YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN." Jn. 3:3-7**

**"MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD. IF MY KINGDOM
WERE OF THIS WORLD, MY SERVANTS WOULD FIGHT...
BUT NOW MY KINGDOM IS NOT FROM HERE." Jn. 18:36**

**"THE KINGDOM OF GOD DOES NOT COME WITH
OBSERVATION; NOR WILL THEY SAY, 'SEE HERE!' OR 'SEE
THERE!' FOR INDEED, THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU."
Luke 17:21**

**"BUT SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD
AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS..." Mat. 6:33**

**"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..." Rom. 14:17-18**

**"GIVING THANKS TO THE FATHER...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. 1:12-14**

**" ...THEN PAUL DWELT TWO WHOLE YEARS IN HIS OWN
RENTED HOUSE, AND RECEIVED ALL WHO CAME TO HIM,
PREACHING THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND TEACHING THE
THINGS WHICH CONCERN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST....
MANY CAME TO HIM AT HIS LODGING, TO WHOM HE
EXPLAINED AND SOLEMNLY TESTIFIED OF
THE KINGDOM OF GOD..."**
Acts 28:30-31, Acts 28:23

**"...AND THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM WILL BE PREACHED
IN ALL THE WORLD AS A WITNESS TO ALL NATIONS AND
THEN THE END WILL COME."**
Mat. 24:14

How does one reconcile all the above passages pertaining to the Kingdom of God with the present thrust and emphasis of Christians in America seeking to legislate the moral values of God's Kingdom on an earthly kingdom? Has Jesus changed His mind? Is His Kingdom now of this world? Has He now commissioned His servants to fight for control of an earthly kingdom? Has His Kingdom now become a physical, observable one in which we can say, "see, here is the Kingdom?" Has the Kingdom of God now become one based on "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness" instead of "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit?" Is the pursuit of legislation of moral Christian values on an earthly kingdom now considered to be the means by which we can "serve Christ acceptably?" Has such activity now become the manner in which we "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness?"

Each one of us must properly and biblically answer the question, "What is, and where is, the Kingdom of God presently?" The Bible teaches that it is a spiritual Kingdom that abides in the heart of the born-again believer regardless of what physical, earthly kingdom he/she lives in. The government of the believer's earthly kingdom is not of significance to the real Kingdom of God. It does not matter if it is an oppressive dictatorship or a free democracy. The Kingdom of God lives in you rather than you living in the Kingdom of God. Upon what basis then do you remain politically active in the affairs of an earthly kingdom as if it were the Kingdom of God? Are you not ignoring the REAL Kingdom of God?

"PONDERING PILGRIM PRIORITIES"

GOD'S WORD PERTAINING TO THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD:

"THEN THE DEVIL... SHOWED HIM ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD IN A MOMENT OF TIME. 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 WILL WORSHIP BEFORE ME, ALL WILL BE YOURS. AND JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID TO HIM, 'GET BEHIND ME, SATAN! FOR IT IS WRITTEN, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND HIM ONLY SHALL YOU SERVE.' "
Luke 4:5-8

"...OUR CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN, FROM WHICH WE ALSO EAGERLY WAIT FOR THE SAVIOR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST."
Phil.3:20

"FOR HERE WE HAVE NO CONTINUING CITY, BUT WE SEEK THE ONE TO COME." Heb. 13:14

"...THEY ARE NOT OF THE WORLD, JUST AS I AM NOT OF THE WORLD. I DO NOT PRAY THAT YOU SHOULD TAKE THEM OUT OF THE WORLD, BUT THAT YOU SHOULD KEEP THEM FROM THE EVIL ONE. THEY ARE NOT OF THE WORLD, JUST AS I AM NOT OF THE WORLD...AS YOU SENT ME INTO THE WORLD. I ALSO SEND THEM INTO THE WORLD."
Jn. 17:13-18

"COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM AND BE SEPARATE, SAYS THE LORD..." 2nd. Cor. 6:17

"DO NOT LOVE THE WORLD OR THE THINGS IN THE WORLD..."
1st Jn. 2:15

"AND DO NOT BE CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD..." Rom. 12:2

"...FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD IS ENMITY WITH GOD..."
Jm. 4:4

"NO ONE ENGAGED IN WARFARE ENTANGLES HIMSELF WITH THE AFFAIRS OF THIS LIFE..." 2nd Tim. 2:4

"...TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES, LEST YOUR HEARTS BE WEIGHED DOWN WITH...THE CARES OF THIS LIFE..."
Luke 21:34

"...AS SOJOURNERS AND PILGRIMS ABSTAIN FROM FLESHLY LUSTS WHICH WAR AGAINST THE SOUL..." 1st Pet. 2:11



Read Hebrews 12:1. It reminds us that not all things that are in the world are sin. Some are weights. We are to not only lay aside the sin that so easily ensnares us but also the weights that prevent us from running the race that is set before us (Heb.12:1). Those weights can be summed up under the categories of "the affairs of this life" (2nd Tim. 2:4) and "the cares of this life" (Luke 21:34). Paul states "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful" (1st Cor. 6:12). It is not unlawful in God's sight to be involved in political activity in an earthly kingdom as many Christians in America are choosing to do. Rather the question must be, "Is it helpful to me?" My answer is a big "NO!" I say that simply because such activity circumvents God's plan for His people to be perfected by suffering. How was Jesus perfected? The Scriptures say, "Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Heb. 5:8-9). Most of the Body of Christ throughout the world does not have the choice to be involved in political solutions to immorality. Rather, they continue to suffer under oppressive, evil dictatorships as did the early church in the Book of Acts under Nero of Rome. Yet the early church earned the reputation among the heathen of "turning the world upside down," and without the benefits of political activity (Acts 17:6). They did it by staying focused on the preaching of "the gospel of the Kingdom" (see Acts 14:21-22). Perhaps they were able to stay focused because they had leaders like Jesus and Paul whose primary message continued to be "the Kingdom of God" (see Acts 1:3 and Acts 28:23,31). It is imperative to see that Jesus and Paul are set apart specifically as "our examples"(role models) of what the normal Christian life is to consist of:

→



“FOR TO THIS YOU WERE CALLED, BECAUSE CHRIST ALSO SUFFERED FOR US, LEAVING US AN EXAMPLE, THAT YOU SHOULD FOLLOW HIS STEPS.”

1st Pet. 2:21

I would highly recommend the careful reading of these two chapters in which Jesus and Paul are singled out as “examples” to be followed. You will find them theologically to be at odds with the present political thrust that is prevalent among Christians today in this country.

“BRETHREN, JOIN IN FOLLOWING MY EXAMPLE AND NOTE THOSE WHO SO WALK, AS YOU HAVE US FOR A PATTERN.”

Phil. 3:17



Let me make a statement to you that, as Paul would often say, “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance” (1 Tim. 1:15) :

IN GOD’S SIGHT, PERFECTION COMES THROUGH PATIENTLY ENDURING INJUSTICE RATHER THAN POLITICALLY PURSUING ONE’S “UNALIENABLE RIGHTS” TO JUSTICE.

Did Jesus, our example, experience justice or injustice while on earth? He was falsely accused, persecuted, unjustly tried and sentenced to death by means of the provocation by the religious Jewish hierarchy upon the secular leaders of the Roman empire. Did not the same scenario of injustice happen to the Apostle Paul? Was it not the Jewish religious leaders provoking the secular Roman leaders to unjustly try him and eventually execute him? Do you remember the story of how Peter took Jesus aside and rebuked Him with the words, “Far be It from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!” (Mat.16:22). Jesus then rebuked Satan who was speaking through Peter! Jesus was telling how He must “suffer many things from the elders, chief priests and scribes.” Peter did not like these words, and neither do many of God’s people in this country! That is why they prefer to rally around thoughts of “unalienable rights” that protect the guarantee of “Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.” These are unbiblical concepts. If they are pursued, they will hinder the ability of injustice to do its perfecting work in us as it did in Jesus and in Paul. Consider how Paul spoke to believers in his day who were “under the gun” of injustice and persecution:

“BUT RECALL THE FORMER DAYS IN WHICH, AFTER YOU WERE ILLUMINATED, YOU ENDURED A GREAT STRUGGLE WITH SUFFERINGS: PARTLY WHILE YOU WERE MADE A SPECTACLE BOTH BY REPROACHES AND TRIBULATIONS, AND PARTLY WHILE YOU BECAME COMPANIONS OF THOSE WHO WERE SO TREATED; FOR YOU HAD COMPASSION ON ME IN MY CHAINS, AND JOYFULLY ACCEPTED THE PLUNDERING OF YOUR GOODS, KNOWING THAT YOU HAVE A BETTER AND AN ENDURING POSSESSION FOR YOURSELVES IN HEAVEN. THEREFORE DO NOT CAST AWAY YOUR CONFIDENCE, WHICH HAS GREAT REWARD.” Heb. 10:32-35

Would the leaders of the church in America give such counsel today as did Paul? Most would circulate a petition, organize a protest, or initiate a lawsuit on behalf of those who have suffered violated rights.

Consider Paul’s words to the Thessalonian church of his day which, I must sadly say, is “foreign theology” to the politically-based American church of our day:

“WE ARE BOUND TO THANK GOD ALWAYS FOR YOU, BRETHREN, AS IT IS FITTING, BECAUSE YOUR FAITH GROWS EXCEEDINGLY, AND THE LOVE OF EVERY ONE OF YOU ALL ABOUND TOWARD EACH OTHER, SO THAT 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...”

2nd Thess. 1:1-5

What were the conditions under which this church’s “faith grew exceedingly” and “their love abounded?” It was by patiently enduring all the persecution and tribulation that they were under. How was God viewing all of this? He states it was “manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God” in order that these suffering saints “may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God for which they suffered.” If our reaction to injustice is always to unite in protest, to organize boycotts, or to enter into litigation, we will circumvent God’s plan of perfection for us. God works through injustice – not justice! The vindication of Jesus and of His followers must await the “...day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (Rom.2:5). In the meantime, God promises “...all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Rom 8:28). What is that purpose? “...to be conformed into the image of His Son...” (Rom. 8:29).

Suffering precedes reigning. The Jews missed who Jesus was because they had been taught by the Rabbis to look for the coming of The Reigning Messiah. However, The Suffering Messiah was to precede The Reigning Messiah. Even Jesus' disciples had this "reigning mentality" when they asked Jesus, "...Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel" (Acts 1:6). Jesus came back with the introduction of a different kind of power, "...You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses ("martyrs") to Me..." (Acts 1:8).

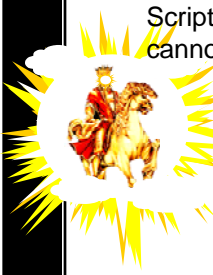
Paul's disciples in Corinth were all taken up with "reigning now" as well. Consider Paul's strong rebuttal:

"YOU ARE ALREADY FULL! YOU ARE ALREADY RICH! YOU HAVE REIGNED AS KINGS WITHOUT US-AND INDEED I COULD WISH YOU DID REIGN, THAT WE ALSO MIGHT REIGN WITH YOU!...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!...BEING REVILED, WE BLESS; BEING PERSECUTED, WE ENDURE IT...THEREFORE I URGE YOU, IMITATE ME." 1st Cor. 4:8-16 excerpts

Paul sets himself as the pattern to follow, rebuking the attitude of Corinth which parallels the present attitude in the politically-based church in America. These words of Paul could easily be spoken as a charge against the politically-based church in America by the rest of the Body of Christ throughout the world that continues to suffer injustice just as Paul describes in these verses. The subtlety behind the political activity of Christians in America is an inward desire to see Christianity reign in this present life prior to the return of Christ. An often-used verse for supporting such political activity is:

"WHEN THE RIGHTEOUS ARE IN AUTHORITY, THE PEOPLE REJOICE; BUT WHEN A WICKED MAN RULES, THE PEOPLE GROAN." Prov. 29:2

This is not a present mandate that the church is to seek to fulfill, but rather a statement of prophetic dispensational truth. The question must be asked, "WHEN shall the righteous rule?" According to the Scriptures not until the Son of Man comes to "rule the nations with a rod of iron." The "Body" (of Christ) cannot reign without the Head – Jesus! (Col. 1:18). Consider the excerpts from Revelation:



"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....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....THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD HAVE BECOME THE KINGDOMS OF OUR LORD AND HIS CHRIST, AND HE SHALL REIGN FOREVER AND EVER!...AND (HE HAS) MADE US KINGS AND PRIESTS TO OUR GOD; AND WE SHALL REIGN ON THE EARTH." Rev. 19:15, 3:26-27, 11:15, 5:10

These are not days of reigning, but rather days of mourning (groaning)! These are the appointed days in which the wicked rule and the people groan (mourn). We cannot reverse this order! These are God-appointed dispensations! Suffering precedes reigning! I believe this is the thrust of a parable Jesus told:

"...WHY DO WE AND THE PHARISEES FAST OFTEN, BUT YOUR DISCIPLES DO NOT FAST?" AND JESUS SAID TO THEM, 'CAN THE FRIENDS OF THE BRIDEGROOM MOURN AS LONG AS THE BRIDEGROOM IS WITH THEM? BUT THE DAYS WILL COME WHEN THE BRIDEGROOM WILL BE TAKEN AWAY FROM THEM, AND THEN THEY WILL FAST. NO ONE PUTS A PIECE OF UNSHRUNK CLOTH ON AN OLD GARMENT; FOR THE PATCH PULLS AWAY FROM THE GARMENT, AND THE TEAR IS MADE WORSE. NOR DO PEOPLE PUT NEW WINE INTO OLD WINESKINS, OR ELSE THE WINESKINS BREAK, THE WINE IS SPILLED, AND THE WINESKINS ARE RUINED. BUT THEY PUT NEW WINE INTO NEW WINESKINS, AND BOTH ARE PRESERVED.' " Mat. 9:14-17

It is when "The Bridegroom is taken away" that God's disciples will mourn! Why? Because the wicked will rule during the time that The Bridegroom is absent! John said, "...the whole world lies under the sway of the Wicked One" (1st Jn.5:19). It is when The Bridegroom returns that the righteous will indeed be placed in authority and they will rejoice! Try to reverse this ordained dispensation and it will be like "putting new cloth on an old garment," it will be like "putting new wine in old wineskins." It will not work! We cannot mix the new with the old! We must wait for the days of new wine and new wineskins – a predetermined dispensation in which "the righteous shall be in authority and the people will rejoice!" (see Dan. 7:18,22,26-27). In this present hour we are the Church ("the called-out ones.") We are "...a holy nation" (1 Pet. 2:9) that consists of born-again peoples whom Jesus has "...redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation...and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:9-10). But, dear American Christian whose roots are in Puritanism, this is not the appointed time that we shall reign!

PROPHETIC WORD

GOD'S LOVE

IS IT

“UNCONDITIONAL”

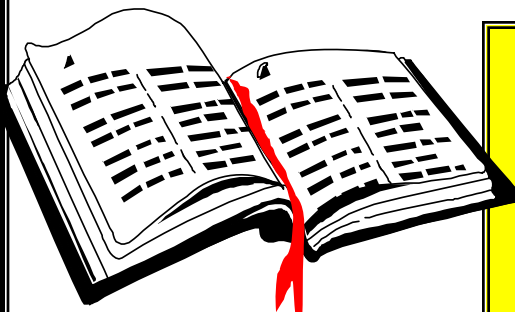
or

“CONDITIONAL”

“NOT LIMITED IN ANY WAY, NOT BOUND OR RESTRICTED BY CONDITIONS OR QUALIFICATIONS, ABSOLUTE, UNRESERVED, WITHOUT STIPULATION...” Webster



“SUBJECT TO, OR DEPENDANT UPON CONDITIONS, STIPULATIONS, LIMITATIONS, RESTRICTIONS, CONTRACTUAL CLAUSES SPECIFIED BY “IF, UNLESS, BUT...” Webster



THE LOVE OF GOD IS A COMPLEX SUBJECT THAT IS NOT EASILY PIGEON-HOLED INTO EITHER OF THESE TWO CATEGORIES. CONSIDER THAT THE SCRIPTURES SUPPORT BOTH CONCEPTS:



“IT IS WRITTEN...”

“IT IS ALSO WRITTEN...”

“BEHOLD WHAT MANNER OF LOVE THE FATHER HAS BESTOWED ON US, THAT WE SHOULD BE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD!..... IN THIS IS LOVE, NOT THAT WE LOVED GOD, BUT THAT HE LOVED US.... FOR WHEN WE WERE STILL WITHOUT STRENGTH...CHRIST DIED FOR THE UNGODLY...GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS OWN LOVE TOWARD US, IN THAT WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US.... FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON...THAT THE WORLD MAY KNOW THAT YOU... HAVE LOVED THEM AS YOU HAVE LOVED ME...THAT THE LOVE WITH WHICH YOU HAVE LOVED ME MAY BE IN THEM...”

“...[nothing can] SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.”
1st Jn. 3:1, 1st Jn. 4:10, Rom. 5:6,8, Jn. 3:16, Jn. 17:23,26, Rom. 8:39

“HE WHO HAS MY COMMANDMENTS AND KEEPS THEM, IT IS HE WHO LOVES ME. AND HE WHO LOVES ME WILL BE LOVED BY MY FATHER AND I WILL LOVE HIM AND MANIFEST MYSELF TO HIM....IF ANYONE LOVES ME, HE WILL KEEP MY WORD; AND MY FATHER WILL LOVE HIM, AND WE WILL COME TO HIM AND MAKE OUR HOME WITH HIM....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.”

John 14:21, 23, Jn.15:10

Rather than having to choose between these two conflicting descriptions of God's love, we must rather seek to understand how they can be harmonized together for God's Word does not contradict itself. Christendom has developed these two opposing doctrinal positions pertaining to God's love due to the error of isolating these verses from the overall depiction of the love of God in the rest of the Scriptures. There is a more balanced, biblical perspective of God's love that I would like to share with you that will harmonize these seemingly opposing concepts together.

Let us first consider that the “either or” option of choosing between these two concepts produces very erroneous conclusions pertaining to how God relates to His people:

IF GOD’S LOVE IS UNCONDITIONAL:

“BEHOLD WHAT MANNER OF LOVE THE FATHER HAS BESTOWED ON US, THAT WE SHOULD BE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD!..... IN THIS IS LOVE, NOT THAT WE LOVED GOD, BUT THAT HE LOVED US.... FOR WHEN WE WERE STILL WITHOUT STRENGTH...CHRIST DIED FOR THE UNGODLY...GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS OWN LOVE TOWARD US, IN THAT WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US.... FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BOTTEN SON...THAT THE WORLD MAY KNOW THAT YOU... HAVE LOVED THEM AS YOU HAVE LOVED ME...THAT THE LOVE WITH WHICH YOU HAVE LOVED ME MAY BE IN THEM...”
“...[nothing] CAN SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.”

1st Jn. 3:1, 1st Jn. 4:10, Rom. 5:6,8, Jn. 3:16,
 Jn. 17:23,26, Rom. 8:39

The unbalanced presentation of “unconditional love” fuels another popular, but equally unbalanced, doctrine which is known as “unconditional eternal security.” If it is true that God’s love is totally unconditional, then it stands to reason there can be no conditions attached to the eternal security of the believer. If there is nothing a believer can do to appropriate God’s love, then nothing can be done by a believer to endanger his/her position of being eternally secure. This is false logic.

Both of these doctrines have elements of truth in them but fall prey to becoming “error by emphasis.” God does have limitless love for every believer and He does provide for them a pathway of eternal security in His Word. However, it is when the phrase “unconditional” is attached to these two doctrines that they become unsound doctrine. Often, I find that “unsound doctrine” is that which “sounds good.” Paul warns against such “ear-tickling” perversions of truth (2nd Tim.4:3-5). Such over-emphasized, partial truths promote a careless and carefree attitude toward the subtle danger of allowing ongoing sin in the life of the believer. “God loves me regardless of whether I obey Him or not,” and “God has sealed me with a promise of eternal security regardless of my lifestyle.” It is my conviction that God will love you all the way through the gates of Hell and beyond! However, such love will not provide a state of “unconditional eternal security” to keep you out of Hell if, by one’s lifestyle of ongoing sin, that is where you choose to go!

“Unconditional” is not the proper way to express the love of God.

IF GOD’S LOVE IS CONDITIONAL:

“HE WHO HAS MY COMMANDMENTS AND KEEPS THEM, IT IS HE WHO LOVES ME. AND HE WHO LOVES ME WILL BE LOVED BY MY FATHER AND I WILL LOVE HIM AND MANIFEST MYSELF TO HIM....IF ANYONE LOVES ME, HE WILL KEEP MY WORD; AND MY FATHER WILL LOVE HIM, AND HE WILL COME TO HIM AND MAKE OUR HOME WITH HIM.... 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.”

John 14:21, 23, Jn.15:10

Equally dangerous as the over-emphasized “unconditional love” is the presentation of God’s love as being “conditional.” If God doles out more of His love as I respond to Him in an approved behavioral pattern, then I can never know experientially the Grace of God. The basis of my acceptance to God will become one of self-merit alone! He “loves me” if I obey Him, and He “loves-me-not” (loves me less) when I disobey Him. Follow this “conditional love” doctrine to its fullest and you will end up with a salvation that is solely focused on works. Works are important to God (Eph. 2:10, Titus 2:14, 3:8,14). We are going to receive rewards according to our works (Rev. 22:12, 1 Cor. 3:13-15, Luke 19:15-19). However, the degree of our works does not earn us more of God’s love! It is my conviction that He loves the one in Hell just as much as He loves the one that ends up in Heaven! Receiving rewards for good works is not evidence that God loves those who perform good works more than He loves those who do not! However, will they receive more praise and honor in Heaven? Yes! Will God love the Bride of Christ more than He loves the Body of Christ? My answer is no, even though it is evident that the Bride will possess a special place of honor and fellowship with God that other believers will not have (see Rev. 21:24 saved – but not the Bride).

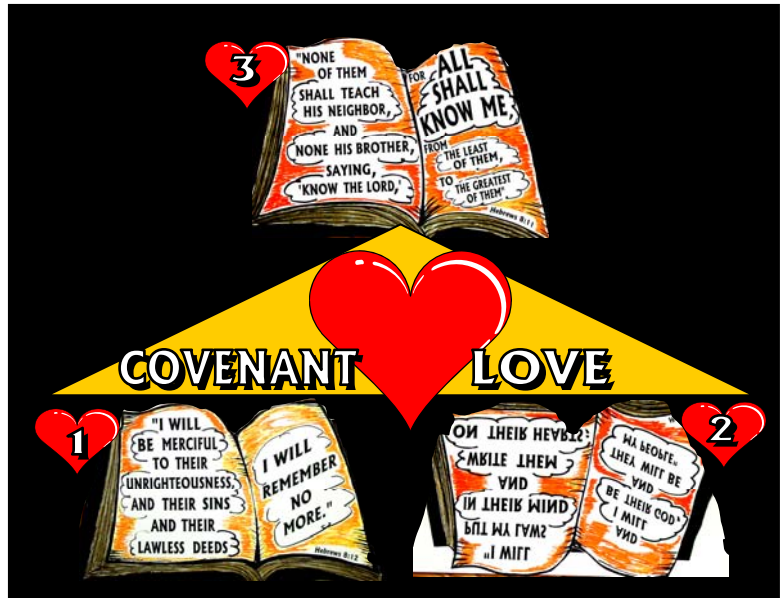
“Conditional” is not the proper way to express the love of God either.



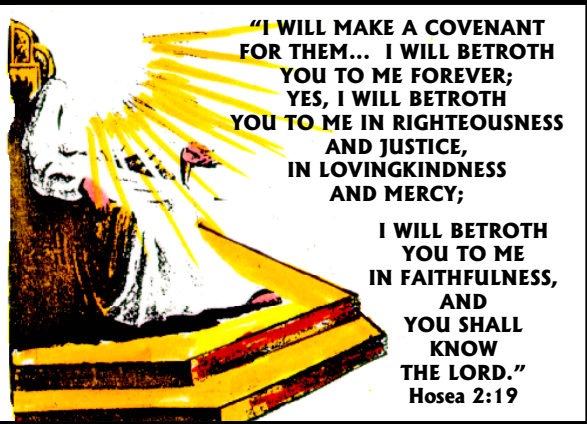
On the wall of our sanctuary I have this 35 foot mural of "The Feasts of the Lord" from Leviticus Chapter 23 depicting how they prophetically relate to New Testament truths. Recently I added these three bibles under each section of the Feasts which contain the three specific terms of the New Covenant as spelled out in Hebrews 8:10-12. Above each bible I have placed the titles (1) "OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD," (2) "OUR DISCIPLESHIP BY GOD," AND (3) "OUR FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD." We will look at each section in detail in this newsletter. Here is what I placed on the three bibles taken From Hebrews 8:10-12:

The New Covenant needs to be viewed as a "covenant of love."
 I believe that what is stated in the three terms of New Covenant is the best way to convey a balanced perspective of the love of God. Understand the terms of the covenant and you will understand the love of God. Do not add to His words, nor take away from them!
 (see Deut. 4:2).

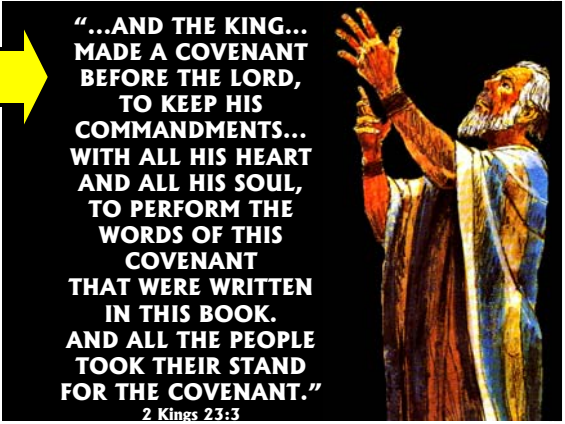
What is stated in the terms of the New Covenant is what God intends to accomplish in the lives of His people. Whether these stated goals are achieved depends on the depth of our response to what is written. God will not force any of His objectives upon His people. These are covenant expressions written to "whosoever will."

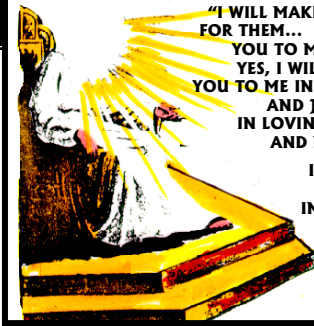


Perhaps these two Old Testament examples will help convey the point that (1) God's covenants (Old and New) are expressions of His love for His people (Hos. 2:19), and (2) that a proper response of love and commitment to the terms of the covenant should flow back to God from His people (2nd Kings 23:3).




This needful response is lacking proper emphasis in the Body of Christ today. Sadly, the New Covenant is viewed more as an "insurance policy."





"I WILL MAKE A COVENANT FOR THEM... I WILL BETROTH YOU TO ME FOREVER; YES, I WILL BETROTH YOU TO ME IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE, IN LOVINGKINDNESS AND MERCY; I WILL BETROTH YOU TO ME IN FAITHFULNESS, AND YOU SHALL KNOW THE LORD."
Hosea 2:19



"...AND THE KING... MADE A COVENANT BEFORE THE LORD, TO KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS... WITH ALL HIS HEART AND ALL HIS SOUL, TO PERFORM THE WORDS OF THIS COVENANT THAT WERE WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK. AND ALL THE PEOPLE TOOK THEIR STAND FOR THE COVENANT."
2 Kings 23:3

"WE LOVE HIM BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US."

1st Jn. 4:19

"HE LOVES US..."

"WE LOVE HIM..."

There is only one way to be able to love God. It is through realizing how much He loves us!

Let Jesus tell us Himself how much love God the Father has for us:

"...THAT THE WORLD MAY KNOW THAT YOU HAVE SENT ME AND HAVE LOVED THEM AS YOU HAVE LOVED ME."

John 17:23

"...I HAVE DECLARED TO THEM YOUR NAME, AND WILL DECLARE IT, THAT THE LOVE WITH WHICH YOU LOVED ME MAY BE IN THEM..."

John 17:26



God loves each of us just as much as He loves Jesus! This knowledge is overwhelming! "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..." (Jn. 3:16). God gave His only Son whom He loved for a people who did not love God! Think about this:

"...GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS OWN LOVE TOWARD US, IN THAT WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US." Rom. 5:8

Consider carefully these two passages pertaining to the giving of the Holy Spirit and His subsequent ministry:

"...FOR GOD DOES NOT GIVE THE SPIRIT BY MEASURE. THE FATHER LOVES THE SON, AND HAS GIVEN ALL THINGS BY HIS HAND."

John 3:34-35



"...THE LOVE OF GOD HAS BEEN POURED OUT IN OUR HEARTS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO WAS GIVEN TO US."

Romans 5:5

The Holy Spirit is not given to us in degrees or stages. God gives initially to every believer the same measure of the Spirit that He gave to His Son Jesus. No one possesses more or less of the Holy Spirit. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to pour out the love of God into the heart of the believer! All of God's infinite love is poured out into the heart of the believer by the Holy Spirit! No one has received more or less of the Holy Spirit, and no one has received more or less of the love of God!

Let me now ask you a vitally important question:

Do you think that although God loves us just as much as He loves Jesus, that Jesus EXPERIENCED more of the love of God in His life than you and I are experiencing right now? I believe we would have to answer "yes." This leads to a second question:

Do you think God wants us to EXPERIENCE all of His love in the same manner as Jesus did? Again, the answer must be in the affirmative. It is up to each and every believer to appropriate all of the Holy Spirit that has been given to us, and equally to lay hold of all of the love of God which has been poured out upon us. How much of that love can you experience? The answer is "as much as your heart desires!" This emphasis on love is the clear teaching of both the Old and the New Covenants:



"YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT. AND THESE WORDS WHICH I COMMAND YOU TODAY SHALL BE IN YOUR HEART; YOU SHALL TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY TO YOUR CHILDREN, AND TALK OF THEM WHEN YOU SIT IN YOUR HOUSE..."

Deut. 6:5-7

"...THAT CHRIST MAY DWELL IN YOUR HEARTS THROUGH FAITH; THAT YOU, BEING ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN LOVE, MAY BE ABLE TO COMPREHEND WITH ALL THE SAINTS WHAT IS THE WIDTH AND LENGTH AND DEPTH AND HEIGHT – TO KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST WHICH PASSES KNOWLEDGE..."

Eph. 3:17-19

The terms of the New Covenant, as expressed in Hebrews 8:10-12, set forth a "road map" which leads to progressively experiencing all of the love of God which the Holy Spirit has initially poured out on every believer. Keep in mind that we cannot EARN more of God's love by obeying the terms of the covenant, but rather we begin to APPROPRIATE EXPERIENTIALLY (by experience) more of His boundless love in our lives as we follow God's plan that is set before us. Sadly, much of Christendom is like the second generation of the children of Israel in the promise land whom Joshua reprovved because they had not as yet appropriated all of the inheritance that God had set before them:

"HOW LONG WILL YOU NEGLECT TO GO UP AND POSSESS THE LAND WHICH THE LORD GOD OF YOUR FATHERS HAS GIVEN YOU?"

Joshua 18:3

We too can neglect to experience all the love God has set before us.

THE INITIAL TERM OF THE NEW COVENANT: "OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD"

Hebrews 8:12



The picture on this page depicts the initial term of the New Covenant that we experience by means of the new birth. We are brought into a "blood relationship" with God the Father by means of the sacrifice of His Son on our behalf. We enter into RELATIONSHIP with God in which He states His promise that:

"... I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE." Hebrews 8:12

The first three Feasts of Leviticus 23 illustrate in type and shadow how we enter into that relationship. Passover portrays the death of Christ, Unleavened Bread represents the burial of Christ, and Firstfruits depicts the Resurrection of Christ. This is the core gospel message Paul preached to Gentile believers at Corinth (See 1 Cor. 5:7-8, 1 Cor. 15:1-3, 1 Cor. 15:20-23). This is the believer's first encounter with the love of God in a practical sense. God chooses by His lovingkindness to not only forgive the believer's sins, but also to remember them no more. This truly creates for the believer the atmosphere of a new life by the new birth:

"FOR HE MADE HIM WHO KNEW NO SIN TO BE SIN FOR US, THAT WE MIGHT BECOME THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM."

2nd Cor. 5:21

"...YOU RECEIVED THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION BY WHOM WE CRY OUT, 'ABBA, (DADDY) FATHER.' THE SPIRIT HIMSELF BEARS WITNESS WITH OUR SPIRIT THAT WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD, AND IF CHILDREN, THEN HEIRS – HEIRS OF GOD..."

Romans 8:15-16

"THEREFORE, IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATION, OLD THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY, BEHOLD, ALL THINGS HAVE BECOME NEW."

2nd Cor. 5:17

"IN THIS THE LOVE OF GOD WAS MANIFEST TOWARD US, THAT GOD HAS SENT HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON INTO THE WORLD, THAT WE MIGHT LIVE THROUGH HIM. IN THIS IS LOVE, NOT THAT WE LOVED GOD, BUT THAT HE LOVED US AND SENT HIS SON TO BE THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS."

1st Jn. 4:9-10

"BEHOLD WHAT MANNER OF LOVE THE FATHER HAS BESTOWED ON US, THAT WE SHOULD BE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD!" 1st Jn. 3:1

This initial encounter with the love of God is well-preached and given proper emphasis both to the lost and to the redeemed, as it should be. We must become "rooted and grounded in love" (Eph. 3:17-18) if we are going to be able to properly respond to God as John the apostle does in saying, "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1st Jn. 4:19). As important as this initial encounter with the love of God is, there is more to the inheritance than what is promised under this initial term of the New Covenant.

With the giving of the Holy Spirit at the Feast of Pentecost, this ongoing intimate love relationship God has with His people progresses to its next level. Jesus told His disciples prior to His ascension:

"AND I WILL PRAY THE FATHER, AND HE WILL GIVE YOU ANOTHER HELPER, THAT HE MAY ABIDE WITH YOU FOREVER, EVEN THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH... I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU ORPHANS, I WILL COME TO YOU.... THE HELPER, THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHOM THE FATHER WILL SEND IN MY NAME, HE WILL TEACH YOU ALL THINGS, AND BRING TO YOUR REMEMBRANCE ALL THINGS THAT I HAVE SAID TO YOU....WHEN HE, THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH HAS COME, HE WILL GUIDE YOU INTO ALL TRUTH... HE WILL TELL YOU THINGS TO COME. HE WILL GLORIFY ME, FOR HE WILL TAKE WHAT IS MINE AND DECLARE IT TO YOU."
John 14:16-17,26, 16:13-14

For what purpose was the Holy Spirit given at Pentecost? The second term of the New Covenant of Hebrews 8:10-12 describes in a nutshell what is the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those who have encountered Jesus through the first term of the covenant! This term is a description of

"OUR DISCIPLESHIP BY GOD" : —————>

THE SECOND TERM OF THE NEW COVENANT: "OUR DISCIPLESHIP BY GOD"

Hebrews 8:10



"...I WILL PUT MY LAWS IN THEIR MIND AND WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE."

Hebrews 8:10

Paul specifically singles out that what is stated above as an objective of the New Covenant is the ministry of the Holy Spirit:

"...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." 2nd Cor. 3:3

God's people greatly err in their limited and narrow view of the Law of God. The Old Covenant is dogmatically labeled as a covenant of law, but the New Covenant is only considered to be a covenant of grace. Wrong! Both covenants contain law and grace! The Tabernacle in the wilderness was HOW God administered grace to those who broke His law! He covered their "sins and lawless deeds" by the blood of bulls and goats!

In the New Covenant ("a better covenant... established on better promises" – Heb.8:6), we find God stating that He will "be merciful to our sins and our lawless deeds, and remember them no more." This is an expression of His grace, but God also states in Hebrews 8:10-12 that He wants to "put His laws in our minds and write them on our hearts." Law follows grace in the New Covenant! Please understand that I am not advocating for a continuance of the Law of Moses upon New Covenant believers. Hebrews tells us that the Old Covenant was made obsolete by the New (Heb. 8:13). In the previous chapter of Hebrews Paul said that a change in the priesthood from Levi to Melchizedek (Jesus –our High Priest – Heb. 5:9-10) brought forth the necessity to "change the law", not eliminate it (see Heb. 7:12). Paul emphatically states in Romans that the law was not made void by faith but rather faith establishes it (Rom. 3:31).

No one can be SAVED by law! That is Paul's only argument! We err when we say we have been delivered from the law of God. It is as much a part of the New Covenant as is grace.

The Holy Spirit has been sent to write God's laws on our hearts! Why so? Because it is by obedience to God's law that we can enter into greater and more intimate fellowship with God!

"CAN TWO WALK TOGETHER, UNLESS THEY ARE AGREED?" Amos 3:3

Take the time to read Paul's plea to New Covenant believers to "Come out from among them and be separate...do not touch what is unclean" (2nd Cor. 6:11-18). What are God's stated objectives in these verses? :

"I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. THEREFORE, COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM AND BE SEPARATE...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..."

This is a higher level of fellowship with God. It only comes by walking in agreement with God's Word (His law is that which is right). Law is not bondage! It is a means to express our love for God and to appropriate more of God's love in our lives (read and ponder 1st Jn. 5:3, Jn.14:21, 23).

From the unchanging God (Mal.3:6), this third term of the New Covenant contains the same expression we saw earlier that He made to Israel in their covenant:

"...AND YOU SHALL KNOW THE LORD." Hosea 2:20
"...FOR ALL SHALL KNOW ME..." Hebrews 8:11

To "know" God means to have intimate acquaintance and sweet fellowship with Him. Jesus said of His sheep:

"MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE, AND I KNOW THEM, AND THEY FOLLOW ME."
 Jn. 10:27

Paul picks up this same theme in saying:
"...IF ANYONE LOVES GOD, THIS ONE IS KNOWN BY HIM."
 1st Cor. 8:3

Paul's great goal in life was:

"...THAT I MAY KNOW HIM..."
 Phil. 3:10

THE THIRD TERM OF THE NEW COVENANT: "OUR FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD"

Hebrews 8:11



I believe we can and should seek to "know God" in such a manner right now. It is accomplished by prayer, meditation, living a life of holiness and, as Paul states, by means of "the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death" (Phil. 3:10). We know God only to the degree that we allow ourselves to be disciplined by Him through His Spirit. However, dispensationally there is coming a time Paul describes as:

"WHEN THAT WHICH IS PERFECT HAS COME, THAT WHICH IS IN PART WILL BE DONE AWAY...FOR NOW, WE SEE IN A MIRROR, DIMLY, BUT THEN FACE TO FACE. NOW I KNOW IN PART, BUT THEN I SHALL KNOW JUST AS I AM ALSO KNOWN."

1st Cor. 13:10-12

When this time comes, there will be no more need for one to "teach his neighbor and his brother, saying, 'know the Lord,' For all shall know Me from the least of them to the greatest of them" (Heb. 8:11).

The last three Feasts of the Lord ("Trumpets, Day of Atonement and Tabernacles") represent this dispensation Paul describes in which we shall see "face to face" and "know just as I am also known." Trumpets depicts the Rapture which is to take place prior to the beginning of God's wrath on the earth. The faithful saints ("wise virgins"— Mat. 25) are not appointed to God's wrath (see 1st Thess. 5:9-10). Paul gives these words to the faithful followers of Christ:

"FOR THE LORD HIMSELF WILL DESCEND FROM HEAVEN WITH A SHOUT...WITH THE TRUMPET OF GOD. AND THE DEAD IN CHRIST WILL RISE FIRST. THEN WE WHO ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN SHALL BE CAUGHT UP TOGETHER WITH THEM IN THE CLOUDS TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR. AND THUS WE SHALL ALWAYS BE WITH THE LORD. THEREFORE COMFORT ONE ANOTHER WITH THESE WORDS."

1st Thess. 4:16-18

This event will be the beginning of a level of fellowship with God that has no end. Ponder the words, "And thus we shall always be with the Lord." That is fellowship! Then, on the Day of Atonement at the Second Coming of Christ, Zechariah the prophet describes more of this ongoing fellowship:

"THUS THE LORD MY GOD WILL COME, AND ALL THE SAINTS WITH YOU... AND THE LORD SHALL BE KING OVER ALL THE EARTH..." Zech. 14:5,9

Then finally, at the Feast of Tabernacles, Christ will rule and reign on earth and the whole world will come up year by year to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles (Zech. 14:16-20). At this time the overcoming saints who have been with Jesus since the rapture will exclaim:

"...AND [You] HAVE REDEEMED US TO GOD BY YOUR BLOOD OUT OF EVERY TRIBE AND TONGUE AND PEOPLE AND NATION, AND HAVE MADE US KINGS AND PRIESTS TO OUR GOD; AND WE SHALL REIGN ON THE EARTH." Rev. 5:9-10

We lack space to describe what shall take place after this 1,000 year reign of fellowship on earth with Christ. We can only consider these opening words portraying an endless eternity of fellowship:

"THEN I, JOHN, SAW THE HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM, COMING DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD, PREPARED AS A BRIDE ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND; AND I HEARD A LOUD VOICE FROM HEAVEN SAYING, 'BEHOLD, THE TABERNACLE OF GOD IS WITH MEN, AND HE WILL DWELL WITH THEM, AND THEY SHALL BE HIS PEOPLE, AND GOD HIMSELF WILL BE WITH THEM AND BE THEIR GOD...' " Rev. 21:2-3



**SHEDDING SPIRITUAL
LIGHT ON THE**

TSUNAMI DISASTER



When I first heard of the mounting, potentially catastrophic toll of the tsunami that struck Asia, the descriptive prophetic words of Jesus pertaining to “the beginning of sorrows” came suddenly to my mind (Mat.24:3-8). The Asian tsunami of 2004 brought forth a destructive act that spanned 12 nations and thousands of miles of shoreline in which 220,000 people perished and multitudes more were listed as “missing.” In places, the landscape was as decimated as the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

This is the kind of event that Jesus describes as marking the dispensation of “the beginning of sorrows.” These prophesied tragic events are going to happen to some generation of people on the earth! We cannot continue to relegate them perpetually into the far-off future when the signs which mark “the beginning of sorrows” are all around us!

Think about this: It has been calculated that three-fourths of the world’s population will perish in the horrific events described in the Book of Revelation as the seven years of tribulation! As catastrophic as we found the 2004 tsunami disaster to be, it must be viewed as only a forerunner of even worse super-mega tragedies yet to come!

I would like to devote this newsletter to bringing forth understanding and spiritual insight as to why God has allowed, and will continue to allow, such things to happen, and how He wants His people to respond when they do occur. The main thrust of this newsletter is to convey to God’s people how we are to respond to whatever portion of “the beginning of sorrows” that lies ahead. These are certainly times of great tragedy and sorrow, but they are also filled with golden opportunities!

When a catastrophic event such as the Asian tsunami of 2004 occurs, typically the insurance industry, as well as the consensus of the general populace, will classify it as being either an act of God, or an act of nature. I would like to suggest adding a third potential cause to this list as being an act of Satan.

Take a careful look at the images displayed on the next page. I would like to convince you that the likes of such dark events as hurricanes, tsunamis, tornadoes, twisters, lightening, hail, floods and earthquakes are all the present, destructive workings of the one whom the Bible calls "The Destroyer" (Ex.12:23, Psm. 17:4, 1 Cor. 10:10)

IS THIS AN **ACT OF GOD?**
AN **ACT OF NATURE?**
OR, AN **ACT OF SATAN?**



Satan is identified with numerous other authoritative and destructive titles such as "The Prince and Power of the Air" who presently directs the course of this world (Eph. 2:2). He is "The Devourer" whom God promises to rebuke for us (Mal. 3:11). Jesus called him "...a murderer from the beginning..." (John 8:44). The apostle John said that "...the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one" (1 Jn. 5:19). Paul tells us he is "the god of this age" (2 Cor. 4:4). These titles of Satan cannot be limited to his functioning only in oppressive, spiritual realms! I would like to convince you that the Scriptures teach that he is also at work in physical realms (such as extreme, destructive weather) on earth as well! Why do we readily attribute the destructive powers of Asia's tsunami as being an "act of God" or an "act of nature" rather than an "act of Satan" whose titles so vividly describe his destructive deeds? Why blame it on nature when God who created the heavens and the earth said of his creative work:

"THEN GOD SAW EVERYTHING THAT HE HAD MADE, AND INDEED IT WAS VERY GOOD."

Gen. 1:31

We need to ask, What is "very good" about the likes of hurricanes, tsunamis, tornadoes, twisters, lightening, hail, floods and earthquakes? Must we not conclude that they have no useful or productive creative purpose but rather only produce destruction, death, misery, suffering, and immense fear to the inhabitants of the earth? Is this the work of God or of nature which He created? Did God, the Righteous Judge, just randomly decide on December 26, 2004, to send a terrible tsunami upon all those poor people in Asia, many of whom face a Christless eternity in hell? Does it not say of the character and will of God:

"THE LORD...IS LONGSUFFERING TOWARD US, NOT WILLING THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH BUT THAT ALL SHOULD COME TO REPENTANCE."

2 Pet. 3:9

"...THIS IS GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE IN THE SIGHT OF GOD OUR SAVIOR, WHO DESIRES ALL MEN TO BE SAVED AND TO COME TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH."

1 Tim. 2:3-4

In light of the 2004 tsunami we must ask, Is right now the time of the judgment of God? Has the prophesied wrath of God begun on earth with the tsunami of 2004? Fortunately no, not yet! Rather, I believe we have entered the precursor time of "The Beginning of Sorrows" which is just prior to the beginning of the outpouring of the wrath of God described vividly in Revelation. The Book of Genesis and the Book of Revelation record the two great outpourings of the wrath of God. One is a past event and the other is yet future. One took place by means of a great flood (Gen.6:17). The other will take place primarily by means of a great earthquake and great hail (see Rev.16:18-21 and Ezek. 38:19). So we can see that God DOES use "floods, hail and earthquakes" as destructive judgments in the time of the outpouring of His wrath on the earth. He has in the past, and He will in the future. Is He doing it NOW – in the present? Specifically, is the 2004 tsunami the outpouring of His judgments of wrath? I would like to convince you that it is not! I believe this is the present work of The Destroyer among those whom God desires to be saved! Hear this well:

THE SALVATION OF THE LOST IS TO BE THE PRESENT PRIORITY OF THE CHURCH, BUT WE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THE PRESENT PRIORITY OF THE ONE CALLED THE DESTROYER IS THEIR DESTRUCTION, LEST THEY BECOME SAVED!

Ponder carefully this fact: God has poured out His wrath on earth in the past as stated in Genesis. He will once again manifest His wrath and judgment as clearly portrayed in Revelation. But in this present hour, whose "wrath" is being manifested? I believe the Word reveals that it is Satan's:

"AND WAR BROKE OUT IN HEAVEN...SO THE GREAT DRAGON WAS CAST OUT, THAT SERPENT OF OLD, CALLED THE DEVIL AND SATAN, WHO DECEIVES THE WHOLE WORLD; HE WAS CAST TO THE EARTH, AND HIS ANGELS WERE CAST OUT WITH HIM...WOE TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH AND THE SEA! FOR THE DEVIL HAS COME DOWN TO YOU, HAVING GREAT WRATH, BECAUSE HE KNOWS THAT HE HAS A SHORT TIME." Rev. 12:7-12 excerpts



HURRICANES...



TSUNAMI...



TORNADOES...



TWISTERS...

**"...THE PRINCE
AND
THE POWER
OF
THE AIR..."**
Ephesians 2:2



LIGHTENING..

**"...A MURDERER
FROM
THE BEGINNING..."**
John 8:44

**"...THE WHOLE
WORLD
LIES UNDER
THE SWAY
OF
THE WICKED ONE..."**
1 John 5:19



"THE DESTROYER"
Exodus 12:23

**"...YOUR ADVERSARY
THE DEVIL...
WALKS ABOUT...
SEEKING WHOM
HE MAY DEVOUR..."**
2 Cor. 4:4

**"...THE
DEVOURER..."**
Mal. 3:11

**"...THE GOD
OF THIS AGE..."**
2 Cor. 4:4



HAIL...

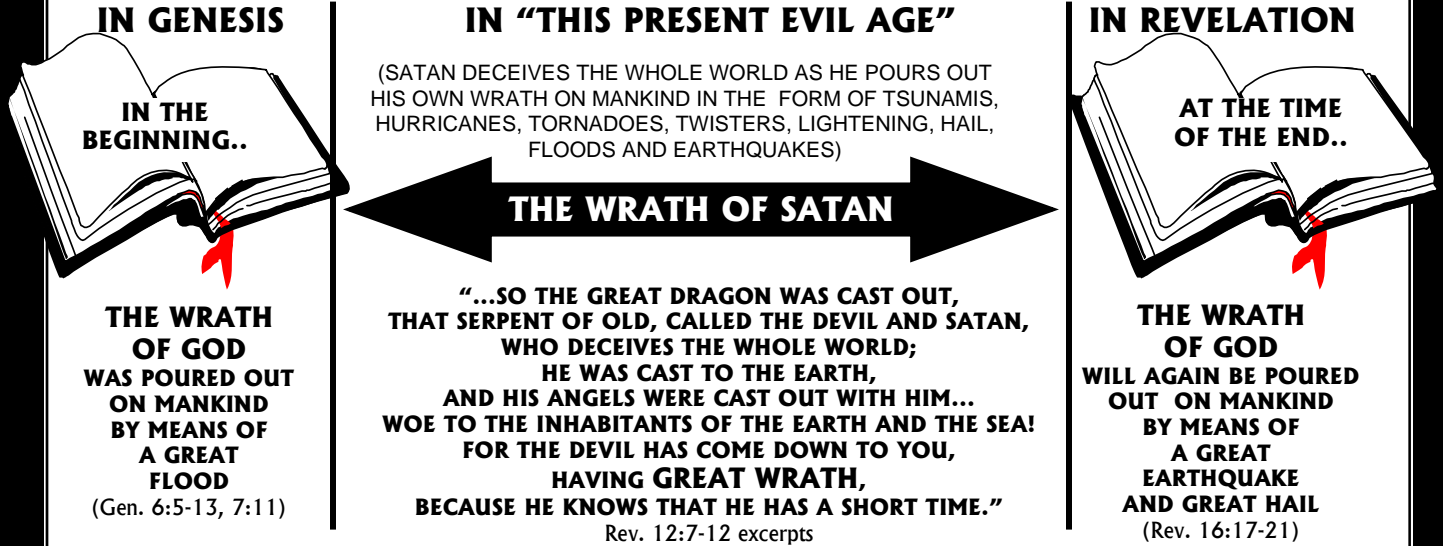


FLOODS...



EARTHQUAKES...

Notice that the devil “deceives the whole world.” Satan deceives the world by first convincing the people on earth to attribute what is an act of his own wrath as being an expression of the wrath (or judgment) of God! This is not the dispensation for the outpouring of the wrath of God! It is the dispensation of the wrath of Satan which functions between what is recorded in Genesis (the beginning of all things) and what is recorded in Revelation (the end of all things)! God help us to “rightly divide the Word of truth!” Satan is the god of this present age (world)! In this “present evil age” the tsunami (and its likes) are his doings!



There is further proof that “this present evil age” (Gal. 1:4) in which we live is not the dispensation in which either the judgment of God or the wrath of God is randomly being poured out on the inhabitants of the earth by means of such disasters as the Asian tsunami of 2004. What is that proof? The apostle Peter specifically tells us what will mark the beginning of God’s judgment on the earth:



THE HOUSE OF GOD

“FOR THE TIME HAS COME FOR JUDGMENT TO BEGIN AT THE HOUSE OF GOD; AND IF IT BEGINS WITH US FIRST, WHAT WILL BE THE END OF THOSE WHO DO NOT OBEY THE GOSPEL OF GOD?”

NOW “IF THE RIGHTEOUS ONE IS SCARCELY SAVED, WHERE WILL THE UNGODLY AND THE SINNER APPEAR?”
1 Pet. 4:17-18

God’s judgments do not begin with the unsaved inhabitants of the world such as the poor unregenerated people of Asia. God’s judgments begin with “the house of God” which is the professing church of Jesus Christ!



THE UNSAVED WORLD

God did not smite the people of Asia as an act of His judgment. He is not going to randomly kill the people He is presently seeking to save! The tsunami of 2004 was a destructive act of Satan smiting his own lest they eventually or potentially be saved. When it is the appointed time for God’s judgments on the earth they will begin with those of the house of God who are not obeying the gospel of God. Notice Peter’s theology is one in which “the righteous one is scarcely saved.” That implies to me that Peter would hardly be an advocate of today’s popular all-inclusive doctrine of “once saved, always saved” or “unconditional eternal security.”

Dispensationally there is a specific event that will earmark the start of the judgment of God upon the earth. This event is the rapture which will take place on the Feast of Trumpets. Rather than “everybody goes” regardless of how they have lived as Christians, Jesus said only “they that were ready” will be taken and those who are not, will not be taken (see Mat. 25:1-13). The whole world will know when the judgment of God has begun! Why? Because God will begin His severe judgments by dealing FIRST with wayward members of His own household! The wise and faithful Christians will be removed from the earth prior to the beginning of the wrath of God and the unfaithful who have chosen to live a foolish life will be left behind for the kingdoms of the world that they love more than God and His Kingdom!

IN GENESIS



**IN THE
BEGINNING..**

**THE WRATH
OF GOD
WAS Poured OUT
ON MANKIND
BY MEANS OF
A GREAT
FLOOD**
(Gen. 6:5-13, 7:11)

IN "THIS PRESENT EVIL AGE"

(SATAN DECEIVES THE WHOLE WORLD AS HE POURS OUT HIS OWN WRATH ON MANKIND IN THE FORM OF TSUNAMIS, HURRICANES, TORNADOES, TWISTERS, LIGHTENING, HAIL, FLOODS AND EARTHQUAKES)



**"...SO THE GREAT DRAGON WAS CAST OUT,
THAT SERPENT OF OLD, CALLED THE DEVIL AND SATAN,
WHO DECEIVES THE WHOLE WORLD;
HE WAS CAST TO THE EARTH,
AND HIS ANGELS WERE CAST OUT WITH HIM...
WOE TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH AND THE SEA!
FOR THE DEVIL HAS COME DOWN TO YOU,
HAVING GREAT WRATH,
BECAUSE HE KNOWS THAT HE HAS A SHORT TIME."**
Rev. 12:7-12 excerpts

IN REVELATION



**AT THE TIME
OF THE END..**

**THE WRATH
OF GOD
WILL AGAIN BE Poured
OUT ON MANKIND
BY MEANS OF
A GREAT
EARTHQUAKE
AND GREAT HAIL**
(Rev. 16:17-21)

If the above scenario is a true depiction, here is the question that must be asked:

Do the Scriptures teach that Satan has exercised power over the elements in a destructive manner?

1. THE EXAMPLES IN JOB:

If you have read the Book of Job you know that there is an ongoing, behind-the-scenes discussion that God and Satan are having about Job. Satan accuses Job of serving God only because of the "protective hedge" that God has placed about him and his possessions. Satan issues a challenge that Job will curse God to His face if that hedge is removed. God sets the parameters of the first trial in which He limits what Satan is allowed to do to Job. In the recorded details of this trial there are two significant points I want to bring out that demonstrates Satan has power over the elements to carry out his destructive bidding:

"BEHOLD, ALL THAT HE HAS IS IN YOUR POWER ("HAND"), ONLY DO NOT LAY A HAND ON HIS PERSON. THEN SATAN WENT OUT FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD.... ANOTHER ALSO CAME AND SAID, 'THE FIRE OF GOD FELL FROM HEAVEN AND BURNED UP THE SHEEP AND THE SERVANTS, AND CONSUMED THEM....' ANOTHER ALSO CAME AND SAID, '...SUDDENLY A GREAT WIND CAME FROM ACROSS THE WILDERNESS AND STRUCK THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE HOUSE, AND IT FELL ON THE YOUNG MEN AND THEY ARE DEAD...' "
Job 1:12-19 excerpts

How did Satan execute his wrath upon Job and his household? By using the forces of nature in a destructive manner to do his bidding. Notice the people who witnessed the event were deceived into readily attributing the destructive power of the fire (probably lightening) as being "the fire of God falling from Heaven." Was it? No, the behind-the-scenes account in Job tells us it was Satan's destructive hand at work using the elements of nature for destructive purposes. This same deceptive tactic of Satan is still at work today in attributing to God the terrible destructive powers of the elements upon mankind such as the Asian tsunami of 2004. Secondly, in the account of the trial of Job we see "a great wind" suddenly appearing that is capable of causing the four structural corners of a building to instantly collapse upon the people within. This ability only comes from the force of a tornado. But is this stated event in Job the hand of God? No, once again we are told in advance that it is the behind-the-scenes hand of Satan at work using the forces of nature to accomplish his own destructive purposes against the household of Job.

It is important to also note the existence of a "protective hedge" about Job which could not be penetrated by Satan at his will! This hedge exists for all of God's covenant people today as it did in Job's day. Satan cannot freely attack God's people as he chooses! God always controls the level of any trial that He allows in the lives of His people. If the hedge is removed as it was in the day of Job's testing, it is comforting to know that all such testing will be monitored and controlled by God with this objective in view:

"...GOD IS FAITHFUL, WHO WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO BE TEMPTED BEYOND WHAT YOU ARE ABLE, BUT WITH THE TEMPTATION WILL ALSO MAKE A WAY OF ESCAPE THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO BEAR IT."
1 Cor. 10:13

Such Divine protection and assurance does not exist for the rest of the inhabitants of the world that are not under a covenant relationship with God. Paul said:

“THEREFORE REMEMBER THAT YOU, ONCE GENTILES IN THE FLESH...THAT AT THAT TIME YOU WERE WITHOUT CHRIST, BEING ALIENS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL AND STRANGERS FROM THE COVENANTS OF PROMISE, HAVING NO HOPE AND WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD.” Eph. 2:11-12

It is because of the lack of possessing “the covenants of promise” by means of the gospel that the poor people of the world, those who “have no hope and without God in the world,” are the ones who suffer the devastations of not only tsunamis, but also devastating earthquakes, floods etc. Why do they always hit such areas? Because Satan kills his own people at his will. It is no secret that the population of the countries hit in the tsunami consist of hard-core Muslims who are resistant to the gospel. When nations endorse a myriad of gods such as found in India and Asia, they come under the power and authority of the originator of those false gods, Satan himself:

“BUT I SAY THAT THE THINGS WHICH THE GENTILES SACRIFICE THEY SACRIFICE TO DEMONS AND NOT TO GOD...” 1 Cor. 10:20

“...BEELZEBUB, THE RULER OF THE DEMONS.” Luke 11:15

Behind every false god is a demon who answers to Satan as “Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.” One of the marks of many ancient religions is the sacrificing of children to appease the wrath of their gods. Israel fell to that with the worship of “the god of Molech” (Psm.106:35-39). Sacrificing children was also a prevalent mark of ancient islanders who worshiped volatile volcanoes. The destructive eruptions were viewed as the angry wrath of the god of the volcano which could only be appeased by human sacrifice. Who was really their god? It was “Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.” They “sacrificed to demons and not to God.”

Right after the tsunami hit, I heard a news report in which a Muslim cleric put out a warning to his people that “god is speaking to us.” Yes, “the god of this world” is speaking to them in his wrath, but it is Satan, the god behind all false religions and demon worship! He will kill his own and seek to blame such disasters upon the one and only true God so that his blinded subjects do not turn toward the real God! Satan intends to keep them totally hopeless and helpless “having no hope and without God in the world.” The church has been given the great commission to circumvent Satan’s intent (Mat.28:18-20, Mark 16:15-20,, Luke 24:47-48). Sadly, for the most part the great commission has become the “great omission.” Eighty-five percent of tithes and offerings never leave the borders of the USA! It is invested in new brick and mortar!

Let us now look to the recorded events of the future and we will see yet another time in which Satan will attempt to use nature to achieve his destructive purposes. There is a distinction in this story that we need to bring out. This time he will attempt to use those powers upon the nation of Israel that is under the protective hand of God Almighty:

“NOW WHEN THE DRAGON SAW THAT HE HAD BEEN CAST TO THE EARTH, HE PERSECUTED THE WOMAN WHO GAVE BIRTH TO THE MALE CHILD. BUT THE WOMAN WAS GIVEN TWO WINGS OF A GREAT EAGLE, THAT SHE MIGHT FLY INTO THE WILDERNESS TO HER PLACE, WHERE SHE IS NOURISHED FOR A TIME AND TIMES AND HALF A TIME, FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE SERPENT. SO THE SERPENT SPEWED WATER OUT OF HIS MOUTH LIKE A FLOOD AFTER THE WOMAN, THAT HE MIGHT CAUSE HER TO BE CARRIED AWAY BY THE FLOOD. BUT THE EARTH HELPED THE WOMAN, AND THE EARTH OPENED ITS MOUTH AND SWALLOWED UP THE FLOOD WHICH THE DRAGON HAD SPEWED OUT OF HIS MOUTH. AND THE DRAGON WAS ENRAGED WITH THE WOMAN, AND WENT TO MAKE WAR WITH THE REST OF HER OFFSPRING, WHO KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD AND HAVE THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST.” Rev. 12:13-17

Let us not get lost in all of this symbolism, but let me simply say that the dragon is Satan, the woman is Israel and the male child is Jesus. I believe the place in the wilderness where she will be sheltered is the rock city of Petra in the wilderness of Jordan. In passing, I would also mention that “the wings of the great eagle” that take her there is NOT America as suggested by some prophecy teachers seeking to establish this country in a positive prophetic vein! Read Exodus 19:4 in which God Himself claims to have borne the original children of Israel out of Egypt “on eagles’ wings.”

The point I am after in this story is that Satan will initiate a FLOOD to destroy the chosen people of God. However, God will cause the earth to open up (perhaps by an earthquake) and “swallow up the flood” that Satan spews after her. This is more evidence of the wrath of Satan being manifested by misusing the forces of nature. At times God will allow it, but at other times He will sovereignly intervene to prevent it.

If you back up in the story of Satan attempting to destroy Israel by means of a flood, you will see “And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born” (Rev. 12:4). Satan continually sought to kill Jesus (Mat.4:6). One of those times was this one:

“NOW IT HAPPENED, ON A CERTAIN DAY, THAT HE GOT INTO A BOAT WITH HIS DISCIPLES. AND HE SAID TO THEM ‘LET US GO OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LAKE.’ AND THEY LAUNCHED OUT. BUT AS THEY SAILED HE FELL ASLEEP. AND A WINDSTORM CAME DOWN ON THE LAKE, AND THEY WERE FILLING WITH WATER, AND WERE IN JEOPARDY. AND THEY CAME TO HIM AND AWOKE HIM, SAYING, ‘MASTER, MASTER, WE ARE PERISHING!’ THEN HE AROSE AND REBUKED THE WIND AND THE RAGING WATER. AND THEY CEASED, AND THERE WAS CALM.” Luke 8:22-24

Since several of Jesus’ disciples were seasoned fishermen, we can assume this was no ordinary storm for His disciples were truly fearful for their lives. Notice that Jesus REBUKES the wind and the raging sea! This implies to me that He was dealing with Satanic forces behind the wind and the raging sea seeking to kill Him as He slept. If the storm was merely a force of nature which God created, then it would be improper for Jesus to rebuke it. Remember, He rebuked Satan who spoke through Peter (Mat. 16:23). Satan spoke through Job’s wife in a similar way (Job 2:9, Job 1:11) Satan is often the source behind what is seen outwardly.

Yes, the Scriptures do present sufficient evidence that Satan has used, is using, and will use in the future the forces of nature for his own destructive purposes. At times God will permit it and at other times He will sovereignly intervene to prevent it. If the Book of Job reveals nothing else, it emphasizes that there are behind-the-scenes discourses taking place between Satan and God of which we are not privy. What happens on the earth is not always as it appears on the surface. However, this we know, what Satan means solely for evil, God will work it for good! We must always remind ourselves of this principle:

“ ‘FOR MY THOUGHTS ARE NOT YOUR THOUGHTS, NOR ARE YOUR WAYS MY WAYS,’ SAYS THE LORD. ‘FOR AS THE HEAVENS ARE HIGHER THAN THE EARTH, SO ARE MY WAYS HIGHER THAN YOUR WAYS, AND MY THOUGHTS THAN YOUR THOUGHTS.’ ” Isa. 55:8-9

God’s “higher ways” will take a tragic event such as the tsunami disaster which Satan meant for evil, and He will bring forth good out of it that may not otherwise have come forth. For example, consider the statistic that a large portion of the victims who died were children. Remember, these were Muslim children. Had they grown up they would have become devout and radical Muslims as were their parents who would have made sure they were trained in the Muslim faith. Where are these children right now? Those who were under the age of accountability are with the Lord. They will not grow up to become Muslims, nor will they end up in a Christless eternity but are already in a Christ-filled eternity! Jesus said:

“...LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO ME, AND DO NOT FORBID THEM; FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD.” Mark 10:14

Not all the children died. There were thousands orphaned by the tsunami. Which group is better off, the ones who died or those left orphaned among the living? Is it not those who died and entered the waiting arms of Jesus? What about those thousands of children that were left as orphans? Multitudes of parents died leaving behind a host of orphaned children. What is to become of them? Herein lie golden opportunities in the time of the beginning of sorrows. The church in America could sit back and allow the world to adopt and care for these orphaned children, and there are many institutions and fundraisers springing up to do just that. The compassion of the world at large has been great. Should it not be even GREATER within the church? Is this not one of the specified marks of what is to be manifested as the “pure and undefiled religion” of the church?

“PURE AND UNDEFILED RELIGION BEFORE GOD AND THE FATHER IS THIS: TO VISIT ORPHANS AND WIDOWS IN THEIR TROUBLE, AND TO KEEP ONESELF UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD.” James 1:27

Sadly, I must say that this teacher of God’s Word for over 25 years has yet to see a wide-spread, visible corporate expression of the church in America that is known for these marks of “pure and undefiled religion”! The religious right is too busy mixing the politics of the world with their religious beliefs. This obsession with a custom-made brand of self-serving Christianity has overshadowed the mandates of being “unspotted from the world” or of “visiting orphans and widows in their trouble.” American Christianity suffers from tunnel vision. we need a world vision. Here it is:

“GO INTO ALL THE WORLD AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE...” Mark 16:15

I do not believe that Jesus meant that everyone is literally to "go into all the world" themselves. Rather it is my conviction that American Christianity should be a major source of funding for those who can literally go into all the world to preach the gospel. The gospel needs to be preached with more than words stating God's love, it requires tangible deeds done by means of God's compassionate love. The tsunami has brought forth a whole realm of golden opportunities to reach its victims with the love of Christ. I am going to recommend a specific ministry to you that our ministry has supported for some time. It is Gospel For Asia. For your convenience I have printed their current website page at the end of this newsletter (pg. 10).

Gospel For Asia is not the only Christian ministry that is doing good things, but I believe it ranks among the best for two reasons. The first reason is that 100% of whatever is donated goes to those specific causes. A recent statistic stated that, on the average, 33% of all funds raised for tsunami relief went for operating expenses. This is not so for Gospel For Asia. Those employed here in the United States raise their own support. Secondly, and perhaps foremost, Gospel For Asia trains indigenous (native) people to take the gospel to their own kindred. Gospel For Asia has over 14,000 locals taking forth the gospel to the people of India and Sri Lanka. It is not Americans coming to bring the American gospel to the people of India. It is the Indian people reaching their own people. Our role is to provide the resources to do so.

Let me recommend a book to you written by the founder of Gospel For Asia, K.P. Yohannan. Someone dropped it in my mailbox with a note that said, "This is your kind of book." It changed my view of life as a follower of Christ. Consider the foreword:

Every once in a while God gives to His people a man who is qualified to cut us open, give us a diagnosis and prescribe a remedy for our healing. K. P. Yohannan is such a man.

This is not a book about missions, although the author's heartbeat for the evangelization of the world pulses on every page. This is a book about spiritual reality; about what it means to be a follower of Christ in the 21st century. It's a book about the spiritual condition of the Western church in light of the awesome needs in other parts of the world.

You will quickly discover that K.P. is a man of deep passion. He fervently loves the believers in the United States and Canada but is grieved over the spiritual insensitivity of the church at large. With tears he admonishes us to leave our fascination with material prosperity and the enjoyment of personal pleasures to turn to Christ with all our heart. That, after all, is the path to true happiness and fulfillment. K. P. calls it reality.

Here is a book that cuts through the welter of pseudo remedies for spiritual renewal and returns to the basics. The author is impatient with intellectual knowledge unless it translates into holy living and a single-minded determination to see the church around the world grow for the glory of God. And he practices what he preaches.

Every believer who is concerned about the spiritual life of the church in America ought to read this book. You may find,

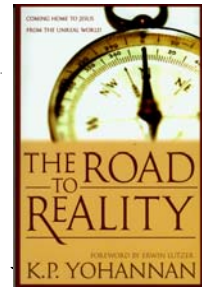
I encourage you to visit their website. Specifically look at the "Bridge For Hope" ministry set up to provide for the orphaned children of the tsunami disaster. The videos are very touching. We need to be touched. Through support of this ministry we can bring the hope of the gospel to children who would not otherwise be exposed to the message of Jesus Christ. The needs are great and perhaps the greatest of God's blessings upon American Christians are for this very purpose. Paul recorded these words which I believe prophetically now speaks to every Christian in this prosperous land of America:

as I did, that at times his analysis made me feel defensive and uncomfortable, but in the end I knew he was right.

This book has the power to change anyone who is weary of half-hearted Christianity and is unafraid to take some giant steps with God. Through these pages K.P. will come into your room, sit down and share his heart. If you listen carefully, you will leave with "eternity stamped on your heart."

Erwin W. Lutzer
Senior Pastor
Moody Church
Chicago, Illinois

(Gospel For Asia will send you a copy of this book free if you will request it)



GFA Home > Urgent Prayer Request > Tsunami > Tsunami Video 020805

Tsunami Links

- Home
- News Updates
- GFA Relief List
- Audio Updates
- Video Updates
- Prayer Requests
- Resources (downloads)
- GFA Tsunami PowerPoint
- GFA Tsunami Multi-Media

Tsunami Photo Galleries

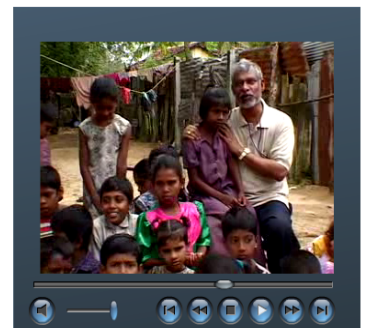


100% of your Tsunami relief gifts will go for ministry to the victims.

GFA EMAIL UPDATE

GFA TSUNAMI UPDATE

Bridge of Hope Provides Key to Helping Tsunami Orphans
Filmed on location in Sri Lanka
(click play button to start video)



"AND GOD IS ABLE TO MAKE ALL GRACE ABUNDANT TOWARD YOU, THAT YOU, ALWAYS HAVING ALL SUFFICIENCY IN ALL THINGS, HAVE AN ABUNDANCE FOR EVERY GOOD WORK. AS IT IS WRITTEN: 'HE HAS DISPERSED ABROAD, HE HAS GIVEN TO THE POOR; HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS REMAINS FOREVER.' NOW MAY HE WHO SUPPLIES SEED TO THE SOWER, AND BREAD FOR FOOD, SUPPLY AND MULTIPLY THE SEED YOU HAVE SOWN AND INCREASE THE FRUITS OF YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHILE YOU ARE ENRICHED IN EVERYTHING FOR ALL LIBERALITY, WHICH CAUSES THANKSGIVING THROUGH US TO GOD."

2 Cor. 9:8-11

In closing, I would like to give you two contrasting views written to those who have the riches of this world, you and I! Both passages are written to believers who are rich. Compared to the rest of the world's standard of living, we Christians in America must see ourselves as exceedingly rich. We live in a country in which the annual average wages exceed \$53,000. Most of the poor countries such as those who experienced the 2004 Tsunami, average wages under \$ 1,000 per year, and some much less than that! Even if you only earn half the average wage of this country, you are rich!

PAUL ON RICHES:

"COMMAND THOSE WHO ARE RICH IN THIS PRESENT AGE NOT TO BE HAUGHTY, NOR TO TRUST IN UNCERTAIN RICHES BUT IN THE LIVING GOD, WHO GIVES US RICHLY ALL THINGS TO ENJOY. LET THEM DO GOOD, THAT THEY MAY BE RICH IN GOOD WORKS, READY TO GIVE, WILLING TO SHARE, STORING UP FOR THEMSELVES A GOOD FOUNDATION FOR THE TIME TO COME, THAT THEY MAY LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE."

1 Tim. 6:17-19

Ponder carefully

← these two exhortations. →
 One is telling us what we SHOULD be doing with our riches, but the other is a warning against what we ARE doing with our riches.

James warns against hoarding of silver and gold. Yet, within the body of Christ we have teachers telling the saints to convert their surplus savings into silver and gold as a hedge against inflation.

You don't have any silver and gold laid away?
 Ok, then what about your clothes closet?
 Do you have so much surplus that they are in danger of being moth-eaten as James depicts?

JAMES ON RICHES:

"COME NOW, YOU RICH, WEEP AND HOWL FOR YOUR MISERIES THAT ARE COMING UPON YOU! YOUR RICHES ARE CORRUPTED, AND YOUR GARMENTS MOTH-EATEN. YOUR GOLD AND SILVER ARE CORRODED, AND THEIR CORROSION WILL BE A WITNESS AGAINST YOU...YOU HAVE HEAPED UP TREASURE IN THE LAST DAYS...YOU HAVE LIVED ON THE EARTH IN PLEASURE AND LUXURY..."

Jam. 5:1-5

Notice that both illustrations involve "storing up." Paul exhorts those who are rich to be "ready to give" and "willing to share." In doing so, they will "store up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come." The other example gives warning about "heaping up treasure in the last days."

Events like the 2004 Tsunami which struck extreme tragedy and hardship into the lives of so many of the poor of this world, give us golden opportunities to align our testimony solidly in the positive category of Paul in which he exhorts "those who are rich" to "be ready to give" and "willing to share." These kinds of events are tests for the righteous to test whether we will obey God's mandate to "remember the poor."

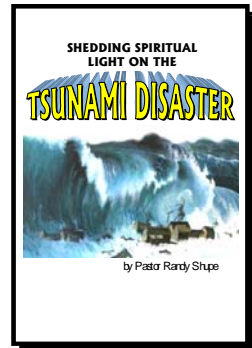
"AND GOD IS ABLE TO MAKE ALL GRACE ABOUND TOWARD YOU, THAT YOU, ALWAYS HAVING ALL SUFFICIENCY IN ALL THINGS, HAVE AN ABUNDANCE FOR EVERY GOOD WORK. AS IT IS WRITTEN: 'HE HAS DISPERSED ABROAD, HE HAS GIVEN TO THE POOR; HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS REMAINS FOREVER.' NOW MAY HE WHO SUPPLIES SEED TO THE SOWER, AND BREAD FOR FOOD, SUPPLY AND MULTIPLY THE SEED YOU HAVE SOWN AND INCREASE THE FRUITS OF YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHILE YOU ARE ENRICHED IN EVERYTHING FOR ALL LIBERALITY, WHICH CAUSES THANKSGIVING THROUGH US TO GOD."

2 Cor. 9:8-11



After writing this newsletter, I taught its contents to our local congregation. I would like to make this teaching available to you in either video or DVD+R format. You can order a copy of this one-hour, illustrated teaching from our ministry for \$12.00 including shipping.

I believe that it is a teaching that you can give to unbelievers as well. Many people do not understand the real cause of such suffering and disaster. This video will reveal the true nature of God to them.
 Pastor Randy Shupe



Please send _____ copy/copies of the video "The Tsunami Disaster" _____ or DVD + R format _____ at \$ 12.00 each to:



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02/03/2005: GFA Brings Hope amid Destruction
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DISCERNING

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

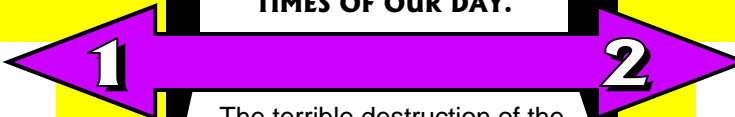
"NOW THESE WERE THE MEN WHO CAME TO DAVID... AND THEY WERE AMONG THE MIGHTY MEN, HELPERS IN THE WAR.... THESE WERE THE NUMBERS OF THE DIVISIONS THAT WERE EQUIPPED FOR THE WAR.... THE SONS OF ISSACHAR WHO HAD UNDERSTANDING OF THE TIMES, TO KNOW WHAT ISRAEL OUGHT TO DO..."

1 Chronicles 12:1,23,32

LIVING AS WE ARE IN WHAT THE BIBLE CALLS "THE LAST DAYS," WE MUST ASK OURSELVES WHICH OF THESE TWO SCENARIOS DESCRIBES HOW WE INDIVIDUALLY ARE PRESENTLY RELATING TO THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES OF OUR DAY.

"WHEN IT IS EVENING YOU SAY, 'IT WILL BE FAIR WEATHER, FOR THE SKY IS RED'; AND IN THE MORNING, 'IT WILL BE FOUL WEATHER TODAY, FOR THE SKY IS RED AND THREATENING.' HYPOCRITES! YOU KNOW HOW TO DISCERN THE FACE OF THE SKY, BUT YOU CANNOT DISCERN THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES."

Matthew 16:2-3



The terrible destruction of the tribulation will suddenly begin at a time in which people will be deluded into saying, "peace and safety!"
(1 Thess. 5:3).

This is a severe lack of needful discernment. Paul goes on to warn believers:

"BUT YOU, BRETHREN ARE NOT IN DARKNESS, SO THAT THIS DAY SHOULD OVERTAKE YOU AS A THIEF. YOU ARE ALL SONS OF LIGHT AND SONS OF THE DAY. WE ARE NOT OF THE NIGHT NOR OF DARKNESS. THEREFORE LET US NOT SLEEP, AS OTHERS DO, BUT LET US WATCH AND BE SOBER."

1 Thess. 5:4-6

The apostle Paul gave frequent warnings of instruction pertaining to how God's people ought to be walking in light of what is going on around them. Here are two parallel examples worthy of scrutiny:

"...ALL THINGS THAT ARE EXPOSED ARE MADE MANIFEST BY THE LIGHT, FOR WHATEVER MAKES MANIFEST IS LIGHT. THEREFORE HE SAYS: 'AWAKE YOU WHO SLEEP, ARISE FROM THE DEAD, AND CHRIST WILL GIVE YOU LIGHT.' 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."

Eph. 5:13-17

In both examples, Paul speaks of believers who are asleep spiritually. Also in both examples, Paul makes reference to how believers are to walk in light, to be equipped with the armor of light, and to know the time in which they live.

This newsletter is dedicated to examining what are "the signs of the times" by which we are to have understanding and discernment.

"AND DO THIS, KNOWING THE TIME, THAT NOW IT IS HIGH TIME TO AWAKE OUT OF SLEEP; FOR NOW OUR SALVATION IS NEARER THAN WHEN WE FIRST BELIEVED. THE NIGHT IS FAR SPENT, THE DAY IS AT HAND. THEREFORE LET US CAST OFF THE WORKS OF DARKNESS, AND LET US PUT ON THE ARMOR OF LIGHT. LET US WALK PROPERLY, AS IN THE DAY...PUT ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND MAKE NO PROVISION FOR THE FLESH, TO FULFILL ITS LUSTS."

Rom. 13:11-14

If you are going to be among those whom God considers to be like the sons of Issachar who "understand the times and know what you ought to do," then you must learn to "discern the signs of the times."

Matthew Chapter 24 gives us a progressive unfolding of "the signs of the times" all the way up to and including the second coming of Jesus Christ. On the right hand of this page I have charted out for you the passages from Matthew Chapter 24 where those "signs" are enumerated. Although I encourage you to learn this whole progression of prophetic signs, our study in this newsletter is only going to focus on the ability to "discern the signs of the times" that Jesus identifies as "the beginning of sorrows" (Matt. 24:4-8). Why is it so? Because these are the signs which mark the present time in which we live. These are the signs that will lead up to the beginning of the tribulation. Know the signs and you will know how near we are to the rapture of the faithful wise virgins which will end the dispensation of "the beginning of sorrows" and start the tribulation!

For the most part, these stated prophetic signs which mark the dispensation of "the beginning of sorrows" are being relegated as yet future events. I want to try to convince you that we have entered into the third and final stage of "the beginning of sorrows" which means that we are sitting on the doorstep of the beginning of the tribulation that follows this initial dispensation of time. It is later than you think! Failure to see that we have already progressed well into the first two signs that Jesus says will mark this time of "the beginning of sorrows" is a contributing cause of God's people remaining spiritually "asleep" as Paul charged some of the saints in his day.

"...TELL US, WHEN WILL THESE THINGS BE? AND WHAT WILL BE THE SIGN OF YOUR COMING, AND OF THE END OF THE AGE?"

(Matt. 24:3)

THE SIGNS MARKING THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS

THE SIGNS MARKING THE FIRST HALF OF THE TRIBULATION

THE SIGN MARKING THE MIDDLE OF THE TRIBULATION

THE SIGNS MARKING THE LAST HALF OF THE TRIBULATION

THE SIGN MARKING THE 2ND COMING OF CHRIST

⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you.

⁵ "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

⁶ "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

⁷ "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.

⁸ "All these are the beginning of sorrows.

⁹ "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.

¹⁰ "And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.

¹¹ "Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

¹² "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

¹³ "But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

¹⁴ "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

¹⁵ "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,'⁴⁴ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),

¹⁶ "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

¹⁷ "Let him who is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house.

¹⁸ "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

¹⁹ "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those with nursing babies in those days!

²⁰ "And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

²¹ "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.

²² "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

²³ "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it.

²⁴ "For false christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

²⁵ "See, I have told you beforehand.

²⁶ "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or

'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it.

²⁷ "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

²⁸ "For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

²⁹ "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

³⁰ "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

³¹ "And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.



"...ALL THESE THINGS MUST COME TO PASS, BUT THE END IS NOT YET..."
 Matt. 24:6

1. "TAKE HEED THAT NO ONE DECEIVES YOU. FOR MANY WILL COME IN MY NAME, SAYING, 'I AM THE CHRIST,' AND WILL DECEIVE MANY." (vs.5)

2. "AND YOU WILL HEAR OF WARS AND RUMORS OF WARS... FOR NATION WILL RISE AGAINST NATION, AND KINGDOM AGAINST KINGDOM." (vs. 6-7)

3. "AND THERE WILL BE FAMINES, PESTILENCES, AND EARTHQUAKES IN VARIOUS PLACES." (vs.7)

"ALL THESE ARE THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS."
 Matt. 24:8

If all the "signs" on the preceding page are progressive in occurrence leading up to the second coming of Christ, then so are the three above with which Christ opens this whole dissertation in Matthew Chapter 24. This is an important point to establish for we can easily surmise in a nebulous way that we have always had such signs as "wars and rumors of wars" as well as "nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom." America, one of the youngest nations on earth, has itself been actively involved in numerous wars since its inception. We could also state that "famines, pestilences and earthquakes in various places" have always been random acts throughout the history of the modern world. But these are not the events Jesus begins with, are they? No, first and foremost on His mind is this thought:

The first sign Jesus speaks of pertains to the deception of the "many" by the "many." This prophetic sign is preceded by the warning "Take heed that no one deceives you." This deception is the present objective of Satan as Rev. 12:9 depicts:

"TAKE HEED THAT NO ONE *DECEIVES* YOU..."

"THAT SERPENT OF OLD, CALLED THE DEVIL AND SATAN,



WHO DECEIVES THE WHOLE WORLD, HE WAS CAST TO THE EARTH..."
 Rev. 12:9

Take a good look at this opening sign that Jesus describes and ask yourself, are there "many" today who claim to be the Christ? The answer is no, there have been a "few" such as Sun Yen Moon in the late Seventies-Eighties.

FOR *MANY* WILL COME IN MY NAME, SAYING, 'I AM THE CHRIST,' AND WILL DECEIVE *MANY*." Matt. 24:5

Nor can we say that Sun Yen Moon was able to deceive "many" of God's people. I would also point out that he did not (1) come in the name of Christ, but rather he came in his own name; and (2) he did not claim to be the Christ of the Bible, but rather a self-appointed savior of the world. Therefore Sun Yen Moon is a false christ (savior-deliverer). This is an important issue, for I fear Christendom is misinterpreting this sign of Jesus altogether! It is because we have yet to see "many" coming "in My name" saying, "I am the Christ" (saying that they are the Christ) that this initial sign of the dispensation of "the beginning of sorrows" is still being relegated to the far-off future! I would like to prove to you that this sign is not to be viewed as "many" coming in the Name of Christ and then claiming that they themselves are the Christ. That is an oxymoron. You cannot come in the name of Christ and then claim yourself to be the Christ. Rather this is a depiction of "many" coming in the name of Jesus Christ as Christians who will readily affirm that Jesus is the Christ! Under the protective guise of being in the fold of Christianity, they will proceed to deceive "many" with their false "Christian" doctrines!

The dispensation of “the beginning of sorrows” began when the church began! This initial sign of DECEPTION of which Jesus warned His disciples PRIOR to the inception of the church, has been going on ever since its birth! Does not the Scripture bear witness? Here are a few examples:

“CONCERNING OUR COMMON SALVATION...CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS. FOR CERTAIN MEN HAVE CREPT IN UNNOTICED....WHO TURN THE GRACE OF OUR GOD INTO LICENTIOUSNESS (“A LICENSE TO SIN”- NIV) ...”
Jude 3-4

“...BEGUILING UNSTABLE SOULS. THEY HAVE HEARTS TRAINED IN COVETOUS PRACTICES, AND ARE ACCURSED CHILDREN. THEY HAVE FORSAKEN THE RIGHT WAY AND GONE ASTRAY FOLLOWING THE WAY OF BALAAM...WHO LOVED THE WAGES OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS...THEY SPEAK GREAT SWELLING WORDS OF EMPTINESS, THEY ALLURE THROUGH THE LUSTS OF THE FLESH, THROUGH LICENTIOUSNESS, THE ONES WHO HAVE ACTUALLY ESCAPED FROM THOSE WHO LIVE IN ERROR...” 2 Pet. 2:14-18 excerpts

“BUT THERE WERE ALSO FALSE PROPHETS AMONG THE PEOPLE, EVEN AS THERE WILL BE FALSE TEACHERS AMONG YOU, WHO WILL SECRETLY BRING IN DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES...AND MANY WILL FOLLOW THEIR DESTRUCTIVE WAYS, BECAUSE OF WHOM THE WAY OF TRUTH WILL BE BLASPHEMED. BY COVETOUSNESS THEY WILL EXPLOIT YOU WITH DECEPTIVE WORDS...”

2 Pet. 2:1-3

“...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

“...WE ARE NOT AS SO MANY, PEDDLING (“ADULTERATING FOR GAIN”) THE WORD OF GOD...”
2 Cor. 2:17

“PREACH THE WORD!...FOR THE TIME WILL COME WHEN THEY WILL NOT ENDURE SOUND DOCTRINE, BUT ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN DESIRES, BECAUSE THEY HAVE ITCHING EARS, THEY WILL HEAP UP FOR THEMSELVES TEACHERS, AND THEY WILL TURN THEIR EARS AWAY FROM THE TRUTH, AND BE TURNED ASIDE TO FABLES.”

2 Tim. 4:2-4

“BUT SHUN PROFANE AND VAIN BABBLINGS, FOR THEY WILL INCREASE TO MORE UNGODLINESS. AND THEIR MESSAGE WILL SPREAD LIKE CANCER HYMENAEUS AND PHILETUS ARE OF THIS SORT, WHO HAVE STRAYED CONCERNING THE TRUTH, SAYING THE RESURRECTION IS ALREADY PAST, AND THEY OVERTHROW THE FAITH OF SOME.”

2 Tim. 2:16-18

“NOW THE SPIRIT EXPRESSLY SAYS THAT IN LATTER TIMES SOME WILL DEPART FROM THE FAITH, GIVING HEED TO DECEIVING SPIRITS AND DOCTRINES OF DEMONS...”

1 Tim. 4:1

“TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES AND TO ALL THE FLOCK... SHEPHERD THE CHURCH OF GOD... 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 THE DISCIPLES AFTER THEMSELVES. THEREFORE WATCH, AND REMEMBER THAT FOR THREE YEARS I DID NOT CEASE TO WARN EVERYONE NIGHT AND DAY WITH TEARS.”

Acts 20:28-31

Some of the above was actively taking place in the days of the apostles. Other passages are prophetic warnings of what is going to take place in the future -- in our present day! Has not all of the above earmarked the church over the last 2,000 years? Is it not ever increasing in intensity? Are we not indeed in the days in which “many” have come “in the name of Jesus” but are actively deceiving “many” in the church today with their false doctrines?

The dispensation of “the beginning of sorrows” begins with mass deception in the church by means of false prophets. This sign will ever increase and intensify right up to the “Day of The Lord” (the rapture of the faithful saints and the judgment of the unfaithful-see Mat. 25:1-13, 1 Pet. 4:17-18). Paul portrays “The Day of The Lord” as Jesus coming in the form of a thief in the night in which we find this depiction:

“FOR YOU YOURSELVES KNOW PERFECTLY THAT THE DAY OF THE LORD SO COMES AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT. FOR WHEN THEY SAY, ‘PEACE AND SAFETY!’ THEN SUDDEN DESTRUCTION COMES UPON THEM AS LABOR PAINS UPON A PREGNANT WOMAN. AND THEY SHALL NOT ESCAPE. BUT YOU, BRETHREN ARE NOT IN DARKNESS, SO THAT THIS DAY SHOULD OVERTAKE YOU AS A THIEF.”

1 Thess. 5:2-4

Prophetically, Paul tells us that this end-time scenario will be “AS LABOR PAINS UPON A PREGNANT WOMAN,” which implies that the “pains” or “signs” will start out slowly but rapidly begin to increase all the more in intensity until the time of “delivery.” What “sign” will mark the approach of our “delivery” by means of the rapture? An ever increasing and intensifying of deception within the church by:

“...MANY (who) WILL COME IN MY NAME, SAYING, I AM THE CHRIST, AND WILL DECEIVE MANY.” Matt. 24:5



"...ALL THESE THINGS MUST COME TO PASS, BUT THE END IS NOT YET..."
Matt. 24:6

1. "TAKE HEED THAT NO ONE DECEIVES YOU. FOR MANY WILL COME IN MY NAME, SAYING, I AM THE CHRIST, AND WILL DECEIVE MANY." Matt.24:5

"ALL THESE ARE THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS."
Matt. 24:8

Satan seeks to deceive the very institution that Christ commissioned to be "the light of the world" (Matt.5:14), the "Ambassadors of Christ" (2 Cor. 5:19-20). The church is the only viable threat to "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4-6). Corrupt the church with "many" **FALSE PROPHETS**, and as Peter warns:

- 1. "MANY" WILL FOLLOW THEIR DESTRUCTIVE WAYS**
- 2. THE WAY OF TRUTH WILL BE BLASPHEMED (2 Pet.2:2)**

In what manner do these false prophets appear? Here are a few current forms:

"PROSPERITY PROPHETS" have infiltrated Christianity in this country and are causing the way of true faith to be blasphemed by their obvious by greedy hearts that are trained in covetous practices just as Peter plainly warns will happen (2 Pet.2:3,14).

We have **"GRACE PROPHETS"** who continue to "turn the grace of God into licentiousness (Jude 2-3) with their heretical doctrines of "once saved, always saved: unconditional eternal security," and the perverse theology of pre-forgiveness of sins: "every sin I ever will commit is already under the Blood of Jesus Christ." The apostle John considers such concepts heresy and lies! (1 Jn. 1:6-7, 2:1-2, 5:16-18).

We have had **"FEAR PROPHETS"** which hyped the Y2K hysteria among God's people to a frenzy causing them to horde up food and water so they can make it through the crisis. They continue to hype the urgent need for you to replace your dollars with gold as a protection against the coming world market crash (if your paper dollars are so worthless, why are they willing to sell you gold in exchange for those paper dollars?)

We have modern **"WAR PROPHETS"** in the Body of Christ just as they existed among the Puritan preachers who sent out their armies in the Name of God to exterminate the "heathen" Indians whose land they stole. Get angry if you must, but the same scenario is being played out in Iraq as thousands of "heathens" are blasted into a Christless eternity in the name of freedom and democracy. The sad part to this saga is that the American church is solidly supporting this slaughter "in the name of Jesus." The church has no commission to traverse the earth to set people free **PHYSICALLY** by means of democracy, but rather it has been commissioned to set them free **SPIRITUALLY** by means of the Gospel! Democracy is not the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Just recently an article appeared in the Rocky Mountain News about a newly organized "Christian" movement in Ohio of Republican pastors who call themselves the "Patriot Pastors." This is the same prideful mold from which came the Puritan preachers who extolled the righteous virtues of "God and Country" (see Dec.2004 Newsletter) Patriotism is a counterfeit, substitute religion which has its own set of martyrs, sacred shrines and special hymns! As Christians, our foundational roots are to be "patristic" (teachings of the early church fathers) not "patriotic!"

We have **"POLITICAL PROPHETS"** bent upon legislating morality on immorality as if this country is called to be a manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth. Read the heretical theology of "The Light and the Glory" which is so popular in the Christian home-school movement. America set forth as "a city set on a hill" is what it proclaims. It is impure Puritan theology that America has replaced Israel as God's favorite and chosen nation. Although this is "doctrines of demons," God's people swallow it hook, line and sinker because they want it to be so Americans **MUST** be God's special people on the face of the earth!

Saints of God, this is the very kind of deception that Jesus warns about that will inundate the church during the dispensation of "the beginning of sorrows." It is going to increase and intensify all the more right up until the coming of Christ at the rapture for the wise virgins! Again consider Paul's exhortation:

"...ALL THINGS THAT ARE EXPOSED ARE MADE MANIFEST BY THE LIGHT, FOR WHATEVER MAKES MANIFEST IS LIGHT. THEREFORE HE SAYS: 'AWAKE YOU WHO SLEEP, ARISE FROM THE DEAD, AND CHRIST WILL GIVE YOU LIGHT.' 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."

Eph. 5:13-17



"...ALL THESE THINGS MUST COME TO PASS, BUT THE END IS NOT YET..."
Matt. 24:6

Let us now add the second progressive sign Jesus gives as marking this dispensation: →

1. "TAKE HEED THAT NO ONE DECEIVES YOU. FOR MANY WILL COME IN MY NAME SAYING, I AM THE CHRIST, AND WILL DECEIVE MANY." Matt. 24:5

2. "AND YOU WILL HEAR OF WARS AND RUMORS OF WARS... FOR NATION WILL RISE AGAINST NATION, AND KINGDOM AGAINST KINGDOM." Matt. 24:6-7

"ALL THESE ARE THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS."
Matt. 24:8

Not only will "the beginning of sorrows" be marked with the sign of ever-increasing deception within the church by false prophets, but this dispensation will also be marked with this second ever-increasing sign of the times, "and you will hear of wars and rumors of wars...nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom" (Matt. 24:6-7). The context of these words of Jesus center about His previous prophecy of the destruction of the Temple:

"...AND HIS DISCIPLES CAME TO HIM TO SHOW HIM THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE. AND JESUS SAID TO THEM, 'DO YOU NOT SEE ALL THESE THINGS? ASSUREDLY, I SAY TO YOU, NOT ONE STONE SHALL BE LEFT UPON ANOTHER, THAT SHALL NOT BE THROWN DOWN.'" Matt. 24:1-2

Consider Daniels' prophecy of the destruction of the temple and what would follow:

"...MESSIAH SHALL BE CUT OFF, BUT NOT FOR HIMSELF; AND THE PEOPLE OF THE PRINCE WHO IS TO COME SHALL DESTROY THE CITY AND THE SANCTUARY. THE END SHALL BE WITH A FLOOD, AND TILL THE END OF THE WAR DESOLATIONS ARE DETERMINED." Dan. 9:26

The second sign Jesus gives as marking "the beginning of sorrows" is of an ever-increasing manifestation of "wars and rumors of wars." Jesus knows that it will begin with the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem as Daniel prophesied. Titus of Rome would destroy the Temple and Jerusalem within forty years of the death of Jesus as the Messiah. The Jews would be scattered throughout the world, and as Daniel foretold, they would be subject to endless wars of "desolations" such as the horrific Holocaust. How many wars and rumors of wars, nation against nation, and kingdom against kingdom have you seen in your short time on earth? How many have taken place since Jesus first prophesied the coming of such events on the earth? To tedious of a task to enumerate! There has been many and there are many more to come! Like the initial sign of progressive and intensifying deception within the church, this second sign will follow that same pattern. Like "labor pains upon a pregnant woman," the world shall find a pattern of "wars and rumors of wars" to be the way of life on earth.

However, I believe there is a hidden truth in this sign of Jesus that we should ponder. The phrase, "nation against nation" should read as "ethnos against ethnos." There will be an intensifying of ETHNIC wars on the earth! God singles out what is now modern-day Jordan and charges them with this sin:

"BECAUSE YOU HAVE HAD AN ANCIENT HATRED, AND HAVE SHED THE BLOOD OF ISRAEL BY THE POWER OF THE SWORD AT THE TIME OF THEIR CALAMITY... 'THEREFORE, AS I LIVE,' SAYS THE LORD GOD, I WILL PREPARE YOU FOR BLOOD AND BLOOD SHALL PURSUE YOU; SINCE YOU HAVE NOT HATED BLOODSHED, THEREFORE BLOOD SHALL PURSUE YOU.'" Ezk. 35:5-6

Perhaps you have heard of the old but famous feud between "the Hatfield's and the McCoy's." They killed each other for generations, not for what they had done, but rather for who they were! This is an unsolvable dilemma. The way it ended was that the Hatfield's finally exterminated the McCoy's! Ethnic wars are based on "ancient hatred." These are unsolvable wars. The motivation for killing is not based on what someone has DONE but rather WHO someone is. Why do Muslims and the Palestinians hate Jews? Why do Iraqis hate Iranians? Why do the people of India hate the Pakistani people? It is because of "ancient hatreds." Our world is presently plagued by many such unsolvable ethnic wars. It is only going to increase! Truly we live in the dispensation Jesus appropriately named "the beginning of sorrows."



"...ALL THESE THINGS MUST COME TO PASS, BUT THE END IS NOT YET..."
Matt. 24:6

1. "TAKE HEED THAT NO ONE DECEIVES YOU. FOR MANY WILL COME IN MY NAME, SAYING, I AM THE CHRIST, AND WILL DECEIVE MANY." Matt.24:5

2. "AND YOU WILL HEAR OF WARS AND RUMORS OF WARS... FOR NATION WILL RISE AGAINST NATION, AND KINGDOM AGAINST KINGDOM." Matt. 24:6-7

"ALL THESE ARE THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS."
Matt. 24:8

3. "AND THERE WILL BE FAMINES, PESTILENCES, AND EARTHQUAKES IN VARIOUS PLACES." Matt. 24:7

Let us now add the third progressive sign that Jesus said would mark "the beginning of sorrows." →

When we consider the devastations that come with "famines, pestilences, and earthquakes" the title "the beginning of sorrows" is quite appropriate. We have all seen the horrible pictures recently of starving children and old people wasting away. Africa and the Sudan come to mind most predominantly. North Korea was recently on the verge of universal starvation. People in South America, in Iraq, Russia and even in Israel are starving because they can't afford what it costs to stay alive. Most of the world goes to bed hungry! What a world! Come Lord Jesus!

What about "pestilences?" Is this a sign of the times in which we live? Let us properly define that word so we can answer that question:

pes-ti-lence \ˈpestələn(t)s\ n -s [ME, fr. MF, fr. L *pestilentia*, fr. *pestilent-*, *pestilens* + *-ia* -y] **1** : a contagious or infectious epidemic disease that is virulent and devastating; *specif* : BUBONIC PLAGUE **2** : something that is destructive or pernicious (I'll pour this ~ into his ear —Shak)

Certainly the Bubonic Plague that swept Europe qualified as "a contagious or infectious epidemic disease that is virulent and devastating." How about our day – right now, is there such an epidemic and devastating disease plaguing the entire world? Yes, it is the global epidemic of AIDS!

Go and look up the statistics of the AIDS epidemic over the last ten years(visit the website at "Earthtrends.wri.org") and you will be convinced that this is indeed an ever-increasing sign which is quadrupling every two years!

Global estimates of HIV and AIDS as of end 2003			
Number of people living with HIV	Total	37.8 million	[34.6–42.3 million]
	Adults	35.7 million	[32.7–39.8 million]
	Women	17 million	[15.8–18.8 million]
	Children <15 years	2.1 million	[1.9–2.5 million]
People newly infected with HIV in 2003	Total	4.8 million	[4.2–6.3 million]
	Adults	4.1 million	[3.6–5.6 million]
	Children <15 years	630 000	[570 000–740 000]
AIDS deaths in 2003	Total	2.9 million	[2.6–3.3 million]
	Adults	2.4 million	[2.2–2.7 million]
	Children <15 years	490 000	[440 000–580 000]



“...YOU KNOW HOW TO DISCERN THE FACE OF THE SKY, BUT YOU CANNOT DISCERN THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.”
 Matthew 16:2-3

“AND THERE WILL BE FAMINES, PESTILENCES... IN VARIOUS PLACES... ALL THESE ARE THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS”
 Matt. 24:7-8

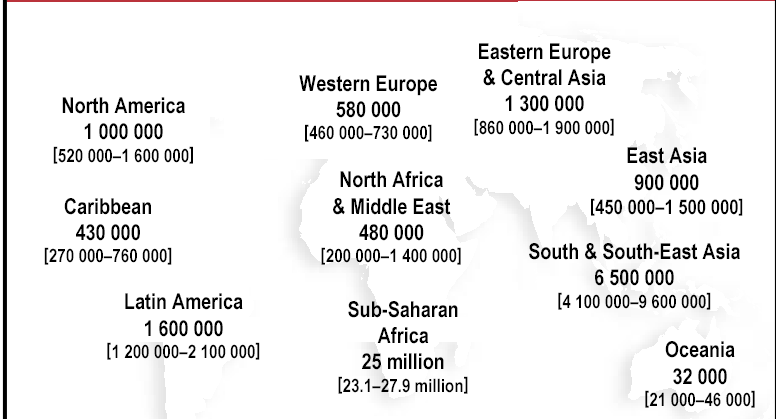
How widespread is this AIDS epidemic? It encompasses the whole world – every continent, and nearly every nation is posting alarming statistics of this rapid and ever-increasing plague! →

GLOBAL HEALTH

U.N.: HIV Infections Hit Record High in 2003

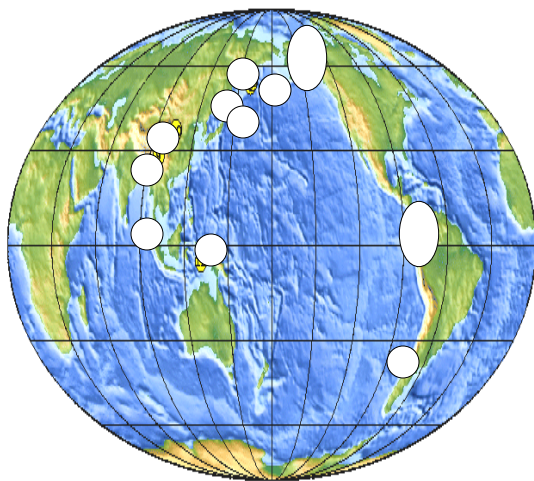
Morning Edition, July 6, 2004 - Roughly 5 million people became infected with HIV in 2003, more than in any previous year. A United Nations study concludes that AIDS appears to be an increasingly global epidemic, currently spreading rapidly in Eastern Europe and Asia.

Global estimates of HIV and AIDS as of end 2003



There is one more “sign” Jesus lists among this third progressive mark of “the beginning of sorrows.” Not only will there be “famines and pestilences in various places, but there will also be “earthquakes” (Matt. 24:7). The fourth largest earthquake in the world struck on December 26th, 2004. Our previous newsletter dealt with “The Tsunami Disaster.” Is this a worldwide sign that is also ever increasing in frequency? Here are some statistics (visit the website “Earthquake Facts and Lists” for a complete rundown)

Largest Earthquakes in the World Since 1900



USGS National Earthquake Information Center

Location	Date UTC	Magnitude
1. Chile	1960 05 22	9.5
2. Prince William Sound, Alaska	1964 03 28	9.2
3. Andreanof Islands, Alaska	1957 03 09	9.1
4. Off the West Coast of Northern Sumatra	2004 12 26	9.0
5. Kamchatka	1952 11 04	9.0
6. Off the Coast of Ecuador	1906 01 31	8.8
7. Northern Sumatra, Indonesia	2005 03 28	8.7
8. Rat Islands, Alaska	1965 02 04	8.7
9. Assam - Tibet	1950 08 15	8.6
10. Ningxia-Gansu, China	1920 12 16	8.6
11. Kuril Islands	1963 10 13	8.5
12. Banda Sea, Indonesia	1938 02 01	8.5
13. Kamchatka	1923 02 03	8.5

Most Destructive Known Earthquakes on Record in the World Earthquakes with 50,000 or More Deaths

Perhaps it is significant that the resurrection of Christ was marked with an earthquake which tore the veil in two and opened the graves of many of the saints (Matt. 27:51). Also, it is interesting that the return of Christ will be preceded by a great earthquake as the wrath of God is poured out on the earth (Rev. 16:18). God has chosen to single out earthquakes as part of the progressive signs that will ear-mark “the beginning of sorrows.” In our last newsletter on “The Tsunami Disaster,” I sought to bring out the fact that Satan is very active in using the forces of weather to accomplish his destructive means. If you have not read that newsletter, I urge you to consider it. God has previously used, and will in the future again utilize “floods, hail and earthquakes” in the dispensations of His wrath, but Satan has great wrath also (Rev. 12:12). It is the conviction of this teacher that Satan’s wrath on earth functions in between the wrath of God in Genesis and His yet future wrath in Revelation. Satan counterfeits God.

Listed in order of greatest number of deaths

Date	Location	Deaths	Magnitude
January 23, 1556	China, Shansi	830,000	~8
December 26, 2004	Sumatra	283,106	9.0
July 27, 1976	China, Tangshan	255,000 (official)	7.5
August 9, 1138	Syria, Aleppo	230,000	
May 22, 1927	China, near Xining	200,000	7.9
December 22, 856+	Iran, Damghan	200,000	
December 16, 1920	China, Gansu	200,000	8.6
March 23, 893+	Iran, Ardabil	150,000	
September 1, 1923	Japan, Kanto (Kwanto)	143,000	7.9
October 5, 1948	USSR (Turkmenistan, Ashgabat)	110,000	7.3
December 28, 1908	Italy, Messina	70,000 to 100,000 (estimated)	7.2
September, 1290	China, Chihli	100,000	
November, 1667	Caucasia, Shemakha	80,000	
November 18, 1727	Iran, Tabriz	77,000	
November 1, 1755	Portugal, Lisbon	70,000	8.7
December 25, 1932	China, Gansu	70,000	7.6
May 31, 1970	Peru	66,000	7.9
1268	Asia Minor, Silicia	60,000	
January 11, 1693	Italy, Sicily	60,000	
May 30, 1935	Pakistan, Quetta	30,000 to 60,000	7.5
February 4, 1783	Italy, Calabria	50,000	
June 20, 1990	Iran	50,000	7.7

In this present dispensation of “the beginning of sorrows,” I believe it is Satan who is presently using earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes and floods to destroy the poor people of the earth who are under his dominion lest they be saved. His deceptive ways are to bring about such events and then blame God for it. He will do all that he can to discredit the image of the God of the Bible as the true savior of the world.

How far along then are we into the dispensation of “the beginning of sorrows?” It is not some far off in the future event. It started at the birth of the church with Satan’s infiltration of it with his false prophets in sheep’s clothing. The deception of the church is his highest priority because it is “the light of the world.”

The beginning of sorrows continues with a history of ever-increasing “wars and rumors of wars” and especially wars of “ethnic cleansing” such as Hitler’s extermination of the Jews. Multiple ethnic wars based on ancient hatreds pock-mark the face of the globe today.

Thirdly, we have a world history of famines as Satan continues to kill the poor people of the earth lest they be saved. We are presently in the midst of a global epidemic with Aids (pestilences). I believe that we are in the final stage of which will be increasingly marked by destructive earthquakes. All of these things, says Jesus, are just “the beginning of sorrows.”

“TAKE HEED THAT NO ONE DECEIVES YOU...”

“THAT SERPENT OF OLD, CALLED THE DEVIL AND SATAN,



WHO DECEIVES THE WHOLE WORLD, HE WAS CAST TO THE EARTH...” Rev. 12:9

1.

“FOR MANY WILL COME IN MY NAME, SAYING, I AM THE CHRIST, AND WILL DECEIVE MANY.” (vs.5)

2.

“AND YOU WILL HEAR OF WARS AND RUMORS OF WARS... FOR NATION WILL RISE AGAINST NATION, AND KINGDOM AGAINST KINGDOM.” (vs. 6-7)

3.

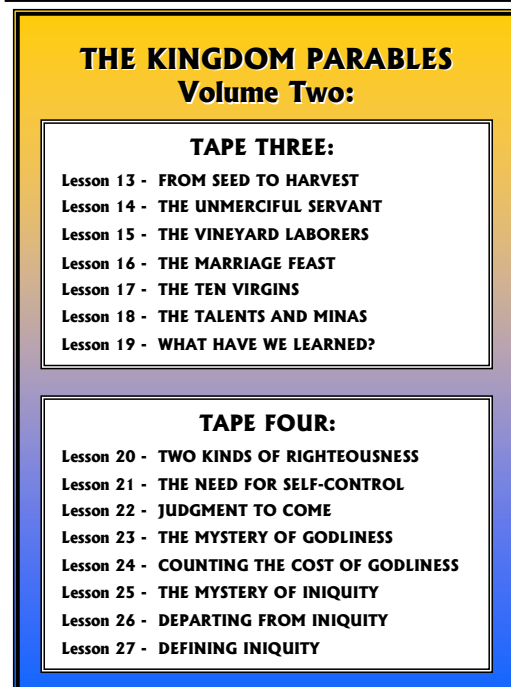
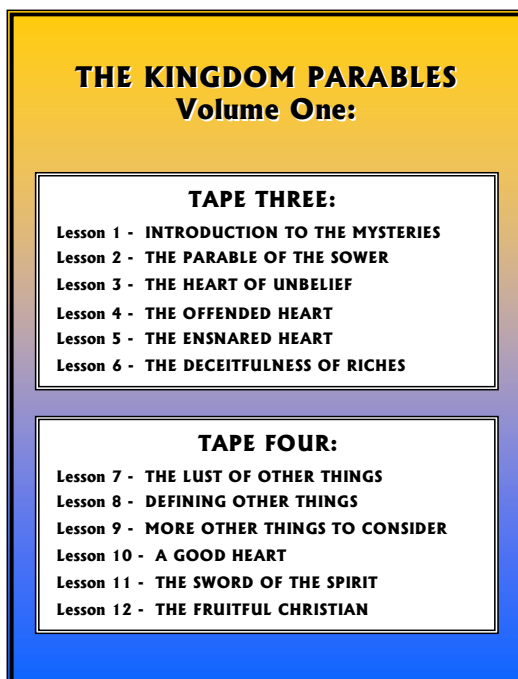
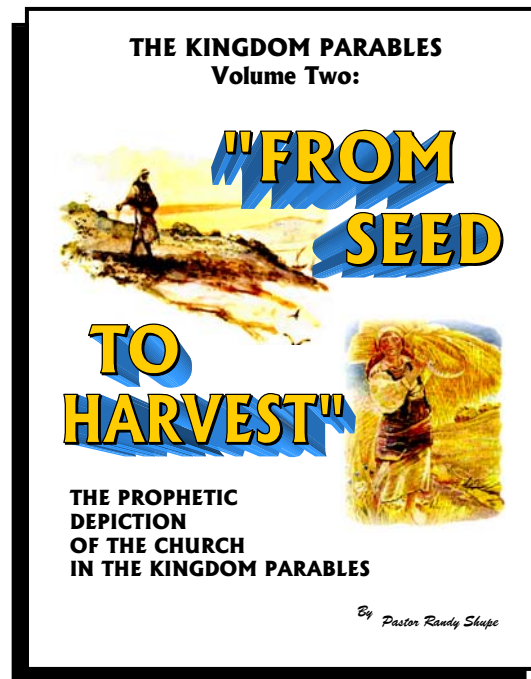
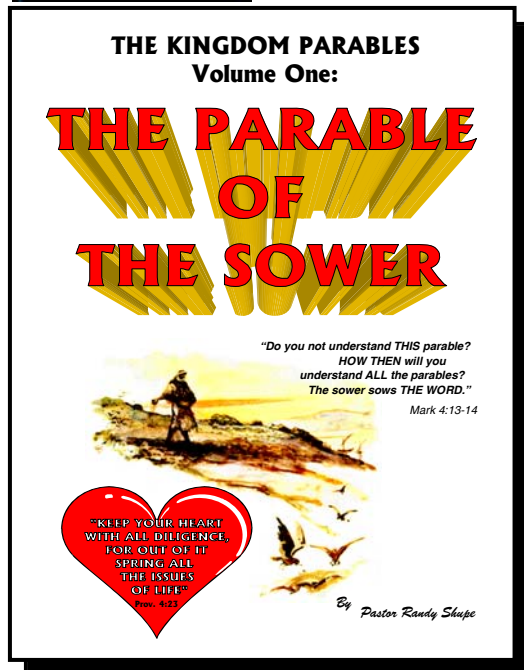
“AND THERE WILL BE FAMINES, PESTILENCES, AND EARTHQUAKES IN VARIOUS PLACES.” (vs.7)

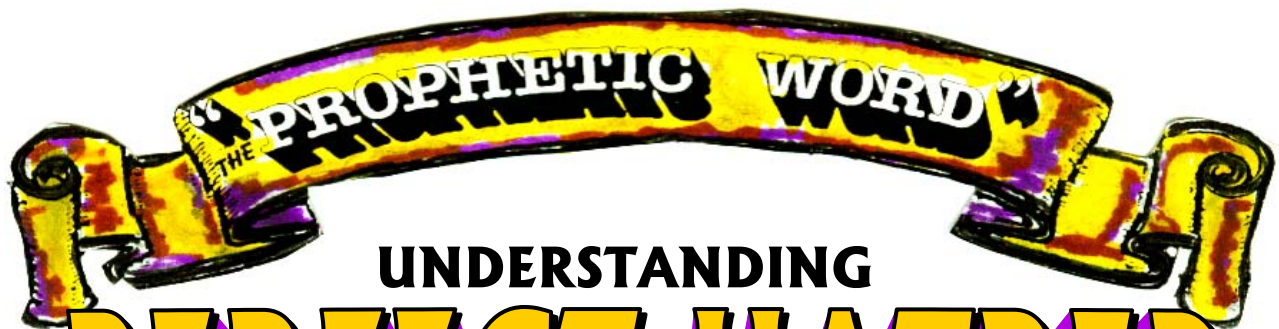
“ALL THESE ARE THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS.” Matt. 24:8



I would like to recommend this new two-volume video series as further insight into the mass deception that Jesus predicted would invade the church. This series was taken from a very extensive teaching I did on "The Twelve Mysteries of the Bible." These two volumes deal with many of those mysteries as they focus upon "The Seven Kingdom parables of Matthew Chapter Thirteen."

These two volumes together contain nearly 27 hours of teaching on four VHS tapes. You can purchase each volume individually for \$35.00, or both volumes for \$55.00 including shipping and handling. **Pastor Randy Shupe**





UNDERSTANDING

PERFECT HATRED



DAVID

**“DO I NOT HATE THEM,
O LORD, WHO HATE YOU?
AND DO I NOT LOATHE THOSE WHO
RISE UP AGAINST YOU?
I HATE THEM WITH PERFECT HATRED.
I COUNT THEM MY ENEMIES.”**

Psalm 139:21-22

God recorded of David this testimony: “I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, who will do all My will” (Acts 13:22). However, it is not hard to find psalms which are filled with all-too-vivid expressions of David praying against the well-being of his enemies. Often I have winced at the intensity of David’s expressed hatred and animosity for his enemies. (We will look at several examples later on.) For a long time, I struggled with the vengeful praying that David frequently practiced in light of the seemingly contradictory words of Jesus in the New Testament pertaining to how we are relate to our enemies:

“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, DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO HATE YOU, AND PRAY FOR THOSE WHO SPITEFULLY USE YOU AND PERSECUTE YOU...”

Mat. 5: 43-44



“BUT I SAY TO YOU WHO HEAR; LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO HATE YOU, BLESS THOSE WHO CURSE YOU, AND PRAY FOR THOSE WHO SPITEFULLY USE YOU...AND JUST AS YOU WANT MEN TO DO TO YOU, YOU ALSO DO TO THEM LIKEWISE....LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, DO GOOD...BE MERCIFUL, JUST AS YOUR FATHER IS ALSO MERCIFUL...”

Luke 6:27-36 excerpts

Make note of the fact that Jesus states that it was legal to hate your enemies under the Old Covenant. However, God commended Solomon, the son of David, for not asking for the life of his enemies as was the common practice (1 Kings 3:11). What was legal for David is not condoned by God for New Covenant believers such as you and me. We are given specific instructions pertaining to our interaction with our enemies as stated above by Jesus and also by Paul (Rom.12:17-21).

We can find a brand of hatred listed in Galatians that is a “work of the flesh” (Gal. 5:20). This is “imperfect hatred” which God hates, and so should we! The kind of hatred that we are going to consider is a product of walking in the power of the Spirit, not in the power of the flesh! In this newsletter, I would like to share with you how to view David’s psalms in such a way that you can hate your enemies with “perfect hatred” as David expresses above in our opening text. The key to “perfect hatred” lies in understanding WHO ARE our “legal” enemies in the New Covenant! The answer might surprise you!

Let us begin by considering several examples of how David prayed in a manner which is no longer an acceptable practice in the New Covenant:



DAVID

“DO NOT KEEP SILENT, O GOD OF MY PRAISE! FOR THE MOUTH OF THE WICKED AND THE MOUTH OF THE DECEITFUL HAVE OPENED AGAINST ME WITH A LYING TONGUE. THEY HAVE ALSO SURROUNDED ME WITH WORDS OF HATRED, AND FOUGHT AGAINST ME WITHOUT A CAUSE....SET A WICKED MAN OVER HIM, AND LET AN ACCUSER STAND AT HIS RIGHT HAND. WHEN HE IS JUDGED, LET HIM BE FOUND GUILTY, AND LET HIS PRAYER BECOME SIN. LET HIS DAYS BE FEW, AND LET ANOTHER TAKE HIS OFFICE. LET HIS CHILDREN BE FATHERLESS, AND HIS WIFE A WIDOW. LET HIS CHILDREN CONTINUALLY BE VAGABONDS, AND BEG; LET THEM SEEK THEIR BREAD ALSO FROM DESOLATE PLACES. LET THE CREDITOR SEIZE ALL THAT HE HAS, AND LET STRANGERS PLUNDER HIS LABOR. LET THERE BE NONE TO EXTEND MERCY TO HIM, NOR LET THERE BE ANY TO FAVOR HIS FATHERLESS CHILDREN. LET HIS POSTERITY BE CUT OFF, AND IN THE GENERATION FOLLOWING LET THEIR NAME BE BLOTTED OUT.

LET THE INIQUITY OF HIS FATHERS BE REMEMBERED BEFORE THE LORD, AND LET NOT THE SIN OF HIS MOTHER BE BLOTTED OUT. LET THEM BE CONTINUALLY BEFORE THE LORD, THAT HE MAY CUT OFF THE MEMORY OF THEM FROM THE EARTH....AS HE HAS LOVED CURSING, SO LET IT COME TO HIM; AS HE DID NOT DELIGHT IN BLESSING, SO LET IT BE FAR FROM HIM. AS HE CLOTHED HIMSELF WITH CURSING AS WITH HIS GARMENT, SO LET IT ENTER HIS BODY LIKE WATER, AND LIKE OIL INTO HIS BONES...LET THIS BE THE LORD’S REWARD TO MY ACCUSERS, AND TO THOSE WHO SPEAK EVIL AGAINST MY PERSON.” Psalm 109:1-20

“LET THOSE BE PUT TO SHAME AND BROUGHT TO DISHONOR WHO SEEK AFTER MY LIFE; LET THOSE BE TURNED BACK AND BROUGHT TO CONFUSION WHO PLOT MY HURT. LET THEM BE LIKE CHAFF BEFORE THE WIND, AND LET THE ANGEL OF THE LORD CHASE THEM. LET THEIR WAY BE DARK AND SLIPPERY, AND LET THE ANGEL OF THE LORD PURSUE THEM....LET DESTRUCTION COME UPON HIM UNEXPECTEDLY, AND LET HIS NET THAT HE HAS HIDDEN CATCH HIMSELF; INTO THAT VERY DESTRUCTION LET HIM FALL.” Psalm 35:4-8

“LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE BEFORE THEM, AND THEIR WELL-BEING A TRAP. LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED, SO THAT THEY DO NOT SEE; AND MAKE THEIR LOINS SHAKE CONTINUALLY. POUR OUT YOUR INDIGNATION UPON THEM, AND LET YOUR WRATHFUL ANGER TAKE HOLD OF THEM. LET THEIR HABITATION BE DESOLATE. LET NO ONE DWELL IN THEIR TENTS...LET THEM BE BLOTTED OUT OF THE BOOK OF THE LIVING, AND NOT BE WRITTEN WITH THE RIGHTEOUS.” Psalm 69:22-28

“BREAK THEIR TEETH IN THEIR MOUTH, O GOD! LET THEM BE LIKE A SNAIL WHICH MELTS AS IT GOES, LIKE A STILLBORN CHILD OF A WOMAN THAT THEY MAY NOT SEE THE SUN...” Psalm 58:6-8

I suspect if God would still allow us to pray for our enemies as did David, our prayer meetings might be full to overflowing instead of nearly empty! Such vengeful praying stimulates and satisfies our fleshly demand for vindication and justification when we suffer injustice at the hand of our enemies. Let us once more consider how Jesus and Paul instructed New Covenant believers as how to treat our enemies:

“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, DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO HATE YOU, AND PRAY FOR THOSE WHO SPITEFULLY USE YOU AND PERSECUTE YOU...”

Mat. 5: 43-44

“BUT I SAY TO YOU WHO HEAR: LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO HATE YOU, BLESS THOSE WHO CURSE YOU, AND PRAY FOR THOSE WHO SPITEFULLY USE YOU. TO HIM WHO STRIKES YOU ON THE ONE CHEEK, OFFER THE OTHER ALSO. AND FROM HIM WHO TAKES AWAY YOUR CLOAK, DO NOT WITHOLD YOUR TUNIC EITHER...AND JUST AS YOU WANT MEN TO DO TO YOU, YOU ALSO DO TO THEM LIKEWISE...LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, DO GOOD... BE MERCIFUL, JUST AS YOUR FATHER IS ALSO MERCIFUL...”

Luke 6:27-36 excerpts

“REPAY NO ONE EVIL FOR EVIL...DO NOT AVENGE YOURSELVES...IF YOUR ENEMY HUNGERS, FEED HIM; IF HE 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

Please do not think that I am speaking of David despairingly. It was perfectly legal for him to pray as he did AGAINST his enemies. However, as New Covenant believers, we are to pray FOR our enemies-not against them. We are to BLESS those who curse us and do good to those who HATE us! We are instructed to LOVE our enemies! Question: Is the New Covenant “easier” than the Old? Hardly!

Jesus was asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Might I ask you a similar question as a New Testament follower of Christ, "Who do you consider to be legitimate enemies?"

**CAN THEY BE
BELIEVERS?**
(NOT ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES)

**CAN THEY BE
UNBELIEVERS?**
(NOT ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES)



OR ARE THEY SOLELY TO BE

SATANIC FORCES:

(THESE ARE OUR ONLY ENEMIES ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES)

"...WE DO NOT WRESTLE AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD, BUT AGAINST PRINCIPALITIES, AGAINST POWERS, AGAINST THE RULERS OF THE DARKNESS OF THIS AGE, AGAINST SPIRITUAL HOSTS OF WICKEDNESS IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES..." Ephesians 6:12

"BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT; BECAUSE YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL WALKS ABOUT LIKE A ROARING LION, SEEKING WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR, RESIST HIM, STEADFAST IN THE FAITH..." 1 Peter 5:8

"...SUBMIT TO GOD, RESIST THE DEVIL AND HE WILL FLEE FROM YOU." James 4:7

"FOR THOUGH WE WALK IN THE FLESH, WE DO NOT WAR ACCORDING TO THE FLESH. FOR THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE ARE NOT CARNAL BUT MIGHTY IN GOD FOR PULLING DOWN STRONGHOLDS, CASTING DOWN ARGUMENTS AND EVERY HIGH THING THAT EXALTS ITSELF AGAINST THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD..." 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

If we only focus upon the **VISIBLE** realm, we can easily cultivate the idea that we have enemies among believers and unbelievers alike. Some of God's people can behave worse than unbelievers (1 Cor. 5:1) We must learn to cultivate the ability to see the **INVISIBLE** realm in which the forces of darkness work through cooperative human beings, either believers or unbelievers. Others may consider **YOU** to be **THEIR** enemy, but we must not, we cannot, consider any human being to be **OUR** enemy and therefore treat them as such! Nor can we pray against them as David was permitted to do.

There is only one way that we are to interact with people who hate, persecute, curse and spitefully use us. We are to love them, pray for them, bless them, do good to them, and be merciful to them. Consider again how we are to interact with either believers or unbelievers who come against us:

"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, DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO HATE YOU, AND PRAY FOR THOSE WHO SPITEFULLY USE YOU AND PERSECUTE YOU..."

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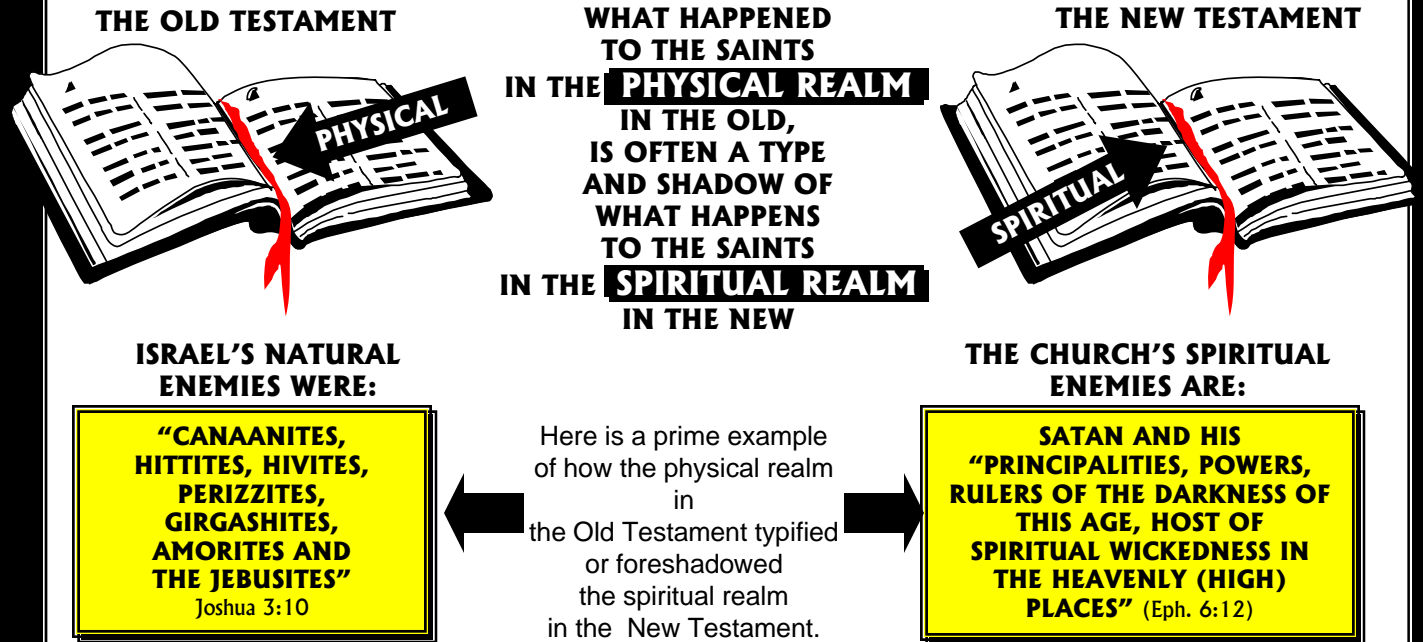
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Romans 12:17-21

If we understand WHO our enemy is and who is NOT, then we can look at the difficult psalms of David in a different light. David could hate his enemies, and there are many psalms that convey his feelings toward his enemies. However, we cannot follow his example. Rather than choosing to no longer read those psalms as New Testament believers, I would like to suggest that we read them with a focus upon who our enemies are. Let me explain. There is a truth about the Old Testament that I would like to share with you. It is this principle:



There are many such comparisons that could be made. Pharaoh is a type and shadow of Satan as the oppressive and evil ruler. Moses is a type of Jesus the deliverer sent by God to rescue His people from bondage. Deliverance from Egypt becomes a type of deliverance from this "present evil age" (Gal. 1:4). The Old Testament Tabernacle in the Wilderness foreshadows the church becoming the new temple of God (Eph.2:21-22, 1 Pet. 2:5). The point is simply that often the NATURAL realm of the Old Testament typifies the SPIRITUAL realm in the New Testament. Therefore we can view David's NATURAL enemies as depicting our SPIRITUAL enemies. Since we cannot pray against our natural enemies as David did,

CAN WE PRAY THIS PRAYER OF DAVID AGAINST THIS KIND OF ENEMY?

(DAVID'S NATURAL ENEMIES) (OUR SPIRITUAL ENEMIES)

"DELIVER ME FROM MY ENEMIES, O MY GOD; DEFEND ME FROM THOSE WHO RISE UP AGAINST ME. DELIVER ME FROM THE WORKERS OF INIQUITY...FOR LOOK, THEY LIE IN WAIT FOR MY LIFE; THE MIGHTY GATHER AGAINST ME. NOT FOR MY TRANSGRESSION NOR FOR MY SIN, O LORD. THEY RUN AND PREPARE THEMSELVES THROUGH NO FAULT OF MINE....FOR GOD IS MY DEFENSE... GOD SHALL LET ME SEE MY DESIRE ON MY ENEMIES...SCATTER THEM BY YOUR POWER, AND BRING THEM DOWN, O LORD OUR SHIELD...LET THEM BE TAKEN IN THEIR PRIDE, AND FOR THE CURSING AND LYING WHICH THEY SPEAK. CONSUME THEM IN WRATH, CONSUME THEM THAT THEY MAY NOT BE; AND LET THEM KNOW THAT GOD RULES...TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH."
 Psalm 59:1-13 excerpts

"...WE DO NOT WRESTLE AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD, BUT AGAINST PRINCIPALITIES, AGAINST POWERS, AGAINST THE RULERS OF THE DARKNESS OF THIS AGE, AGAINST SPIRITUAL HOSTS OF WICKEDNESS IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES..." Ephesians 6:12

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 2 Corinthians 10:3-5



DAVID

PERFECT HATRED

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O LORD, WHO HATE YOU?
AND DO I NOT LOATHE THOSE WHO
RISE UP AGAINST YOU?
I HATE THEM WITH PERFECT HATRED.
I COUNT THEM MY ENEMIES.”**

Psalm 139:21-22

WE CAN PRAY THIS KIND OF PRAYER AGAINST THIS KIND OF ENEMY:

(DAVID'S NATURAL ENEMIES)

“GIVE EAR TO MY PRAYER, O GOD...I AM RESTLESS IN MY COMPLAINT, AND MOAN NOSILY, BECAUSE OF THE VOICE OF THE ENEMY, BECAUSE OF THE OPPRESSION OF THE WICKED, FOR THEY BRING DOWN TROUBLE UPON ME, AND IN WRATH THEY HATE ME. MY HEART IS SEVERELY PAINED WITHIN ME, AND THE TERRORS OF DEATH HAVE FALLEN UPON ME. FEARFULNESS AND TREMBLING HAVE COME UPON ME, AND HORROR HAS OVERWHELMED ME...DESTROY, O LORD, AND DIVIDE THEIR TONGUES...LET DEATH SEIZE THEM; LET THEM GO DOWN ALIVE INTO HELL, FOR WICKEDNESS IS IN THEIR DWELLINGS AND AMONG THEM... AS FOR ME, I WILL CALL UPON GOD AND THE LORD SHALL SAVE ME...HE HAS REDEEMED MY SOUL IN PEACE FROM THE BATTLE WHICH WAS AGAINST ME, FOR THERE WERE MANY AGAINST ME. GOD WILL HEAR AND AFFLICT THEM... BUT YOU, O GOD, SHALL BRING THEM DOWN TO THE PIT OF DESTRUCTION...”

Psalm 55:1-23 excerpts

(OUR SPIRITUAL ENEMIES)

“...WE DO NOT WRESTLE AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD, BUT AGAINST PRINCIPALITIES, AGAINST POWERS, AGAINST THE RULERS OF THE DARKNESS OF THIS AGE, AGAINST SPIRITUAL HOSTS OF WICKEDNESS IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES...” Ephesians 6:12

“BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT; BECAUSE YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL WALKS ABOUT LIKE A ROARING LION, SEEKING WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR, RESIST HIM, STEADFAST IN THE FAITH...” 1 Peter 5:8

“...SUBMIT TO GOD, RESIST THE DEVIL AND HE WILL FLEE FROM YOU.” James 4:7

“FOR THOUGH WE WALK IN THE FLESH, WE DO NOT WAR ACCORDING TO THE FLESH. FOR THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE ARE NOT CARNAL BUT MIGHTY IN GOD FOR PULLING DOWN STRONGHOLDS, CASTING DOWN ARGUMENTS AND EVERY HIGH THING THAT EXALTS ITSELF AGAINST THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD...”

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Consider the above well dear saint! If you seek to walk after God you are going to experience the same kind of opposition that David describes. David's enemies were PHYSICAL, but yours will be SPIRITUAL! All believers go through periods of warfare such as David depicts which include such oppression that you will have thoughts based on a “severely pained heart,” “terrors of death” and “fearfulness and trembling.” Perhaps even experiencing “horror that is overwhelming” as did David. So oppressed was David in this Psalm that he had temptations to run away from it all:

“SO I SAID, ‘OH, THAT I HAD WINGS LIKE A DOVE! FOR THEN I WOULD FLY AWAY AND BE AT REST. INDEED, I WOULD WONDER OFF, AND REMAIN IN THE WILDERNESS. SELAH! I WOULD HASTEN MY ESCAPE FROM THE WINDY STORM AND TEMPEST.” Psalm 55:6-8

Satan is seeking “whom he may devour.” He is “our adversary.” Even though we are submitted to God, we must also resist Satan steadfast in the faith. We must learn to use the weapons that are mighty in God for “pulling down strongholds” and “casting down (all of Satan's) arguments” and “every high thing that exalts itself above the knowledge of God.” This is mental warfare! What kind of “thing” exalts itself above the knowledge of God? It is “principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age, and hosts of spiritual wickedness that exist in high places.” We are not wrestling against “flesh and blood.” We are warring against spiritual enemies that at times use human beings to carry out their oppressions. Remember when Jesus cast out a legion of demons, they pleaded that they may enter the bodies of a herd of pigs! They must have a physical body to carry out their dirty deeds! We must get our eyes off of the physical vessels they use and rather focus our warfare upon the hordes of demons behind them! Love your physical enemies, but hate your true enemies with a perfect hatred such as David expressed:

**“DO I NOT HATE THEM, O LORD, WHO HATE YOU?
AND DO I NOT LOATHE THOSE WHO RISE UP AGAINST YOU?
I HATE THEM WITH PERFECT HATRED. I COUNT THEM MY ENEMIES.”** Psalm 139:21-22



DAVID

PERFECT HATRED

**"DO I NOT HATE THEM,
O LORD, WHO HATE YOU?
AND DO I NOT LOATHE THOSE WHO
RISE UP AGAINST YOU?
I HATE THEM WITH PERFECT HATRED.
I COUNT THEM MY ENEMIES."**

Psalm 139:21-22

WE CAN PRAY THIS KIND OF PRAYER AGAINST THIS KIND OF ENEMY:

(DAVID'S NATURAL ENEMIES)

(OUR SPIRITUAL ENEMIES)

O LORD, DO NOT REBUKE ME IN YOUR WRATH, NOR CHASTEN ME IN YOUR HOT DISPLEASURE!...BECAUSE OF MY SIN...MY INIQUITIES HAVE GONE OVER MY HEAD; LIKE A HEAVY BURDEN THEY ARE TOO HEAVY FOR ME...I AM TROUBLED, I AM BOWED DOWN GREATLY; I GO MOURNING ALL THE DAY LONG...I GROAN BECAUSE OF THE TURMOIL OF MY HEART...THOSE ALSO WHO SEEK MY LIFE LAY SNARES FOR ME; THOSE WHO SEEK MY HURT SPEAK OF MY DESTRUCTION, AND PLAN DECEPTION ALL THE DAY LONG...FOR IN YOU, O LORD, I HOPE; YOU WILL HEAR, O LORD MY GOD. FOR I SAID, 'HEAR ME, LEST THEY REJOICE OVER ME, LEST, WHEN MY FOOT SLIPS, THEY MAGNIFY THEMSELVES AGAINST ME.' FOR I AM READY TO FALL, AND MY SORROW IS CONTINUALLY BEFORE ME. FOR I WILL DECLARE MY INIQUITY; I WILL BE IN ANGUISH OVER MY SIN. BUT MY ENEMIES ARE VIGOROUS, AND THEY ARE STRONG, AND THOSE WHO HATE ME WRONGFULLY HAVE MULTIPLIED....THEY ARE MY ADVERSARIES BECAUSE I FOLLOW WHAT IS GOOD. DO NOT FORSAKE ME, O LORD; O MY GOD, BE NOT FAR FROM ME! MAKE HASTE AND HELP ME, O LORD, MY SALVATION!" Psalm 38: 1-22 excerpts

"...WE DO NOT WRESTLE AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD, BUT AGAINST PRINCIPALITIES, AGAINST POWERS, AGAINST THE RULERS OF THE DARKNESS OF THIS AGE, AGAINST SPIRITUAL HOSTS OF WICKEDNESS IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES..." Ephesians 6:12

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"BE ANGRY AND DO NOT SIN": DO NOT LET THE SUN GO DOWN ON YOUR WRATH, NOR GIVE PLACE TO THE DEVIL." Ephesians 4:26

"NO TEMPTATION HAS OVERTAKEN YOU EXCEPT SUCH AS IS COMMON TO MAN; BUT GOD IS FAITHFUL, WHO WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO BE TEMPTED BEYOND WHAT YOU ARE ABLE, BUT WITH THE TEMPTATION WILL ALSO MAKE THE WAY OF ESCAPE THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO BEAR IT." 1 Corinthians 10:13

"BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO ENDURES TEMPTATION; FOR WHEN HE HAS BEEN PROVED, HE WILL RECEIVE THE CROWN OF LIFE WHICH THE LORD HAS PROMISED TO THOSE WHO LOVE HIM. LET NO ONE SAY WHEN HE IS TEMPTED, 'I AM TEMPTED BY GOD'; FOR GOD CANNOT BE TEMPTED BY EVIL, NOR DOES HE HIMSELF TEMPT ANYONE. BUT EACH ONE IS TEMPTED WHEN HE IS DRAWN AWAY BY HIS OWN DESIRES AND ENTICED." James 1:12-14

"...LEST BY SOME MEANS THE TEMPTER HAD TEMPTED YOU, AND OUR LABOR MIGHT BE IN VAIN." 1 Thessalonians 3:5

This is a different kind of plea that we see coming from David in this psalm. For the most part, it is because of his own sin that he is suffering great oppression from his enemies. We need to learn to hate our sin as much as we hate Satanic forces. They work hand in hand against us. Satan is not only "our adversary" but he is also called "the tempter" (1 Thess. 3:5). If there are areas in our life in which we love sin, (and we do if we keep performing it), we will give place to the tempter to oppress us with a great fervency such as David describes. "Give no place to the devil" (Eph. 4:26). Read carefully David's psalm above. Note he states to God "I will declare my iniquity" and "I will be in anguish over my sin." We will never find deliverance apart from this dual declaration against sin and the tempter.



DAVID

NATURAL ENEMIES



PERFECT HATRED

**"DO I NOT HATE THEM,
O LORD, WHO HATE YOU?
AND DO I NOT LOATHE THOSE WHO
RISE UP AGAINST YOU?
I HATE THEM WITH PERFECT HATRED.
I COUNT THEM MY ENEMIES."**

Psalm 139:21-22

SPIRITUAL ENEMIES



N.T. SAINTS

What David prayed against his natural enemies in the Psalms we can also pray against our spiritual enemies; against Satan and his "principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age, and against the hosts of spiritual wickedness in heavenly (high) places." We need to do warfare against "our adversary," against "the tempter," against Satan who deceives those who are perishing, "whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel...should shine on them" (2 Cor. 4:3-4).

God has given us the privilege of being a soldier of Jesus Christ. Paul warns us about this sacred calling:



"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

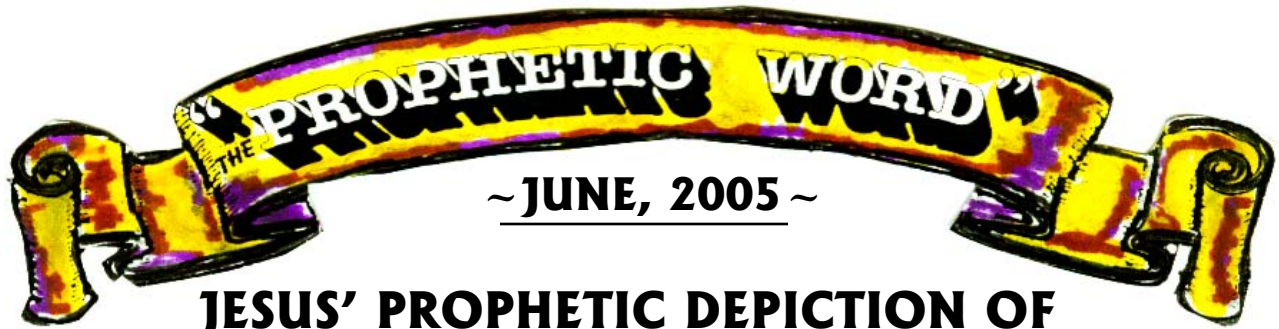
The "affairs of this life" are numerous. They include cares, anxieties and worries (Mat. 13:22). They include vain pleasures and amusements (Luke 21:34, Mark 4:18). They include passing pleasures of sin (Heb.11:25). They also must include all the unbiblically-based religious causes which sidetrack God's people to focus upon natural enemies rather than the forces of darkness that operate behind the scenes. Protest rallies have replaced prayer rallies.

Politically-based solutions are pursued rather than the power of God to change hearts by means of the new birth. The Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-19 has become the great omission. All of our monies are poured into political coffers in order to continue to protect "our rights and freedoms." While the rest of the world continues to "go to hell in a hand-basket," the political wing of the church in America madly pursues its self-interests along with the unsaved in America whose preeminent goal is "the pursuit of life, liberty and happiness." These things are "the affairs of this life" and do not constitute a biblical understanding of "fighting the good fight of faith."

Let me give you one more of David's psalms in which he speaks of victory over his natural enemies. I believe this too should be a prayer that we can pray as we learn to fight what should be "the good fight of faith" against the forces of darkness, our spiritual enemies:

"FOR YOU WILL LIGHT MY LAMP; THE LORD MY GOD WILL ENLIGHTEN MY DARKNESS. FOR BY YOU I CAN RUN AGAINST A TROOP, AND BY MY GOD I CAN LEAP OVER A WALL. AS FOR GOD; HIS WAY IS PERFECT; THE WORD OF THE LORD IS PROVEN; HE IS A SHIELD TO ALL WHO TRUST IN HIM...IT IS GOD WHO ARMS ME WITH STRENGTH, AND MAKES MY WAY PERFECT...HE TEACHES MY HANDS TO MAKE WAR, SO THAT MY ARMS CAN BEND A BOW OF BRONZE. YOU HAVE ALSO GIVEN ME THE SHIELD OF YOUR SALVATION; YOUR RIGHT HAND HAS HELD ME UP..."

I HAVE PURSUED MY ENEMIES AND OVERTAKEN THEM; NEITHER DID I TURN BACK AGAIN TILL THEY WERE ALL DESTROYED. I HAVE WOUNDED THEM, SO THAT THEY WERE NOT ABLE TO RISE; THEY HAVE FALLEN UNDER MY FEET. FOR YOU HAVE ARMED ME WITH STRENGTH FOR THE BATTLE; YOU HAVE SUBDUED UNDER ME THOSE WHO ROSE UP AGAINST ME. YOU HAVE ALSO GIVEN ME THE NECKS OF MY ENEMIES, SO THAT I DESTROYED THOSE WHO HATED ME. THEY CRIED OUT, BUT THERE WAS NONE TO SAVE THEM. THEN I BEAT THEM AS FINE DUST BEFORE THE WIND; I CAST THEM OUT LIKE DIRT IN THE STREETS...IT IS GOD WHO AVENGES ME...HE DELIVERS ME FROM MY ENEMIES. YOU ALSO LIFT ME UP ABOVE THOSE WHO RISE AGAINST ME...THEREFORE I WILL GIVE THANKS TO YOU, O LORD, AMONG THE NATIONS AND SING PRAISES TO YOUR NAME." Psalm 18 28-49 excerpts



JESUS' PROPHETIC DEPICTION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

**"AND HE SAID,
TO WHAT SHALL WE LIKEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD?
OR WITH WHAT PARABLE SHALL WE PICTURE IT?..." "**

Mark 4:30-34

**"I WILL OPEN MY MOUTH IN PARABLES;
I WILL UTTER THINGS WHICH HAVE
BEEN KEPT SECRET FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD."**

Matthew 13:35



**"...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..."**

Mat. 13:11,16



Mat.
13:1-23



Mat.
13:24-43,



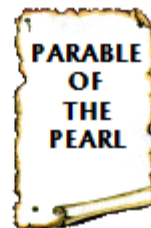
Mat.
13:31-32



Mat.
13:33



Mat.
13:44



Mat.
13:45-46



Mat.
13:47-50

THE SEVEN KINGDOM PARABLES OF MATTHEW CHAPTER 13

These seven "Kingdom parables" contain a prophetic depiction of what is to happen to the present manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth. For the most part, we are talking about a depiction of the church of Jesus Christ from its inception with the original twelve disciples right up to this present hour, and on into the future that remains ahead until we reach the end of the age.

How important are the contents of these parables? They contain "...things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world" (Mat. 13:35), and they contain "...the mysteries (hidden truths) of the Kingdom of Heaven..." (Mat. 13:11).

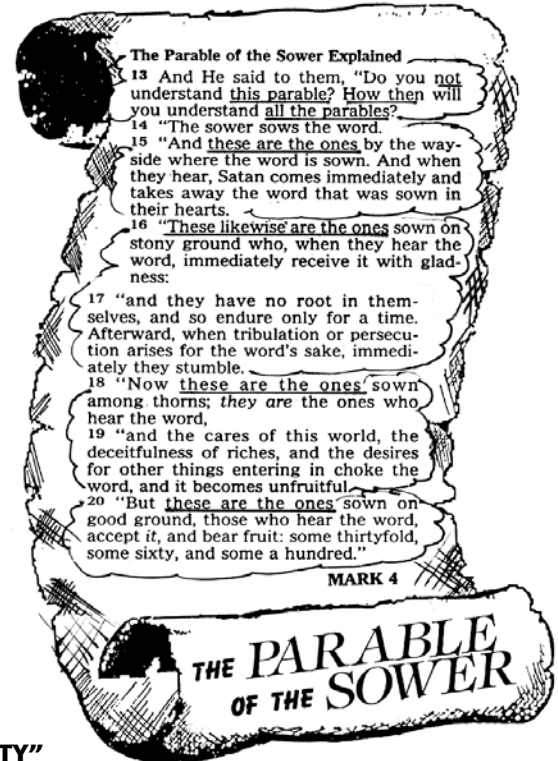
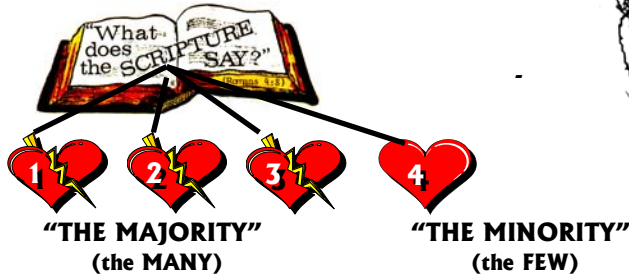
It is my firm conviction that these seven parables span the time-frame of the Kingdom of God on earth depicting the sowing of the seed to the harvesting of the crop. The first parable begins the Kingdom story with a sower sowing seed, the Word of God, in the hearts of men. The last parable concludes with God's angels separating the wicked from the just at the end of this age. All that is in between paint for us a hidden picture of the various stages and significant happenings within the Kingdom of God from "seed to harvest." It is vitally important for us to grasp the meaning of these seven parables for that understanding will prevent us from believing false prophets preaching "great expectations" (such as a last-day church revival) that are not based on God's Word.

The first of these seven parables is of paramount importance. I would strongly suggest that you read all three accounts of the parable of the sower. They are located in Matthew 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8. Consider them in the Amplified Bible as well if you have one. This parable is the key to understanding the other Kingdom parables that Jesus spoke:

"DO YOU NOT UNDERSTAND THIS PARABLE? HOW THEN WILL YOU UNDERSTAND ALL THE PARABLES?"

MARK 4:13

What is the parable attempting to communicate to us? It is that the same Word sown on four hearts will have four different reactions. Three of those reactions are the result of Satan impacting their heart in a negative manner toward what is contained in the Word.



There is one main point I would like to firmly emphasize from the parable of the sower. It is this: Christianity will be greatly divided when it comes to embracing Kingdom truth.

Think about it: only one out of four people will hear the Word in a positive way and then do something about what they heard. They begin to bring forth fruit in their lives, "some thirty-fold, some sixty-fold, and some a hundredfold" increase.

The principles of the parable of the sower are at work at the end of the church age as they were at its infant beginnings. Jesus writes seven letters to His churches in Asia. They are prophetic letters which depict the spiritual condition of His church just prior to the rapture. To five of His churches He calls them to "repent or else." Only two out of seven are considered faithful and true witnesses. Consider the minisynopsis of the corrupt testimony these five churches bear: →



Do you want to enter the narrow gate that Jesus describes in Matthew 7:13 that "leads to life" and avoid the pitfalls of the broad way that "leads to destruction"? If so, then arm yourself by being mindful of the many (majority) and the few (minority) principle of the sower. The narrow way is a L-O-N-E-L-Y way because you are not going to find very many people who are willing to travel along with you! If you take a look at Chapter 13 of Matthew you will see that there are 53 verses dedicated to these seven parables. However, note well that 23 verses, nearly half of the 53 verses, are dedicated to the first of the seven parables, the parable of the sower! Jesus wants us to get the significance this parable plays in the Kingdom of God. Understand it and you will also understand what has and is presently happening within the confines of professing Christianity!



"THE MAJORITY"
 (the MANY) FOLLOW THE BROAD WAY

"THE MINORITY"
 (the FEW) FOLLOW THE NARROW WAY

Of paramount importance to God is what takes place in the heart upon hearing God's Word:

"MY SON, GIVE ATTENTION TO MY WORDS... KEEP THEM IN THE MIDST OF YOUR HEART; FOR THEY ARE LIFE TO THOSE WHO FIND THEM... KEEP YOUR HEART WITH ALL DILIGENCE, FOR OUT OF IT SPRING THE ISSUES OF LIFE."
 Prov. 4:20-23

The message of the parable of the sower is simple: Whenever the Word of the Kingdom is sown in your heart, you are going to have to avoid the three pitfalls Satan will set before you in an attempt to steal the seed that was sown:



"WHEN ANYONE HEARS THE WORD OF THE KINGDOM, AND DOES NOT UNDERSTAND IT, THEN THE WICKED ONE COMES AND SNATCHES AWAY WHAT WAS SOWN IN THE HEART. THIS IS HE WHO RECEIVED SEED BY THE WAYSIDE."
 Matthew 13:19



"...THE ONES ON STONY GROUND ARE THOSE WHO, WHEN THEY HEAR THE WORD, AT ONCE RECEIVE AND ACCEPT AND WELCOME IT WITH JOY...THEY ENDURE FOR A LITTLE WHILE; 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 4:16-17 Amplified



"...THE CARES AND ANXIETIES OF THE WORLD, AND DISTRACTIONS OF THE AGE, AND THE PLEASURE AND DELIGHT AND FALSE GLAMOUR AND DECEITFULNESS OF RICHES, AND THE THE CRAVING AND PASSIONATE DESIRE FOR OTHER THINGS CREEP IN..."
 Mark 4:18-19 Amplified



**“THE MAJORITY”
(the MANY)**

**“THE MINORITY”
(the FEW)**

Only one out of four people who hear the Word of God will do something with what they hear. The other three remain “hearers only” and they “deceive themselves” (Jam. 1:22-25). Here is what the parable says about the few that “hear and do”:

**“THESE ARE THE ONES SOWN ON
GOOD GROUND**



**WHO HEAR THE WORD,
AND RECEIVE AND ACCEPT AND WELCOME IT,
AND BEAR FRUIT- SOME THIRTY TIMES AS MUCH
AS WAS SOWN, SOME SIXTY TIMES AS MUCH,
AND SOME A HUNDRED TIMES AS MUCH.”**

Mark 4:20 Amplified

There is one thing that God wants in His Kingdom, and that is fruit-bearing disciples. This is the one thing Satan does not want to see. The parable of the sower tells us that the majority of God’s people will not be fruitful. It is only one out of four that will succeed. Set your heart on being among the minority! We must constantly remind ourselves why the Kingdom of God was taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles:



**“...I CHOSE YOU AND APPOINTED
YOU THAT YOU SHOULD GO AND
BEAR FRUIT, AND THAT YOUR FRUIT
SHOULD REMAIN...
BY THIS MY FATHER IS GLORIED,
THAT YOU BEAR MUCH FRUIT;
SO YOU WILL BE MY DISCIPLES.”**

John 15:16,8

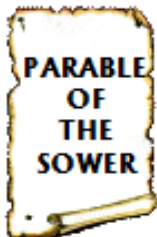
**“THEREFORE I SAY UNTO YOU, THE KINGDOM OF GOD WILL BE TAKEN FROM YOU
AND GIVEN TO A NATION BEARING THE FRUITS OF IT...”** Mat.21:43

Notice the different degrees of fruit bearing even among the good hearts depicted above. Some will bear thirty times, some sixty, and some will even produce a hundred times as much as was sown. What makes the difference? Jesus tells us in Mark’s account of the parable of the Sower:

**“IF ANY MAN HAS EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM BE LISTENING AND LET HIM PERCEIVE AND
COMPREHEND. AND HE SAID TO THEM, BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU ARE HEARING. THE
MEASURE OF THOUGHT AND STUDY YOU GIVE TO THE TRUTH YOU HEAR WILL BE THE
MEASURE OF VIRTUE AND KNOWLEDGE THAT COMES BACK TO YOU-AND MORE WILL BE
GIVEN TO THOSE WHO HEAR...”**

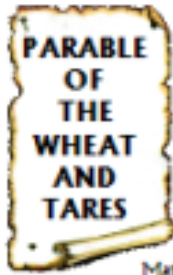
Mark 4:23-24 Amplified

What makes the distinction between a valedictorian who has excelled in college and the average student? It is the degree of labor and effort being applied. This is true in the Kingdom of God as well!



Mat. 13:1-23

The first of these seven prophetic parables which depict the Kingdom of God in its present manifestation on earth gives us warning about the spiritual condition of the majority of God’s people who hear “the Word of the Kingdom.” Only one out of four who hear the same word will bring forth fruit. The rest will fall to Satan’s devices and bring reproach to the name of Christ. They will say they are Christians, but will continue to look like the world and continue to like what they see in the world. It will be evident that there is a lack of loving God with the whole heart! How else do we explain the overall lukewarmness of the majority of professing Christians that we see here in America? Jesus is giving us a forewarning of this in the principles of the parable of the sower.



Mat. 13:24-30

Let us now look at the second of the seven parables Jesus uses to prophetically depict what the Kingdom of God will be like on earth. This is the second longest parable spanning 15 of the 53 total verses found in Matthew 13. Here is the parable and how Jesus interpreted it to His disciples:



This parable is one of the sowing of seed just as was the parable of the sower. In the sower parable the seed was sown in the hearts of men. Here the seed is sown in the field of the Master. This parable says "the field is the world." This is where God has planted us as His special field -- in the world! Consider Paul's parallel word in Corinthians:

"I PLANTED, APOLLOS WATERED, BUT GOD GAVE THE INCREASE... HE WHO PLANTS AND HE WHO WATERS ARE ONE...FOR WE ARE GOD'S FELLOW WORKERS, YOU ARE GOD'S FIELD..."

1st Cor. 3:6-9

The church is God's field planted in the midst of the world. The servants asked the Master, "Did you not plant good seed in your field? How does it have tares?" (vs.27). Jesus answers by saying "An enemy has done this" (vs.28). Look carefully at the main point Jesus makes in this prophetic parable: →

Two kinds of seed are sown in the field of the Master. One is "good seed" sown by the Master Himself. The other seed is identified as "tares" and was sown by "the enemy" of the Master.

Tares are counterfeit wheat. Initially, it produces a crop that looks like wheat. As it matures however, the tares can be distinguished from the "good seed" the Master sowed. It will be at the time of the harvest that the Master will instruct the reapers of the harvest to separate the tares from the midst of the wheat.

So important is this parable that Jesus carefully explains its meaning to His disciples just as He did with the parable of the sower. →

Remember this is a depiction of what the Kingdom of God will look like while on earth prior to the return of Jesus. Satan will have his "sons of the wicked one" sown right among the "sons of the Kingdom." They are counterfeit "wheat" (Christians). Satan did this to discredit the testimony of the true sons of the Kingdom. Note how it will end: →

Those who practice lawlessness in the Kingdom of God will be permitted to continue to do so right up unto the end of the age.

Consider what will happen afterwards: →

The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares

24 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;

25 "but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.

26 "But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared.

27 "So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?'

28 "He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?'

29 "But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them.

30 "Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together

the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn."'"

The Parable of the Tares Explained

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."

37 He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.

38 "The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one.

39 "The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.

40 "Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age.

41 "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,

42 "and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43 "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

Look carefully at this contrast below:

"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..."

**THE IMPURE STAGE
(TEMPORAL)**



"You are here"



Mat. 13:41-43

THEN THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN IN THE KINGDOM OF THEIR FATHER. HE WHO HAS EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR!"

**THE PURE STAGE
(ETERNAL)**

What is being depicted is a temporal "impure" stage of the Kingdom followed by an eternal "pure" manifestation of the Kingdom.

It is good to constantly remind ourselves "where we are" presently in the Kingdom of God lest we become "discouraged and weary in our soul" by what we see within the confines of the Christian community. Do you see Christians that "offend and practice lawlessness?" Get the message: They will grow together unto the end of the age! Then and only then, will Jesus "...gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend and those who practice lawlessness."

The impure phase of the Kingdom is due to the tares (sons of the wicked one) who are IN the Kingdom but are causing offense and are practicing lawlessness. Only after the angels take out of His Kingdom all things that offend and those who practice lawlessness, will we have a pure Kingdom in which the righteous (the sons of the Kingdom) will then shine forth like the sun! The parable of the sower tells us that three out of four, three fourths, (the majority) of those who enter the Kingdom will not even bother to bear forth the fruit of the Kingdom. Satan will overcome them. This conveys that the present stage (the impure stage) of the Kingdom will be laden down with those who offend and practice lawlessness. The minority, one fourth, will bear fruit but will be overshadowed by the majority with their lawless lifestyle. It will remain like this until the end of the age when Jesus sends forth His angels to gather out of the Kingdom all things that offend and those who practice lawlessness. Let us consider other verses Jesus spoke pertaining to the degree of lawlessness that will mark the Kingdom of God in the last days. Take notice of the repeated use of the word "many" in these passages:

"AND MANY WILL BE OFFENDED, WILL BETRAY ONE ANOTHER, AND WILL HATE ONE ANOTHER, THEN MANY FALSE PROPHETS WILL ARISE AND DECEIVE MANY. AND BECAUSE LAWLESSNESS WILL ABOUND, THE LOVE OF MANY WILL GROW COLD. BUT HE WHO ENDURES TO THE END WILL BE SAVED. AND THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM WILL BE PREACHED IN ALL THE WORLD AS A WITNESS TO ALL THE NATIONS, AND THEN THE END WILL COME."

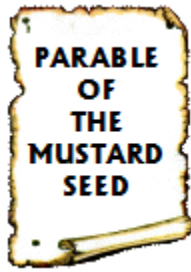
Mat. 24:10-14

"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 PROPHESIED 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!" Mat. 7:21-23

I pray that you do not leave this page until the Holy Spirit imparts to you the depth of what it contains! Look at the use of "many" by Jesus in relation to lawlessness. Remember that many will go in at the wide gate and walk the broad way that leads to destruction--eternal misery! There will be "many" according to the parable of the sower that will not produce Kingdom fruit in their lives. Know this: Eventually Jesus will purge His Kingdom of all who practice lawlessness, but for now, in this present impure stage of the Kingdom, the many will outnumber the few!

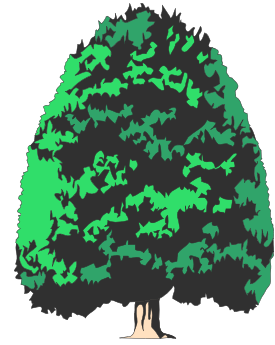
Let us now consider the third parable Jesus gives in Matthew 13 that depicts what the Kingdom of heaven will look like right up until His return at the end of the age:



“ANOTHER PARABLE HE PUT FORTH TO THEM, SAYING: “THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A MUSTARD SEED, WHICH A MAN TOOK AND SOWED IN HIS FIELD, WHICH INDEED IS THE LEAST OF ALL THE SEEDS, BUT WHEN IT IS GROWN IT IS GREATER THAN THE HERBS AND BECOMES A TREE, SO THAT THE BIRDS OF THE AIR COME AND NEST IN ITS BRANCHES.”

Mat. 13:31-32

Often this parable is misinterpreted when it is isolated from its contextual setting. These seven parables are like a string of pearls. They are one complete story, not individual random truths to be isolated from each other as are some of Jesus' other parables.



When you read the parable by itself it seems to portray a quiet tranquil story about a tiny seed that grows up into a big tree and provides nice little homes for the birdies. However, this is a story about the imperfect phase of the Kingdom of God in its present manifestation on earth. So far Jesus has painted a dismal picture by means of the parable of the sower, followed by the parable of the wheat and the tares. A rosy interpretation of this parable of the mustard seed does not fit the negative flow of the parable of the sower or the wheat and the tares, and it certainly does not fit the parable which follows it, the parable of the leaven. Leaven is a picture of corruption and sin. So then, we must look at this parable of the mustard seed in light of the previous parables and the one which follows it since Jesus did not interpret this specific parable for us as He did the previous two.

In the parable of the sower we had a picture of little birds coming along and devouring the seed sown along the wayside (Mat. 13:4). What did Jesus say the birds who stole away the seed in the parable represent? He said the birds depict the wicked one who comes and snatches away what was sown in the heart (Mat. 13:19). The illustration in the parable itself seems innocent, just birds devouring seed, but the birds represent the wicked one, Satan! In the parable of the mustard seed, birds nesting in the branches of the tree seems innocent enough, but I would suggest to you that Jesus does not have a double meaning for the birds! It was the wicked one in the parable of the sower and I believe it represents the wicked one in the parable of the mustard seed. The mustard seed is very tiny but becomes a huge tree. Is this not what happened to the church? It began with only 12 disciples and blossomed into a huge conglomerate covering the earth! The parable of the wheat and tares told of Satan planting the sons of the wicked one in God's field. This parable of the mustard seed is another variation of that story. The church is destined to become a nesting place for Satan's emissaries.

“I HAVE SEEN THE WICKED IN GREAT POWER, AND SPREADING HIMSELF LIKE A NATIVE GREEN TREE.”

Psalm 37:35



“...WHEN IT IS GROWN... AND BECOMES A TREE... THE BIRDS OF THE AIR COME AND NEST IN ITS BRANCHES.”

Mat. 13:32

The mustard seed was sown in a man's field. The field in the previous parable of the wheat and the tares belonged to the Master. So does this one. The field in the previous parable represented the church in the world and so must this one.

The parable of the mustard seed is a different perspective of the Kingdom in that it shows the infant tiny beginnings of the church planted in the field of the world as a tiny mustard seed, but it quickly grows into a humongous tree. The church universal today certainly qualifies as a humongous institution (especially if you add Catholicism to it). Jesus is simply bringing forth the point that the birds, as in the parable of the wheat and the tares, are Satan and his emissaries. The message is that they have found the church to be a great nesting place from which they can wreak havoc. The parable of the sower showed this corruptive force at work in that three-fourths of those who hear the Word do not bring forth any fruit. They continue to be like the world. The parable of the wheat and the tares shows this corruption in that Satan has planted within the confines of the Kingdom the sons of the wicked one to cause offense and practice lawlessness while disguised as wheat. This parable is just another confirmation of the previous two. The fourth parable will confirm even more that we are dealing with a continuous theme:



Mat. 13:33

**“ANOTHER PARABLE
HE SPOKE TO THEM:
THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
IS LIKE LEAVEN,
WHICH A WOMAN TOOK AND HID IN
THREE MEASURES OF MEAL TILL IT WAS
ALL LEAVENED.”**



Where does meal come from? It is from the kernels of wheat which were planted in the field and have been ripened and harvested. This is a further revelation of the progression of the Kingdom of God. The field has yielded a harvest and now is ground into meal. The parable states “three measures of meal” which I would suggest to you prophetically represents

**JUDAISM
CATHOLICISM
PROTESTANTISM**

What does the woman hide in the three measures of meal? It is leaven which in Scripture is always a picture of corruption, false teaching and sin. Here are some proof texts:

**“HIS DISCIPLES...HAD FORGOTTEN TO TAKE BREAD. THEN JESUS SAID TO THEM,
“TAKE HEED AND BEWARE OF THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES AND THE SADDUCEES.”**

(Mat. 16:5-6)

“..YOU SHOULD BEWARE OF THE LEAVEN...THE DOCTRINE OF THE PHARISEES AND THE SADDUCEES.”

Mat. 16:11-12

**“AND THE PHARISEES CAME OUT AND BEGAN TO DISPUTE WITH HIM...TESTING HIM...THEN HE
CHARGED THEM SAYING, “TAKE HEED, BEWARE OF THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES
AND THE LEAVEN OF HEROD.”** Mark 8:11,15

**“DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT A LITTLE LEAVEN LEAVENS THE WHOLE LUMP? THEREFORE PURGE
OUT THE OLD LEAVEN...THE LEAVEN OF MALICE AND WICKEDNESS...”** 1st Cor. 5:6-8 excerpts

**“YOU RAN WELL. WHO HAS HINDERED YOU FROM OBEYING THE TRUTH? THIS PERSUASION DOES
NOT COME FROM HIM WHO CALLS YOU. A LITTLE LEAVEN LEAVENS THE WHOLE LUMP.”**

Gal. 5:7-9

Often this parable is erroneously taught as a picture of the gospel being preached by which the whole world will become “leavened” with its message of good news. Leaven in Scripture is not a positive illustration but a negative one. Also the woman hides the leaven in the meal, she does not reveal it to the world! The gospel is not to be hidden, but proclaimed. There is no support for such an interpretation. Leaven depicts sin, corruption and false doctrine!



“ANOTHER PARABLE HE SPOKE TO THEM: THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE LEAVEN, WHICH A WOMAN TOOK AND HID IN THREE MEASURES OF MEAL TILL IT WAS ALL LEAVENED.”

Why do I include Judaism in this depiction of the Kingdom? Because the Kingdom of God began with the Jews and was eventually taken from them by Jesus and prophetically given to the Gentiles:

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“THEREFORE I SAY UNTO YOU, THE KINGDOM OF GOD WILL BE TAKEN FROM YOU AND GIVEN TO A NATION BEARING THE FRUITS OF IT...NOW WHEN THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND THE PHARISEES HEARD HIS PARABLES, THEY PERCEIVED THAT HE WAS SPEAKING TO THEM...” Mat.21:43-45

Why did the Jews not bring forth the fruits of the Kingdom? Because of the leaven of the doctrine of the Pharisees. Consider the charges Jesus brings against the leaders of Judaism:



“THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME. AND IN VAIN THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN. FOR LAYING ASIDE THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD, YOU HOLD TO 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. AND MANY SUCH THINGS YOU DO.” Mark. 7:6-13

Notice (1) their HEART is far from Jesus (parable of the sower), and (2) they teach as doctrines the commandments of men. God's Kingdom laws written for His people have been replaced with handed-down cherished traditions of men. Notice the power of tradition makes the Word of God of no effect. The leaven that the woman places in three measures of meal (Judaism, Catholicism and Protestantism) is tradition. Each of these three subtle substitutes for true Kingdom Christianity is riddled with traditions that make the Word of God of no effect. God wrote the Torah for the Jews, but the Jews wrote the Talmud for themselves. The Talmud consists of all the handed-down oral traditions that they clung to over the centuries that caused Jesus to charge them with, “all too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.” For example, consider that God told Israel when they came up out of Egypt, “This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you” (Ex. 12:2). God wanted their new year to begin with the Feast of Passover depicting the Suffering Messiah. What have they done with this written commandment of God? By tradition they moved the biblical new year from the first to the fifth feast of Lev.23, the Feast of Trumpets, Rosh Hashanah.



Mat. 13:33

“ANOTHER PARABLE HE SPOKE TO THEM: THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE LEAVEN, WHICH A WOMAN TOOK AND HID IN THREE MEASURES OF MEAL TILL IT WAS ALL LEAVENED.”

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If you think Judaism is steeped in tradition, Catholicism is the king of tradition! Like Judaism, its doctrines are riddled with the traditions and commandments of men. Most often, Catholic catechism is in opposition to what is stated in the Word of God. If you were to make a point-by-point comparison between what Catholicism professes and what the Word of God says, you would have to brand this religion as a cult that is contrary to God's Word. However, because they profess allegiance to the same trinity of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, they are readily accepted as Christian. Never mind that Mary is called “the mother of God” (instead of the mother of Jesus) and has been unbiblically exalted by Catholicism to a theological place equal to the Godhead.

Catholicism makes the bold statement in all their literature that the Roman Catholic Church is the one and only true church of Jesus Christ. They claim apostolic authority all the way back to Peter as being the first pope, and that the present pope is Peter's God-appointed heir as "the Vicar of Christ." Blasphemy! The vicar (voice of God), is the Holy Spirit, not the Catholic pope!

Catholicism is the originator of many traditions that are observed even by the protestant church. Take Christmas or the "Christ Mass," which is the origin of this traditional word. The Catholic Encyclopedia plainly admits that they made the birthday of the S-o-n fall on the pagan worship day of the s-u-n (Sol), the winter Solstice. Likewise "Easter" is a word that Catholicism coined which is derived from "Ishtar", the Greek Goddess of fertility. What does the Word of God call the day that Jesus Christ raised from the dead? It is Firstfruits (1st Cor. 15:20,23). Where did this name come from? It is the third feast of Leviticus 23. Again, tradition makes the Word of God of no effect.

Catholicism is full of man-made traditions. The popery, the celibate priesthood, selected sainthood, confession of sins to men, praying the Rosary, Mary worship, praying to statues of "the saints", the nunnery, transubstantiation of the wafer into Jesus' body, the ascension of Mary, the sinless divine conception of Mary, these are all man-made traditions without a shred of evidence or support in the Scriptures! Here is a religion claiming to best represent Jesus, but is often totally opposite to the Word of God which IS Jesus! (Jn. 1:1,14,).



Mat. 13:33

"ANOTHER PARABLE HE SPOKE TO THEM: THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE LEAVEN, WHICH A WOMAN TOOK AND HID IN THREE MEASURES OF MEAL TILL IT WAS ALL LEAVENED."

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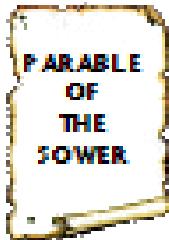
The third measure of meal in which the woman of this parable hides leaven so that the whole lump will become leavened, is Protestantism. The foundational seed from which such leaven sprung forth here in America is Puritanism with its man-made, unbiblical claim that America is God's New Israel. From this foundational error has sprung the marriage of Christianity with political agendas and credos such as "One Nation Under God" and "In God We Trust." These are man-made cherished traditions that make the Word of God of no effect. America has not replaced Israel as God's chosen nation!

Protestantism is being leavened by tradition, and sadly, even by Roman Catholic tradition. Have we soon forgotten where the name "Protestantism" originated? It was Martin Luther's proclamation against the tradition of the Catholic church! Recently a movie came forth called "The Passion of Christ." It was created by actor and producer, Mel Gibson, a radical and outspoken Roman Catholic. One might readily understand that Catholics would wholeheartedly endorse this movie as it was produced by one of their own. However, Protestant believers throughout this country went berserk over this movie as an "evangelical tool." The problem is that this movie is nothing more than a evangelical tool for Catholicism! The wide endorsement of this Catholic movie by the church is proof of how much leaven is already at work leavening Protestantism with religious tradition. For a Protestant believer to swallow the unbiblical content of this movie shows the degree of the lack of true biblical doctrine abiding in the hearts of God's people. Consider this analysis of the movie:

"Concerning the film, Gibson has declared, "It reflects my beliefs." He also has stated, "There is no salvation for those outside the [Catholic] Church...I believe it." Clearly, before the public eye, here is a Catholic movie, made by a Catholic director, with Catholic theological advisers and a Catholic message. According to a Catholic website, Catholic Passion Outreach, "The Passion of The Christ" offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for you to spread, strengthen, and share the Catholic faith with your family and friends." It is obvious from this and other Catholic sources that Catholics see this film as an excellent way to convey the Catholic Christ. The Passion of Christ leaves us with a vision of the sacrifice of Christ that is full of grief; sad; sorrowful; doleful; dismal and which puts into sharp relief the Roman Catholic notion, not only of the importance of Christ's agony, but that of Mary in 'offering her Son'."

**THE SEVEN KINGDOM PARABLES
OF
MATTHEW CHAPTER 13**

Let us consider a brief synopsis of what we have seen so far in these prophetic parables of Jesus in which He foretells what the Kingdom of heaven will be like in its present earthly manifestation prior to His return at the end of this age. This is what Jesus reveals His Kingdom will be like in this present "impure" stage which has been infiltrated by Satan and the kingdom of darkness.



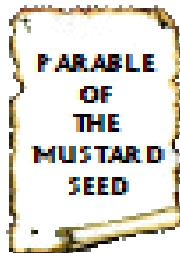
Mat. 13:1-23

The parable of the sower brings home the truth that the majority of God's people who are inside the Kingdom will not be fruit-bearing Christians. Only the minority will persevere and bring forth fruit that will glorify God the Father. We need to set our sights on being among the fruit bearers and not be discouraged by those all around us who do not bear fruit. To be forewarned is to be forearmed!



Mat. 13:24-43

This parable was given so that we would know in advance that God is going to allow the sons of the wicked one whom Satan has planted inside the Kingdom to continue to be there right up to the end of the age, professing to be "wheat" but living like the devil himself.



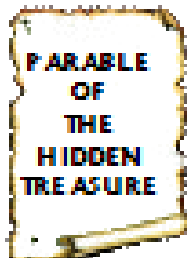
Mat. 13:31-32

This parable tells us how enormous the professing church will become, and that Satan's emissaries (the birds) will make nests in the branches of God's church and wreak their havoc from within the church.



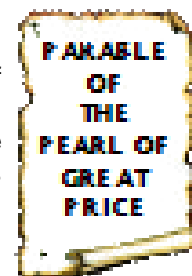
Mat. 13:33

The parable of the leaven reveals the three divisions of the Kingdom of God that have been, and are presently being leavened by the corruption of tradition.



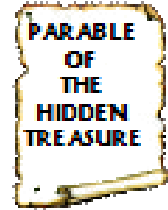
Mat. 13:44

Standing in stark contrast to the above four dismal accounts of the Kingdom of God are these next two. I have always believed that God gives just enough encouragement in order that we are not overwhelmed by discouragement. These next two parables represent the true remnant of Israel and the church.



Mat. 13:45-46

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



Jesus does not interpret this parable for us but there are enough facts stated within it that we can deduce that this parable of the hid treasure is depicting the remnant of Israel which will be grafted back into the Kingdom of God. First of all consider that God regards Israel alone to be a special treasure above all peoples:

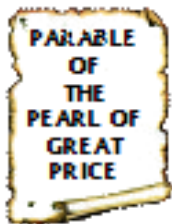
"NOW THEREFORE, IF YOU WILL INDEED OBEY MY VOICE AND KEEP MY COVENANT, THEN YOU SHALL BE A SPECIAL TREASURE TO ME ABOVE ALL PEOPLE; FOR ALL THE EARTH IS MINE.... THESE ARE THE WORDS WHICH YOU SHALL SPEAK TO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL." Exodus 19:5-6

Notice the unique promise that Israel is to be a special treasure to God above all people. This statement is followed by the reminder that "all the earth is mine." The field of this parable is, as it has been in the previous parables, some form of God's Kingdom planted in the world. Unfortunately, Israel did not meet the conditions attached to the promise of being a special treasure to God for they neither obeyed His voice nor kept His Covenant. Therefore God scattered them throughout the nations of the world but with a promise of someday to gather them back into the land:

"SURELY, I WILL TAKE THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL FROM AMONG THE NATIONS, WHEREVER THEY HAVE GONE, AND WILL GATHER THEM FROM EVERY SIDE AND BRING THEM INTO THEIR OWN LAND...THEN THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD." Ezk. 37:21-23

Paul teaches the church that God has not cast away Israel (Rom. 11:1-2), even though He did take away the Kingdom from them and give it to the Gentiles, as we saw earlier. Paul exclaims, "Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11:5, 9:27). The prophet Zechariah tells us that two-thirds of the Jews will perish but one-third will be saved as God pours out the spirit of grace on them once again (Zech 12:10, and 13:1-9). The parable is exacting. Jesus did not buy the treasure but rather He hid the treasure in the field. The field that God buys in this parable is the land of Israel. The treasure hidden in that field is the one-third remnant of Israel that will yet be saved.

These two parables, The hid treasure and the pearl of great price teach us how God is simultaneously dealing with two peoples, Israel and His Gentile church. Keep them distinctly separated as God does, and you will rightly divide God's Word of truth.



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



The order of these two parables, the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price, are significant as well. The church (the pearl) is not first but rather the hid treasure. The Scripture proclaims, "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him" (Jn. 1:11). Therefore, by means of His death, Jesus paid the price to buy back the field (the land of Israel) with all that He had which was His life. Hidden in that field is His own special treasure, the remnant of Israel.

Following on the heels of the parable of the hidden treasure is this parable of the pearl of great price. Notice the exactness as in the other parable. This time the merchant gives all that He has to be able to purchase the pearl which I believe is the gentile church. Consider the fullness of the Scripture I quoted above from the Gospel of John:

"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, EVEN TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIS NAME..." John 1:11-12

Paul cried out to the Christ rejecting Jews:

"THEREFORE LET IT BE KNOWN TO YOU THAT THE SALVATION OF GOD HAS BEEN SENT TO THE GENTILES, AND THEY WILL HEAR IT!" AND WHEN HE HAD SAID THESE WORDS, THE JEWS DEPARTED AND HAD A GREAT DISPUTE AMONG THEMSELVES." Acts 28:28-29

Often I have heard preachers speak of the pearl of great price as being Jesus Himself. It is not Jesus who is the pearl of great price. We did not buy Jesus, He bought us with His own blood:

“SHEPHERD THE CHURCH OF GOD WHICH HE PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD.” Acts 20:28

“FOR YOU WERE BOUGHT AT A PRICE...” 1st Cor. 6:20

“...YOU WERE NOT REDEEMED WITH CORRUPTIBLE THINGS LIKE SILVER OR GOLD...BUT WITH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST...” 1st Pet. 1:17-19

“...THE REDEMPTION OF THE PURCHASED POSSESSION...” Eph. 1:14

One final thought here: Do you know how pearls are formed? They are made by means of the ongoing suffering that the oyster experiences over a long period of time. Paul reminds us that “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), “If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him” (2nd Tim. 2:12 KJ).



“AGAIN, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A DRAGNET THAT WAS CAST INTO THE SEA AND GATHERED SOME OF EVERY KIND, WHICH, WHEN IT WAS FULL, THEY DREW TO SHORE; AND THEY SAT DOWN AND GATHERED THE GOOD INTO VESSELS, BUT THREW THE BAD AWAY.

SO IT WILL BE AT THE END OF THE AGE. THE ANGELS WILL COME FORTH, SEPARATE THE WICKED FROM AMONG THE JUST, AND CAST THEM INTO THE FURNACE OF FIRE. THERE WILL BE WAILING AND GNASHING OF TEETH.”

Mat. 13:47-50



Had this string of Kingdom parables ended on the positive note with the parable of the pearl of great price (the church), there would be room for speculative teachings such as a worldwide revival to come on the church as it happened in the book of Acts. However, Jesus' string of parables does not end on the positive but rather on yet another dreadful scenario summed up by “There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

The parable of the dragnet is how Jesus ends this series of depictions of what the Kingdom of God is going to look like at the end of the age. There is a sudden change of scenery from parables about the earth to one that takes place in the sea. The sea in Scripture is a picture of the mass of humanity and it usually speaks heavily of the wicked:

“BUT THE WICKED ARE LIKE THE TROUBLED SEA, WHEN IT CANNOT REST, WHOSE WATERS CAST UP MIRE AND DIRT.”

Isa. 57:20

“THE LORD... WILL PUNISH LEVIATHAN THE FLEEING SERPENT... THAT TWISTED SERPENT; AND HE WILL SLAY THE REPTILE THAT IS IN THE SEA.”

Isa. 27:1-2

“AND FOUR GREAT BEASTS CAME UP FROM THE SEA, EACH DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER...”

Dan. 7:3

“ALSO THERE WAS NO MORE SEA.”

Rev. 21:1

The last picture above is that of the appearance of Antichrist. The sea is usually associated with the wicked and that may be the very reason that when God makes a new heaven and a new earth we read:

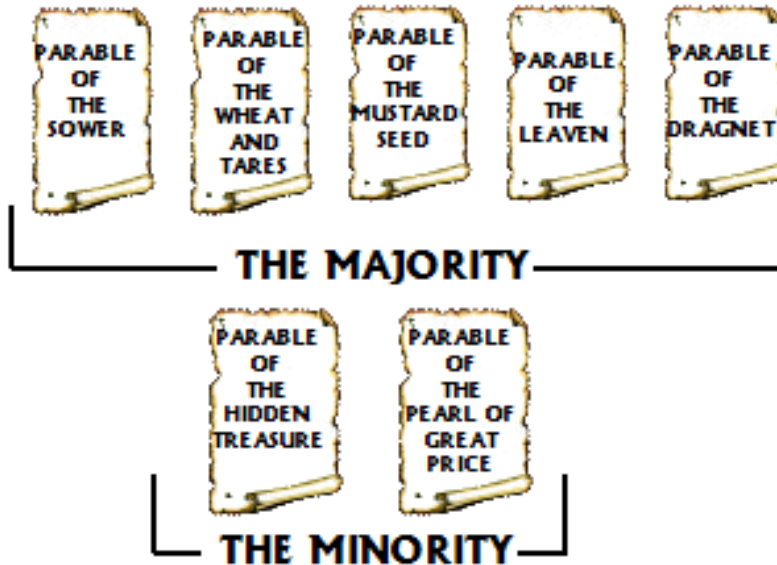
“ALSO THERE WAS NO MORE SEA.” Rev. 21:1

This last parable is depicting the close of the age. You can read a blow-by-blow detailed account of it in the book of Revelation. It is the Day of God's wrath, the great tribulation which is coming to test all those who dwell on the earth. It is the final purging of the wicked from among the just. The parable ends with a reference to “the furnace of fire.” Chapter 20 of Revelation ends with the wicked being cast into the lake of fire. Then comes a new heaven and a new earth in which there is no more sea, no more wicked!

**THE SEVEN KINGDOM PARABLES
OF
MATTHEW CHAPTER 13**

**“AND HE SAID, “TO WHAT SHALL WE LIKEN THE KINGDOM OF
GOD? OR WITH WHAT PARABLE SHALL WE PICTURE IT?...
AND WITH MANY SUCH PARABLES HE SPOKE TO THEM
THE WORD AS THEY WERE ABLE TO HEAR IT.”**

Mark 4:30-32



This diagram will help you to see the overall perspective that Jesus is presenting of the Kingdom of Heaven as it will exist right up to the end of the age. It is a familiar story. It is again a depiction of “the many” and “the few,” the majority and the minority. I separated the negative parables from the positive ones so that you can see the ratio of the many and the few more clearly. There is a 5 (negative) to 2 (positive) ratio portrayed above. Where have we seen this ratio presented before? It is recorded in Revelation Chapters Two and Three where we find the seven prophetic letters that Jesus wrote to His churches. In those letters He calls five of the seven churches, Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis and Laodicea, to “repent or else”. Only the two remaining churches, Philadelphia and Smyrna, were considered faithful and true and in need of no correction. This is also a 5 to 2 ratio just as we find depicted in the seven parables above. The percentage ratio may vary slightly as in the parable of the sower (3 out of 4), but the picture will always be that the majority are in error while the minority is on track. There is a warning of great significance here. Do not be deceived by what the multitudes are embracing!

Jesus’ parables are important because they function as absolute litmus tests for sound doctrine. The body of Christ is inundated with all kinds of teachings that will not stand up to the light of what is revealed in Jesus’ Kingdom parables. Remember, the parables contain the mysteries, the hidden truths, of the Bible that God has kept secret from the foundation of the world. Therefore the content of them must be given our highest priority. All that we embrace as sound doctrine must be in harmony with the content of the parables. Ask the question, do doctrines such as “once saved, always saved” and “unconditional eternal security” stand in agreement or in opposition to what Jesus has taught in His parables? Are we going to believe the words of men which are the opposite of what Jesus has spoken to us by means of His office as the prophet of God?

**“AND HE SAID,
“TO WHAT
SHALL WE LIKEN THE KINGDOM
OF GOD?
OR WITH WHAT PARABLE
SHALL WE
PICTURE IT?...
AND WITH MANY SUCH PARABLES
HE SPOKE TO THEM THE WORD
AS THEY WERE ABLE
TO HEAR IT.”**
Mark 4:30-32

**“FOR MOSES TRULY SAID TO THE FATHERS,
“THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU
A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN.
HIM YOU SHALL HEAR IN ALL THINGS,
WHATEVER HE SAYS TO YOU.
AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS THAT EVERY SOUL
WHO WILL NOT HEAR THAT PROPHET SHALL BE
UTTERLY DESTROYED FROM AMONG THE
PEOPLE.”**
Acts 3:22-23

**“I WILL OPEN
MY MOUTH
IN PARABLES;
I WILL UTTER THINGS
WHICH HAVE BEEN
KEPT SECRET
FROM
THE FOUNDATION
OF THE WORLD.”**
Matthew 13:35



~ JULY 2005 ~

PONDERING THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF

LIFE AFTER DEATH

What happens to
true followers of Christ at death?

Is the doctrine of "soul sleep until the resurrection of the dead" the immediate destiny of the believer at death? Is the doctrine of soul confinement in some place other than heaven until the resurrection of the dead the immediate destiny of the believer at death? Both of the above scenarios are being taught as the biblical answer to the question, "What happens to true followers of Christ at death?" Both use a selected string of Scriptures as validation for their premise. However, it is only by "comparing [ALL] spiritual things with [ALL] spiritual" that we are able to avoid the pitfalls of teaching as man's wisdom teaches and rather be safely taught as the Holy Spirit teaches.



"...NO ONE KNOWS THE THINGS OF GOD EXCEPT THE SPIRIT OF GOD. NOW WE HAVE RECEIVED, NOT THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD, BUT THE SPIRIT WHO IS FROM GOD, THAT WE MAY KNOW THE THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN FREELY GIVEN TO US BY GOD. THESE THINGS WE ALSO SPEAK, NOT IN WORDS WHICH MAN'S WISDOM TEACHES BUT WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT TEACHES, COMPARING SPIRITUAL THINGS WITH SPIRITUAL." 1 Cor. 2:11-13

Neither the doctrine of "soul sleep" nor "soul confinement" are positions to be labeled as damnable heresy. However, I believe they are both robbers of the faith and comfort that the Scriptures present to the believer facing death. This newsletter is dedicated to considering ALL of what the Scriptures have to say pertaining to "life after death" for the true follower of Christ. I am of the firm conviction that Paul taught, as a literal truth, that the immediate destiny of all New Testament believers at death is that the soul and spirit ascend to heaven and into the immediate presence of Christ. We do not lack for such expression by Paul:

"FOR TO ME, TO LIVE IS CHRIST, AND TO DIE IS GAIN. BUT IF I LIVE ON IN THE FLESH, THIS WILL MEAN FRUIT FROM MY LABOR, YET WHAT I SHALL CHOOSE I CANNOT TELL. FOR I AM HARD PRESSED BETWEEN THE TWO, HAVING A DESIRE TO DEPART AND BE WITH CHRIST, WHICH IS FAR BETTER..." Phil. 1:21-24

"THEREFORE WE ARE ALWAYS CONFIDENT, KNOWING THAT WHILE WE ARE HOME IN THE BODY WE ARE ABSENT FROM THE LORD. FOR WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT. WE ARE CONFIDENT, YES, WELL PLEASSED RATHER TO BE ABSENT FROM THE BODY AND TO BE PRESENT WITH THE LORD." 2 Cor. 5:6-8

Paul is not looking forward to a period of "soul sleep" or of "soul confinement" until the resurrection of the dead. Rather he conveys that when he dies it results in an immediate gain: "...to depart and be with Christ," and, "...to be present with the Lord." Both the doctrine of "soul sleep" and "soul confinement" rob the believer of this precious truth. I want to try to convince you that the Scriptures teach plainly that it is only the physical body of the believer that remains "asleep" until the resurrection.

Let us look at “soul sleep” first. If you don’t think this is a big controversial subject in Christianity, just enter the words “soul sleep” into the Google search engine as I did. What you will find are about 4,430,000 references to the subject of “soul sleep” on the internet. Thankfully, most of the articles that I sampled were dedicated to exposing the error of this doctrine.

Variations of the doctrine of soul sleep are held by the Seventh Day Adventists and the Jehovah’s Witnesses. That combination in itself should be a sufficient red flag to beware of this subtle substitute for the truth that God’s Word presents about the subject of life after death. The two Scriptures from the apostle Paul which I presented on the previous page should be enough alone to safely label this doctrine as containing elements of “another gospel” of which Paul warned:

“I MARVEL THAT YOU ARE TURNING AWAY SO SOON FROM HIM WHO CALLED YOU IN THE GRACE OF CHRIST, TO A DIFFERENT GOSPEL, WHICH IS NOT ANOTHER; BUT THERE ARE SOME WHO TROUBLE YOU AND WANT TO PERVERT (“DISTORT”) THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. BUT EVEN IF WE, OR AN ANGEL FROM HEAVEN, PREACH ANY OTHER GOSPEL TO YOU THAN WHAT WE PREACHED TO YOU, LET HIM BE ACCURSED. AS WE HAVE SAID BEFORE, SO NOW I SAY AGAIN, IF ANYONE PREACHES ANY OTHER GOSPEL TO YOU THAN WHAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED, LET HIM BE ACCURSED.” Gal. 1: 6-9



It is important to see that Paul sets as a plumb line (1) “what we have preached to you” and (2) “what you have received.” You will not find support from Paul preaching the concepts of either “soul sleep” or “soul confinement” in his epistles, but rather just the opposite as our opening Scriptures reveal. Although neither of these two concepts qualifies as outright heresy, they certainly must be deemed as doctrines preached by “...some who trouble you and want to pervert (distort) the gospel of Christ.” Let me inject this important distinction:

1. SOUND DOCTRINE (“doctrine of God” Titus 2:10, 1 Tim. 1:10, Titus 1:9,)

2. UNSOUND DOCTRINE (“fables” 2 Tim. 4:3)

3. FALSE DOCTRINE (“doctrines of demons” 1 Tim. 4:1)

Paul’s words above from Galatians are obviously aimed at those who preach FALSE doctrines. Paul is willing to allow them to be accursed for the message they preach. False doctrines bring damnation to the souls of those who receive its contents in place of truth. Therefore Paul is willing to allow those who preach doctrines that damn the soul to be accursed themselves. This is a “sowing and reaping” principle of which Paul clearly warns (see Gal. 6:7-8).

In dealing with the doctrines of “soul sleep” or “soul confinement” we are rather talking about things that constitute UNSOUND doctrine. You can usually define unsound doctrine as “doctrine that sounds good.” Paul speaks of such as being the result of “their own desires” and because they have “itching ears” (see 2 Tim. 4:3). Christendom is inundated with all kinds of “doctrines that sound good” such as we hear in the “hundred-fold return” and “seed faith” prosperity messages. This is not sound doctrine, but rather doctrine that sounds good. Many of God’s people are spinning their wheels and spending their money and time chasing after “doctrines that sound good.”

The two doctrines we are considering, that of “soul sleep” and of “soul confinement” are doctrines about the hereafter. They are doctrines about life after death. You can believe either one of them and they will not condemn you in eternity. They are not doctrines of heresy. They will not affect this present life other than robbing you of the hope and comfort of Paul’s words, “...to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8) and “...to depart and be with Christ, which is far better” (Phil. 1:24). You can believe, if you so desire, that your soul and your body lie together in the grave in a state of sleep until the resurrection. However, such beliefs, although “harmless” from a doctrinal standpoint, are NOT in harmony with what the Scriptures present. If you are careless rather than careful in what you believe to be truth, then you will be in danger of believing ALSO doctrines which can bring damnation to your soul. I mentioned before the two major sects that believe in variations of “soul sleep” are the Seventh-Day Adventists and the Jehovah’s Witnesses. Do not they both also believe doctrines which have caused main-stream Christianity to label them as cults that preach damnable heresies? It IS important what you believe, and that those beliefs are in perfect harmony and agreement with the clear teachings of Scripture alone - nothing added to what the Scriptures say and nothing taken away from it! (Deut. 4:2, Rev. 22:18-19).

The following is a mini-synopsis of the three doctrinal views being presented about life after death.

**WHAT
THE APOSTLE PAUL
TAUGHT:**

**AT DEATH,
THE SOUL AND SPIRIT
OF THE N.T. BELIEVER
DEPART FROM THE BODY,
GOING DIRECTLY TO HEAVEN
TO BE WITH THE LORD WHILE
THE BODY REMAINS "ASLEEP"
IN THE GRAVE UNTIL THE
APPOINTED TIME OF THE
RESURRECTION. THEN THE
SOUL AND THE SPIRIT WHICH IS
PRESENTLY IN HEAVEN WITH
CHRIST WILL BE RE-UNITED
WITH THE BODY AS PROMISED.**

**WHAT
"SOUL SLEEP"
TEACHES:**

**AT DEATH,
THE SOUL AND SPIRIT
OF THE N.T. BELIEVER,
REMAIN WITH THE BODY
AND MUST "SLEEP"
IN THE GRAVE,
IN AN UNCONSCIOUS STATE,
UNTIL THE APPOINTED TIME
OF THE RESURRECTION OF
THE BELIEVER FROM THE
DEAD BY JESUS CHRIST.
THEN THE BELIEVER WILL GO
TO HEAVEN TO BE WITH
CHRIST AS PROMISED**

**WHAT
"SOUL CONFINEMENT"
TEACHES:**

**AT DEATH,
THE SOUL AND SPIRIT
OF THE N.T. BELIEVER
DEPART FROM THE BODY,
BUT ARE CONFINED IN THE
LOWER PARTS OF THE EARTH
(IN PARADISE,
IN ABRAHAM'S BOSOM)
UNTIL THE APPOINTED TIME OF
THE RESURRECTION OF THE
BELIEVER'S BODY BY JESUS
CHRIST. ONLY THEN WILL THE
BELIEVER GO TO HEAVEN TO
BE WITH CHRIST AS PROMISED.**

"WHAT DOES THE SCRIPTURE SAY?"

Rom. 4:3

Let us now look at each of these three stated views and see indeed, "...what does the Scripture say?" Paul's view is the proper view as we shall see by "comparing spiritual things with spiritual" for this is how the Holy Spirit teaches "the things that have been freely given to us by God" (see 1 Cor. 2:12-13).

**WHAT
"SOUL SLEEP"
TEACHES:**

**AT DEATH,
THE SOUL AND SPIRIT
OF THE N.T. BELIEVER,
REMAIN WITH THE BODY AND
MUST "SLEEP" IN THE GRAVE,
IN AN UNCONSCIOUS STATE,
UNTIL THE APPOINTED TIME OF
THE RESURRECTION OF THE
BELIEVER FROM THE DEAD BY
JESUS CHRIST. THEN THE
BELIEVER WILL GO TO HEAVEN
TO BE WITH CHRIST AS
PROMISED**

Let us begin by dealing with the more obvious error of "soul sleep." Does the Scripture present a conscious existence of the soul and spirit OUTSIDE of a deceased physical body? Or is it true as stated that the spirit and the soul are retained in the deceased physical body in a state of unconsciousness UNTIL the appointed resurrection of the dead? Such a view stands in opposition to what we find in the Scriptures.

THE APOSTLE JAMES:

**"FOR AS THE BODY WITHOUT THE SPIRIT IS DEAD,
SO FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD ALSO."** Jam. 2:26

To make his point about faith without works, James uses the illustration that death separates the spirit from the dead body. James did not hold the view that the spirit is retained within the body at death.

THE APOSTLE PETER:

**"YES, I THINK IT IS RIGHT, AS LONG AS I AM IN THIS TENT, TO STIR YOU UP BY REMINDING YOU,
KNOWING SHORTLY THAT I MUST PUT OFF MY TENT, JUST AS OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST SHOWED ME."**

2 Pet. 1:13-14

Peter does not expect to "remain in his tent" in the grave but rather to "put it off" at his decease (vs. 15). This was shown to him by Jesus Christ Himself. Paul held the same view:

THE APOSTLE PAUL:

"FOR WE KNOW THAT IF OUR EARTHLY HOUSE ("PHYSICAL BODY"), THIS TENT, IS DESTROYED, WE HAVE A BUILDING FROM GOD, A HOUSE NOT MADE WITH HANDS, ETERNAL IN THE HEAVENS...FOR WE WHO ARE IN THIS TENT GROAN...THAT MORTALITY MAY BE SWALLOWED UP BY LIFE...THEREFORE WE ARE CONFIDENT, KNOWING THAT WHILE WE ARE AT HOME IN THE BODY WE ARE ABSENT FROM THE LORD...WE ARE WELL PLEASED RATHER TO BE ABSENT FROM THE BODY AND TO BE PRESENT WITH THE LORD." 2 Cor. 5:1-8 excerpts

"FOR TO ME, TO LIVE IS CHRIST, AND TO DIE IS GAIN. BUT IF I LIVE ON IN THE FLESH, THIS WILL MEAN FRUIT FROM MY LABOR; YET WHAT I SHALL CHOOSE I CANNOT TELL. FOR I AM HARD PRESSED BETWEEN THE TWO, HAVING A DESIRE TO DEPART AND BE WITH CHRIST, WHICH IS FAR BETTER..." Phil. 1:21-24

Do indeed the soul and the spirit “sleep” in an unconscious state, confined to the deceased body in the grave? What about the example of Moses? Look at what is taught in these passages:

Moses dies and God Himself buries his body in an unknown grave....
Behind the scenes, the devil is contending with Michael the archangel over possession of the body of Moses...
Rather than resting in an unconscious state of “soul sleep” awaiting the resurrection of his body, we find a very active and very involved Moses in the planning of the death of Jesus in Jerusalem. Not only does Moses appear to Jesus but also to Peter, James and John. It is not without significance that the other person in this story is Elijah who did not die at all! What is the story conveying? There is no difference between the living and the dead! Elijah was taken up alive into heaven while Moses suffered death, but is not lying in the grave along with his deceased body.

“SO MOSES THE SERVANT OF THE LORD DIED THERE IN THE LAND OF MOAB, ACCORDING TO THE WORD OF THE LORD. AND HE (THE LORD) BURIED HIM IN A VALLEY...BUT NO ONE KNOWS HIS GRAVE TO THIS DAY.”

Deut. 34:5-6

“...MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL, IN CONTENDING WITH THE DEVIL, WHEN HE DISPUTED ABOUT THE BODY OF MOSES...”

Jude 1:9

“...JESUS...WAS TRANSFIGURED BEFORE THEM...AND BEHOLD, MOSES AND ELIJAH APPEARED TO THEM, TALKING WITH HIM....THEN PETER ANSWERED...LET US MAKE THREE TABERNACLES; ONE FOR YOU, ONE FOR MOSES AND ONE FOR ELIJAH.”

Mat. 17:2-4

“AND AS HE PRAYED, THE APPEARANCE OF HIS FACE WAS ALTERED, AND HIS ROBE BECAME WHITE AND GLISTENING. THEN BEHOLD, TWO MEN TALKED WITH HIM, WHO WERE MOSES AND ELIJAH, WHO APPEARED IN GLORY AND SPOKE OF HIS DECEASE WHICH HE WAS ABOUT TO ACCOMPLISH AT JERUSALEM.”

Luke 9:29-30

And then we might consider the myriads of martyrs found in Revelation that suffer physical death:

“I SAW UNDER THE ALTAR THE SOULS OF THOSE WHO HAD BEEN SLAIN FOR THE WORD OF GOD AND FOR THE TESTIMONY WHICH THEY HELD. AND THEY CRIED WITH A LOUD VOICE, SAYING, ‘HOW LONG, O LORD, HOLY AND TRUE, UNTIL YOU JUDGE AND AVENGE OUR BLOOD ON THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH? AND A WHITE ROBE WAS GIVEN TO THEM THAT THEY SHOULD REST A LITTLE WHILE LONGER, UNTIL BOTH THE NUMBER OF THEIR FELLOW SERVANTS AND THEIR BRETHREN, WHO WOULD BE KILLED AS THEY WERE WAS COMPLETED.”

Rev. 6:9-11

Are these “souls under the altar” lying in a grave in a state of unconsciousness awaiting the resurrection of the dead, or are they conversing with the Lord after having received white robes after their death? What about this picture of multitudes of the redeemed who are presently in heaven prior to “the last resurrection of the dead” that takes place at the second coming of Christ (Rev. 20:5). Are they in a state of unconsciousness awaiting the resurrection? Hardly. Rather they are actively praising God in heaven:

“AND THEY SANG A NEW SONG, SAYING: YOU ARE WORTHY TO TAKE THE SCROLL, AND TO OPEN ITS SEALS; FOR YOU WERE SLAIN, AND HAVE REDEEMED US TO GOD BY YOUR BLOOD OUT OF EVERY TRIBE AND TONGUE AND PEOPLE AND NATION, AND HAVE MADE US KINGS AND PRIESTS TO OUR GOD; AND WE SHALL REIGN ON THE EARTH.”

Rev. 5:9-10

And what of this great multitude of saints who die in the tribulation:

“AFTER THESE THINGS I LOOKED, AND BEHOLD, A GREAT MULTITUDE WHICH NO ONE COULD NUMBER, OF ALL NATIONS, TRIBES, PEOPLES AND TONGUES, STANDING BEFORE THE THRONE AND BEFORE THE LAMB, CLOTHED WITH WHITE ROBES.... AND CRYING OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE, SAYING, ‘SALVATION BELONGS TO OUR GOD WHO SITS ON THE THRONE, AND TO THE LAMB!’... ‘WHO ARE THESE ARRAYED IN WHITE ROBES, AND WHERE DID THEY COME FROM?...THESE ARE THE ONES WHO COME OUT OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION AND WASHED THEIR ROBES AND MADE THEM WHITE IN THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB. THEREFORE THEY ARE BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD, AND SERVE HIM DAY AND NIGHT IN HIS TEMPLE...”

Rev. 7:9-15 excerpts

They died physically on earth. Where are they? Asleep in the grave? Are they unconscious or very aware of where they are? They are “before the throne of God serving Him day and night in His temple.” Soul sleep is a bad doctrine. It is in direct opposition to Paul’s impartation of the blessed hope that “...to depart and be with Christ, which is far better...” (Phil. 1:24) and “...to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8).

**“ ‘LORD, REMEMBER ME WHEN YOU COME INTO YOUR KINGDOM.’
AND JESUS SAID TO HIM, ‘ASSUREDLY, I SAY UNTO YOU,
TODAY YOU WILL BE WITH ME IN PARADISE.’ ”**

Luke 23:42-43



These words of Jesus alone should be adequate to dismiss the “soul sleep” theory. When would the thief on the cross be with Jesus? Would he have to sleep in the grave in an unconscious state until the time of the resurrection? No! Jesus gives him assurance that “...TODAY you will be WITH ME in PARADISE.” Jesus confirms Paul’s words that “...to be absent from the body (is to be) present with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8). Notice where it is that Jesus says He and the believing thief on the cross will be, “in Paradise.” This concept leads us right into the second erroneous concept of the afterlife which is “soul confinement”:

It is here that we must be careful to teach as “the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (1 Cor. 2:13). Consider only a portion of this subject and you can validate what “soul confinement” teaches. To be honest with you, I was unaware that this particular theory even existed until someone anonymously mailed me a CD expounding this theory as being what the “early church fathers” taught N.T. believers. I don’t know whether this CD was sent to me to expose this doctrine to me or whether I was supposed to expose the error of it. As to the significance of the “early church fathers” teaching it, let me emphatically state that the “father of the church fathers,” the apostle Paul, did not teach this doctrine! Consider how Paul, author of two-thirds of the New Testament epistles, establishes himself above all other teachers:

**“FOR THOUGH YOU MIGHT HAVE TEN THOUSAND INSTRUCTORS IN
CHRIST, YET YOU DO NOT HAVE MANY FATHERS;
FOR IN CHRIST JESUS I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU THROUGH THE GOSPEL.
THEREFORE... IMITATE ME.” 1 Cor. 4:15-16**

Earlier in the passage from Galatians 1:8-9, I stressed to you two criteria Paul gave to believers as the foundation for their beliefs:

1. WHAT WE HAVE PREACHED TO YOU (Gal. 1:8)

2. WHAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED (Gal. 1:9)

It is my belief that the recorded, historical writings of the “early church fathers” can only be viewed as credible when they validate or confirm what Paul has taught. They should never be used as the foundation for establishing a doctrine that Paul did not teach, and they must never, never be used to establish a doctrine that is contrary to what Paul taught. Paul is the supreme “early church father” as he states above. Deviate from his teachings and you have the seeds of erroneous doctrine at work. All cults use external writings in addition to the Scriptures. The Jews exalted the Talmud (book of oral traditions) to a place equal to the Torah (Word of God). How we need to hear that Jesus reproved them for “making the Word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down” (Mark 7:13). The Mormons use “The Pearl of Great Price” and “The Book of Mormon” to “validate” or “clarify” difficult passages of Scripture such as Paul’s reference to being “baptized for the the dead” (1 Cor. 15:29).

Over many years of study, I have come to the conclusion that NOTHING is essential in addition to the Word of God. It remains its own best commentary if we will but heed the principle I gave you earlier:

**“THESE THINGS WE ALSO SPEAK, NOT IN WORDS WHICH MAN’S WISDOM
TEACHES, BUT WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT TEACHES,
COMPARING SPIRITUAL THINGS WITH SPIRITUAL.” 1 Cor. 2:13**

I have also come to the conclusion that if the Scripture doesn’t amplify some point, then perhaps it does not need to be amplified at all. God’s Word contains all that He wants us to know on any given subject. If that subject is vague, then I suggest that it be left vague. We should only major in what the Scriptures major in lest we end up like the Pharisees who “strained at gnats while swallowing camels” (see Mat. 23:24). Jesus charged them with “neglecting the weightier matters of the law” (vs. 23). We can fall into this error as well.

**WHAT
“SOUL CONFINEMENT” TEACHES:**

**AT DEATH,
THE SOUL AND SPIRIT
OF THE N.T. BELIEVER
DEPART FROM THE BODY,
BUT ARE CONFINED IN THE
LOWER PARTS OF THE EARTH
(IN PARADISE,
IN ABRAHAM’S BOSOM)
UNTIL THE APPOINTED TIME
OF THE RESURRECTION OF
THE BELIEVER’S BODY BY
JESUS CHRIST. ONLY THEN
WILL THE BELIEVER GO TO
HEAVEN TO BE WITH CHRIST
AS PROMISED.**

“Soul confinement” in an interim place other than heaven is primarily based upon this teaching of Jesus found in Luke 16. Take sufficient time to read the account below and to study the diagram which illustrates what Jesus taught. This place does exist. However, is it the immediate place of destiny at death for N.T. believers on this side of the cross? This is the question we seek to answer by means of the Scriptures.




"THERE WAS A CERTAIN RICH MAN WHO WAS CLOTHED IN PURPLE AND FINE LINEN AND FARED SUMPTUOUSLY EVERY DAY. BUT THERE WAS A CERTAIN BEGGAR NAMED LAZARUS, FULL OF SORES, WHO WAS LAID AT HIS GATE, DESIRING TO BE FED WITH THE CRUMBS WHICH FELL FROM THE RICH MAN'S TABLE. MOREOVER THE DOGS CAME AND LICKED HIS SORES. SO IT WAS THAT THE BEGGAR DIED, AND WAS CARRIED BY THE ANGELS TO ABRAHAM'S BOSOM. THE RICH MAN ALSO DIED AND WAS BURIED. AND BEING IN TORMENTS IN HADES, HE LIFTED UP HIS EYES AND SAW ABRAHAM AFAR OFF, AND LAZARUS IN HIS BOSOM. THEN HE CRIED AND SAID, 'FATHER ABRAHAM, HAVE MERCY ON ME, AND SEND LAZARUS THAT HE MAY DIP THE TIP OF HIS FINGER IN WATER AND COOL MY TONGUE; FOR I AM TORMENTED IN THIS FLAME.' BUT ABRAHAM SAID, 'SON, REMEMBER THAT IN YOUR LIFETIME YOU RECEIVED YOUR GOOD THINGS, AND LIKEWISE LAZARUS EVIL THINGS; BUT NOW HE IS COMFORTED AND YOU ARE TORMENTED. AND BESIDES ALL THIS, BETWEEN US AND YOU THERE IS A GREAT GULF FIXED, SO THAT THOSE WHO WANT TO PASS FROM HERE TO YOU CANNOT, NOR CAN THOSE FROM THERE PASS TO US....' " Luke 16:19-27

b. In the New Testament
The word *paradise* (Gk. *paradeisos*) occurs in only three instances in the NT (Lk. 23:43; 2 Cor. 12:3; Rev. 2:7). The context shows that the predominating sense is that of the later development of the word. In Lk. 23:43 the word 'paradise' is used by Jesus for the place where souls go immediately after death, cf. the concealed paradise in later Jewish thought. The same idea is also present in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31).
Illustrated Bible Dictionary Vol. 3, pg 1155


“Abraham’s Bosom” is a Jewish expression for the place Jesus called “paradise” in Luke 23:42-43.
Jesus did tell the thief on the cross that “today you will be with Me in Paradise.” Truly this established the existence of an interim place of confinement for the souls of men as this doctrine of “soul confinement” teaches. However, this is not all that the Holy Spirit has recorded about Paradise. The apostle Paul adds this:

ABRAHAM’S BOSOM. A figure of speech used by Jesus in the parable of *Lazarus and Dives (Lk. 16:22-23), illustrating the ‘great gulf fixed’ between the bliss of paradise and the misery of Hades (cf. Mt. 8:11-12). The dead Lazarus is portrayed as reclining next to ...
... To sit in Abraham’s bosom, in Talmudic language, was to enter *Paradise (cf. 4 Macc. 13:17).
Illustrated Bible Dictionary Vol. 1, pg 8

JESUS ON PARADISE
“...AND JESUS SAID TO HIM, ‘ASSUREDLY, I SAY UNTO YOU, TODAY YOU WILL BE WITH ME IN PARADISE.’ ”
Luke 23:42-43



PAUL ON PARADISE
“I KNOW A MAN IN CHRIST WHO FOURTEEN YEARS AGO...SUCH A ONE WAS CAUGHT UP TO THE THIRD HEAVEN... HOW HE WAS CAUGHT UP INTO PARADISE...”
2 Cor. 12:1-5 excerpts



According to Jesus’ teaching in Luke 23:42-43 and in Luke 16:19-27, the place called “Paradise” or “Abraham’s Bosom” is in the lower parts of the earth. However, Paul clearly states the direction to Paradise is now UP, not DOWN! Twice he states “... such a one was caught UP to the third heaven...” and “ he was caught UP into Paradise...” Do we have a conflict here between Jesus and Paul? We do not! Prior to the cross, the place called “Paradise” was truly located in the lower parts of the earth. Not only was Abraham there, but so were all the O.T. faithful saints whose sins were covered by the blood of bulls and goats UNTIL the coming of Jesus Christ with this dual mission as His purpose:

“BUT WHEN THE FULLNESS OF THE TIME HAD COME, GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON, BORN OF A WOMAN, BORN UNDER THE LAW, TO REDEEM THOSE WHO WERE UNDER THE LAW, THAT WE MIGHT RECEIVE THE ADOPTION AS SONS.” Gal. 4:4-5

**"BUT WHEN THE FULLNESS OF THE TIME HAD COME, GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON,
BORN OF A WOMAN, BORN UNDER THE LAW,
TO REDEEM THOSE WHO WERE UNDER THE LAW,
THAT WE MIGHT RECEIVE THE ADOPTION AS SONS."** Gal. 4:4-5

O.T. believers in essence looked FORWARD to the work Christ would perform on the cross. God covered their sins with the blood of bulls and goats UNTIL the appointed time of the coming of Jesus Christ "to REDEEM those under the Law."



Of necessity, because their sins were only covered by the blood of bulls and goats God had to place the souls of O.T. saints in an interim place until Jesus was able to "redeem those under the Law" by means of His blood. Paradise, located in the lower parts of the earth was this interim place of confinement in which they would wait for the finished work of Christ on the cross. This is how Jesus could promise the thief on the cross that "today you will be with me in Paradise." Paul the apostle gives us this further illumination about Jesus' descent into the lower parts of the earth where Paradise was located:

"WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE...(NOW THIS, 'HE ASCENDED' - WHAT DOES IT MEAN BUT THAT HE ALSO FIRST DESCENDED INTO THE LOWER PARTS OF THE EARTH? HE WHO DESCENDED IS ALSO THE ONE WHO ASCENDED FAR ABOVE ALL THE HEAVENS..." Eph. 4:8-10

The gospel of Matthew will clarify what is meant by Paul's use of the O.T. quote from Psalm 68:18 of the fact that He "led captivity captive":

"AND BEHOLD, THE VEIL OF THE TEMPLE WAS TORN IN TWO FROM TOP TO BOTTOM; AND THE EARTH QUAKED, AND THE ROCKS WERE SPLIT, AND THE GRAVES WERE OPENED; AND MANY BODIES OF THE SAINTS WHO HAD FALLEN ASLEEP WERE RAISED; AND COMING OUT OF THE GRAVES AFTER HIS RESURRECTION, THEY WENT INTO THE HOLY CITY AND APPEARED TO MANY." Mat. 27:51-53

Jesus descends into the lower parts of the earth prior to ascending on high. He "leads captivity captive." From Matthew we learn that "the bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised...they went into the Holy City and appeared to many." Jesus took the souls out of Paradise and raised their bodies from the grave and allowed them to appear to many. This is an overlooked and under-emphasized truth! There is no longer any need for the location of Paradise in the lower parts of the earth! It was moved to the third heaven as Paul plainly stated. He was "caught up to Paradise" because that is where it now is located! God does not need to retain the souls of the deceased in an interim place any longer!

N.T. believers do not descend at death but rather ascend into the same place that Paul was "caught up" to, which is Paradise in the third heaven! There is no need to place the souls of N.T. believers in any place other than heaven itself since the redemptive work of Jesus Christ has been completed!

The New Covenant is a "better covenant established on better promises" (Heb. 8:6). Where does this "new covenant" first appear in Scripture? It is given to the Jews in Jeremiah 31:31-34 and repeated in Hebrews 8:7-13. Can you see how God has transferred the O.T. believers into their new covenant? He placed them prior to the cross in Paradise in the lower parts of the earth. Jesus descended prior to ascending! He "led captivity captive" (including the thief on the cross) into the third heaven where Paradise now exists. To make the point clear, Jesus allowed those whom He led captive to first walk about the holy city and appear to many in their resurrected bodies!

The doctrine of "soul confinement" is espousing that all saints whether old covenant or new covenant are in Paradise in the lower parts of the earth awaiting the resurrection of the dead by Jesus Christ. The resurrection of the dead has ALREADY begun! Jesus is called the "Firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15:20). Those whom Jesus "led captivity captive" are ALSO part of the Firstfruits from the dead! There is more to come:

**"...EACH ONE IN HIS OWN ORDER;
CHRIST THE FIRSTFRUITS, AFTERWARD
THOSE WHO ARE CHRIST'S AT HIS COMING."** 1 Cor. 15:23

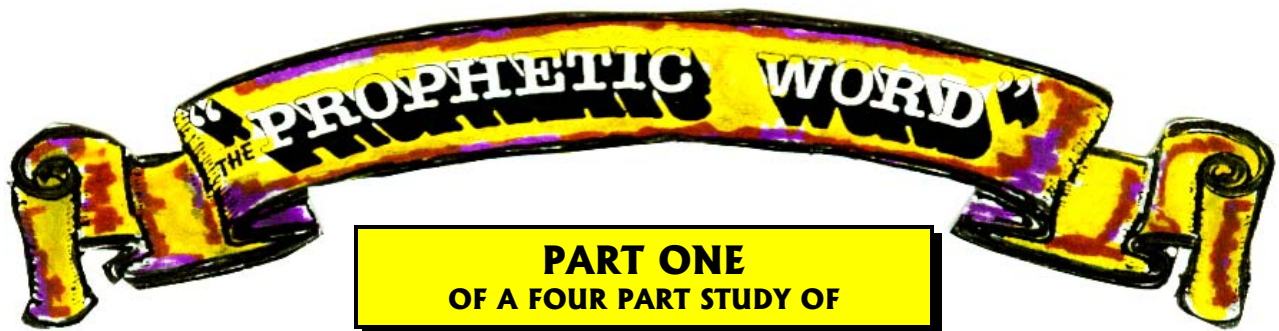
In the Book of Ephesians Paul states plainly what is the mystery (hidden truth) of God's will:

"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, BOTH WHICH ARE IN HEAVEN AND WHICH ARE ON EARTH - IN HIM." Eph. 1:9-10

That "gathering together" began when Jesus emptied out Paradise in the lower parts of the earth and moved it to the third heaven. N.T. saints look forward to the next stage of that gathering together which is the rapture in which Paul said "the dead in Christ will rise first..." (1 Thess. 4:16-17). Dear friends, read carefully the "resurrection Chapter" (1 Cor. 15). It is a message about planting and raising THE BODY from the grave. When Jesus comes He will bring all His saints WITH Him (Zech. 14:5).

N.T. believers are not in the lower parts of the earth. They are where Paul said he would be at death:

"...TO BE ABSENT FROM THE BODY AND TO BE PRESENT WITH THE LORD." 2 Cor. 5:8



KEEPING ONESELF FROM THE INFLUENCE OF THE WICKED ONE

"WE KNOW THAT... THE WHOLE WORLD LIES UNDER THE SWAY (INFLUENCE) OF THE WICKED ONE..."
1 John 5:19



"THE WICKED ONE"



"THE RIGHTEOUS ONE"

"WE KNOW THAT... HE WHO HAS BEEN BORN OF GOD KEEPS (GUARDS) HIMSELF, AND THE WICKED ONE DOES NOT TOUCH HIM."
1 John 5:18

The apostle John tersely sets before us what is the prime personal responsibility of every born-again believer in relation to this present world: It is the commission to "...keep (guard) himself from the sway (influence) of a world that is under the domination of Satan, "The Wicked One." In essence, it is an ongoing battle between THE WICKED ONE (Satan) and THE RIGHTEOUS ONE (the Christian).

It is imperative that we understand clearly that the mandate is not for the Christian to gain control of the world in which he presently lives, but rather to guard himself from the sway and influence of a Satan-dominated world. There is coming a day in which "...The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (Rev. 11:15). That is the future commission of Jesus Christ at His second coming. It is not the present mandate given to the followers of Christ. The apostles state how we are to relate to this world UNTIL Jesus Christ returns:

"PURE AND UNDEFILED RELIGION BEFORE GOD AND THE FATHER IS THIS: TO VISIT ORPHANS AND WIDOWS IN THEIR TROUBLE, AND TO KEEP ONESELF UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD."
Jam. 1:27

"AND DO NOT BE CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD, BUT BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND, THAT YOU MAY PROVE WHAT IS THAT GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE AND PERFECT WILL OF GOD."
Rom. 12:2

"DO NOT LOVE THE WORLD OR THE THINGS IN THE WORLD...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 Jn. 2:15-17

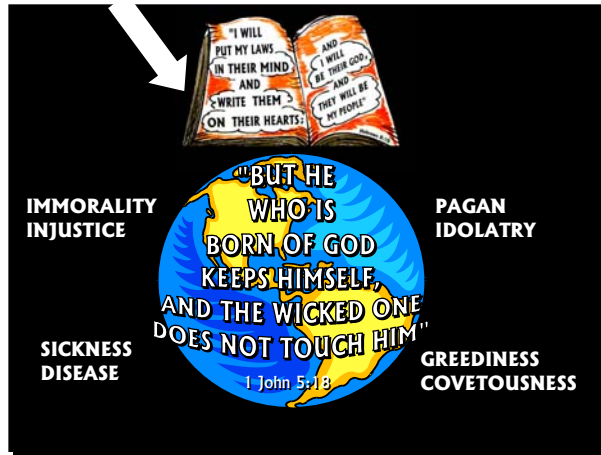
"COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM AND BE SEPARATE, SAYS THE LORD. DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN..."
2 Cor. 6:17

"...THOSE WHO USE THIS WORLD AS NOT MISUSING IT. FOR THE FORM OF THIS WORLD IS PASSING AWAY."
1 Cor. 7:31

"WE KNOW THAT... HE WHO HAS BEEN BORN OF GOD KEEPS (GUARDS) HIMSELF, AND THE WICKED ONE DOES NOT TOUCH HIM."
1 Jn. 5:18

The chart on the right depicts the manner in which "The whole world lies under the sway (influence) of the wicked one." Regardless of cultural, geographical or political differences, the whole world is subject in varying degrees to these four groups of maladies.

The Christian's main line of defense against such influence is found in allowing God to perform His stated objective to:



"...I WILL PUT MY LAWS IN THEIR MIND AND WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS..."

This verse from Hebrews 8:10 is as much a term of the New Covenant as is the more popular preferred term stated in verse 12 of Hebrews,

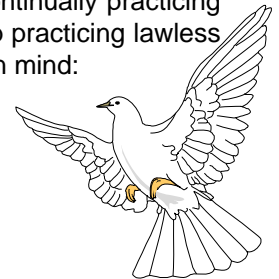
"FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR UNRIGHTEOUSNESS AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE."

It isn't by means of God's GRACE (as expressed through false doctrines such as "once saved always saved" and "unconditional eternal security") that will keep us from a world filled with "immorality, injustice, sickness, disease, greediness, covetousness and pagan-based idolatries." Such false doctrinal securities were birthed due to a failure to present the fullness of the New Covenant to God's people as expressed in Hebrews 8:10-12. It is true that God's mercy and grace are always available to forgive us when we yield to Satan's worldly influence, but God has a better plan than continual forgiveness of our continual lawless deeds. It is by embracing the fullness of the New Covenant in allowing God to "...put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts" (Hebrews 8:10), that we can have dominion over continually practicing lawless deeds! Arm yourselves defensively with the moral law of God and you will stop practicing lawless deeds! The Holy Spirit was sent to New Covenant believers with this specific purpose in mind:



"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."

2 Cor. 3:2-3



Paul's reference to "stone tablets" reveals to us what the Holy Spirit intends to write on the "fleshy tablets of our hearts." It is God's moral law as expressed in the original Ten Commandments. A strong argument is easily made since nine of the original ten are plainly and repeatedly expressed in the New Testament. Only "the seventh-day Sabbath" is in question as to whether it too is to be embraced as a commandment repeated in the New Testament. God's people have not been delivered from God's law! Paul's argument was that one cannot be saved by the deeds of the law. Consider:

"THEREFORE WE CONCLUDE THAT A MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH APART FROM THE DEEDS OF THE LAW... DO WE THEN MAKE VOID THE LAW THROUGH FAITH? CERTAINLY NOT! ON THE CONTRARY, WE ESTABLISH THE LAW." Rom. 3:28,31

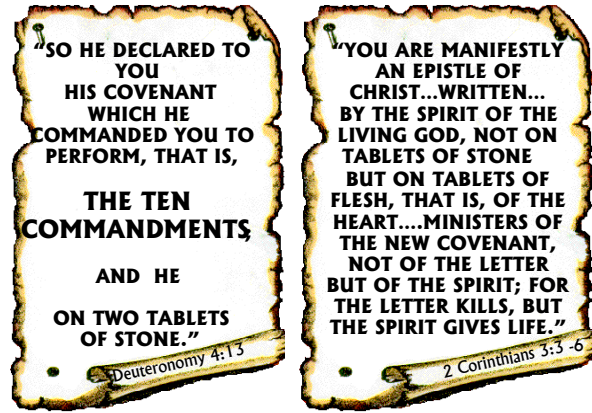
How is the law to be established for those justified by faith? By allowing God to put His laws in our minds and write them on our hearts (Heb.8:10) and by allowing the Holy Spirit to write His laws on the fleshy tablets of the heart rather than on stone tablets (2 Cor. 3:2-3).

"I AM THE LORD, I DO NOT CHANGE."

Mal. 3:6

Consider these passages from Deuteronomy 4:1-13.

What did God consider the heart of the Old Covenant to be? It was the Ten Commandments which He wrote on stone tablets.



What does Paul reveal as the heart of the New Covenant? It is the Ten Commandments to be written on the hearts of New Covenant believers rather than as previously, on stone tablets. We indeed have "...a better covenant established on better promises" (Heb. 8:6).

"JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND FOREVER"

Heb. 13:8

In this newsletter, and in the three that will follow it, I want to try to show you how we can successfully use principles taken from the law of the Old Covenant and use them DEFENSIVELY as the means by which "...he who has been born of God (can) keep (guard) himself (so that) the wicked one does not touch him" (1 Jn. 5:18). Consider again what is set before us as the supreme battle we face in this present world:

"WE KNOW THAT... THE WHOLE WORLD LIES UNDER THE SWAY (INFLUENCE) OF THE WICKED ONE..."
1 John 5:19



"WE KNOW THAT... HE WHO HAS BEEN BORN OF GOD KEEPS (GUARDS) HIMSELF, AND THE WICKED ONE DOES NOT TOUCH HIM."
1 John 5:18

"THE WICKED ONE"

"THE RIGHTEOUS ONE"



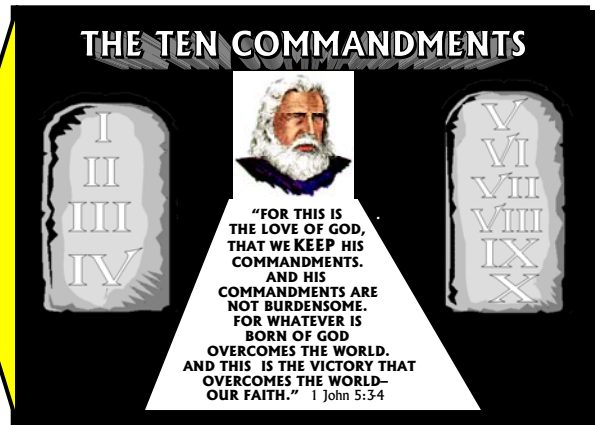
What I would like to suggest to you in these four newsletters is that these four sets of laws taken from four complete chapters of the book of Deuteronomy (moral law-Deut.5, the monetary law –Deut. 26, the dietary law-Deut.14, and the law of the feasts-Deut. 16), are God's DEFENSE against all of the sway and influence that Satan has upon this present world.

If you are going to successfully guard yourself against what dominates this world, you are going to have to embrace faith in the principles that are behind these laws of God. They were meant to be a line of defense against the wicked one!

In this newsletter let us ponder how God's moral law will enable the believer to keep himself from the wicked one who has the whole world under the sway of immorality and injustice.

Let us remember that God's intent for the Christian is to "...keep himself (in order that) the wicked one does not touch him." As stated on our opening page, we saw that pure and undefiled religion in God's sight consists of "...keeping oneself unspotted from the world" (Jm.1:27). We do not have a commission to remove the spots from the world, but rather we are to remain unspotted by what we find in the world.

We also saw that John stated that "...all that is in the world...is not of the Father but is of the world" (1 Jn. 2:15-17). Most importantly we are exhorted "Do not love the world...if anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 Jn. 2:15). Plainly, John is giving us a litmus test as to whether we love the Father or not. Consider that Jesus and John specifically state that the measure of our love for God is determined by whether we keep God's commandments or not:



To the words of Jesus and John, we can add these words of Paul found in Romans 13:8-10 pertaining to the relationship between love and the commandments: →

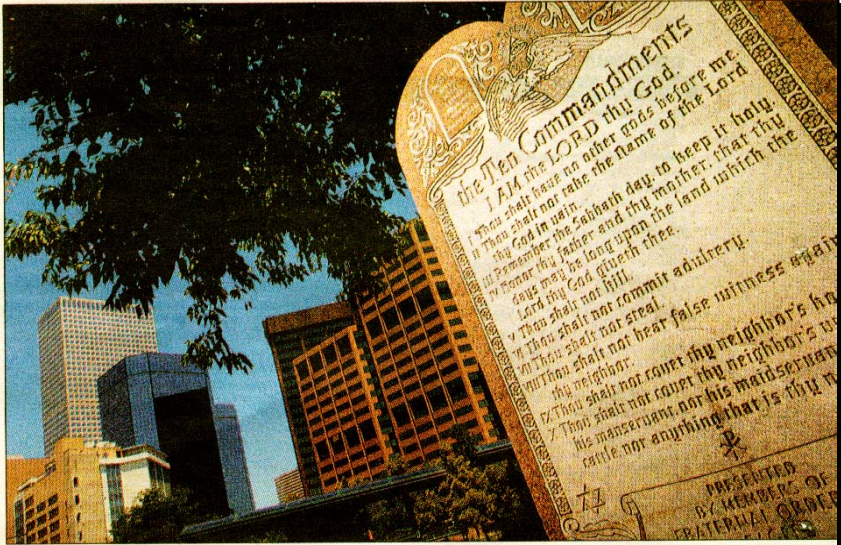
Note that Paul does not teach that love replaces the law, but rather that keeping the moral laws of God fulfills the law. He singles out obedience to six of the Ten Commandments that deal with our relationship to other people as being manifest evidence that we are walking in the love of God. Today's "sloppy agape" theology seeks to state that in some nebulous, undefined way love replaced the law. It did not. If we love, we fulfill the righteous requirements of the law as Paul states earlier in this same Roman epistle:



"...THAT THE RIGHTEOUS REQUIREMENT OF THE LAW MIGHT BE FULFILLED IN US WHO DO NOT WALK ACCORDING TO THE FLESH BUT ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT." Rom. 8:4

Rather than giving emphasis to the mandate to allow God to "...put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts", we find the political-minded Christian to be more obsessed with keeping the Ten Commandments displayed on stone tablets in front of civic buildings.

This picture appeared in the Rocky Mountain News recently due to fervent debates by Christian forces to keep these stone tablets where they presently are. Look carefully at these commandments. Are they worth defending as a proper expression of defending the Christian faith?



The Ten Commandments are etched in a stone tablet on the grounds of Civic Center Park in Denver. Families, as well as religious, legal and activists groups, split on two Supreme Court rulings on such displays.

These are not the original Ten Commandments that God gave to Moses. These are the commandments as re-written by the Catholic Church in their catechism (they are right in the Catholic Bible, but not in their Catechism.) Note that the original second commandment has been removed completely, yet there are still ten. How can this be? They have taken the original tenth commandment and divided it into two separate ones so that the total remains ten after the second was removed. What is the second commandment? It is the one that forbids the making of statues and bowing down and worshiping them. The selling of statues is big business in the Catholic Church.

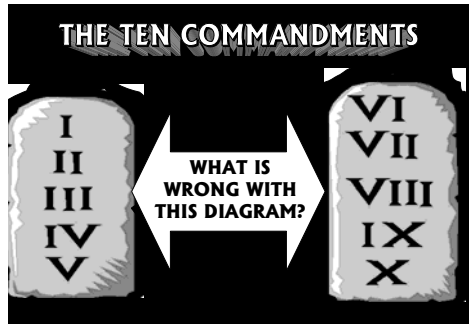


All do not adhere to Paul's words pertaining to the handling of the Word of God. This religious conglomerate claims to be the only true church of Jesus Christ on the earth and yet they purposely are deceiving those who trust them.



My thrust here is not merely to expose the error of the Catholic Church, but rather to reprove Christians who (1) Make an issue out of defending the Ten Commandments written on stone tablets, and perhaps at the expense of emphasizing the need to have them written on their own hearts, and (2) Failure to even notice that the Commandments they are defending are not the ones God originated. I have a great suspicion that many of the stone tablet displays that Christianity is so fervently defending in governmental buildings and parks may also be this deceptive, modified Catholic version. However, even if this is not so, on what basis do we become so defensive over God's Ten Commandments remaining displayed on stone tablets? This is not the thrust of God's Word to New Testament believers at all, is it? Are the Ten Commandments for the heathen or for the believer? God's law is for the people of God. It was not given to be legislated on unbelievers or to keep them ever before their eyes. It was not given to remind the heathen of what God says is right or wrong. They were given to guide God's people in paths of righteousness! Here is how to keep the Ten Commandments before the eyes of the heathen:

"YOU ARE OUR EPISTLE WRITTEN IN OUR HEARTS, KNOWN AND READ BY ALL MEN; YOU ARE MANIFESTED BY THE SPIRIT 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." 2 Cor. 3:2-3

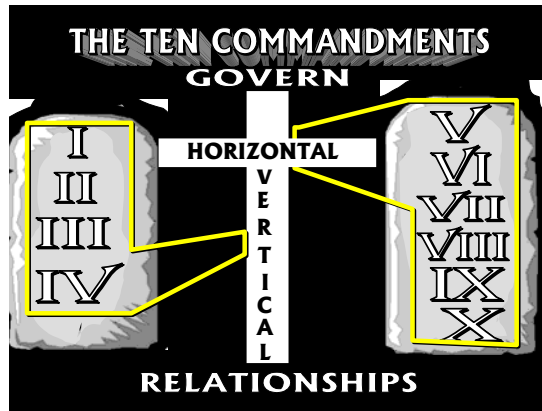


The diagram on the left is the typical, and perhaps the logical, way that the Ten Commandments are divided upon two tablets – five on each stone. In the passages from Romans 13:8-10 we considered earlier, Paul grouped the last six together.

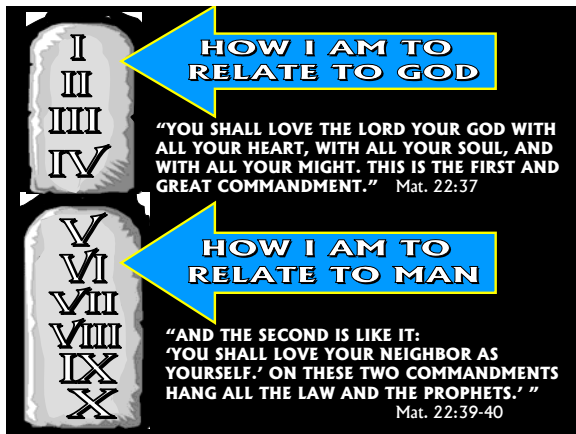


There is a better reason for dividing the commandments into a four and six pattern:

The first four commandments speak of the believer's relationship to His God, but the next six describe the Christian's relationship to people. One therefore depicts a vertical relationship (man on earth to God in heaven.)



The second relationship outlines a horizontal relationship (man on earth to mankind on earth.) Together they form a cross which is the kind of cross that Jesus said every believer must take up daily (Luke 9:23). The ten Commandments govern these two vital relationships.



When Jesus was asked, "...which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" (Mat. 22:36), He gave this twofold answer:

His summarization verifies that the Ten Commandments should indeed be divided into these two categories (vertical and horizontal.)

"...On these two commandments hang all the law..." The first four commandments depict how I can love the Lord my God with all my heart, soul and might. The next six show me how to love my neighbor as myself.

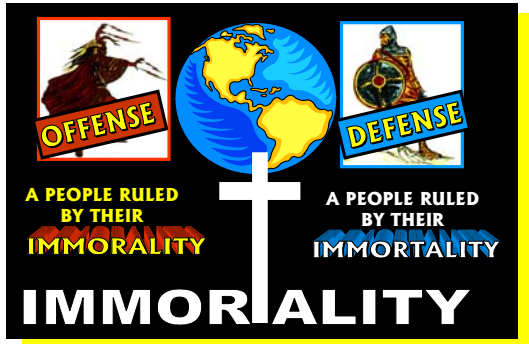
The moral law, (the Ten Commandments) are God's means given to enable us to guard ourselves against the sway and influence of all the immorality that is in a world dominated by Satan:

"WE KNOW THAT... THE WHOLE WORLD LIES UNDER THE SWAY (INFLUENCE) OF THE WICKED ONE..."
1 John 5:19



"WE KNOW THAT... HE WHO HAS BEEN BORN OF GOD KEEPS (GUARDS) HIMSELF, AND THE WICKED ONE DOES NOT TOUCH HIM."
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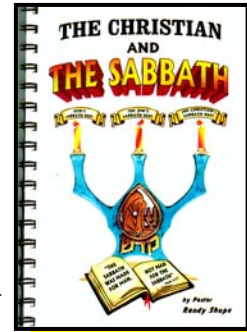
The rapture will remove God's faithful saints before the tribulation. However, people will be saved during the tribulation. Revelation vividly depicts that in those days the whole world would still be following hard after immortality while the tribulation saints would be steadfastly keeping the commandments of their God.



I was struck by the simple illustration that it only requires a "T" (a cross) to change IMMORTALITY into IMMORTALITY.

A final thought about the Ten Commandments. Eight of them begin with the phrase, "YOU SHALL NOT." They are not difficult to understand; "You shall not steal," "You shall not commit adultery", "You shall not murder", etc. The other two are positives, one from each tablet: (1) honor your Father and mother and (2) remember the Sabbath.

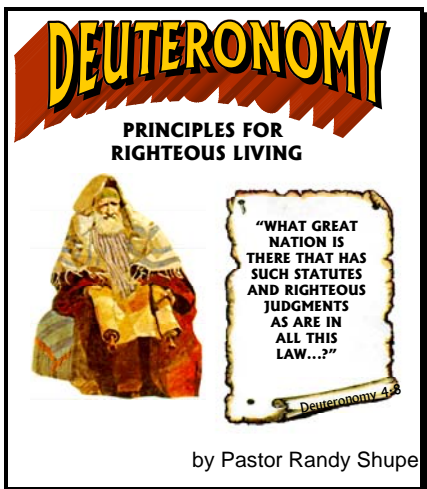
The Sabbath is perhaps the most difficult for us as New Testament believers. I wrote this little booklet on that subject. I believe it will help you to grasp the spirit rather than the letter of this law. Paul reminds us that "...the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 3:6). You can order this booklet from our ministry for \$ 7.95 inc. shipping.



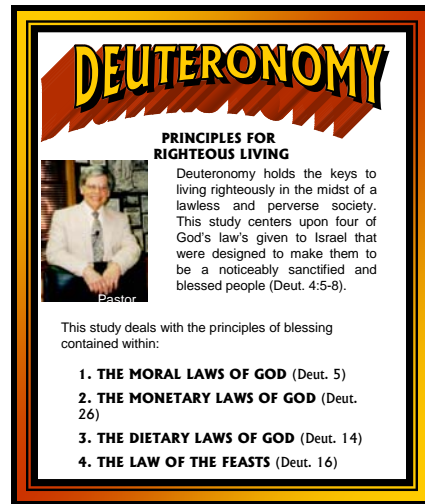
In our next newsletter we shall examine God's monetary laws as a defense against the covetousness and greediness that possesses this world.

The contents of this newsletter, as well as the three that will follow it, were taken from my latest series on the Book of Deuteronomy. I highly recommend this study for a more in-depth study of what has been presented in this newsletter.

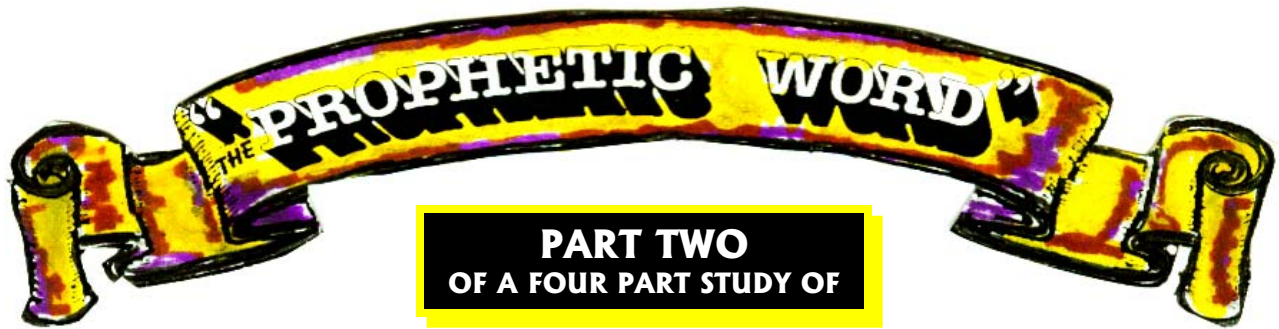
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**PART TWO
OF A FOUR PART STUDY OF**

KEEPING ONESELF FROM THE INFLUENCE OF

THE WICKED ONE

**"WE KNOW THAT...
THE WHOLE WORLD LIES UNDER
THE SWAY (INFLUENCE) OF THE WICKED ONE..."**
1 John 5:19



**SPIRITUAL HOSTS OF WICKEDNESS
IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES**

PRINCIPALITIES



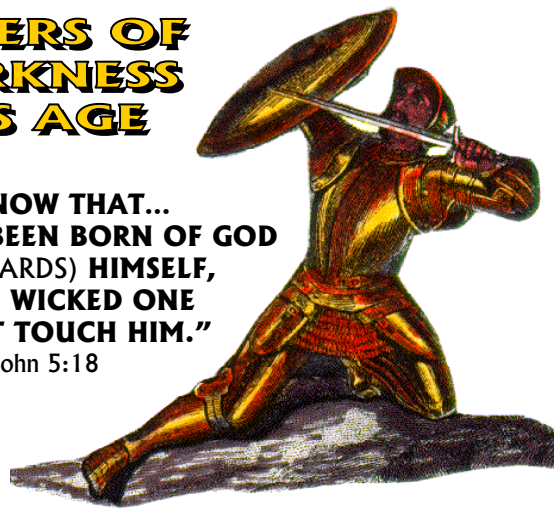
POWERS

Two things God wants us to know:
1) This world is under the influence and guidance of Satan ("the wicked one") and a whole host of his demonic forces enumerated in Ephesians Chapter 6 as principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness and the spiritual wickedness that abides in high or heavenly places. From these positions of power they hold the whole world under their sway and demonic influence.

**THE RULERS OF
THE DARKNESS
OF THIS AGE**

**"WE KNOW THAT...
HE WHO HAS BEEN BORN OF GOD
KEEPS (GUARDS) HIMSELF,
AND THE WICKED ONE
DOES NOT TOUCH HIM."**

1 John 5:18



2) God wants us to also know how we, as followers of Christ, can live in the midst of all that wicked influence in a manner that the wicked one does not touch us (the born-again believer).

This is the second part of a four-part study dedicated to revealing how we can dwell in the midst of such immense and forceful demonic activity and not be swallowed up in it along with the rest of the world.

“WE KNOW THAT... THE WHOLE WORLD LIES UNDER THE SWAY (INFLUENCE) OF THE WICKED ONE...”
 1 John 5:19

“THE WICKED ONE”



“THE RIGHTEOUS ONE”

“WE KNOW THAT... HE WHO HAS BEEN BORN OF GOD KEEPS (GUARDS) HIMSELF, AND THE WICKED ONE DOES NOT TOUCH HIM.”
 1 John 5:18



What I am suggesting to you in these four newsletters is that these four sets of laws taken from four complete chapters of the book of Deuteronomy (moral law-Deut.5, the monetary law –Deut. 26, the dietary law-Deut.14, and the law of the feasts-Deut. 16), are God’s DEFENSE against all of the sway and influence that Satan has upon this present world. If you are going to successfully guard yourself against what dominates this world, you are going to have to embrace faith in the principles that are contained within these laws from God that were given to be a line of defense against the onslaught of the wicked one!

In our last newsletter (August 2005) I presented the first of the four sets of laws that can be utilized as a wall of defense against the immorality that permeates the world. The moral laws of God (the Ten Commandments) were not given to be legislated on people of immorality as the Religious Right and all politically-based brands of Christianity attempt to do. James reminds us that pure and undefiled religion should seek only to “keep oneself unspotted from the world” (Jm. 1:27), rather than idealistically attempt to remove the grimy spots from the world. The unbiblical attempts to remove spots such as abortion, pornography, homosexuality, etc. remain unsuccessful due to the fact that the church has no such commission from God.

The laws of God were given for the people of God - period! Read all the terms of the New Covenant in Hebrews 8:10-12. Not only will you find an expression of God’s grace to forgive our sins, but the New Covenant also states that God says He intends to “put My laws in their minds and write them on their hearts,” not to hypocritically write them or display them in the halls of Congress, in our schools or outside our public buildings! Christianity is to be a religion of the HEART. Jesus condemned the multitude of showy outward displays practiced by the Pharisees and the Sadducees (Mat. 23:25-28).



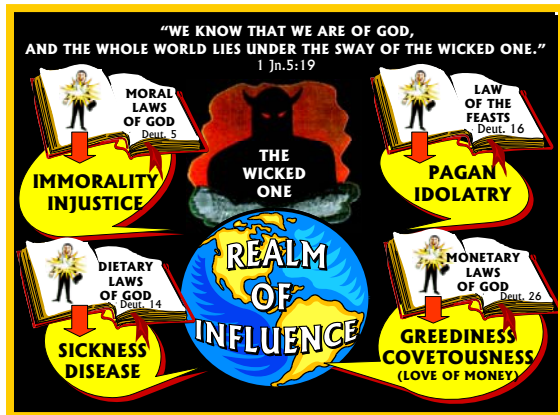
The real conflict of “the last days” will be a battle between morality and immorality. You can only positively change “immorality” by the addition of a “T” making it become “immorTality.” The significance of this play on words is simply that it takes the supernatural work of Jesus on a cross (“T”) to change people.

Look carefully at these two contrasting Scriptures from the Book of Revelation. Most of the people in the world are going to continue to choose immorality over immortality. In contrast, Revelation 14:12 reveals that it is the commandments of God that will be the first line of defense for those who become believers in the tribulation.

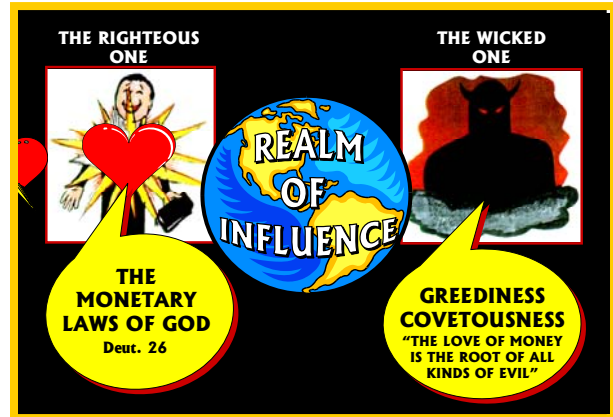
I would like to convince you that the same line of defense is needful for our survival as “pre-tribulation believers” as well.

Space prevents me from any further review of the importance of the moral laws of God being a defense against the sway of Satan’s immorality upon this world. You need to read the previous newsletter (August 2005). You can download it from our website (“www.PastorRandyShupe.com”)

Listed below, once again, are the four primary ways by which Satan influences the whole world, and also the four laws of God which are designed to be antidotes for his poisonous ways. Our last newsletter was dedicated to examining the moral laws of God as being the Christian's first line of defense against a world inundated by immorality.



Let us now consider God's monetary laws as being the Christian's line of defense against the spirit of greediness and covetousness that permeates every culture throughout the whole world. The entire world is in hot pursuit of riches. I believe we are all aware that the pursuit of riches is the greatest temptation that the American Christian faces living in the midst of the most prosperous and abundant land in the whole world.



Let us begin by stating the serious nature of the problem that even God's people face in this present evil age. Paul gives us two warnings about the consequences of covetousness or as more plainly stated to be the love of money:



"SET YOUR MIND ON THINGS ABOVE, NOT ON THINGS ON THE EARTH...PUT TO DEATH YOUR MEMBERS WHICH ARE ON THE EARTH: FORNICATION, UNCLEANNESS, PASSION, EVIL DESIRE, AND COVETOUSNESS, WHICH IS IDOLATRY. BECAUSE OF THESE THINGS THE WRATH OF GOD IS COMING UPON THE SONS OF DISOBEDIENCE..."

Col. 3:2-6 excerpts

"BUT THOSE WHO DESIRE TO BE RICH FALL INTO TEMPTATION AND A SNARE, AND INTO MANY FOOLISH AND HARMFUL LUSTS WHICH DROWN MEN IN DESTRUCTION AND PERDITION. FOR THE LOVE OF MONEY IS A ROOT OF ALL KINDS OF EVIL, FOR WHICH SOME HAVE STRAYED FROM THE FAITH IN THEIR GREEDINESS, AND PIERCED THEMSELVES THROUGH WITH MANY SORROWS. BUT YOU, O MAN OF GOD, FLEE THESE THINGS..."

1 Tim. 6:9-11

From these two passages alone we can see that Paul is setting forth the potential danger for Christians falling into the trap of covetousness (which is idolatry). We tend to think of idolatry as the worship of statues and images of false gods. Modern-day idolatry is "the love of money." Notice Paul warns that "some (believers) have strayed from the faith in their greediness." That implies that their faith has transferred from God to a new god – "the love of money." This is why Paul calls covetousness idolatry. In his second epistle to Timothy, Paul gives this specific mark of what will transpire in the last days:

"BUT KNOW THIS, THAT IN THE LAST DAYS PERILOUS TIMES WILL COME: FOR MEN WILL BE...LOVERS OF MONEY...RATHER THAN LOVERS OF GOD." 2 Tim. 3:1,4 excerpts

As Christians, we may criticize the Buddhists and the Hindu's for worshiping a whole host of false gods and rightly label them as idolatrous, but in the eyes of God, so is the Christian an idolater who chooses to be a lover of money rather than, or more than, being a lover of God. Whatever we love more than God is idolatry, and you know Paul often soberly warned believers of the potential of inheriting the wrath of God:

"FOR THIS YOU KNOW...NO COVETOUS MAN, WHO IS AN IDOLATER, HAS ANY INHERITANCE IN THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST AND OF GOD. LET NO ONE DECEIVE YOU WITH EMPTY WORDS, FOR BECAUSE OF THESE THINGS THE WRATH OF GOD COMES UPON THE SONS OF DISOBEDIENCE. THEREFORE DO NOT BE PARTAKERS WITH THEM." Eph. 5:5-7

THE PHILOSOPHY OF

THE WORLDIS THE SPIRIT OF
GETTING

"THIS WISDOM DOES NOT DESCEND FROM ABOVE, BUT IS EARTHLY, SENSUAL, DEMONIC. FOR WHERE ENVY AND SELF-SEEKING EXIST, CONFUSION AND EVERY EVIL THING WILL BE THERE."

Jam. 3:15-16

"COME NOW, YOU RICH, WEEP AND HOWL FOR YOUR MISERIES THAT ARE COMING UPON YOU! YOUR RICHES ARE CORRUPTED, AND YOUR GARMENTS ARE MOTH-EATEN. YOUR GOLD AND SILVER ARE CORRODED, AND THEIR CORROSION WILL BE A WITNESS AGAINST YOU...YOU HAVE HEAPED UP TREASURE IN THE LAST DAYS...YOU HAVE LIVED ON THE EARTH IN PLEASURE AND LUXURY; YOU HAVE FATTENED YOUR HEARTS AS IN A DAY OF SLAUGHTER..."

James 5:1-6 excerpts

The words "world" and "word" may phonetically sound alike, but they are 180 degrees opposite of each other in wisdom and philosophy because they originate from two different sources. One, as James tells us, is wisdom from below and the other is wisdom from above. One is from Satan designed to keep the inhabitants of the world in bondage and slavery to the pursuit of riches at any cost. The other is God's wisdom given to His people to set them free from the love of money, and to impart to them His purposes for abundantly blessing them.

Take a careful look at these two contrasting depictions of the improper and proper use of riches found in James 5:1-6 and 1 Tim. 6:17-19.

Notice both passages describe people who are rich.

James speaks of those who are misusing riches in this life. They are hoarding gold and garments to the point that they have become corroded and moth-eaten. They have heaped up treasure and have lived in pleasure and luxury. This is wisdom from below that is a self-seeking way of life that produces every evil thing.

Paul, in contrast, gives the counsel of the Word (wisdom from above) to those who have riches. It is important to note that "the living God gives us richly all things to enjoy." It is not asceticism (giving everything away to the poor) that God wants the rich to do. Rather He asks those who have riches to

- (1) not trust in uncertain riches,
- (2) be ready to give,
- and (3) be willing to share.

Which of these two philosophies govern our lives (and our pocketbooks) as Christians? This is a question worthy of careful introspection.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE WORDIS THE SPIRIT OF
GIVING

"BUT THE WISDOM THAT IS FROM ABOVE IS FIRST PURE, THEN PEACEABLE, GENTLE, WILLING TO YIELD, FULL OF MERCY AND GOOD FRUITS, WITHOUT PARTIALITY AND WITHOUT HYPOCRISY."

Jam. 3:17

"COMMAND THOSE WHO ARE RICH IN THIS PRESENT AGE NOT TO BE HAUGHTY, NOR TO TRUST IN UNCERTAIN RICHES BUT IN THE LIVING GOD WHO GIVES US RICHLY ALL THINGS TO ENJOY. LET THEM DO GOOD, THAT THEY MAY BE RICH IN GOOD WORKS, READY TO GIVE, WILLING TO SHARE, STORING UP FOR THEMSELVES A GOOD FOUNDATION FOR THE TIME TO COME, THAT THEY MAY LAY HOLD OF ETERNAL LIFE."

1 Tim. 6:17-19

Compared to the bulk of the world's population we, American Christians, qualify as being counted among those that Jesus describes in a parable as "...a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously (lived in luxury) every day" (Luke 16:19). Do we learn from such stories? What are we doing with our riches? Which of the philosophies above depict how we are handling those God-given riches? Does God have a plan for our abundance? Is there direction given in God's Word pertaining to His purpose for providing us with such abundance? My answer is yes! God instructs us with the principles found in His monetary laws, specifically, the concept of "TITHES and OFFERINGS."

I'm sure you have read Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7. This newsletter contains a "Sermon on the Amount." I would like to convince you that God still calls His people to practice the concepts of tithes and free-will offerings. A tithes is just what the root of this word contains; it is a tenth of our income. Offerings are free-will offerings that are given above our obligation to give God His holy tithe. (Hang on a bit if you are mentally verbalizing the opposition, "but we are not under Law but under grace." God's principles of giving did not originate with the giving of the Law, nor were they abolished with it!)

It is significant to note that the proper or improper use of money was the moral to the story behind many of Jesus' forty Kingdom parables. In fact, He states in the parable of "the Unjust Servant" as the moral to the story:

"HE WHO IS FAITHFUL IN WHAT IS LEAST IS FAITHFUL ALSO IN MUCH. THEREFORE IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN FAITHFUL IN THE UNRIGHTEOUS MAMMON ("MONEY") WHO WILL COMMIT TO YOUR TRUST THE TRUE RICHES? AND IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN FAITHFUL IN WHAT IS ANOTHER MAN'S, WHO WILL GIVE YOU WHAT IS YOUR OWN?...YOU CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MAMMON." Luke 16:10-13

Money is the initial test of Christian faithfulness. God blesses you and then watches to see what you are going to do with what He has given you. If we are not faithful with what is another man's (property), namely the tithe, then God will not entrust you with what He calls "the true riches."

If you think God is not concerned about what you give, then let me remind you that Jesus hung about the temple specifically to watch what people were putting in the offerings:



"NOW JESUS SAT OPPOSITE THE TREASURY AND SAW HOW THE PEOPLE PUT MONEY INTO THE TREASURY. AND MANY WHO WERE RICH PUT IN MUCH. THEN ONE POOR WIDOW CAME AND THREW IN TWO MITES...SO HE CALLED HIS DISCIPLES TO HIM AND SAID TO THEM, 'ASSUREDLY, I SAY TO YOU THAT THIS POOR WIDOW HAS PUT IN MORE THAN ALL THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN TO THE TREASURY; FOR THEY ALL PUT IN OUT OF THEIR ABUNDANCE, BUT SHE OUT OF HER POVERTY PUT IN ALL THAT SHE HAD, HER WHOLE LIVELIHOOD.'" Mark 12:41-44

We tend not to think of money as something that qualifies as being spiritual. Nothing could be further from the truth. Paul exhorts:

"NOT THAT I SEEK THE GIFT, BUT I SEEK THE FRUIT THAT ABOUNDS TO YOUR ACCOUNT...HAVING RECEIVED FROM EPAPHRODITUS THE THINGS THAT WERE SENT FROM YOU, A SWEET-SMELLING AROMA, AN ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE, WELL PLEASING TO GOD."
Phil. 4:18

How does God view our giving? It is "...an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God." The apostle Peter tells us why it is that God views our giving as an acceptable sacrifice:

"YOU ALSO (ARE) ...A HOLY PRIESTHOOD TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST." 1 Pet. 2:5

Notice that we (the church) are viewed by God as members of a holy priesthood. Money is one of those spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Why does Peter say that these sacrifices are offered to God by His holy priesthood "through Jesus Christ?" It is because Jesus Christ is OUR HIGH PRIEST who is ordained to receive tithes from His holy priesthood on earth! Let us consider tithing as it is found in the New Testament. To do so, we are going to look at the Book of Hebrews as our proof texts for New Testament tithing. Although it is surely a more difficult book, it is as much a New Testament epistle written to the entire church as is the Book of Romans. Many in the church hold a strange view of the epistle to the Hebrews, namely, that its contents were written solely for those among the church who were "Jewish Christians" and therefore is not applicable to any "Gentile Christians" such as you and me. This is very bad theology! According to the apostle Paul, a Christian who becomes a member of the church by means of the new birth is not to be singled out any longer in some special manner as Jew or Gentile any longer:

"FOR YOU ARE ALL SONS OF GOD THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS. FOR AS MANY OF YOU AS WERE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST HAVE PUT ON CHRIST. THERE IS NEITHER JEW NOR GREEK (GENTILE), THERE IS NEITHER SLAVE NOR FREE, THERE IS NEITHER MALE NOR FEMALE; FOR YOU ARE ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS." Gal. 3:26-28

Before we plunge into the Book of Hebrews, let us remember that the apostle Peter has already told us that God views the members of the church as

(1) A HOLY PRIESTHOOD (1 Pet. 2:5) **A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD** (1 Pet. 2:9)

(2) THAT OFFERS ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICES TO GOD THROUGH CHRIST (1 Pet. 2:5,9.)

Our giving is one of those "acceptable sacrifices, well-pleasing to God" (Phil. 4:18). This is not theology from the Book of Hebrews, but rather it is revelation from Peter and Paul in their epistles to the church. Is this how Christians are being taught to see themselves -- as a holy priesthood that offers up acceptable sacrifices to God? Is this the common teaching of the church today? No, it is not! Rather the church has systematically divorced itself from anything that resembles the Old Testament pattern of "priests and sacrifices" in spite of Peter and Paul's clear instruction. For the same illogical reasoning, tithing is also readily rejected as a New Testament responsibility.

Let us consider what Hebrews has to say about New testament tithing. There is a "main point" that its author wants to make:

"NOW THIS IS THE MAIN POINT OF THE THINGS WE ARE SAYING: WE HAVE SUCH A HIGH PRIEST, WHO IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE THRONE OF THE MAJESTY IN THE HEAVENS (Heb. 8:1) "...BUT NOW HE HAS OBTAINED A MORE EXCELLENT MINISTRY, INASMUCH AS HE IS MEDIATOR OF A BETTER COVENANT, ESTABLISHED ON BETTER PROMISES." (Heb. 8:6)

The Seventh and Ninth Chapter of Hebrews will clearly state that this HIGH PRIEST who is mediating a better covenant is none other than Jesus Christ (see 9:11). Not only is the Christian identified as a holy priesthood but Jesus Christ is the High Priest over His holy priesthood! We must ask, is this common teaching among the church today? No it is not! Let us now add the crucial verse that is sandwiched in-between the two verses above:

"FOR EVERY HIGH PRIEST IS APPOINTED TO OFFER BOTH GIFTS AND SACRIFICES. THEREFORE IT IS NECESSARY THAT THIS ONE ALSO HAVE SOMETHING TO OFFER." (Heb. 8:3)

Consider again the words of Peter to the church of Jesus Christ:

"YOU ALSO...(ARE) A HOLY PRIESTHOOD TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST." 1 Pet. 2:5

Dear friends, as members of the church, members of a holy priesthood, we are to offer up sacrifices to God THROUGH OUR HIGH PRIEST – JESUS CHRIST, the mediator of the New Covenant! The author of Hebrews points out that (1) every High Priest is appointed by God and (2) it is necessary that this One (our High Priest) also have something to offer on our behalf. Hebrews Chapter 7 will establish that it is our tithes that our High Priest is receiving from us in the same manner as did the Old Covenant priesthood of Levi on behalf of the people. Below I have printed out for you the first 12 verses of Hebrews Chapter 7 which speaks of Jesus Christ as our High Priest after the order of Melchizedek rather than after the order of Levi. I know these things are difficult reading and foreign to our ears as Gentile converts into a Jewish salvation, but we must work our way through them if we are going to fulfill our role as "a holy priesthood (who) offers up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." Paul has identified one of those acceptable sacrifices that is well-pleasing to God to be our giving (Phil.4:18). I want you to see that it is our tithes that Jesus is receiving and offering to God on our behalf. I will show you why in a moment. First take the time to digest and dissect these 12 verses from Hebrews 7 which lead up to Paul saying that the MAIN POINT of Hebrews is that the church has Jesus Christ as its High Priest:

CHAPTER 7

Description of Melchizedek

FOR this ¹Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, Gen. 14:18-20

² to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace,"

³ without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.

⁴ Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the ^{plunder}spoils.

⁵ And indeed ⁸those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; Num. 18:21-28

⁶ but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.

⁷ Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better.

⁸ Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, ⁹of whom it is witnessed that he lives. Heb. 5:6; 6:20

⁹ Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, ¹⁰ for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

Imperfection of Aaronic Priesthood

¹¹ ¹¹Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? Heb. 7:18; 8:7

¹² For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.

(I have reprinted these verses again on this page for convenience of reference to the highlighted sections)

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Jesus is identified as being a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Earlier in Hebrews Chapter 5 Paul expresses frustration with this church due to their inability to progress from the milk of God's Word to the meat of it:

"...CALLED BY GOD AS HIGH PRIEST ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK,' OF WHOM WE HAVE MUCH TO SAY, AND HARD TO EXPLAIN, SINCE YOU HAVE BECOME DULL OF HEARING. FOR BY THIS TIME YOU OUGHT TO BE TEACHERS, YOU NEED SOMEONE TO TEACH YOU AGAIN THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE ORACLES OF GOD; AND YOU HAVE COME TO NEED MILK AND NOT SOLID FOOD. FOR EVERYONE WHO PARTAKES ONLY OF MILK IS UNSKILLED IN THE WORD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, FOR HE IS A BABE."

Heb. 5:1-13

Spiritually, much of the church today are as babies on milk when it comes to understanding the present work of Jesus Christ as "HIGH PRIEST ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK." They know Him as Savior, as the Lamb of God, but not as having risen from the dead as our High Priest mediating a present ministry on earth! It is obvious from the description of this Melchizedek which Abraham met that He was none other than Jesus Christ as verse 2 and 3 plainly depict. Who else can qualify as "having neither beginning of days nor end of life"? Either this is Jesus appearing to Abraham as the Priest of the Most High God or we have a fourth member in the Godhead! Melchizedek is none other than Jesus Christ. Notice Abraham tithed to Melchizedek. Read the account in Genesis and you will see that he tithed in response to Melchizedek bringing out "the bread and the wine" (Gen. 14:18-20)

Do you not see the type and shadow? When we, like Abraham, met our Melchizedek (Jesus Christ), He too brought out "bread and wine" (His body and His Blood) and blessed us with it! (the new birth). Abraham responded with an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. He gave a tenth of all.

"THIS MELCHIZEDEK...PRIEST OF THE MOST HIGH GOD... KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS...KING OF PEACE... WITHOUT FATHER, WITHOUT MOTHER, WITHOUT GENEALOGY, HAVING NEITHER BEGINNING OF DAYS NOR END OF LIFE... LIKE THE SON OF GOD, REMAINS A PRIEST CONTINUALLY." Heb. 7:1-3

ABRAHAM MET MELCHIZEDEK...

MELCHIZEDEK BLESSED ABRAHAM...

MELCHIZEDEK GAVE ABRAHAM BREAD AND WINE...

ABRAHAM GAVE MELCHIZEDEK A TENTH OF ALL...



HAVE YOU MET MELCHIZEDEK...?

HAS MELCHIZEDEK BLESSED YOU?

HAS MELCHIZEDEK GIVEN YOU BREAD AND WINE...?

DO YOU GIVE MELCHIZEDEK A TENTH OF ALL...?

"HERE MORTAL MEN (the Levities) RECEIVE TITHES, BUT THERE HE (Jesus as Melchizedek) RECEIVES THEM, OF WHOM IT IS WITNESSED THAT HE LIVES."

Should not this verse of Hebrews 7:8 be the response of "the sons of Abraham" as Paul calls the church in Galatians 3:7-9?

Notice this last verse (12). There was a CHANGE in the PRIESTHOOD, so of necessity, there was a CHANGE in the law. Neither the priesthood or the law was totally eliminated by the New Covenant as is commonly taught, but rather they were both changed as needed by God. We have a new High Priest after the order of Melchizedek replacing the old order which was according to Levi. Read the rest of Hebrews Chapter 7 and it will tell you all about the superiority of the new priesthood over the old one. The law was also changed. We pay tithes to our High Priest in order to enable Him to fulfill His mandate as High Priest before God the Father:

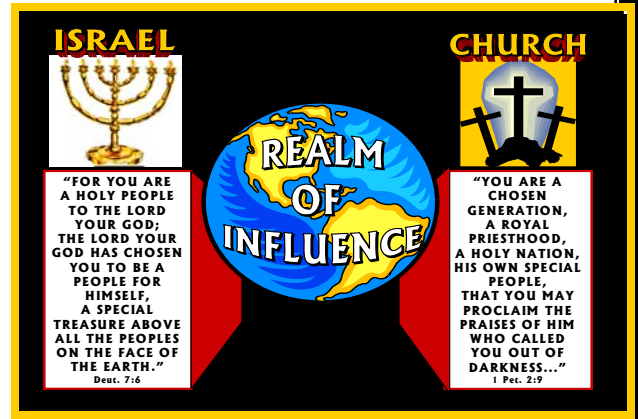
"FOR EVERY HIGH PRIEST IS APPOINTED TO OFFER BOTH GIFTS AND SACRIFICES. THEREFORE IT IS NECESSARY THAT THIS ONE ALSO HAVE SOMETHING TO OFFER." (Heb. 8:3)

When it is to the advantage of the church, it will agree:

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

"JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND FOREVER." Heb. 13:8

It is true that the covenant has changed (Heb.8:13), the High Priest has changed (Heb.7:22-28), the sacrifice has changed (Heb.9:22-26), the temple of God has changed (1 Cor. 6:19), but God has not. What He was to Israel is what He is to the church. He offered salvation to Israel by means of a temple, a sacrifice and the work of a High Priest.



These same ingredients are necessary for salvation in the New Covenant as well. We just have "a better covenant established on better promises" (Heb.8:6). Look at the two passages from Deuteronomy 7:6 and 1 Peter 2:9. They are identical callings on two different peoples under two different covenants. God may change HOW He does something but He does not change WHY He does so. He had purposes for Israel to tithe and He also has the same purposes for His church. Has God changed His mind about His people tithing? The Scriptures from Hebrews state otherwise:

ABRAHAM	CHILDREN OF ISRAEL		THE CHURCH
ABRAM'S COVENANT	THE OLD COVENANT		THE NEW COVENANT
(Gen.17:2-9)	(Ex. 19:5)		(Heb. 8:10-12, 9:9-18)
<p>"FOR THIS MELCHIZEDEK... PRIEST OF THE MOST HIGH GOD, WHO MET ABRAHAM...TO WHOM ABRAHAM GIVE A TENTH PART OF ALL...NOW CONSIDER HOW GREAT THIS MAN WAS, TO WHOM EVEN THE PATRIARCH ABRAHAM GIVE A TENTH..." Heb. 7:1-2</p>	<p>"AND INDEED THOSE WHO ARE OF THE SONS OF LEVI, WHO RECEIVED THE PRIESTHOOD, HAVE A COMMANDMENT TO RECEIVE TITHES FROM THE PEOPLE ACCORDING TO THE LAW..." Heb. 7:5</p>	<p>"FOR THE PRIESTHOOD BEING CHANGED, OF NECESSITY THERE WAS ALSO A CHANGE IN THE LAW." Heb. 7:12</p>	<p>"HERE MORTAL MEN RECEIVE TITHES, BUT THERE HE RECEIVES THEM, OF WHOM IT IS WITNESSED THAT HE LIVES." Heb. 7:8</p> <p>"NOW THIS IS THE MAIN POINT OF THE THINGS WE ARE SAYING: WE HAVE SUCH A HIGH PRIEST... EVERY HIGH PRIEST IS APPOINTED TO OFFER BOTH GIFTS AND SACRIFICES. THEREFORE IT IS NECESSARY THAT THIS ONE ALSO HAVE SOMETHING TO OFFER." Heb. 8:1,3</p>

The testimony of the Scriptures is such that when God makes a covenant with man, man's response is to give a tenth to God.

Before the Old Covenant was made with Israel, God cut a covenant with Abraham. When Abraham met the Priest of the Most High God, Melchizedek, he gave him a tenth of all in response to receiving a blessing and the provision of the "bread and the wine" (Gen.14:17-20). Isn't there something wrong with the concept that the sons of Abraham by faith (Gal.3:7-14), who have received the blessing of Abraham (Gal. 3:14), do not respond as did Abraham in tithing to Melchizedek? Are we not to respond in like manner as father Abraham who is called the father of us all? (Rom. 4:16). Are we to believe we are not called to also tithe by this great type and shadow of Abraham's interaction with Melchizedek? Are we not to tithe to the One who supplies blessing and bread and wine? Has not our Melchizedek also blessed us with the provision of the bread and the wine (the broken body and shed blood of Jesus Christ) as Paul states in 1 Cor. 10:16? Consider how Paul depicts what this great event really portrayed:

"THEREFORE KNOW THAT ONLY THOSE WHO ARE OF FAITH ARE THE SONS OF ABRAHAM. AND THE SCRIPTURE, FORESEEING THAT GOD WOULD JUSTIFY THE NATIONS BY FAITH, PREACHED THE GOSPEL TO ABRAHAM BEFOREHAND, SAYING, 'IN YOU ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED.'" Gal. 3:7-8

God preached the gospel to Abraham through Melchizedek. So thankful was he that he gave the Priest of the Most High God a tenth of all. The church also has the gospel preached to them, and thereby become sons of Abraham, but believe they are delivered from tithing because the Old Covenant was replaced by the New. The problem with that fuzzy thinking is this: The Law of Moses was given 430 years AFTER the covenant God made with Abraham (see Gal. 3:17). Abraham was not under the Law any more than the church is under the Law of Moses! Tithing BEGAN in Genesis, not in Leviticus! The unchanging God carried over into the Old Covenant His law of tithing which originated with Abraham, the "father of us all." We have the same High Priest as Abraham, but we are "delivered" from giving Him our tithes? Hardly!

Because we don't see the word "tithing" in the New Testament apart from what is found in the Book of Hebrews, the church doesn't feel that it is a valid New Testament doctrine. Do you believe in the Trinity? That word does not appear in the New Testament either, but we certainly know the CONCEPT is rampant throughout the New Testament! Do you believe in the rapture? That word does not appear in the New Testament either, but the CONCEPT is plainly taught by Paul in several of his epistles. The same pattern is true of tithing. What does Paul mean by these Scriptures other than the concept of tithing:

**"FOR I DO NOT MEAN THAT OTHERS SHOULD BE EASED AND YOU BURDENED;
BUT BY AN EQUALITY...THAT THERE MAY BE EQUALITY" 2 Cor. 8:13-14
"...THE WHOLE BODY, JOINED AND KNIT TOGETHER BY WHAT EVERY JOINT SUPPLIES,
ACCORDING TO THE EFFECTIVE WORKING BY WHICH EVERY PART DOES ITS SHARE..." Eph. 4:16**

Those are concepts that can only be achieved by the equality of everyone giving their tithes so that the work of the Lord can go forth. Paul argues with the Corinthian believers who obviously were shirking their responsibility to provide for the needs of the apostles and the ministry:

"DO WE HAVE NO RIGHT TO EAT AND DRINK? DO WE HAVE NO RIGHT TO TAKE ALONG A BELIEVING WIFE, AS DO THE OTHER APOSTLES?...WHO EVER GOES TO WAR AT HIS OWN EXPENSE?...DO I SAY THESE THINGS AS A MERE MAN? OR DOES NOT THE LAW SAY THE SAME ALSO? FOR IT IS WRITTEN IN THE LAW OF MOSES, 'YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE AN OX WHILE IT TREADS OUT THE GRAIN.' IS IT OXEN GOD IS CONCERNED ABOUT?...IF WE HAVE SOWN SPIRITUAL THINGS FOR YOU, IS IT A GREAT THING IF WE REAP YOUR MATERIAL THINGS?...EVEN SO THE LORD HAS COMMANDED THAT THOSE WHO PREACH THE GOSPEL SHOULD LIVE FROM THE GOSPEL." 1 Cor. 9:4-14 excerpts

Notice the last phrase of Paul's argument. It is not a "suggestion" but a commandment from God to the people to enable "those who preach the gospel (to) live from the gospel." God's purpose for His covenant people (Old or New) was to provide for those who labor in the necessary things of God's service. Consider His instruction concerning the Levitical priesthood:

"BEHOLD, I MYSELF HAVE TAKEN YOUR BRETHREN THE LEVITIES FROM AMONG THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL; THEY ARE A GIFT TO YOU, GIVEN BY THE LORD TO DO THE WORK OF THE TABERNACLE OF MEETING."
Num. 18:6

"BEHOLD, I HAVE GIVEN THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL ALL THE TITHES IN ISRAEL AS AN INHERITANCE IN RETURN FOR THE WORK WHICH THEY PERFORM, THE WORK OF THE TABERNACLE OF MEETING." Num. 18:21

ISRAEL

2	3	4	5	6	
7	8	9	10	11	12

THE COVENANT PEOPLE OF GOD

1 **"BEHOLD, I HAVE GIVEN THE CHILDREN OF LEVI ALL THE TITHES IN ISRAEL AS AN INHERITANCE IN RETURN FOR THE WORK WHICH THEY PERFORM ... FOR THE TITHES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, WHICH THEY OFFER UP AS A HEAVE OFFERING TO THE LORD, I HAVE GIVEN TO THE LEVITES..."**
Numbers 18:21,24

The unchanging God ordained a small portion (tribe of Levi) of the 12 tribes of Israel to do the work of the tabernacle. The same is true for the church. God has also separated people in the New Covenant as "gifts" from God. Listen to the apostle Paul as he speaks of the giving of the fivefold ministry and its purposes:

CHURCH

2	3	4	5	6	
7	8	9	10	11	12

THE COVENANT PEOPLE OF GOD

1 **"IF WE HAVE SOWN SPIRITUAL THINGS FOR YOU, IS IT A GREAT THING IF WE REAP YOUR MATERIAL THINGS?
...EVEN SO THE LORD HAS COMMANDED THAT THOSE WHO PREACH THE GOSPEL SHOULD LIVE FROM THE GOSPEL."**
1 Cor. 9:9-14

"BUT TO EACH ONE OF US GRACE WAS GIVEN ACCORDING TO THE MEASURE OF CHRIST'S GIFT....AND HE HIMSELF GAVE SOME TO BE APOSTLES, SOME PROPHETS, SOME EVANGELISTS, AND SOME PASTORS AND TEACHERS, FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF MINISTRY, FOR THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST...THAT WE SHOULD NO LONGER BE CHILDREN TOSSED TO AND FRO AND CARRIED ABOUT BY EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE, BY THE TRICKERY OF MEN, IN THE CUNNING CRAFTINESS BY WHICH THEY LIE IN WAIT TO DECEIVE, BUT... (WE) MAY GROW UP IN ALL THINGS INTO HIM...FROM WHOM, THE WHOLE BODY, JOINED AND KNIT TOGETHER BY WHAT EVERY JOINT SUPPLIES, ACCORDING TO THE EFFECTIVE WORKING BY WHICH EVERY PART DOES ITS SHARE, CAUSING GROWTH OF THE BODY FOR THE EDIFYING OF ITSELF IN LOVE. " Eph. 4:7-16 excerpts

Can this ministry be done without the consistent support (financially) of the members that they are called to serve? Should only part of the body be financially burdened while the other part is at ease to do with their money what they please? Is it not just and fair that the fivefold ministry be supported EQUALLY by "what every joint supplies" and by which "every part does its share"? Can anything be more equal than each member bringing their tithes into the storehouse as they did under the Levitical priesthood?

What did God do to those under the Law when they failed to support the Levites and allowed God's house to be neglected? Here is what He did, and I believe is what He continues to do to His people that repeat the sins of the children of Israel:

"IS IT TIME FOR YOU YOURSELVES TO DWELL IN YOUR paneled HOUSES, AND THIS TEMPLE TO LIE IN RUINS?...CONSIDER YOUR WAYS! YOU HAVE SOWN MUCH, AND BRING IN LITTLE; YOU EAT, BUT DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH; YOU DRINK, BUT YOU ARE NOT FILLED WITH DRINK; YOU CLOTHE YOURSELVES, BUT NO ONE IS WARM; AND HE WHO EARNS WAGES, EARNS WAGES TO PUT INTO A BAG WITH HOLES....CONSIDER YOUR WAYS!...YOU LOOKED FOR MUCH, BUT INDEED IT CAME TO LITTLE; AND WHEN YOU BROUGHT IT HOME, I BLEW IT AWAY. WHY?...BECAUSE OF MY HOUSE THAT IS IN RUINS, WHILE EVERY ONE OF YOU RUNS TO HIS OWN HOUSE...I CALLED FOR A DROUGHT...ON ALL THE LABOR OF YOUR HANDS." Haggai 1:5-11

"WILL A MAN ROB GOD? YET YOU HAVE ROBBED ME...IN TITHES AND OFFERINGS. YOU ARE CURSED WITH A CURSE, FOR YOU HAVE ROBBED ME, EVEN THIS WHOLE NATION. BRING ALL THE TITHES INTO THE STOREHOUSE THAT THERE MAY BE FOOD IN MY HOUSE, AND PROVE ME NOW IN THIS,...IF I WILL NOT OPEN FOR YOU THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN AND POUR OUT FOR YOU SUCH A BLESSING THAT THERE WILL NOT BE ROOM ENOUGH TO RECEIVE IT. AND I WILL REBUKE THE DEVOURER FOR YOUR SAKES... AND ALL THE NATIONS WILL CALL YOU BLESSED..." Mal. 3:8-12 excerpts

God cursed His own people with a curse when they did not bring their tithes into the house of the Lord. They were spending their tithes on their own houses. God offered to replace their curse with His abundant blessing, but only if they would put Him first in their finances.

The Book of Deuteronomy devotes a whole chapter to tithing. Let me give you some applicable highlights to consider from our unchanging God:

"TAKE SOME OF THE FIRST OF ALL...PUT IT IN A BASKET AND GO TO THE PLACE WHERE THE LORD YOUR GOD CHOOSES TO MAKE HIS NAME ABIDE...THEN THE PRIEST SHALL TAKE THE BASKET OUT OF YOUR HAND AND SET IT DOWN BEFORE THE ALTAR OF THE LORD YOUR GOD. AND YOU SHALL ANSWER AND SAY BEFORE THE LORD YOUR GOD...'AND NOW, BEHOLD, I HAVE BROUGHT THE FIRSTFRUITS (TITHE) OF THE LAND WHICH YOU, O LORD, HAVE GIVEN ME. THEN YOU SHALL SET IT BEFORE THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND WORSHIP BEFORE THE LORD YOUR GOD. SO YOU SHALL REJOICE IN EVERY GOOD THING WHICH THE LORD YOUR GOD HAS GIVEN TO YOU AND YOUR HOUSE...THEN YOU SHALL SAY BEFORE THE LORD YOUR GOD: 'I HAVE REMOVED THE HOLY TITHE FROM MY HOUSE, AND ALSO HAVE GIVEN THEM TO THE LEVITE...ACCORDING TO ALL YOUR COMMANDMENTS WHICH YOU HAVE COMMANDED ME;...I HAVE NOT EATEN ANY OF IT...NOR HAVE I REMOVED ANY OF IT FOR ANY UNCLEAN USE, NOR GIVEN ANY OF IT FOR THE DEAD. I HAVE OBEYED THE VOICE OF THE LORD MY GOD, AND HAVE DONE ACCORDING TO ALL THAT YOU HAVE COMMANDED ME. LOOK DOWN FROM YOUR HOLY HABITATION, FROM HEAVEN, AND BLESS YOUR PEOPLE ISRAEL AND THE LAND WHICH YOU HAVE GIVEN US..." Deuteronomy 26 excerpts

And we don't think that this holy act of worship is a pattern for the church to emulate? Are we "delivered" from such tangible acts of worship? Again, HARDLY! Paul speaks of New Testament giving:

"BUT THIS I SAY; HE WHO SOWS SPARINGLY WILL ALSO REAP SPARINGLY, AND HE WHO SOWS BOUNTIFULLY WILL ALSO REAP BOUNTIFULLY. SO LET EACH ONE GIVE AS HE PURPOSES IN HIS HEART, NOT GRUDGINGLY OR OF NECESSITY; FOR GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER. AND GOD IS ABLE TO MAKE ALL GRACE ABUNDANT TOWARD YOU, THAT YOU, ALWAYS HAVING ALL SUFFICIENCY IN ALL THINGS, HAVE AN ABUNDANCE FOR EVERY GOOD WORK...NOW MAY HE...SUPPLY AND MULTIPLY THE SEED YOU HAVE SOWN AND INCREASE THE FRUITS OF YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." 2 Cor. 9:6-10 excerpts

Notice the repeated use of "all" in the passages above. God wants to bless His people so that they always have all sufficiency in all things. Why so? That we may have an abundance for every good work" God's provision for us is to enable us to develop the ability to become GIVERS instead of GETTERS. Like Paul instructed the rich, be willing to share and ready to give (1 Tim. 6:17-19)

The tsunami disaster opened golden windows of opportunity for us as God's people to use our abundance to give seed to the sower. (see my tsunami newsletter on our website). God did not cause this event. It was Satan who meant it for evil but God is working it for good. We need to be in a position to be able to be willing to share and ready to give. This is God's purpose for our abundance.

We have little space in this newsletter left and I have much more to say. What I will share with you on our final page will be a short synopsis of God's threefold purposes for us as His people to follow His plan pertaining to the giving of our tithes and offerings. I am going to recommend the DVD series that is advertised on the next page for a fuller explanation of my final thoughts to you in this newsletter.

1. **HONOR**
GOD IN HEAVEN

2. **HONOR**
GOD'S WORK
ON EARTH

3. HAVE GOD
HONOR
THE WORK
OF OUR HANDS
ON EARTH

"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.

Luke 11:2-4

Jesus not only taught His disciples how to pray by using the outline of The Lord's Prayer, but also this prayer contains the three priorities/reasons and motivation for giving!

1. **HONOR**
GOD IN HEAVEN

2. **HONOR**
GOD'S WORK
ON EARTH

3. HAVE GOD
HONOR
THE WORK
OF OUR HANDS
ON EARTH

"HONOR THE LORD WITH YOUR POSSESSIONS AND WITH THE FIRSTFRUITS OF ALL YOUR INCREASE..."
Prov. 3:9

"LET THE ELDERS WHO RULE WELL BE COUNTED WORTHY OF DOUBLE HONOR, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO LABOR IN THE WORD AND DOCTRINE. FOR THE SCRIPTURE SAYS, 'YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE AN OX WHILE IT TREADS OUT THE GRAIN...'"
1 Tim. 5:17-18

"THOSE WHO HONOR ME I WILL HONOR, AND THOSE WHO DESPISE ME SHALL BE LIGHTLY ESTEEMED."
1 Sam. 2:30

The Lord's prayer functions from the bottom to the top as to establishing priorities for the believer. The phrases "give us" and "forgive us" and "lead us" and "deliver us" are pleas to God to give us all sufficiency in all things. It is the lowest form of prayer because it focuses upon only our own needs. Tithing, when it is taught in the church, usually focuses upon this low level of our needs, teaching that we should "give to get back." It is not wrong as the Lord's Prayer models. However, there are higher reasons to tithe.

Look at the second level of the Lord's Prayer and notice the emphasis switches from focusing upon our needs to what could be labeled as God's needs ("Your kingdom come" and "Your will be done"). This kind of giving brings honor to God's work on earth. We don't "muzzle the ox while it treads out the grain." We see to it that the house of the Lord is filled with the tithes of His people so that there is no lack of funds to accomplish the furthering of the Kingdom of God and the will of God on earth. The gospel may be free, but it is not free to proclaim it. For us to fulfill "Your kingdom come and Your will be done" it requires the consistent and faithful giving of our tithes and our free-will offerings.

The third level of the Lord's Prayer is simply to hallow (bring honor) to the name of our Heavenly Father. The highest reason to tithe is to honor God. That is why Proverbs tells us to "Honor the Lord with your possessions and with the firstfruits of all your increase..." (Prov. 3:9). God is not honored when we give Him our leftovers. God is a God worthy of our firstfruits. Consider how He reproves Israel (and His church):

"A SON HONORS HIS FATHER, AND A SERVANT HIS MASTER. IF THEN I AM THE FATHER, WHERE IS MY HONOR? AND IF I AM A MASTER, WHERE IS MY REVERENCE? SAYS THE LORD OF HOSTS TO YOU PRIESTS THAT DESPISE MY NAME." Mal. 1:6

This is the intro into the Book of Malachi. We looked earlier at this book in which God accused His people of robbing Him by failing to give their tithes and offerings. Here were Levitical priests that God accuses of "despising My name" rather than bringing HONOR to His name. We too, as Peter showed us are a holy priesthood to our God. As that priesthood, are we among those who are honoring God with our tithes and offerings? SELAH! (think on that!)

The contents of our last newsletter, as well as the two that will follow this present one, were taken from

my latest series on the Book of Deuteronomy. I highly recommend this teaching for a more in-depth study of what has been presented in this newsletter.

DEUTERONOMY

PRINCIPLES FOR
RIGHTEOUS LIVING

"WHAT GREAT NATION IS THERE THAT HAS SUCH STATUTES AND RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENTS AS ARE IN ALL THIS LAW...?"
Deuteronomy 4:8

by Pastor Randy Shupe

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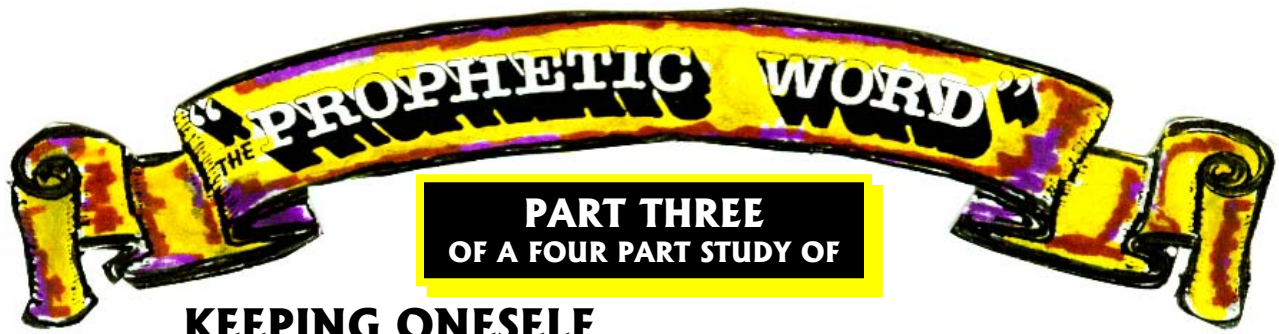
DEUTERONOMY

PRINCIPLES FOR
RIGHTEOUS LIVING

Deuteronomy holds the keys to living righteously in the midst of a lawless and perverse society. This study centers upon four of God's law's given to Israel that were designed to make them to be a noticeably sanctified and blessed people (Deut. 4:5-8).

This study deals with the principles of blessing contained within:

1. THE MORAL LAWS OF GOD (Deut. 5)
2. THE MONETARY LAWS OF GOD (Deut. 26)
3. THE DIETARY LAWS OF GOD (Deut. 14)
4. THE LAW OF THE FEASTS (Deut. 16)



**PART THREE
OF A FOUR PART STUDY OF**

KEEPING ONESELF

FROM THE INFLUENCE OF

THE

WICKED

ONE



**"WE KNOW THAT...
THE WHOLE WORLD
LIES UNDER
THE SWAY
(INFLUENCE)
OF
THE WICKED ONE..."**

1 John 5:19



**"WE KNOW THAT...
HE WHO HAS BEEN
BORN OF GOD
KEEPS (GUARDS) HIMSELF,
AND
THE WICKED ONE
DOES NOT TOUCH HIM."**

1 John 5:18

This is the third part of a four-part study dedicated to revealing how we can fulfill the mandate to guard ourselves in such a way that Satan, the wicked one, and his whole host of demonic forces described in the Sixth Chapter of Ephesians as principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness, and a whole host of spiritual wickedness dwelling in heavenly places, will not be able to "touch" or influence the one who has been born of God and knows how to guard (keep) himself.

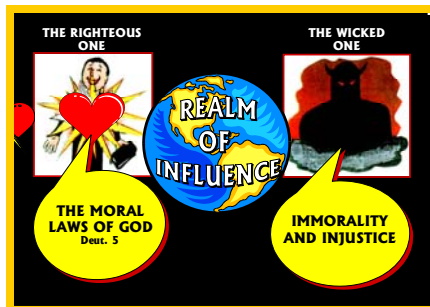
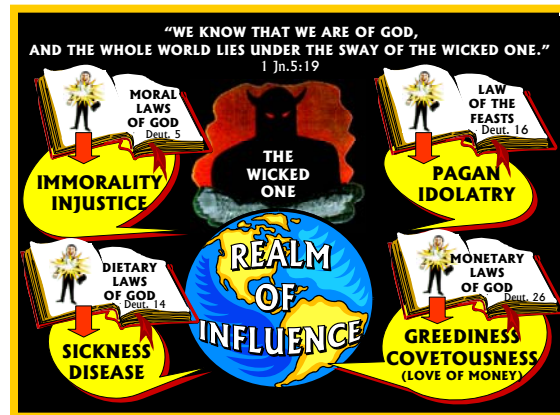
In the 1950's there was a television series entitled "The Untouchables." It was an on-going story of special Federal agents so dedicated to their mission that they could not be bribed or coerced by the mafia they were sworn to destroy. Such is the mission of the church. We too should be labeled by satanic forces as "The Untouchables." The newsletters in this present series are dedicated to showing us how we can live in such a way that the wicked one does not touch us!

These four newsletters focus upon four sets of laws taken from four complete chapters of the book of Deuteronomy

(the moral law-Deut.5, the monetary law –Deut. 26, the dietary law-Deut.14, and the law of the feasts-Deut. 16).

They are God's DEFENSE for the believer against all of the sway and influence that Satan has upon this present world. →

If you are going to successfully guard yourself against what dominates this world, you are going to have to embrace faith in the principles that are behind these laws of God. They were meant to be a line of defense against the devious ways of the wicked one!



THE MORAL LAWS OF GOD

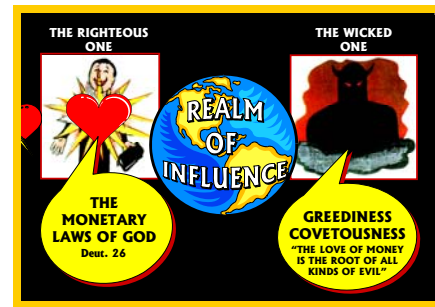
The moral laws of God (the Ten Commandments) which He gave to the children of Israel at Mt. Sinai were given AFTER God rescued them from Egypt. That deliverance from Egypt is a type and shadow of our deliverance from the world by means of the new birth. The point is simply that the moral laws of God were given for the people God delivered out of "Egypt" (the world.) Christianity in America is trying to force-feed those laws down the throats of unbelievers under the premise that this nation was created for Christians as "One Nation Under God."

God wants His laws to change HIS people. He had no trouble getting His people out of Egypt, but He could not get Egypt out of His people because they rejected the rule of God's laws over them. They died in the wilderness bearing the testimony, that "With most of them God was not well-pleased" (1 Cor. 10:5).

We have no commission from God to eradicate the immorality that is in the un-regenerated people of America. God's moral laws were given to make us a different people than those around us. The church is to be a people governed by moral living among a people governed by immorality. Pure and undefiled religion according to the apostle James consists of "keeping oneself unspotted from the world" (Jm. 1:27). The law was not given to remove the spots from the world, but rather to keep the Christian unspotted from the world. The moral law of God is the Christian's first line of defense against Satan's immoral influence on the whole world.

In our last two newsletters we examined two of those four sets of laws and the satanic influences that they are designed to counteract.

Let me give you a very brief synopsis of the concepts presented in those two newsletters:



THE MONETARY LAWS OF GOD

The monetary laws of God (tithes and offerings) were given as acts of expressed worship of a people who loved their God. Read Deuteronomy Chapter 26 and you will see those acts of worshipful giving being carried out.

The world thrives on "the love of money" which Paul goes on to say "is a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Tim. 6:10). God uses our willingness or unwillingness to give as a test of faithfulness (Luke 16:10-13).

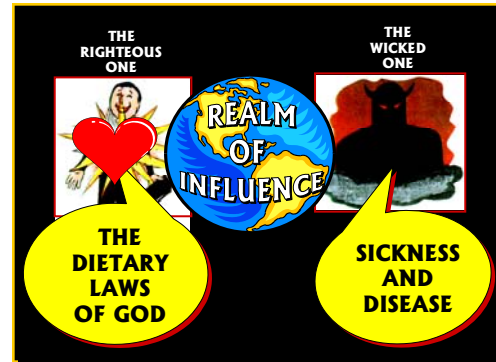
Satan's influence over the world is producing a people who are captivated by a spirit of GETTING. God, through His monetary laws, is seeking to produce a people motivated by a spirit of GIVING.

Tithing did not originate with the giving of the Law of Moses. Both Abraham and Jacob were tithing way back in Genesis, four hundred and thirty years before the giving of the Levitical Law. (Gen.14:18-20, 28:20-22).

Abraham tithed to Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High God (Gen.14:18). Hebrews Chapter 7 reveals that this Melchizedek was Jesus Christ who is "our High Priest" (Heb. 8:1). Yes, the church has a High Priest, and is also considered by God as "a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God" (1 Pet. 2:5). One of those "acceptable sacrifices well-pleasing to God is our giving" (Phil. 4:18). Our last newsletter establishes that tithing is still the responsibility of New Covenant believers. Please read last month's newsletter as well as the "Tsunami" newsletter that is posted on our website (www.PastorRandyShupe.com).

In this newsletter we want to examine the third of the four sets of laws found in the Book of Deuteronomy that can be used as a first-line defense against the sway of the wicked one and the devices that he employs to dominate and control the whole earth. I want to examine the dietary laws of Deuteronomy and Leviticus as being God's preventative medicine against Satan's use of sickness and disease to rob, kill and destroy the inhabitants of the earth. Jesus said of Satan:

"THE THIEF DOES NOT COME EXCEPT TO ROB, AND TO KILL, AND TO DESTROY. I HAVE COME THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE, AND THAT THEY MAY HAVE IT MORE ABUNDANTLY." Jn. 10:10.



To see that the abundant life that Jesus speaks of above is about quality, physical life as well as imparting spiritual life. We need only to add the summarization of Jesus' ministry found in Acts:

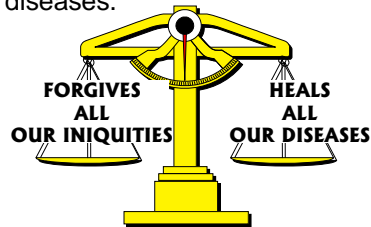
"HOW GOD ANOINTED JESUS OF NAZARETH WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND WITH POWER, WHO WENT ABOUT DOING GOOD AND HEALING ALL WHO WERE OPPRESSED BY THE DEVIL, FOR GOD WAS WITH HIM." Acts 10:38

Matthew's gospel also bears witness to this mission of Christ:

"...THEY BROUGHT TO HIM MANY WHO WERE DEMON POSSESSED. AND HE CAST OUT THE SPIRITS WITH A WORD, AND HEALED ALL WHO WERE SICK, THAT IT MIGHT BE FULFILLED WHICH WAS SPOKEN BY ISAIAH THE PROPHET, SAYING 'HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES AND BORE OUR SICKNESSES.'" Mat. 8:16-17



Doctrinally, this is a very important Psalm as it imparts what the will of God is for us. God does not only "forgive ALL our iniquities" but also equally stated is the fact that He "heals ALL our diseases."



This twofold benefit that we are not to forget is how God redeems our life from the destruction which comes by the hand of Satan, the one whom the Bible calls "the Destroyer" (1 Cor. 10:10).

However, it is this last verse (vs.5) that brings us to the subject of God's dietary laws. Although God is always willing and able to "heal all our diseases," this verse speaks of what is needful to PREVENT sickness and disease from ever laying hold of the child of God.

God wants to SATISFY OUR MOUTHS WITH GOOD THINGS so that, or in order that, our youth may be renewed like the eagle! My wife and I have followed the principles of the dietary law for over thirty years. I was not even a Christian when we began to observe them for needful health reasons. Now at the age of 72 and 65, we are healthier than we were in our late twenties and thirties! It required that we would allow God to satisfy our mouths with what He considers to be good things as spelled out in His dietary laws. Satan wants to satisfy our mouths with things that look so good, and taste so good, but in reality are deceptive food designed to rob, kill and destroy us of our physical health. The psalmist declares in Psalm 17:4:

"BY THE WORDS OF YOUR LIPS, I HAVE KEPT MYSELF FROM THE PATHS OF THE DESTROYER."

For some, this message is going to be "hard to swallow." I want to talk to you about what we ought to swallow and what God's Word (the words of His lips) states we should not be swallowing if we want physical health to follow us all the days of our life. Ever heard this saying?

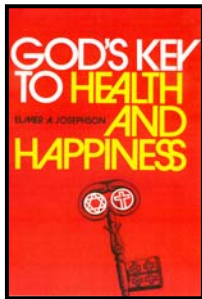
"AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF CURE"

I have found it to be far easier to walk in a way that maintains health than it is to be cured from the consequences of yielding to the deceptive food Satan merchandizes to rob, kill and destroy us.

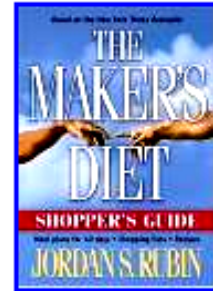
**"WHEN YOU SIT DOWN TO EAT...CONSIDER CAREFULLY WHAT IS BEFORE YOU;
AND PUT A KNIFE TO YOUR THROAT IF YOU ARE A MAN GIVEN TO APPETITE.
DO NOT DESIRE HIS DELICACIES, FOR THEY ARE DECEPTIVE FOOD." Prov. 23:1-3**

What I am depicting in this chart is a modern-day practical application of what we find recorded in Proverbs 23:1-3. I am amazed at the degree of what is listed as "appetizers" in most restaurants are the forbidden items God lists in the Dietary Laws of Deuteronomy and Leviticus.

God created all creatures, but all creatures were not created for food as we shall unfold. The creatures that God lists that are not to be eaten all fall into a category called "scavengers." Such creatures were created by God to police the earth. They eat the dead and the dying, the rotten and the putrid, so that the earth is not plagued with disease. Shell fish police the bottom of the ocean. Pigs, by nature will eat any and everything you give them. Ask a proud pig farmer!



I am going to recommend to you either of, or both of these books to help get the point across. God is speaking to many of His servants about the health benefits of the dietary laws as preventative medicine against Satan's use of deceptive foods to "rob, kill and destroy" whosoever is willing to succumb to his deceptions.



One is an old book and the other is very new. *God's Key to Health and Happiness* (Elmer A. Josephson) is the book that launched my wife and I on the path of following God's dietary laws some thirty years ago. It is out of print (naturally). However, we have taken the liberty to reprint it. If you want a copy and you cannot find a used one, you can order it from our ministry for \$ 9.95. This book will turn your world upside down (it did me). It was written by a Baptist minister who was dying from stomach cancer. Desperate, he even tried the charismatic faith healers, but to no avail. Coming across Deuteronomy's list of dietary laws of what was clean and unclean, he decided to give it a try, because he realized that he was eating everything on the "no-no" side of the list. Forty years later, (still alive and well) he wrote this book to attest that God's wisdom is better than man's! He was progressively healed as he ate what God said was good for him and avoided what God said was not. The statistics in this book pertaining to the myriad of diseases and worms carried by the pig is astounding! It was this statistical information that persuaded me as an unbeliever to make the switch. This is a book about far more than just the dietary law. It deals with the self-destructive side of sugar and sodas and a lot of other things that Satan has invented to achieve his goal to rob, kill and destroy the people of God!

Jordin Rubin's book, *The Maker's Diet* has sold 1.2 million copies since it came out last year. It is a similar story to that of Elmer Josephson who wrote *God's Key to Health and Happiness*. Rubin tells how he recovered from Crohn's disease by avoiding pork and shellfish (see Reader's Digest, August 2005, page 182).

Healing and health is there for the taking, but it will cost you. Your Christian friends will tell you that you are placing yourself under the legalistic bondage of the Law. Ironically, these two authors would tell you rather that by means of God's dietary laws they came to know the truth that set them free (Jn. 8:32). To embrace this message you are going to have to be fully persuaded to be able to stand up under well-meaning peer pressure from people who love you, but may be loving you to death. These two books will help convince you. The remainder of this newsletter is dedicated to convincing you from the Scriptures that this is STILL God's plan for His people!

"APPETIZERS"

SHRIMP COCKTAIL
RAW OYSTERS
LOBSTER TAILS
CALAMARI
SNOW CRAB
CRAB DIP

BABY BACK PORK RIBS
CREAMY CRAB SPINACH DIP
MEDITERRANEAN MUSSELS
BLOOD SAUSAGE
PORK ROLLS
PRAWNS
ESCARGOTS



**"WHEN YOU SIT DOWN TO EAT...
CONSIDER CAREFULLY WHAT IS SET BEFORE YOU...
DO NOT DESIRE... DELICACIES,
FOR THEY ARE DECEPTIVE FOOD." Prov. 23:1-3**

God gave the dietary law as a practical manifestation of sanctification (how to be set apart, holy in conduct). Consider these two passages, one from Deuteronomy and the other from Leviticus which preface the listing of what God said were the things that His people were to eat and not eat.

The dietary laws, like the moral laws, were given to God's people so that they would be different; light in the midst of darkness, health in the midst of sickness and disease!

Notice Leviticus' reference of not "defiling yourselves" by eating what God has forbidden. Let us look at another story about a man of God who was concerned about not "defiling himself" in the same manner.

This is the story of Daniel and his friends who were in captivity in Babylon, chosen by the pagan king to receive refined education and then function in the courts of the king. Here are excerpts:

"...AND THE KING APPOINTED FOR THEM A DAILY PROVISION OF THE KING'S DELICACIES...BUT DANIEL PURPOSED IN HIS HEART THAT HE WOULD NOT DEFILE HIMSELF WITH THE PORTION OF THE KING'S DELICACIES...HE REQUESTED OF THE CHIEF OF THE EUNUCHS THAT HE MIGHT NOT DEFILE HIMSELF...PLEASE TEST YOUR SERVANTS FOR TEN DAYS, AND LET THEM GIVE US VEGETABLES TO EAT AND WATER TO DRINK. THEN LET OUR COUNTENANCES BE EXAMINED BEFORE YOU, AND THE COUNTENANCES OF THE YOUNG MEN WHO EAT THE PORTION OF THE KING'S DELICACIES...SO HE CONSENTED WITH THEM IN THIS MATTER, AND TESTED THEM TEN DAYS. AND AT THE END OF THE TEN DAYS THEIR COUNTENANCE APPEARED BETTER AND FATTER IN FLESH THAN ALL THE YOUNG MEN WHO ATE THE PORTION OF THE KING'S DELICACIES. THUS THE STEWARD TOOK AWAY THEIR PORTION OF DELICACIES AND THE WINE THAT THEY WERE TO DRINK, AND GAVE THEM VEGETABLES." Daniel 1:5-16 excerpts

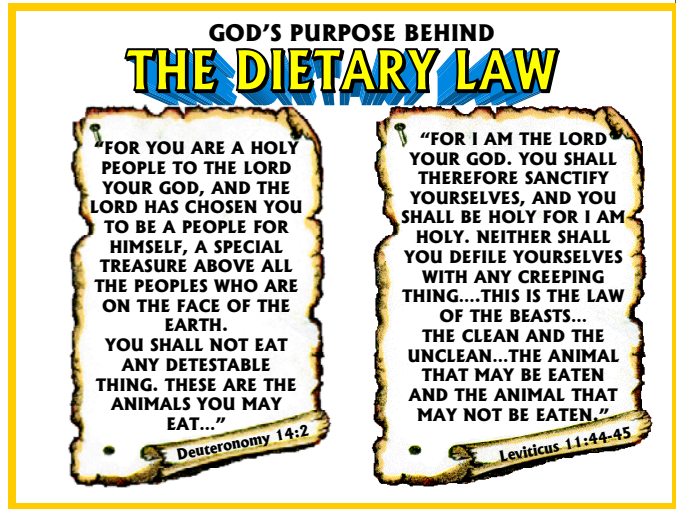
It has been said, "You are what you eat." Daniel obviously believed this to be true. Being under the dietary law, he did not wish to defile himself with the king's delicacies. Obviously, the king though he was doing Daniel and his friends a favor by allowing them to eat what the king eats. This is the deception Proverbs was warning us of earlier:

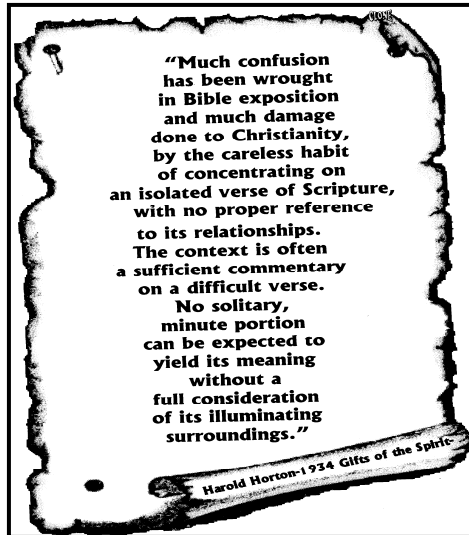
"WHEN YOU SIT DOWN TO EAT...CONSIDER CAREFULLY WHAT IS BEFORE YOU; AND PUT A KNIFE TO YOUR THROAT IF YOU ARE A MAN GIVEN TO APPETITE. DO NOT DESIRE HIS DELICACIES, FOR THEY ARE DECEPTIVE FOOD." Prov. 23:1-3

The real moral to this story of Daniel and his friends is the results of the "ten-day test" of not eating the king's deceptive food! You could tell a difference in their outward appearance in only ten days - WOW! It really is true, "we are what we eat"! Is this Old Testament story among the things that Romans 15 tells us "were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope"? (Rom. 15:4). Or, are we, as some report, to ignore such testimonies of people who were "under the Law" as not being applicable for us that are now "under grace?" No dear friends, this account was written for our learning. The moral to this story could well be stated as "You are what you eat."

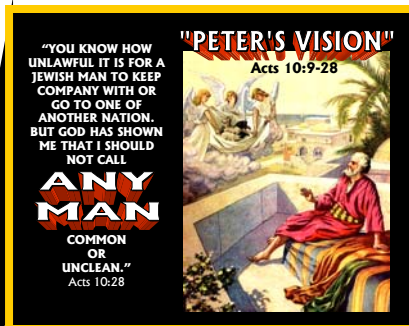
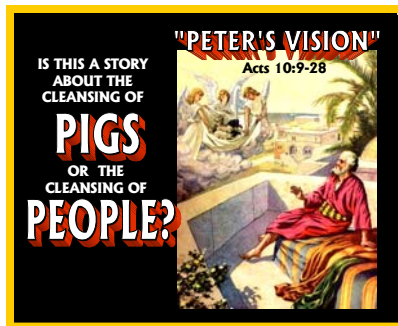
An old saint of God (Smith Wigglesworth) once asked his hosts who were feeding him morning, noon and night a constant diet of pork products, whether it was possible for God to bless under grace, what He cursed under Law. Amazingly, this is the very doctrinal scenario that God's people are being fed about the non-applicableness of the dietary law. The theory seems to be that when God instated the New Covenant and abolished the Old, that somehow the pig along with shellfish and all the other things that God once forbid His people to eat, have suddenly been cleansed along with the cleaning of the sins of the people of the New Covenant. What is the scriptural basis of this revelation? Without hesitation, advocates of this theory will point you to Peter's vision of the sheet in the Book of Acts to prove that God has now put his divine "USDA" stamp of approval on all things that were previously unclean. Is this truly the message God states in this event in Acts 10? Let us take a scrutinizing look at those passages and honestly seek to answer the question,

IS THIS A STORY ABOUT THE CLEANSING OF "PIGS" OR "PEOPLE?" →





Read the story of Peter's vision IN ITS CONTEXTUAL SETTING as the above exhortation from Harold Horton advises, and you will draw the proper conclusion to the meaning of this vision as did Peter himself.



Peter had to think about what this vision might mean (Acts 10:17). This implies he did not consider its meaning to be a literal cleansing of what had been previously forbidden meat for a Jew. The moral to the story of Peter's vision was the fact that God did not want the Jews to consider the Gentiles as "unclean" any longer. This detailed account in Acts 10 and 11 is recounted again by Peter before the apostles in Jerusalem in chapter 15:

"MEN AND BRETHREN, YOU KNOW THAT A GOOD WHILE AGO GOD CHOSE AMONG US, THAT BY MY MOUTH THE GENTILES SHOULD HEAR THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL AND BELIEVE...GOD ACKNOWLEDGED THEM, BY GIVING THEM THE HOLY SPIRIT JUST AS HE DID TO US, AND MADE NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN US AND THEM, PURIFYING THEIR HEARTS BY FAITH." Acts 15:7-9

Previously, the Law prevented a Jew from darkening the door of a Gentile for they were an unclean people (Acts 10:28). The vision was an ILLUSTRATION to get the point across. Peter "was very hungry and wanted to eat" (Acts 10:10). God used this opportunity to illustrate to Peter that salvation was also going to be offered to the unclean Gentiles. This is a story about the cleansing of people – not pigs! It is a travesty that God's people today, mostly Gentile converts, would draw any other conclusion to this story than what the Scriptures emphatically state:

"GOD HAS SHOWN ME THAT I SHOULD NOT CALL ANY MAN COMMON OR UNCLEAN." Acts 10:28

10 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, **2** a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. **3** About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius!" **4** And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it, lord?" So he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. **5** "Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. **6** "He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do." **7** And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. **8** So when he had explained all these things to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Peter's Vision

9 The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter

went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour.

10 Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance

11 and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth.

12 In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air.

13 And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."

14 But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean."

15 And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common."

16 This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.

Summoned to Caesarea

17 Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate.

18 And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there.

19 While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you.

20 "Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."

21 Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, "Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?"

22 And they said, "Cornelius the centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you."

23 Then he invited them in and lodged them. On the next day Peter went away with them, and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

Peter Meets Cornelius

24 And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends.

25 As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him.

26 But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I myself am also a man."

27 And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together.

28 Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

29 "Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?"

30 And Cornelius said, "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,

31 "and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God.

32 'Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you.'

33 "So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God."

"WE ALSO HAVE THE PROPHETIC WORD MADE MORE SURE, WHICH YOU WILL DO WELL TO HEED AS A LIGHT THAT SHINES IN A DARK PLACE..." 2 Pet. 1:19

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST



"...A REBELLIOUS PEOPLE, WHO WALK IN A WAY THAT IS NOT GOOD, ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN THOUGHTS... WHO EAT SWINE'S FLESH, AND THE BROTH OF ABOMINABLE THINGS IS IN THEIR VESSELS..."
Isa. 65:4

Look at these three prophetic events recorded as light enabling us to do well by heeding its content. If indeed the message of Peter's vision was that all previously unclean animals are now cleansed and fit for consumption by New Covenant believers, why then does the "prophetic word" bear a starkly different message?

These two detailed passages from Isaiah Chapters 65 and 66 are prophetic pictures of the time of Christ's return to judge the whole earth. (Read them in their contextual setting)

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST



FOR THE LORD WILL COME WITH FIRE... TO RENDER HIS ANGER... HIS REBUKE... THE LORD WILL JUDGE ALL FLESH... THOSE... EATING SWINE'S FLESH AND THE ABOMINATION AND THE MOUSE, SHALL BE CONSUMED TOGETHER, SAYS THE LORD."
Isa. 66:15-17

Why is Jesus upset with people who are "eating swine's flesh" and putting "the broth of abominable things in their vessels" if Peter's vision taught that now, under grace, they were perfectly OK with God to eat? When the present church age ends with the rapture of the faithful, does God then revert to instituting once again the dietary law only upon the people found in the last days of the tribulation or in fact, is it not rather that He has never lifted His dietary laws from His people? And why, we must ask, is mystery Babylon, which is about to be destroyed at the end of the tribulation, described as a city that is a habitation for "every unclean and hated bird" if Peter's vision taught that they were now all cleansed?

"Much confusion has been wrought in Bible exposition and much damage done to Christianity, by the careless habit of concentrating on an isolated verse of Scripture, with no proper reference to its relationships. The context is often a sufficient commentary on a difficult verse. No solitary, minute portion can be expected to yield its meaning without a full consideration of its illuminating surroundings."

Harold Horton-1934 Gifts of the Spirit

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

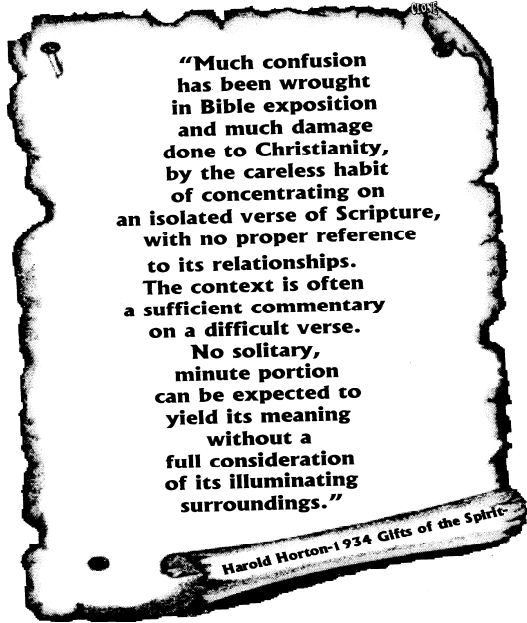


"BABYLON THE GREAT IS FALLEN, IS FALLEN, AND HAS BECOME A HABITATION OF DEMONS, A PRISON FOR EVERY FOUL SPIRIT, AND A CAGE FOR EVERY UNCLEAN AND HATED BIRD!"
Rev. 18:2

Harold Horton's exhortation is worthy of consideration once more. We cannot jump into the middle of Peter's vision and take out the verses like "Rise, Peter; kill and eat" and "What God has cleansed you must not call common," and draw hasty conclusions such as is being done with this vision.

The only way to approach the Scriptures and draw the proper conclusions is to follow Paul's counsel:

"...NOT IN WORDS WHICH MAN'S WISDOM TEACHES BUT WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT TEACHES, COMPARING SPIRITUAL THINGS WITH SPIRITUAL." 1 Cor. 2:13



Let us apply Harold Horton’s exhortation to yet another passage of Scripture that is equally misapplied as is presently being done with selected portions of Peter’s vision. Wrong conclusions are the result of not considering what is being said in light of context.

Here is a verse that is also being widely used to support the idea that food itself is not what defiles a man, therefore it really doesn’t matter what you eat.

**“NOT WHAT GOES INTO THE MOUTH
DEFILES A MAN;
BUT WHAT COMES OUT OF HIS MOUTH,
THIS DEFILES A MAN.”** Mat. 15:11

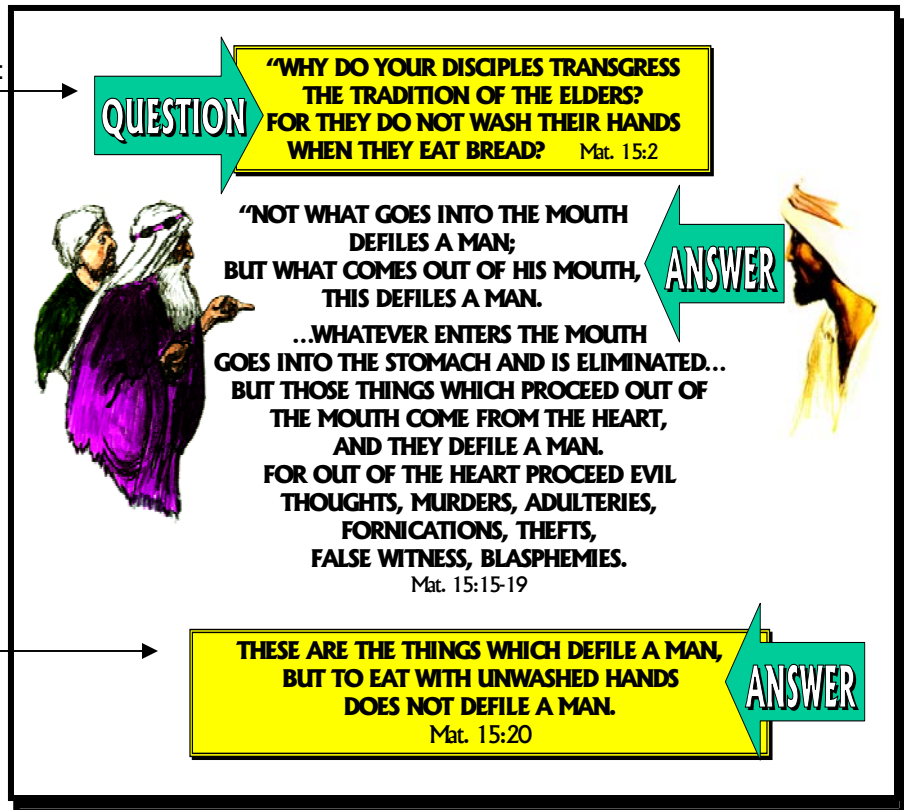
Isolate this verse and it seems to support the idea that Jesus is saying it doesn’t matter what you eat, for it is not food that defiles a person. Let us now apply Harold Horton’s exhortation to the contextual setting of these verses and see if it changes the meaning of this isolated verse altogether.

Look at Matthew 15:2 which is the opening statement that caused Jesus to say what He did in 15:11:

What was in question in these passages is not WHAT they were eating, but HOW they were doing it. Jesus’ disciples were not following the man-made tradition of the elders of washing their hands before eating. The issue here is eating with “dirty hands” not eating “dirty meat.”

Were not these the Pharisees raising this issue? Do you think that they, or Jesus, were breaking the dietary law at this point? Hardly! They observed the Law of Moses which included the dietary Law.

Look at the closing verse to this story in Mat. 15:20. Jesus confirms that His words were directed toward “eating with unwashed hands” rather than freedom to eat unclean meats.



For a Pharisee, or Jesus at this point, both still under the Old Covenant, to eat what the Law of Moses said was unclean would certainly have defiled them as Leviticus 11:44-45 states. This was also Peter’s great fear when he said, “...I have never eaten anything common or unclean” (Acts 10:15).

We cannot just randomly go through the Scriptures and pick out a verse here and there and put them together as “proof texts” to establish a doctrine such as, “Peter’s vision cleansed the pig for human consumption.” These kinds of conclusions will not stand the light of “comparing spiritual to spiritual.”



Let us now look at yet another set of verses that are used to support the erroneous idea that the New Covenant somehow cleansed not only the people's sins, but also made the unclean animals suddenly to be clean for eating.

These verses from 1 Timothy 4:1-5 are quoted as proof-positive that you can eat anything as long as you pray over it when you receive it with thanksgiving.

Emphasis is given to Paul's words in these verses that
 (1) every creature of God is good and
 (2) nothing is to be refused
 (3) it is sanctified by thankfully praying over it.

If the stated premise above is true, then we should have no problem eating a whole host of the other

← creatures of God such as

If Paul really means "every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused" then we should be willing to eat every creature under this all-inclusive interpretation of this passage. That includes "Trigger" and "Benji" and even "that darn cat." These are all part of the creatures that God created, are they not? Can they be excluded from what we consider to be edible since we interpret this passage as "nothing is to be refused" and "every creature of God is good?"

Such conclusions cannot be stated to be "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." Let us look analytically at each statement Paul makes. I will purposely be redundant in analyzing these verses for you because they are not being properly interpreted:

1. "...ABSTAINING FROM FOODS WHICH GOD CREATED TO BE RECEIVED WITH THANKSGIVING BY THOSE WHO BELIEVE AND KNOW THE TRUTH."

First of all we see that this is a specific message to a specific people. This is a warning prophetically written to Christian believers who would be living in "the latter times." It is a warning about those who will teach "doctrines of demons." This is written to those Christians who believe and who "know the truth." We must ask, Know the truth about what? It is written to those who know the truth about "foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving." It is speaking of the Dietary Law which specifies what to eat and what not to eat. Paul is warning about people who would come and (1) forbid people to marry and (2) command people to ABSTAIN (not eat) the foods that God created to be received! This "latter times" commandment of false teachers would tell God's people NOT to eat what God said to eat. They will tell them to ABSTAIN (not eat) the very creatures "God created to be received with thanksgiving." Perhaps they would say (as it is being said today), "You are free to eat anything you want! Don't listen to a bunch of "legalists" who try to tell you that some of God's creatures are still "unclean." They will tell you, "Peter's vision made them clean!" They will tell you that you are free to "eat the king's delicacies" which we have already seen to be "deceptive food." This warning of Paul speaks of an outright attack on the Dietary Law of God! It is not the reverse as if Paul is saying, "you can eat anything you want as long as you receive it with thanksgiving by praying over it." No, Paul is saying they will tell you to ABSTAIN from the very foods that God created to be received, the foods that will keep you healthy. This is a message to believers who "know the truth" about what IS to be received and what is not to be received. Even this first statement is being twisted to say the opposite of what it was meant to say. Consider Peter's warning about Paul's epistles and what people will do with what he has said in his epistles:

"...PAUL, ACCORDING TO THE WISDOM GIVEN TO HIM, HAS WRITTEN TO YOU, AS ALSO IN ALL HIS EPISTLES, SPEAKING IN THEM OF THESE THINGS, IN WHICH ARE SOME THINGS ARE HARD TO UNDERSTAND, WHICH THOSE WHO ARE UNTAUGHT AND UNSTABLE TWIST TO THEIR OWN DESTRUCTION, AS THEY DO ALSO THE REST OF THE SCRIPTURES." 2 Pet. 3:15-16

**"...COMMANDING TO
ABSTAIN FROM FOODS
WHICH GOD CREATED
TO BE RECEIVED
WITH THANKSGIVING
BY THOSE WHO BELIEVE
AND KNOW THE TRUTH.**

**FOR EVERY
CREATURE OF GOD
IS GOOD, AND
NOTHING
IS TO BE REFUSED
IF IT IS RECEIVED WITH
THANKSGIVING;
FOR IT IS SANCTIFIED
BY THE WORD OF GOD AND
PRAYER."**
1 Tim. 4:1-5

So then, the first half of Paul's statement is a warning to the people of God that live in "the latter times" to watch out for people who will command to "abstain from foods which God created to be received." Look at the context. Two phrases are important: they are commanded to "ABSTAIN FROM FOODS WHICH GOD CREATED TO BE RECEIVED" and Paul's answer to that is "NOTHING IS TO BE REFUSED..." Men will command you to ABSTAIN. Paul responds with "nothing is to be REFUSED..." This is not an all-inclusive statement of being free to eat anything you wish! The latter statement of Paul is his answer to those who come with doctrines commanding you to ABSTAIN from the foods that God created to be received. Where does God record what He created to be received? In the dietary law!

Paul's reference to "nothing is to be refused" cannot be divorced from the verse that warns of those who will come "commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received." The statement, "nothing is to be refused" is not an endorsement that we are free to eat any and everything. It is a warning not to allow people to command you to ABSTAIN from eating what God HAS stated is to be eaten! The second part of Paul's words above will shed even more light on the proper meaning.

**2. "FOR EVERY CREATURE OF GOD IS GOOD,
AND NOTHING IS TO BE REFUSED IF IT IS RECEIVED WITH THANKSGIVING;
FOR IT IS SANCTIFIED BY THE WORD OF GOD AND PRAYER." 1 Tim. 4:4-5**

Let us ponder the meaning of "every creature of God is good." We have seen that this cannot mean "every creature of God is good for food" or as suggested earlier, we should have no problem eating every creature God created (maggots, leaches, vultures and rats). God created every creature, but He did not create every creature as food for us to eat. He created a whole class of creatures to police the earth and the ocean. They are scavengers. They were scavengers during the Old Covenant and they are STILL scavengers in the New Covenant! The new birth did not "sanctify" the pig!

If I were to say to you that "God created every man, but every man is not a man of God," you would understand that statement. He created all men but all men are not "men of God." The same reasoning applies in saying, "God created every creature, but every creature is not a creature of God." By that I simply mean that every creature is not sanctified (set apart unto God) any more than every man that God created is sanctified (set apart unto God).

Let's go a little deeper. The creatures that are of God are the ones "set apart" by TWO things:

"...FOR IT IS SANCTIFIED BY THE WORD OF GOD AND PRAYER."

1 Tim. 4:4-5

Paul is not saying that you can eat anything you pray over. He adds to the need of praying over what you receive with thanksgiving, the fact that it is the Word of God that sanctifies (sets apart) what you eat. In Paul's day, what is he referring to as "the Word of God?" Is it his own epistles? No, it is not. Paul is referring to what was recognized as the Word of God in his day. In Acts 28 he sought to persuade the Jews concerning Jesus with "The Law of Moses and the prophets" (Acts 28:23). Jesus presented Himself as the Messiah to His disciples by means of "the Law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms" (Luke 24:44).

What "Word of God" is Paul referring to that would set apart or sanctify their food? It has to be what was recorded in the Dietary Law – The Law of Moses! Remember, Paul is writing to those who "believe and know the truth." He is warning them against false teachers that would come in "the latter times" teaching "doctrines of demons," one of which would be "commanding to abstain from foods that God created to be received..." Don't refuse what God has sanctified (set apart) by the Word of God! This is Paul's warning!

It is my strong suspicion that Satan is using the devious doctrinal sanctification of scavengers to "rob, kill and destroy" God's people who gullibly swallow a wrong interpretation of Peter's vision as well as this end-time warning from the apostle Paul. It may well be that the source of cancer lies in the eating of scavengers. Why is it that America, the richest country, is also the sickest? Can it be that we consume all the forbidden scavengers as sanctified food from God?

One final thought I would like to impart is that the Dietary Law found in Leviticus and in Deuteronomy enumerating what is "clean and unclean," did not originate in these books of the Law. This is the same principle I brought forth in our last newsletter on the Monetary laws. Tithing did not originate under the Law of God, but rather has its origins in Genesis. Both Abraham and Jacob were tithers (Gen. 14:18-22, Gen 28:20-22). Let us now look at these passages in Genesis pertaining to the "clean and unclean":

"YOU SHALL TAKE WITH YOU SEVEN EACH OF EVERY CLEAN ANIMAL, A MALE AND HIS FEMALE; TWO EACH OF ANIMALS THAT ARE UNCLEAN, A MALE AND HIS FEMALE, ALSO SEVEN EACH OF BIRDS OF THE AIR, A MALE AND A FEMALE, TO KEEP THE SPECIES ALIVE ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH...OF CLEAN BEASTS, OF BEASTS THAT ARE UNCLEAN, OF BIRDS AND OF EVERYTHING THAT CREEPS ON THE EARTH, TWO BY TWO THEY WENT INTO THE ARK TO NOAH..." Gen. 7:2-3,8

"THEN NOAH BUILT AN ALTAR TO THE LORD, AND TOOK OF EVERY CLEAN ANIMAL AND OF EVERY CLEAN BIRD, AND OFFERED BURNT OFFERINGS ON THE ALTAR, AND THE LORD SMELLED A SOOTHING AROMA." Gen. 8:20-21

It is apparent that Noah knew what was "clean and unclean" prior to God's instructions given here in Genesis. Why, also we might ask, did God specify "seven clean and two unclean"? Because he needed more of the clean to offer as acceptable sacrifices to God after the flood and perhaps some of the clean were eaten while they were in the Ark those one hundred and fifty days.

Like the principles of tithing, we find that the principle of what is specified as "clean and unclean" in Leviticus and Deuteronomy existed long before the Law of God was given to Israel. Therefore it matters little that we are "not under the Law of Moses" as New Covenant believers. The dietary laws of "clean and unclean" existed right from the beginning of all things and, as we have seen, will continue right up to the end of all things. It is folly to think that the church age was mysteriously exempted from what is "clean and unclean."

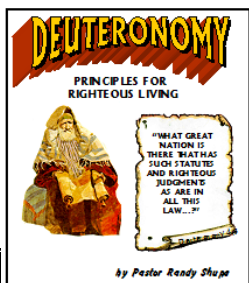
<p>NOAH'S INSTRUCTIONS PERTAINING TO THE CLEAN AND THE UNCLEAN PRIOR TO THE OLD COVENANT. Gen. 7:2-8, Gen. 8:20-21</p>	<p>MOSES' INSTRUCTIONS PERTAINING TO THE CLEAN AND THE UNCLEAN GIVEN UNDER THE OLD COVENANT. Lev. Chap. 11 and Deut. Chap. 14</p>	<p>MISINTERPRETATION OF "PETER'S VISION" Acts 10 MISINTERPRETATION OF PAUL'S "EVERY CREATURE OF GOD IS GOOD, NOTHING TO BE REFUSED" 1 Tim. 4:3-4 MISINTERPRETATION OF JESUS' "NOT WHAT GOES INTO THE MOUTH DEFILES A MAN" Mat. 15:15-19</p>	<p>AT THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST, HE CONDEMNS THOSE "EATING SWINE FLESH AND PUTTING ABOMINABLE THINGS IN THEIR BROTH." Isa. 65:4, 66:15-17 MYSTERY BABYLON PRIOR TO ITS DESTRUCTION IS FULL OF "EVERY UNCLEAN AND HATED BIRD." Rev. 18:2</p>
<p>IN THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS</p>	<p>OLD COVENANT UNDER LAW</p>	<p>NEW COVENANT UNDER GRACE</p>	<p>AT THE THE END OF ALL THINGS</p>

The church dispensation is not exempt from what God presents as "clean and unclean."
Keep in mind that God says of Himself:

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

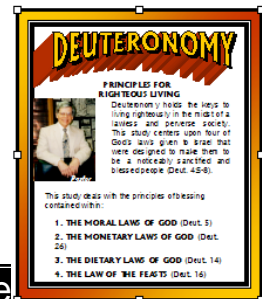
"JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME, YESTERDAY, TODAY AND FOREVER."
Heb. 13:8

The contents of our last newsletter, as well as the two that will follow this present one, were taken from my latest series on the Book of Deuteronomy. I highly recommend this study for a more in-depth understanding of what has been presented in this newsletter.



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**PART FOUR
OF A FOUR-PART STUDY OF**

**KEEPING ONESELF FROM THE INFLUENCE OF
THE WICKED ONE**




**"WE KNOW THAT...
THE WHOLE WORLD
LIES UNDER
THE
SWAY
(INFLUENCE)
OF
THE WICKED
ONE..."**
1 John 5:19

**"DO NOT LET THE WORLD AROUND
YOU SQUEEZE YOU INTO ITS OWN
MOLD, BUT LET GOD RE-MAKE YOU
SO THAT YOUR WHOLE ATTITUDE OF
MIND IS CHANGED,
THUS YOU WILL PROVE IN
PRACTICE...THE WILL OF GOD..."**
Rom. 12:2 Phillips

**"DO NOT BE CONFORMED TO THIS
WORLD (THIS AGE) [FASHIONED AFTER
AND ADAPTED TO ITS EXTERNAL,
SUPERFICIAL CUSTOMS], BUT BE
TRANSFORMED (CHANGED) BY THE
ENTIRE RENEWAL OF YOUR MIND...
SO THAT YOU MAY PROVE...THE THING
WHICH IS GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE AND
PERFECT [IN HIS SIGHT FOR YOU]."**
Rom. 12:2 Amplified

**"WE KNOW THAT...
HE WHO HAS BEEN
BORN OF GOD
KEEPS (GUARDS)
HIMSELF,
AND
THE WICKED ONE
DOES NOT
TOUCH HIM."**
1 John 5:18

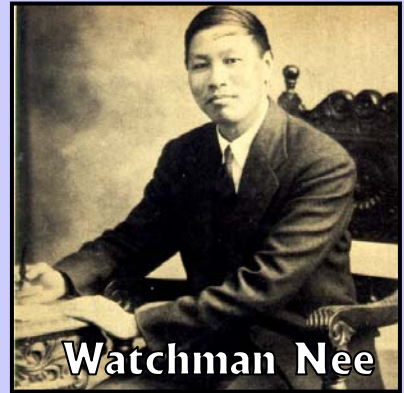


“DO NOT LET THE WORLD AROUND YOU SQUEEZE YOU INTO ITS OWN MOLD, BUT LET GOD RE-MAKE YOU SO THAT YOUR WHOLE ATTITUDE OF MIND IS CHANGED, THUS YOU WILL PROVE IN PRACTICE... THE WILL OF GOD...”
Rom. 12:2 Phillips

“DO NOT BE CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD (THIS AGE) [FASHIONED AFTER AND ADAPTED TO ITS EXTERNAL, SUPERFICIAL CUSTOMS], BUT BE TRANSFORMED (CHANGED) BY THE ENTIRE RENEWAL OF YOUR MIND... SO THAT YOU MAY PROVE...THE THING WHICH IS GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE AND PERFECT [IN HIS SIGHT FOR YOU].”
Rom. 12:2 Amplified

To fulfill such mandates as stated above in Romans 12:2, we must first be fully persuaded that it is true as John states, "...the whole world lies under the sway (influence) of the wicked one" (1 Jn. 5:19). That all-inclusive influence comes by means of Satan's army of "principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age, and the host of spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places" as Ephesians 6:12 depicts. To help convince you, I highly recommend that you read "Love Not the World" written by Watchman Nee. Let me quote a few passages from this little book to perhaps entice you to read it:

"Separation to God, separation from the world, is the first principle of Christian living...our deliverance from the world begins, not with our giving up this or that, but with our seeing, as with God's eyes, that it is a world under sentence of death...everything belonging to the world is under the sentence of death. We still go on living in the world and using the things of the world, but we build no future with them...we inevitably lose all interest in the world, and it loses its grip on us, as soon as it dawns upon us that the world is doomed. To see that is to be automatically severed from Satan's entire economy...we are released from its power when we truly see its nature. The essential character of the world is Satanic; it is at enmity with God. To see this is to find deliverance...God has called us. Thence comes the title 'Church', God's called-out ones..."



Watchman Nee

There is no such thing as a call from God that is not a call 'out of' the world...If you are a called one, then you are a called-out one. If God has called you at all, then He has called you to live in spirit outside the world system...If our life is the life of mere men, we are swayed by the world. If it is a life of the Spirit it is unmoved by worldly pressures...We overcome the world not by giving up the world's things, but by being other-worldly in a positive way: by possessing, that is, a love and a joy and a peace that the world cannot give and that men sorely need...God has deliberately placed us in the world to show it up for what it is...its hollowness and emptiness...The Church glorifies God, not by getting out of the world but by radiating His light in it.

The book of Revelation suggests that Satan will set up his kingdom of antichrist in the political world (Ch. 13), in the religious world (Ch. 17), and in the commercial world (Ch. 18). On this three-fold basis of politics, religion and commerce, his reign will find its last violent expression...Every time you and I touch the world through the things of the world-and we must do so repeatedly-we should feel much as we would feel about taking morphine, for there are demons at the back of everything that belongs to the world...there is a Satanic power behind every worldly thing. How vital therefore for every Christian to have a clear revelation of the spirit of the world in order to appreciate how real is the danger to which he is continually exposed!"

(selected excerpts from "Love Not the World" Watchman Nee)

Further, we in the Church must be convinced that "pure and undefiled religion" consists of "...keeping oneself unspotted from the world" (Jam. 1:27). Modern-day Christianity in America continues to spin its wheels in vain attempts to "remove the spots from the world." The Church has no such commission! We have a commission to INFLUENCE society, not DOMINATE it! Watchman Nee touched on what is needful, "We overcome the world not by giving up the world's things, but by being other-worldly in a positive way: by possessing, that is, a love and a joy and a peace that the world cannot give and that men sorely need." It is this "other-world" that this newsletter, as well as the previous three, is dedicated to revealing!

"TO AFFECT, ALTER CONDUCT, CHARACTER BY MEANS OF SWAY OR PERSUASION, DEMONSTRATE A BETTER WAY...POWER RESIDENT IN A PERSON TO COMMAND BELIEF, ACCEPTANCE, OR ALLEGIANCE, OFTEN THROUGH LEARNING OR WISDOM DEMONSTRATED."

Webster

Which of these two concepts describe the present commission of the Church?

Did not Jesus say:

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

Mat. 5:16

(LIT.) LORD OVER, MASTER OF... TO RULE, GOVERN, TO HOLD SUPREMACY OVER BY MEANS OF SUPERIOR POWER, STRENGTH, AUTHORITY, TO PREVAIL OVER, TO EXCEED ALL OTHERS IN NUMBER, POWER OR POSITION."

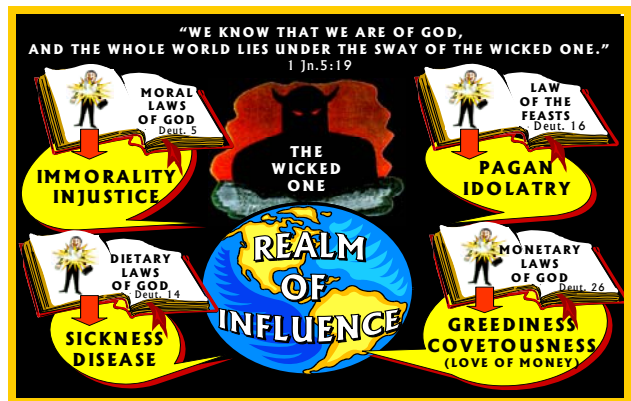
Webster

In context, letting our light "so shine before men" speaks of demonstrating to the unsaved world the specified Christian character traits of being "poor in spirit...those who mourn...the meek...those who hunger and thirst for righteousness...the merciful...the pure in heart...the peacemakers and those who are persecuted for righteousness sake" (Mat. 5:3-10). Is this not what Watchman Nee had in mind in saying, "We overcome the world not by giving up the world's things, but by being other-worldly in a positive way: by possessing, that is, a love and a joy and a peace that the world cannot give and that men sorely need."

It is quite obvious to me that the present thrust of the likes of the "Religious Right," the "Moral Majority" and the ever-increasing politically-motivated brand of Christianity which now dominates the Republican Party, reveals that they have chosen the philosophy of domination in this country. However, although being well-meaning Christians, they function apart from any scriptural foundation for their actions.

Like Paul, I desire to "...show you a more excellent way" (1 Cor. 12:31). It is a way of demonstrating INFLUENCE upon the unsaved rather than forcing DOMINANCE over them. Only when Jesus comes literally and physically to earth as King will the world be forcibly "ruled by a rod of iron" (Rev. 19:15).

This chart from our last three newsletters reveals "a more excellent way" of having INFLUENCE upon those that are presently under the "influence" of the wicked one. To counteract these four areas of demonic influence, we have been considering four sets of laws from the Book of Deuteronomy. We saw that God's Moral Laws were not intended to be legislated on unbelievers (see August newsletter). The Moral laws were given to be written on the minds and hearts of GOD'S PEOPLE (Heb. 8:10) who are called to live in the midst of a corrupt and immoral society while holding forth the Word of life (Phil. 2:15-16).



God's Monetary Laws (see September newsletter) were given so that His people would prosper in such a manner that they would influence the world by their generosity toward the "have-nots." The world thrives on the love of money which Paul states is "a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Tim. 6:10). God uses our willingness or unwillingness to give as a test of faithfulness (Luke 16:10-13). Satan's influence over the world is producing a people who are captivated by a spirit of GETTING. God, through His monetary laws, is seeking to produce a people motivated by a spirit of GIVING.

We also looked at God's Dietary Laws (see October newsletter) as His antidote for a world inundated by sickness and disease that come from Satan's influence upon the world to eat the very things that God did not create for food. Conversely, the Christian would walk in health not simply by means of great faith, but equally due also to walking in great obedience in allowing God to "Feed me with the food You prescribe for me" (Prov. 30:7), namely, His Dietary Laws; and by avoiding "the king's delicacies, for they are deceptive food" (Prov. 23:3). The world under the influence of Satan readily condones the eating of scavengers, but God does not!

We come now to the fourth set of laws, the Law of the Feasts (see Lev.23). If you want to influence the world around you, embrace God's HOLY DAYS instead of the world's cherished HOLIDAYS →

(MAN-CENTERED) THE HOLIDAYS OF THE WORLD



Happy Holidays

Merry Christmas

THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND MAN-CENTERED HOLIDAYS

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out what is the central theme of these five major holidays of the world in which we live, especially here in America. It is the cherished theme of "happiness." The Constitution of the United States is founded upon the "inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." These five holidays are an ongoing means of expressing those cherished man-centered rights. The holidays systematically enforce this "pursuit of happiness" as they repetitiously cycle year after year. In reality, this is a philosophy Satan wants to firmly plant. Holidays such as portrayed above are based on this present life. Look at them carefully for none of them convey any message about the future.

All of the imagery above is readily found on the internet as one types in the names of the holidays. I was amazed at the "childishness" this imagery portrays. As I built the above visual portrayal of these major holidays, I was quickened by the Holy Spirit to Paul's instruction to believers pertaining to childish things:

"WHEN I WAS A CHILD, I SPOKE AS A CHILD, I UNDERSTOOD AS A CHILD, I THOUGHT AS A CHILD; BUT WHEN I BECAME A MAN, I PUT AWAY CHILDISH THINGS." 1 Cor. 13:11

When we become a "man (or woman) of God," we are called to put away such childish celebrations as these pagan-based holidays glorify. We are called to "...no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine...but...grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ..." (Eph. 4:14-15). The world's holidays are a means for the merchants of the earth to manipulate the masses to spend, spend and spend all the more! I have watched how Halloween has come right along beside Christmas as the two most decorated holidays! What does this holiday glorify? It "hallows" all that belongs to the demonic world! It is one thing for the un-regenerate world to practice such things, but what about the people of God? Does not the Scripture specifically state:

"DO NOT LEARN THE WAYS OF THE GENTILES...FOR THE CUSTOMS OF THE PEOPLE ARE FUTILE..." Jer. 10:2-3

"COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM AND BE SEPARATE, SAYS THE LORD. DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN..." 2 Cor. 6:17

(GOD-CENTERED)

THE HOLY DAYS OF

THE WORD



THE SEVEN GOD-GIVEN FEASTS OF THE LORD – Lev. 23



PASSOVER
(DEATH
OF CHRIST)



UNLEAVENED BREAD
(BURIAL
OF CHRIST)



FIRSTFRUITS
(RESURRECTION
OF CHRIST)



PENTECOST
(HOLY SPIRIT SENT
BY CHRIST)



TRUMPETS
(RAPTURE
BY CHRIST)



ATONEMENT
(RETURN
OF CHRIST)



TABERNACLES
(REIGN
OF CHRIST)

THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND GOD-CENTERED HOLY DAYS

Again, one does not need to be a rocket scientist to figure out which of these two scenarios is God's will for His people on earth to cherish and repeatedly celebrate as reminders. As believers, are we to practice our rejoicing in childish, pagan-based, materialistic, man-centered holidays, or in God-centered holy days that prophetically reflect the work of Christ on earth, past, present and future? The apostle Paul in describing the New Testament believer's relationship to the Old Testament Feasts states:

".....WITH REGARD TO A FEAST DAY... SUCH THINGS ARE ONLY THE SHADOW OF THINGS THAT ARE TO COME, AND THEY HAVE ONLY A SYMBOLIC VALUE. BUT THE REALITY (THE SUBSTANCE, THE SOLID FACT OF WHAT IS FORESHADOWED, THE BODY OF IT) BELONGS TO CHRIST."

Col. 2:16-17 Amplified.

What is Paul's view of the Feasts? They foreshadow what belongs to Christ, past-present-future! Also in the Book of Hebrews Paul speaks of the Law of the Old Testament as containing a foreshadowing of what is to come:

"...THE LAW HAS MERELY A RUDE OUTLINE (FORESHADOWING) OF THE GOOD THINGS TO COME— INSTEAD OF FULLY EXPRESSING THOSE THINGS..." Heb.10:1 Amplified

Unlike worldly holidays, the Feasts focus on the future and therefore can be used as constant reminders for God's people to "Set their mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2). Celebrating the Feasts can stir us up so that "...we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells..." (2 Pet. 3:13). The Feasts will continually remind us to "...confess (to be) strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:13). Celebrating the Feasts will cultivate a vision that "...here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come" (Heb. 13:14), ever reminding us that "...our citizenship is in heaven..." (Phil. 3:20).

"BLESSED...ARE THE PEOPLE WHO KNOW THE JOYFUL SOUND [WHO UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE THE SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS SYMBOLIZED BY THE FEASTS] THEY WALK, IN THE LIGHT AND FAVOR OF YOUR COUNTEenance! IN YOUR NAME THEY REJOICE ALL THE DAY..." Psm. 89:15-17 Amp.

The holidays of the world are not only childish, but also several of them have their origins steeped in PAGANISM. What does that word mean to you? Most tend to dismiss anything labeled as having "pagan" origins as being harmless and irrelevant in today's society. The mentality today is that the pagans were the Huns and the Vikings. However, if we ponder the literal meaning of this word we can easily see that the concept of paganism thrives in our educated high society as it did in ancient times of ignorance.

The word "pagan" becomes a very relevant term when you consider its definition:

PAGAN

"ONE THAT HAS LITTLE OR NO RELIGION AND IS MORE DISTINCTLY MARKED BY A FRANK DELIGHT IN, AND UNINHIBITED IN THE SEEKING AFTER MATERIAL GOODS, SENSUAL PLEASURES OR SELF-INDULGENT HABITS... THE EARTHLY ACCEPTANCE OF LIFE AS PRACTICED IN ALL OF ITS CUSTOMS AND RITUALS... PREFERENCE FOR A WELL-ORDERED DINNER RATHER THAN A DISSERTATION ON THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL. TO HOLD THE CONCEPT OF DEATH AND OBLIVION AS THE NATURAL END OF LIFE (AS EXPRESSED IN "EAT DRINK, AND BE MERRY, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE")... Webster



Paul prophetically warned of such a definitive "pagan" society surfacing in the last days:

"BUT KNOW THIS, THAT IN THE LAST DAYS PERILOUS TIMES WILL COME: FOR MEN WILL BE LOVERS OF THEMSELVES, LOVERS OF MONEY... LOVERS OF PLEASURE RATHER THAN LOVERS OF GOD, HAVING A FORM OF GODLINESS BUT DENYING ITS POWER, AND FROM SUCH PEOPLE TURN AWAY!"
2 Tim. 3: 1-5

"BUT YOU MUST REALIZE THAT IN THE LAST DAYS THE TIMES WILL BE FULL OF DANGER. MEN WILL BECOME UTTERLY SELF-CENTERED, GREEDY FOR MONEY, FULL OF BIG WORDS...THEY WILL BE...LOVING WHAT GIVES THEM PLEASURE INSTEAD OF LOVING GOD. THEY WILL MAINTAIN A FACADE OF "RELIGION" BUT THEIR LIFE DENIES ITS TRUTH. KEEP CLEAR OF PEOPLE LIKE THAT."
2 Tim. 3: 1-5 Phillips

Note the above warning of Paul, as well as Webster's definition of paganism, states the existence of a minute "religiosity" among the pagans. That is why we find the birth of baby Jesus added to all the other major pagan trappings of Christmas such as Santa Claus, mistletoe, elaborately decorated trees and gift-giving galore! Also we find the worldly acknowledgment of a resurrected Jesus sandwiched within the principal image of the Easter bunny as best representing the true "Easter spirit." If you don't believe that is true, I challenge you to walk into a commercial establishment that hangs out the sign, "Your Easter Headquarters" and determine for yourself what is the major imagery commercial Easter contains.

To heed Paul's warning to believers, "From such people turn away!" , or "Keep clear of people like that" requires that we, the people whose major emphasis is the imagery of Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, must ABSTAIN from celebrating the world's cherished PAGAN HOLIDAYS!

We have clear mandates to this calling:

"DO NOT LEARN THE WAYS OF THE GENTILES...FOR THE CUSTOMS OF THE PEOPLE ARE FUTILE..."
Jer. 10:2-3

(Consider the context of these verses to see the relevance of them to the holidays)

"COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM AND BE SEPARATE, SAYS THE LORD. DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN..."
2 Cor. 6:17

CONTEXT:

"DO NOT LEARN THE WAY OF THE GENTILES...FOR THE CUSTOMS OF THE PEOPLES ARE FUTILE. FOR ONE CUTS A TREE FROM THE FOREST, THE WORK OF THE HANDS OF THE WORKMAN WITH THE AX. THEY DECORATE IT WITH SILVER AND GOLD; THEY FASTEN IT WITH NAILS AND HAMMERS SO THAT IT WILL NOT TOPPLE. THEY ARE UPRIGHT, LIKE A PALM TREE..." Jer. 10:1-4

(Note well the pagan origin of what has become the cherished Christmas tree! Such trees were worshipped as a god! Should Christians practice this "harmless" tradition? Has what God so clearly condemned previously, now become an acceptable practice for His people today?)

CONTEXT:

"DO NOT BE UNEQUALLY YOKED TOGETHER WITH UNBELIEVERS. FOR WHAT FELLOWSHIP HAS RIGHTEOUSNESS WITH LAWLESSNESS? AND WHAT COMMUNION HAS LIGHT WITH DARKNESS? AND WHAT ACCORD HAS CHRIST WITH BELIAL? (a false pagan god) OR WHAT PART HAS A BELIEVER WITH AN UNBELIEVER? AND WHAT AGREEMENT HAS THE TEMPLE OF GOD WITH IDOLS?... THEREFORE, COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM AND BE SEPARATE, SAYS THE LORD. DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN..." 2 Cor. 6:14-17

(Being "unequally yoked with unbelievers" is not limited to the marriage covenant! It includes God's people loving and practicing what the world loves and practices, namely the idols of Christmas and Easter as defined by the world!)

"BUT THEY MINGLED WITH THE GENTILES AND LEARNED THEIR WORKS; THEY SERVED THEIR IDOLS, WHICH BECAME A SNARE TO THEM." Psalm 106:35-36

THE PAGAN ORIGINS OF CHRISTMAS

The Two Babylons

Or
THE PAPAL WORSHIP

Proved to be
THE WORSHIP OF NIMROD
AND HIS WIFE

WITH SIXTY-ONE WONDER ILLUSTRATIONS FROM
NINEVEH, BABYLON, EGYPT, POMPEII, ETC.

BY THE LATE
REV. ALEXANDER HISLOP

“Christmas” or “Christ – Mass” is the creation of a religious institution that has been rightly dubbed “the the king of tradition”, an organization whose very origins itself are steeped in ancient Babylonian pagan rituals—the Roman Catholic Church.

← This old classic work is but one of many that expose the pagan origins of Christmas as well as the Roman Catholic Church itself. I have copied out several paragraphs to entice you to consider reading what it has to say:

That Christmas was originally a Pagan festival, is beyond all doubt. The time of the year, and the ceremonies with which it is still celebrated, prove its origin. In Egypt, the son of Isis, the Egyptian title for the queen of heaven, was born at this very time, “about the time of the winter solstice.” † The very name by which Christmas is popularly known among ourselves—Yule-day §—proves at once its Pagan and Babylonian origin. “Yule” is the Chaldee name for an “infant” or “little child;”

within the Christian Church no such festival as Christmas was ever heard of till the third century, and that not till the fourth century was far advanced did it gain much observance. How, then, did the Romish Church fix on December the 25th as Christmas-day? Why, thus: Long before the fourth century, and long before the Christian era itself, a festival was celebrated among the *heathen*, at that precise time of the year, in honour of the birth of the son of the Babylonian queen of heaven; and it may fairly be presumed that, in order to conciliate the heathen, and to swell the number of the nominal adherents of Christianity, the same festival was adopted by the Roman Church, giving it only the name of Christ. This tendency on the part of Christians to meet Paganism half-way was very early developed; and we find Tertullian, even in his day, about the year 230, bitterly lamenting the inconsistency of the disciples of Christ in this respect, and contrasting it with the strict fidelity of the Pagans to their own superstition. “By us,” says he, “who are strangers to Sabbaths,* and new moons, and festivals, once acceptable to God, the Saturnalia, the feasts of January, the *Brumalia*, and *Matronalia*, are now frequented; gifts are carried to and fro, new year’s day presents are made with din, and sports and banquets are celebrated with uproar; oh, how much more faithful are the heathen to *their* religion, who take special care to adopt no solemnity from the Christians.” † Upright men strove to stem the tide, but in spite of all their efforts, the apostacy went on, till the Church, with the exception of a small remnant, was submerged under Pagan superstition. That Christmas was originally a Pagan festival, is beyond all doubt. The time of the year, and the ceremonies with which it is still celebrated, prove its origin.

→
(STRANGERS
NOW TO
THE FEASTS
OF THE LORD!)

Christ could not be born in the depth of winter. Again, at the time of Christ’s birth, the shepherds lay abroad watching with their flocks in the night time; but this was not likely to be in the middle of winter. And if any shall think the winter wind was not so extreme in these parts, let him remember the words of Christ in the gospel, ‘Pray that your flight be not in the winter.’ If the winter was so bad a time to flee in, it seems no fit time for shepherds to lie in the fields in, and women and children to travel in.” *

This Christmas article has always been somewhat painful for me as I have appeared on Ken Hamblin's radio show several times in defense of the remnant of true Christianity. As you read the article you will sense the cynicism Ken has for what he has seen in Christianity. I had developed a good rapport with Ken to the point that he offered me his program if I ever needed it to defend a point from a more balanced Christian perspective. The content of this article bears witness to the words of Jesus when He warned His disciples that "...the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light" (Luke 16:8). It bothered Ken that Christians always tried to defend the indefensible such as labeling Christmas as a Christian holiday in spite of its historical pagan origins.

Let me further illustrate this point: Recently in Denver, the "Religious Right" (political arm of Christianity) launched a heated organized campaign in which they threatened to universally boycott all commercial establishments that have chosen to replace the words "Merry Christmas" with the phrase, "Happy Holidays" in their advertisements. We must ask: Does this INFLUENCE the unbelievers? Is this effective evangelism? No, it is not evangelistic, but rather a defiant protest against the unbeliever for removing Christ from the Christian's sacred Christmas. Rather than seeking to INFLUENCE the unbeliever, we see once again an attempt to DOMINATE them. As Ken proves in this article, Christmas was never a Christian event – however, regardless of the facts, they continue to attempt to defend the indefensible.

It was in the year 1988 that our local congregation ceased celebrating Christmas and replaced it with the more biblical perspective that Jesus was born on the first holy day of the Feast of Tabernacles which occurs early in the fall rather than in the improbable wintry date of Dec. 25th. Over the last 17 years that we have forsaken the traditional December 25th pagan-based event called "Christmas" in favor of the Feast of Tabernacles date, I have seen people leave our congregation due to our position. Upon leaving they would reiterate, "It isn't the Christmas issue." It IS the Christmas issue! Among many of God's people this cherished traditional holiday has become a "holy sacred cow" that few, when confronted with the historical or biblical facts, are willing to let it go. The late French historian, Amaury De Reincourt was right when he said:

Deck the halls, but post a watch 1. for the origins of Christmas

A HAPPY holiday and a Merry Christmas to Colorado and all the far reaches of the land — wherever this day's edition is likely to turn up.

It's Christmas again and the day the Christian church claims as the birthday of its savior Christ. But that wasn't always the case. For the first three hundred years of the church's existence, it had no spiritual birthday at all.

Then sometime during the 4th century, Christians began to quarrel over selecting that date. Some favored the then popular date of the Koreion, the time when it was believed the divine Virgin gave birth to the new Aeon in Alexandria. Now referred to as the Twelfth Night of Epiphany, it's still the official date of the nativity in Armenian churches and is celebrated by the Greek Orthodox with more ceremony than is associated with Christmas.

December 25th was a day to honor other gods too, among them Atti, Dionysus, Osiris and Syrian Baal.



**KEN
HAMBLIN**

On the night before Christmas, Roman priests who were called "tree-bearers" would cut one of the sacred pines, decorate it, and carry it into the temple to receive the effigy of Atti, an early pagan whose cult had a strong influence on early Christianity.

The passion of Atti was originally celebrated on the 25th day of March, exactly nine months before the birth of Christ in December. When Christians were challenged for laying claim to the December date, the church resorted to its favorite debate: that the devil had established pagan customs to counterfeit Christianity, even before there was a Christianity.

chal times when people worshiped the goddess as the mother of the Divine Child.

The custom of Christmas trees evolved from a ceremony called the *pinea silva*, the custom of attaching pine groves to the temples of the Great Mother.

The night of the birth, Christmas Eve, was known in Latin as the Night of the Mother — another festival that was more celebrated than Christmas day.

Finally, by the 4th century, the Roman church adopted the 25th of December as the official day of Christmas — or Christ Mass — because the population had grown accustomed to exclaiming it as God's birthday. But the eastern church, made up of a hard core of religious fundamentalists, persevered against a Dec. 25th nativity until 375 A.D. And the church of Jerusalem continued to ignore the newly established date until the 7th century.

Today, we associate holiday trappings such as Yule logs, gifts, lights, mistletoe, holly, carols and feasting with Christmas. Each of them dates back to the time and the ritual of pagan worship. They are customs which were acquired from matriar-

Despite the controversy, Christmas and its associated merrymaking continued to flourish throughout the ages, and in time it became such a distinguished gala — with its companion pagan rites — that many Christian churchmen of the day began to denounce the celebrations as superstitious and heathen worship of the devil.

Among superstitions that were associated with Christmas was the belief that animals could speak human words when the clock struck midnight on Christmas Eve. Another was that water in springs and wells was supposed to turn to blood as a sacrament to Christ. It was accepted that all who witnessed the miracle of the blood were fated to die within the year.

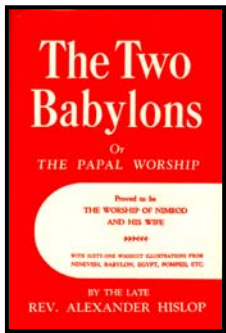
The Puritans of 17th century Massachusetts tried to outlaw Christmas from the colony altogether. They also believed this season we associate with joy and giving was a heathen custom not to be continued.

Whatever your family's customs for this yuletide season, I wish you and yours a happy holiday from Kuvo Radio, the Denver Post and all the Hamblins. May the God you trust in be with you this Christmas day.

**"GIVEN SUFFICIENT TIME,
CHERISHED TRADITIONS BECOME DOGMATIC BELIEFS." Amaury De Reincourt**

THE PAGAN ORIGINS OF **EASTER**

Again, I am going to extensively quote from this old classic work of authority on pagan-based holidays, "The Two Babylons" by Alexander Hislop. This time we will look at the popular holiday the world calls "Easter." This ancient holiday is NOT the story about the resurrection of Jesus Christ as readily accepted by modern-day Christianity. This sacred event of Scripture (the resurrection) has been added to this pagan-based worldly holiday by the "king of tradition," the Roman Catholic Church. The biblical name for the holy day of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is "Firstfruits," the third Feast of the Lord spelled out in Leviticus 23. Even the apostle Paul taught Gentile believers in the church of Corinth that this event was "Firstfruits" (see 1 Cor.15:20-23). The word "Easter" appears only in the King James Bible in Acts 12:4. This is a blatant mistranslation of the Greek word "Pascha" (3957 Strongs) which in every other place is translated as "Passover" which is the first Feast of Leviticus 23. Passover is the death of Christ, not His resurrection! "Easter" is a purposeful mistranslation of this Greek word to lend support to the concept of Easter as "resurrection Sunday." Who put this pressure on the King James translators? It was the Roman Catholic Church who selected this holiday as being the day of Christ's resurrection. The Roman Catholic Church has a history of mixing the pagan with the pure. They take an existing popular pagan holiday and "Christianize" it by adding something religious. It was true of Christmas and it is true of Easter. Let us consider its true origin:



Then look at Easter. What means the term Easter itself? It is not a Christian name. It bears its Chaldean origin on its very forehead. Easter is nothing else than Astarte, one of the titles of Beltis, the queen of heaven, whose name, as pronounced by the people of Nineveh, was evidently identical with that now in common use in this country. That name, as found by Layard on the Assyrian monuments, is Ishtar.* The worship of Bel and Astarte was very early introduced into Britain, along with the Druids, "the priests of the groves."

that his consort Astarte was also adored by our ancestors, and that from Astarte, whose name in Nineveh was Ishtar, the religious solemnities of April, as now practised, are called by the name of Easter—that month, among our Pagan ancestors, having been called Easter-monath. The festival, of which we read in Church history, under the name of Easter, in the third or fourth centuries, was quite a different festival from that now observed in the Romish Church, and *at that time* was not known by any such name as Easter.† It was called Pasch, or the Passover, and though not of Apostolic institution,‡ was very early observed by many professing Christians, in commemoration of the death and resurrection of Christ. That festival agreed originally with the time of the Jewish Passover, when Christ was crucified, a period which, in the days of Tertullian,

The difference, in point of time, betwixt the Christian Pasch, as observed in Britain by the native Christians, and the Pagan Easter enforced by Rome, at the time of its enforcement, was a whole month; † and it was only by violence and bloodshed, at last, that the Festival of the Anglo-Saxon or Chaldean goddess came to supersede that which had been held in honour of Christ.

Such is the history of Easter. The popular observances that still attend the period of its celebration amply confirm the testimony of history as to its Babylonian character.

THE PAGAN ORIGINS OF HALLOWEEN

You would think that this subject would not need to be addressed at all among believers. However, such is not the case. Often viewed as "harmless innocent fun," believers mingle among the unbelievers in allowing their children to celebrate this "mother of all pagan holidays!" Some churches even seek to "clean it up" or use it as a day of "evangelism" via the "Hell-House" displays. Consider the following:

"History traces Halloween back to the ancient religion of the Celts. The Celtic people were very conscious of the spiritual world and had their own ideas of how they could gain access to it - such as by helping their over 300 gods to defeat their enemies in battle, or by imitating the gods in showing cleverness and cunning. Their two main feasts were Beltane at the beginning of summer (May 1), and Samhain (pronounced Sah-ween) at the end of summer (Nov. 1). They believed Samhain was a time when the division between the two worlds became very thin, when hostile supernatural forces were active and ghosts and spirits were free to wander as they wished. "During this interval the normal order of the universe is suspended, the barriers between the natural and the supernatural are temporarily removed, the sidh lies open and all divine beings and the spirits of the dead move freely among men and interfere sometimes violently, in their affairs" (Celtic Mythology, p. 127). The Celtic priests who carried out the rituals in the open air were called Druids, members of pagan orders in Britain, Ireland and Gaul, who generally performed their rituals by offering sacrifices, usually of animals, but sometimes of humans, in order to placate the gods; ensuring that the sun would return after the winter; and frightening away evil spirits. Some trace the origins of present day "trick-or-treat" to Samhain, which was the supreme night of demonic jubilation. Spirits of the dead would rise out of their graves and wander the countryside, trying to return to the homes where they formerly lived. Frightened villagers tried to appease these wandering spirits by offering them gifts of fruit and nuts. They began the tradition of placing plates of the finest food and bits of treats that the household had to offer on their doorsteps, as gifts, to appease the hunger of the ghostly wanderers. If not placated, villagers feared that the spirits would kill their flocks or destroy their property.

The problem was... if the souls of dead loved ones could return that night, so could anything else, human or not, nice or not-so-nice. The only thing the superstitious people knew to do to protect themselves on such an occasion was to masquerade as one of the demonic hoard, and hopefully blend in unnoticed among them. Wearing masks and other disguises and blackening the face with soot were originally ways of hiding oneself from the spirits of the dead who might be roaming around. This is the origin of Halloween masquerading as devils, imps, ogres, and other demonic creatures... When Christianity spread to parts of Europe, instead of trying to abolish these pagan customs, people tried to introduce ideas which reflected a more Christian world-view. Halloween has since become a confusing mixture of traditions and practices from pagan cultures and Christian tradition... To witches, Halloween is a festival of the dead, and represents the "end and the beginning of the witches year. It marks the beginning of the death and destruction associated with winter. At this time the power of the underworld is unleashed, and spirits are supposedly freed to roam about the earth; it is considered the best time to contact spirits..."

Is Halloween just another innocent holiday that doesn't harm anyone? Is it really just childish fun? Should the church be compromised by accommodating itself to the culture? Vandalism and wanton disregard for the property of others is common on Halloween night. Even normally well-behaved children are driven by unseen forces to destructive behavior. Police officials everywhere report a great increase in such activities on Halloween. Worse yet are the horrifying accounts of poisoned candy and fruits booby-trapped with razor blades and needles. Such threats are so real that many hospitals offer free X-rays of Halloween treats in order to prevent children from being harmed. Who but Satan could inspire such monstrous actions? When America and the world celebrates the Festival of Samhain and the powers of darkness by masquerading as evil creatures or decorating our homes, schools, businesses and churches with occult symbols, Satanic power is glorified. While you may have participated "all in fun," be assured, Halloween is serious business for Satanists and witches. Those who oppose Christ are known to organize on Halloween to observe satanic rituals, to cast spells, to oppose churches and families, to perform sacrilegious acts, and to even offer blood sacrifices to Satan. While some may say, "But we only do this in fun...we don't practice witchcraft," those things that represent Satan and his domain cannot be handled or emulated "for fun". Such participation places you in enemy and forbidden territory and that is dangerous ground.

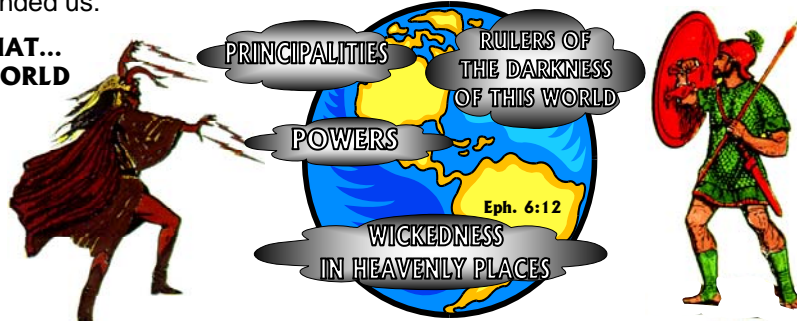
Tom Sanguinet, former high priest in the Celtic tradition of Wicca (witchcraft) said "The modern holiday we call Halloween has its origins in the full moon closest to November 1, the witches' New Year. It was a time when the "spirits" (demons) were supposed to be at their peak power and revisiting the earth planet." He went on to say, "Halloween is purely and absolutely evil, and there is nothing we ever have or will do that would make it acceptable to the Lord Jesus. As evil prevails, Americans have embraced an evil day of Satan, with the pranks of 'would be' hoodlums, combined with 'demon faces' on pumpkins, clothing of 'death' being worn, and calling it fun. When Christians participate in Halloween, it sends a message to children that witchcraft, demonism, Satanism, and the occult are something fun, entertaining and harmless."

Halloween does not have even one single redeeming virtue. It is custom born out of pagan superstition. It is a demon-inspired, devil-glorifying, occult festival. It is an evening holy unto evil, death, and divination. The Scriptures tells us to *"Abstain from all appearance of evil."* [1Thess. 5:22] Wake up Christian! This is the night of evil and those who love the Lord Jesus Christ should have nothing to do with it. We are all accountable for our choices and decisions. Ignorance is no excuse. The choice is up to you."

"BUT 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 OWN PEOPLE, SO THAT HE ABHORRED HIS OWN INHERITANCE." Psalm 106:35-40

The above testimony God recorded of the Children of Israel should speak to the ever-present danger of the church repeating the sin of Israel of "mingling with the Gentiles and serving their idols." The idols of this world, such as the pagan-based holidays of Christmas, Easter and even Halloween, can become a snare to the church of Jesus Christ if we allow them to be so. The battle is set before us as the apostle John has reminded us:

"WE KNOW THAT... THE WHOLE WORLD LIES UNDER THE SWAY (INFLUENCE) OF THE WICKED ONE..."
1 John 5:19



"WE KNOW THAT... HE WHO HAS BEEN BORN OF GOD KEEPS (GUARDS) HIMSELF, AND THE WICKED ONE DOES NOT TOUCH HIM."
1 John 5:18

"DO NOT BE CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD...[FASHIONED AFTER AND ADAPTED TO ITS EXTERNAL, SUPERFICIAL CUSTOMS], BUT BE TRANSFORMED (CHANGED) BY THE ENTIRE RENEWAL OF YOUR MIND... SO THAT YOU MAY PROVE...THE THING WHICH IS GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE AND PERFECT [IN HIS SIGHT FOR YOU]."

Rom. 12:2 Amplified



THE SEVEN FEASTS OF THE LORD
("A MORE EXCELLENT WAY")

If you are not that familiar with the significance of the Feasts of the Lord as found in Leviticus 23, then I am going to recommend both of these teaching aids to you:

BOOK



This is an unusual book in that it is in a panoramic form. By this I mean that it is wider than it is tall. The size of this book is 8.5 wide and 5.5 tall. I found that I needed the added width in order to show the overall prophetic span of the seven feasts together. As with all my other books this one is wire-spiral bound which I believe greatly enhances the ability to ponder it's contents as it will lay flat while open, exposing two pages side by side. I have kept this in mind as I did the illustrations for this unusual book.

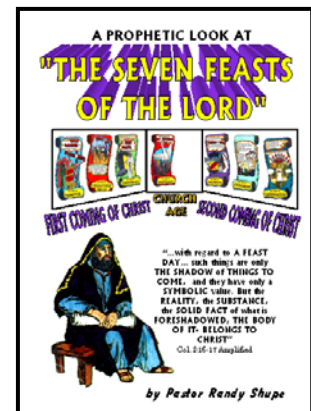
\$ 9.95 ea

DVD SERIES

The Feasts of the Lord recorded in Leviticus 23 are one of the most profound and prophetic pictures of the last days. They contain the Divine appointment calendar of the Lord Jesus Christ. He has fulfilled the first four Feasts on the very days as specified in Leviticus 23. It stands to reason that the last three Feasts will also be fulfilled by Him since they depict the events known as the rapture, the second coming of Christ, and the millennial reign of Christ.

The first DVD contains a three-hour overview of the seven Feasts of the Lord which I taught from a 35 foot mural on the wall of our sanctuary. The three remaining DVD's in this series contain individual teachings of the various Feasts which I have taught over the years. There are 12 hours of teachings in this series.

\$ 25.00 ea.



THE PROPHETIC WORD

THE TWELVE MYSTERIES OF THE BIBLE



Perhaps the mythical Sherlock Holmes would have been intrigued with the Bible since it contains a host of "mysteries" ("hidden truths") that God intended to be understood by the reader. For example, Jesus told His disciples:

"IT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO YOU TO KNOW THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, BUT TO THEM IT HAS NOT BEEN GIVEN."

Mat. 13:11

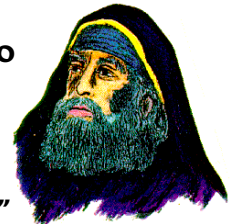


The New Covenant is stated to be "...a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Heb. 8:6). Nowhere greater is this truth made evident than by the revelation that all the mysteries of the Bible are found only in the New Testament. In other words, none of God's mysteries were revealed or even stated by the writers of the Old Testament. Consider Paul's plain affirmation to this truth:

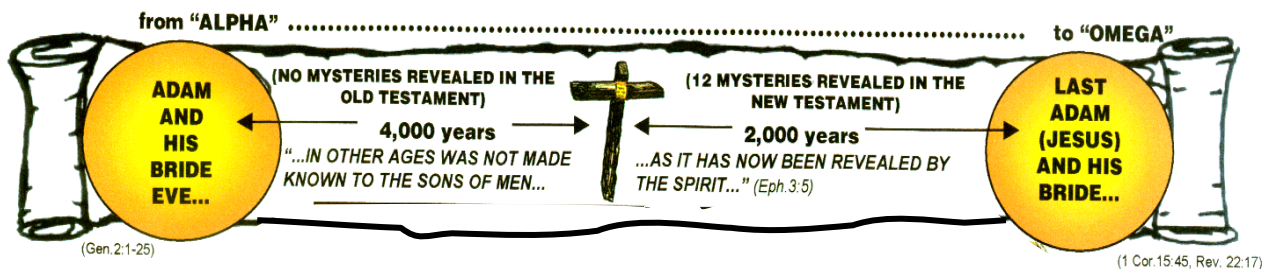
...YOU HAVE HEARD OF THE DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD WHICH WAS GIVEN TO ME FOR YOU, HOW THAT BY REVELATION HE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE MYSTERY

(AS I WROTE BEFORE IN A FEW WORDS, BY WHICH WHEN YOU READ, YOU MAY UNDERSTAND MY KNOWLEDGE IN THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST), 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..."

Eph. 3:2-5



Here is a visual timeline that expresses the magnitude of what Paul is stating above:



Daniel the prophet was told prophetically that in the "time of the end...knowledge shall increase" (Dan.12:4).

I believe that a significant part of that increased knowledge is to be found in the contents of the 12 mysteries stated in the New Testament! The purpose of this newsletter is simply to attempt to stir up your interest in this vital and amazing New Testament theme!

"...FOR IT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO YOU TO KNOW THE MYSTERIES..." Mat. 13:11

The extensive chart on the next page is going to take some careful scrutiny and meditation, otherwise the contents of this newsletter will remain a "mystery" (hidden truth) to you. I can only urge you to consider Paul's exhortation to all believers:



"STUDY AND BE EAGER AND DO YOUR UTMOST TO PRESENT YOURSELF TO GOD APPROVED...A WORKMAN WHO HAS NO CAUSE TO BE ASHAMED, CORRECTLY ANALYZING AND ACCURATELY DIVIDING [RIGHTLY HANDLING AND SKILLFULLY TEACHING] THE WORD OF TRUTH."

2 Tim. 2:15 Amplified bible

These exhortative words from Charles Finney might also stimulate you to pay the price needed to unlock the mysteries of God's Word. →

In the book of Proverbs we also find such an exhortative emphasis when it comes to God's hidden truths:

"...INCLINE YOUR EAR TO WISDOM; AND APPLY YOUR HEART TO UNDERSTANDING... CRY OUT FOR DISCERNMENT... LIFT UP YOUR VOICE FOR UNDERSTANDING...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



REV. CHARLES C. FINNEY
C. C. Finney

"LET NO ONE DESPAIR IN COMMENCING THIS BOOK, NOR STUMBLE AT THE DEFINITIONS, THINKING HE CAN NEVER UNDERSTAND SO ABSTRUSE A SUBJECT..."

MY BROTHER, SISTER FRIEND- READ, STUDY, THINK; TO DEVELOP YOUR POWERS BY STUDY. GOD DESIGNED THAT RELIGION SHOULD REQUIRE THOUGHT, INTENSE THOUGHT, AND SHOULD THOROUGHLY DEVELOP OUR POWERS OF THOUGHT. THE BIBLE ITSELF IS WRITTEN IN A STYLE SO CONDENSED AS TO REQUIRE MUCH INTENSE STUDY.

MANY KNOW NOTHING OF THE BIBLE OR OF RELIGION, BECAUSE THEY WILL NOT THINK AND STUDY. I DO NOT PRETEND TO SO EXPLAIN THEOLOGY AS TO DISPENSE WITH THE LABOR OF THINKING."

(SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY- PREFACE, PAGE 9- CHARLES FINNEY)

READY TO BEGIN?

My suggestion to you is that you would FIRST read the passages that specify what are the 12 mysteries. These verses do not necessarily explain them, but rather just state what they are. I would also suggest that in the margin of your Bible, you "chain reference" these 12 passages one to another. That way, all you need to remember is where the first one is located. Memorize the location of what is singled out as "the GREAT mystery" as a starting point. From that initial location point (1), place the reference to the next mystery (2), and so on. If you do this, you will instantly be more knowledgeable about the mysteries of the Bible than most Christians that you encounter! My experience has been that the majority of believers are unaware of what are, and where are, God's stated mysteries!

Here are the references to where the mysteries are located:

1. **"THE GREAT MYSTERY"** (Eph. 5:31-32)
2. **"THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL"** (Eph. 6:19)
3. **"THE MYSTERY OF THE FAITH"** (1 Tim. 3:9)
4. **"THE MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM"** (Mat. 13:11)
5. **"THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS"** (1 Tim. 3:16)
6. **"THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST AND THE FATHER"** (Col. 2:2-3)
7. **"THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S WILL"** (Eph. 1:9-10)
8. **"THE MYSTERY OF THE 7 STARS AND THE 7 LAMPSTANDS"** (Rev. 1:20)
9. **"THE MYSTERY OF THE RAPTURE AND THE RESURRECTION"** (1 Cor. 15:52)
10. **"THE MYSTERY OF THE REDEMPTION OF THE JEWS"** (Rom. 11:25)
11. **"THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY"** (2 Thess. 2:7)
12. **"MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT"** (Rev. 17:1,5)

from "ALPHA"

(NO MYSTERIES REVEALED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT)

4,000 years

"...IN OTHER AGES WAS NOT MADE KNOWN TO THE SONS OF MEN..."



(12 MYSTERIES REVEALED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT)

2,000 years

"...AS IT HAS NOW BEEN REVEALED BY THE SPIRIT..." (Eph.3:5)

to "OMEGA"

LAST ADAM (JESUS) AND HIS BRIDE...

(Gen.2:1-25)

FROM THE FIRST COMING OF CHRIST



"THE GREAT MYSTERY"

"...and the TWO shall become ONE FLESH. This is a GREAT MYSTERY, but I speak concerning CHRIST and the CHURCH."

Eph.5:31-32

12

"THE MYSTERIES OF "GOOD" GOD REVEALS:"
(TO CAUSE YOU TO "BE ESTABLISHED IN THE FAITH" -Rom.16:25-26)

1
(Eph.6:19)
THE MYSTERY OF

"THE KINGDOM OF GOD"

2
(Mat. 13:11)
THE MYSTERY OF

"THE FAITH"

3
(1Tim.3:9)
THE MYSTERY OF

"THE "GODLINESS" AND THE FATHER"

4
(1Tim.3:16)
THE MYSTERY OF

"CHRIST AND THE FATHER"

5
(Col.2:2-3)
THE MYSTERY OF

"GOD'S WILL"

6
(Eph.1:9-10)
THE MYSTERY OF

"7 STARS"/ 7 LAMP STANDS OF THE DEAD"

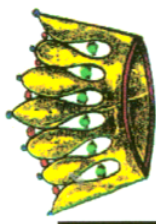
7
(Rev.1:20)
THE MYSTERY OF

"THE RAPTURE AND THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD"

8
(1 Cor.15:52)
THE MYSTERY OF

"THE REDEMPTION OF THE JEWS"

9
(Rom.11:25)
THE MYSTERY OF



TO THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST



(1 Cor.15:45, Rev. 22:17)

"THE MYSTERIES OF "EVIL" SATAN CONCEALS:"
(TO CAUSE YOU TO "DEPART FROM THE FAITH"-1 Tim.4:1)

10
"THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY, (or LAWLESSNESS) IS ALREADY AT WORK"
2 Thess.2:7

"SATAN'S MAN OF SIN- ANTICHRIST"



11
"MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT... THE GREAT HARLOT"
Rev.17:1,5

"SATAN'S COUNTERFEIT BRIDE"



FROM THE FIRST COMING OF THE SON OF PERDITION"
(John 17:12)

TO THE END OF THE SECOND COMING OF THE SON OF PERDITION"
(Rev.17:10-11, 2 Thess.2:3)

We have learned where the mysteries of the Bible are located. Let us now begin to divide the mysteries into three distinct groups that will help us to further understand them. The first division:

**THE 9 MYSTERIES OF "GOOD" THAT GOD REVEALS
TO CAUSE YOU TO "BE ESTABLISHED IN THE FAITH"- Col. 2:7**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
(Eph. 6:19)	(Mat. 13:11)	(1 Tim. 3:9)	(1 Tim. 3:16)	(Col. 2:2-3)	(Eph. 1:9-10)	(Rev. 1:20)	(1 Cor. 15:52)	(Rom. 11:25)
THE MYSTERY OF	THE MYSTERY OF	THE MYSTERY OF	THE MYSTERY OF	THE MYSTERY OF	THE MYSTERY OF	THE MYSTERY OF	THE MYSTERY OF	THE MYSTERY OF
"THE GOSPEL"	"THE KINGDOM OF GOD"	"THE FAITH"	"GODLINESS"	"CHRIST AND THE FATHER"	"GOD'S WILL"	"7 STARS"/ 7 LAMP STANDS	"THE RAPTURE/ RESURRECTION	"THE REDEMPTION OF JEWS"



FROM THE
FIRST COMING
OF CHRIST

The first point I would like to make about these 9 mysteries
is the magnitude of the individual topics.



TO THE
SECOND COMING
OF CHRIST

word "grace" which is used 134 times. We are saved by grace, but we are saved through the gospel!

What about the subject of "the Kingdom of God?" Here is a word ("kingdom") used 164 times in the New Testament! When Jesus preached "the gospel" He called it "the gospel of the Kingdom" (Mat. 4:23, 9:35). In fact, Jesus said, "...this gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in all the world..." (Mat. 24:14). Is that "the gospel" we hear being preached today? What has happened to the "good news" (the gospel) of the Kingdom of God? Did not Jesus tell Nicodemus, "...unless one is born again, he cannot see...he cannot enter the Kingdom of God"? (Jn.3:3,5). Why is the message today just, "You must be born again?" Is it because the Kingdom of God has been replaced with an earthly kingdom?

How important is "the faith?" Hebrews tells us, "...without faith it is impossible to please God.." (Heb.11:6). Paul summed up his life as one who "kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7), but he also gave strong warning about some believers who would "...depart from the faith" (1 Tim.4:1). Dear reader, the mysteries contain vital truths for God's people!

Is "godliness" important? Paul said, "...godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8). Many of God's people do not even know what "godliness" is! It is not holiness or righteous living, but rather it is your heart attitude toward God! If we do not have a heart for God (godliness) then we will not walk in holiness or righteousness!

What about the mystery of "Christ and the Father?" How important is it to hold a right concept of the two? The apostle John tells us, "...He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also" (1 Jn.2:22-23). There are more cults that have been built around either denying the Son or the Father. We have "Jesus only" groups and we have "Jehovah only" groups. John says you can't have one without the other! The Jews today mock the idea of a triune Godhead, but what do the Scriptures teach from Genesis to Revelation?

Is it important to know "the will of God"? Paul will tell you that understanding God's will is the mark of being "wise" vs. being "foolish" (Eph. 5:15-17). Jesus is going to rapture the "wise", but the "foolish" He will leave behind (Mat.25:1-3).

The mystery of the "7 stars and 7 lampstands" is vital for God's people! The "stars" are the leaders of the church and the "lampstands" represent the church itself! Are God's leaders and those that they lead "hearing what the Spirit is saying to the churches"? (Rev. 3:22).

What of "the mystery of the rapture and the resurrection from the dead? What about the redemption of the Jews? All of these 9 subjects are of great importance to God and should also be to the people of God.

"...FOR IT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO YOU TO KNOW THE MYSTERIES..." Mat. 13:11

THE 9 MYSTERIES OF "GOOD" THAT GOD REVEALS TO CAUSE YOU TO "BE ESTABLISHED IN THE FAITH"- Col. 2:7

- | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| (Eph.6:19) | (Mat. 13:11) | (1Tim.3:9) | (1Tim.3:16) | (Col.2:2-3) | (Eph.1:9-10) | (Rev.1:20) | (1Cor.15:52) | (Rom.11:25) |
| THE MYSTERY OF | THE MYSTERY OF | THE MYSTERY OF | THE MYSTERY OF | THE MYSTERY OF | THE MYSTERY OF | THE MYSTERY OF | THE MYSTERY OF | THE MYSTERY OF |
| "THE GOSPEL" | "THE KINGDOM OF GOD" | "THE FAITH" | "GODLINESS" | "CHRIST AND THE FATHER" | "GOD'S WILL" | "7 STARS"/
7 LAMP STANDS | "THE RAPTURE/
RESURRECTION" | "THE REDEMPTION OF JEWS" |

FROM THE FIRST COMING OF CHRIST

TO THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

I have arranged these 9 mysteries in what I believe is both a progressive and a chronological order of events. They span the time frame from the first coming of Christ, at which time He birthed the church through the preaching of the gospel, right up to the second coming of Christ to reign. Zechariah Chapters 13 and 14 prophetically depict that God will say once more to the Jews, "This is My people"; and each one will say, 'The Lord is my God' " (Zech 13:9).

Although limited space prevents me from greatly elaborating on the contents of the individual mysteries above, let me emphasize that these 9 mysteries, when properly understood, bring out all of the "good" that God has in store for His people, both for the church and for the Jews. Paul prays for the church that it would become "...established in the faith" (Col. 2:7). These 9 mysteries contain what is needful to establish God's people in the faith. However Paul gave prophetic warning that in the latter times there would be an opposing side to being established in the faith:

"...ESTABLISHED IN THE FAITH..."
Col. 2:7



"...SOME WILL DEPART FROM THE FAITH..."
1 Tim. 4:1

Below is the second category of our chart on page 3. This second grouping reveals to us what Satan is planning as "evil" for God's people as well as for unbelievers. Hidden within these two demonic mysteries is Satan's method by which he will seek to cause "some to depart from the faith":

THE 2 MYSTERIES OF "EVIL" SATAN CONCEALS TO CAUSE YOU TO "DEPART FROM THE FAITH"- 1 Tim.4:1)

"THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY, (or LAWLESSNESS) IS ALREADY AT WORK"

2 Thess.2:7

10

THE COMING OF SATAN'S MAN OF SIN- ANTICHRIST

"MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT... THE GREAT HARLOT"

Rev.17:1,5

THE FORMATION OF SATAN'S COUNTERFEIT "BRIDE"

FROM THE FIRST COMING OF "THE SON OF PERDITION" (John 17:12)

TO THE END OF THE REIGN OF THE SECOND COMING OF "THE SON OF PERDITION" (Rev.17:10-11, 2 Thess.2:3)


This page contains a great overall contrast of the forces of "good" and "evil" at work. Spend some quality time digesting what these mysteries are contrasting. It is a matter of life and death:

"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

Let us now briefly consider these two mysteries of evil for we are warned:

"...LEST SATAN SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF US...WE ARE NOT IGNORANT OF HIS DEVICES."
2 Cor. 2:11

THE 2 MYSTERIES OF "EVIL" SATAN CONCEALS TO CAUSE YOU TO "DEPART FROM THE FAITH"- 1 Tim.4:1)



**"THE MYSTERY
OF INIQUITY,
(or LAWLESSNESS)
IS ALREADY AT WORK"**

2 Thess.2:7

10

THE COMING OF SATAN'S MAN OF SIN- ANTICHRIST

11

**"MYSTERY
BABYLON
THE GREAT...
THE GREAT HARLOT"**

Rev.17:1,5



THE FORMATION OF SATAN'S COUNTERFEIT "BRIDE"

I would suggest that you take the time to read the contextual setting of the two above statements. Limited space prevents me from printing them out for you. These are two prophetic warnings from two of God's apostles, Paul and John. Paul is talking about the coming of "the man of sin – the lawless one" who is empowered by Satan himself to perform "signs and lying wonders." However, it is most imperative to realize that this "empowerment" to dominate the world for a season comes as a direct judgment of God upon a Christ-rejecting world:

"THE COMING OF THE LAWLESS ONE IS ACCORDING TO THE WORKING OF SATAN, WITH ALL POWER, SIGNS, AND LYING WONDERS, AND WITH ALL UNRIGHTEOUS DECEPTION AMONG THOSE WHO PERISH, BECAUSE THEY DID NOT RECEIVE THE LOVE OF THE TRUTH, THAT THEY MAY BE SAVED. AND FOR THIS REASON GOD WILL SEND THEM STRONG DELUSION, THAT THEY SHOULD BELIEVE THE LIE, THAT THEY ALL MAY BE CONDEMNED WHO DID NOT BELIEVE THE TRUTH BUT HAD PLEASURE IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS." 2 Thess. 2:9-12

Who is going to perish? Those who "love the lie" rather than "loving the truth." It is "for this reason" that God sends forth the first stage of His final judgment upon the world. The appearance of antichrist is God's judgment – His initial wrath of which Revelation reveals that there is much more to come. The seven-year tribulation is God's wrath from beginning to end. It starts with the revealing of the antichrist who is presently being restrained by the Spirit of God until "He be taken out of the way" (2 Thess. 2:7). God's wrath is made complete only when He pours out the last seven plagues (Rev. 15:1).

All that embodies the antichrist is already at work. Paul clearly states that, and the apostle John adds depth to Paul's warning:

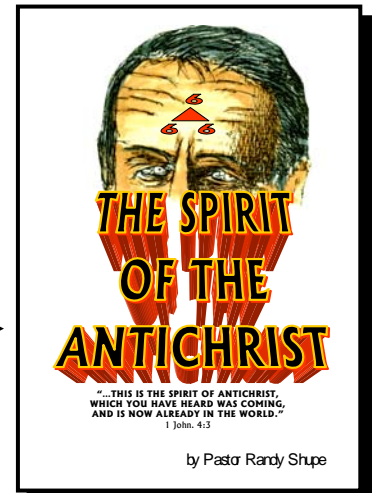
"...FOR THE MYSTERY OF LAWLESSNESS IS ALREADY AT WORK; ONLY HE WHO NOW RETRAINS WILL DO SO UNTIL HE IS TAKEN OUT OF THE WAY. AND THEN THE LAWLESS ONE WILL BE REVEALED..." 2 Thess. 2:7-8

"...IT IS THE LAST HOUR; AND AS YOU HAVE HEARD THAT THE ANTICHRIST IS COMING, EVEN NOW MANY ANTICHRISTS HAVE COME, BY WHICH WE KNOW THAT IT IS THE LAST HOUR." 1 Jn. 2:18

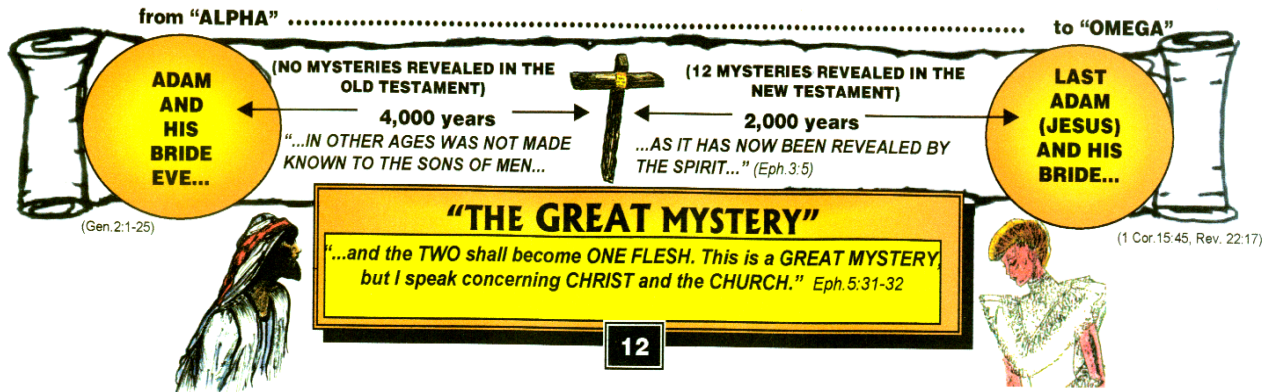
"...THIS IS THE SPIRIT OF ANTICHRIST, WHICH YOU HAVE HEARD WAS COMING, AND IS NOW ALREADY IN THE WORLD." 1 Jn. 4:3

We may rightly take assurance in the promise of Paul that, "...God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ..." (1 Thess. 5:9). The rapture will indeed remove the faithful believers (wise virgins) prior to the loosing of antichrist upon the world. However, we must also be aware that John and Paul are warning the saints that "the spirit of antichrist" is already at work.

I would like to recommend a teaching to you that I did on "The Spirit of The Antichrist" which is already at work in the world. → The question is, "Is the spirit of antichrist working in us?" In this teaching, I took several of the things that ear-mark the antichrist and described how these identifying marks are at work already in God's people? (You can order this DVD teaching from us for \$ 10.00)



In the examination of the third division of our chart found on page 3 pertaining to the mysteries of the Bible, this must be classified as a stand-alone mystery. It deserves to be in a category all by itself because it is the ultimate revelation of God to His people: the GREAT mystery, the Bride of Christ.



“...CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT, THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY 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... THIS IS A GREAT MYSTERY, BUT I SPEAK CONCERNING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.”
Eph. 5:25-27,32

The two “THAT’S” above reveal why Christ “loved the church and gave Himself for it.” He has a wedding in mind. The apostle Paul expressed a concern for this espoused Bride (the church) of being corrupted by Satan in the same manner that he seduced the first Adam’s bride:


“...I AM JEALOUS FOR YOU WITH GODLY JEALOUSY. FOR 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 (“PURITY”) THAT IS IN CHRIST.” 2 Cor. 11:2-3



“...SO YOUR MINDS MAY BE CORRUPTED AND SEDUCED FROM WHOLEHEARTED AND PURE DEVOTION TO CHRIST.” 2 Cor. 11:3 Amplified Bible

What will Satan use to seduce the believer from wholehearted and pure devotion to Christ? What will he use to get believers to “depart from the faith?” He will use these two “evil” resources:

THE 2 MYSTERIES OF “EVIL” SATAN CONCEALS TO CAUSE YOU TO “DEPART FROM THE FAITH”- 1 Tim.4:1)




“THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY, (or LAWLESSNESS) IS ALREADY AT WORK”
2 Thess.2:7

10

THE COMING OF SATAN’S MAN OF SIN- ANTICHRIST

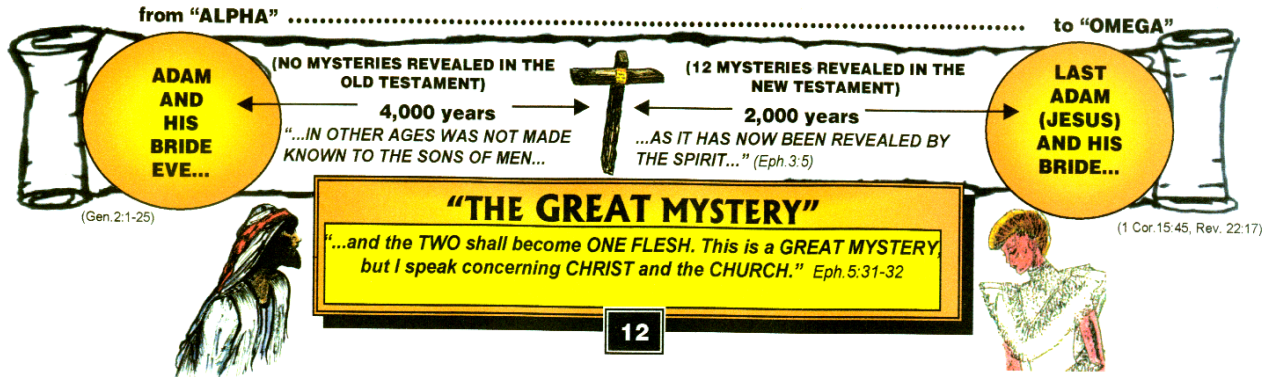
11

“MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT... THE GREAT HARLOT”
Rev. 17:1,5



THE FORMATION OF SATAN’S COUNTERFEIT “BRIDE”

Read the rest of 2 Cor. 11:1-4 and you will see that Satan will doctrinally present to believers “another Jesus” and “a different spirit” and “a different gospel” to achieve his devious means. His deception will come by the use of “deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons” as 1 Timothy 4:1 states.



If you intend to be among those who are found by Jesus as “not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing...holy and without blemish,” as Eph. 5:26-27 depicts the “glorious church” who is “washing in the Water of the Word,” then you must pay attention to how those objectives are going to be obtained. They will be achieved by focusing upon the purity of God’s Word that is contained in the nine mysteries that God has given for the purpose of making believers who are “established in the faith” rather than succumbing to Satan’s trap of “departing from the faith”:

THE 9 MYSTERIES OF “GOOD” THAT GOD REVEALS

TO CAUSE YOU TO “BE ESTABLISHED IN THE FAITH”- Col. 2:7

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
(Eph.6:19)	(Mat. 13:11)	(1Tim.3:9)	(1Tim.3:16)	(Col.2:2-3)	(Eph.1:9-10)	(Rev.1:20)	(1Cor.15:52)	(Rom.11:25)
THE MYSTERY OF	THE MYSTERY OF	THE MYSTERY OF	THE MYSTERY OF	THE MYSTERY OF	THE MYSTERY OF	THE MYSTERY OF	THE MYSTERY OF	THE MYSTERY OF
“THE GOSPEL”	“THE KINGDOM OF GOD”	“THE FAITH”	“GODLINESS”	“CHRIST AND THE FATHER”	“GOD’S “7 STARS”/ WILL”	“7 LAMP STANDS”	“THE RAPTURE/ RESURRECTION	“THE REDEMPTION OF JEWS”

“NOW TO HIM WHO IS ABLE TO ESTABLISH YOU ACCORDING TO MY GOSPEL AND THE PREACHING OF JESUS CHRIST, ACCORDING TO THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY WHICH WAS KEPT SECRET SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN BUT NOW HAS BEEN MADE MANIFEST, AND BY THE PROPHETIC SCRIPTURES HAS BEEN MADE KNOWN TO ALL NATIONS, ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT OF THE EVERLASTING GOD, FOR OBEDIENCE TO THE FAITH – TO GOD, ALONE WISE, BE GLORY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST FOREVER, AMEN.” Rom. 16:25-27

Do you, dear reader, have a firm grip on what these nine subjects are all about? Do you fully understand “the gospel?” Can you say that you are endorsing Paul’s exclusive brand of the gospel of which he warns:

“...THERE ARE SOME WHO TROUBLE YOU AND WANT TO PERVERT THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST...AS WE HAVE SAID BEFORE, SO NOW I SAY AGAIN, IF ANYONE PREACHES ANY OTHER GOSPEL TO YOU THAN WHAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED, LET HIM BE ACCURSED.” Gal. 1:7-9

At the risk of being redundant, let me ask you once more some of the same questions that I posed earlier. What about “the Kingdom of God?” Are you well rooted in all that Jesus and Paul taught about the Kingdom of God? Things such as how to enter the Kingdom and how to stay in the Kingdom? Are you aware of the sins that Paul said would prevent someone from inheriting the Kingdom of God? Is the Kingdom of God to you “...righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17), or are you listening to those who tell you that your Christian obligation is to be centered upon your God-given rights to “Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness?” Do you have true spiritual priorities or misleading political ones?

Do you know what is the will of God for you? Paul said that those who do are wise and those who do not understand the will of God are foolish (Eph. 5:15-17). Jesus is going to take only the wise at His coming. The foolish will be left behind (Mat. 25:1-13). The mysteries of God are vital subjects for the believer!

“...FOR IT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO YOU TO KNOW THE MYSTERIES...” Mat. 13:11

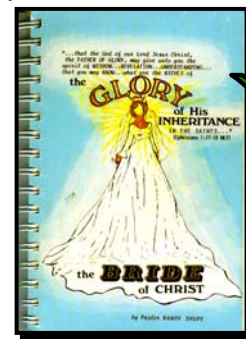
What about the rapture? Is there one? When will it happen – before or after the seven years of tribulation? Who is going to be raptured? Jesus said he would take the wise virgins and leave the foolish ones behind (Mat. 25:1-13). Is he talking about blood-washed believers being left behind? Are there conditions to being found “worthy to escape?” (Luke 21:34-36). Is not Jesus spelling out those conditions in His letter to Philadelphia? (Rev. 3:8-11). Important issues, disturbing questions!

What is your doctrinal view of the Jews? Do you believe they need to be saved today, or do they still have, as some teach, an “everlasting covenant” and therefore do not need to be born again? Didn’t Paul believe they needed to be saved in his day? (Rom.10:1). Many churches presently teach that the church has replaced Israel. Is that biblical? More specifically, is America, as the Puritans taught, “the New Israel of God?”

I present this barrage of questions to you in order to cause you to examine what you believe. If your interest has been stirred up toward the contents of the mysteries of God, then let me recommend a series of books to you that I have written over the years of my ministry that will enable you to study in-depth the mysteries of God. This newsletter has only briefly introduced them to you. What is needful now is to unlock what the Scriptures teach about these subjects.

Without realizing it at the time, and continuing for several years, I was quite unaware that many of the books the Holy Spirit was inspiring me to write were about the various mysteries of God.

The very first book I wrote was in 1986. It was entitled *“The Glory of His Inheritance”*



Prior to the wonders of writing books by computer, I did this book with a daisy-wheel typewriter. The artwork was rather primitive compared to what the Lord has led me to develop today, but the MESSAGE of this book is timeless.

I have allowed it to no longer be in print, but if there was enough interest I could reprint it in its original form. Let me know if you are interested.

“THE GREAT MYSTERY”
“...and the TWO shall become ONE FLESH. This is a GREAT MYSTERY but I speak concerning CHRIST and the CHURCH.” Eph. 5:31-32

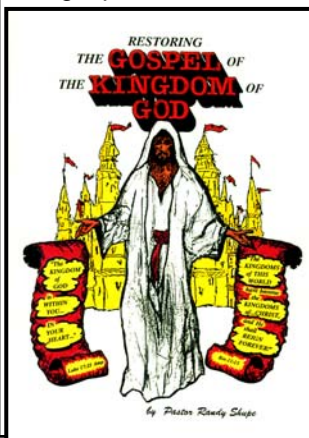
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The two books displayed below unlock the mystery of the gospel as well as the mystery of the Kingdom of God. Both “the gospel” and “the Kingdom” that Jesus preached are being greatly watered-down today by the presentation of half-truths as the whole truth. A half-truth is no better than a lie. Often what is being left out of the message today centers upon a necessary RESPONSE to what is stated as truth. For example consider:

“AND HE DIED FOR ALL, THAT THOSE WHO LIVE SHOULD LIVE NO LONGER FOR THEMSELVES, BUT FOR HIM WHO DIED FOR THEM AND ROSE AGAIN.” 2Cor. 5:15

Paul preached more than “He died for all...and rose again.” This is half the truth! Notice the response required of the believer to this truth is “...those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died and rose again.” Often, the middle truth is being ripped out of what is being given as “the gospel.”

I believe these two books will call you to a life of DISCIPLESHIP, not just marveling over the “conversion experience” of the new birth. A call to a new life lies beyond the new birth. Any other message is “another gospel.”

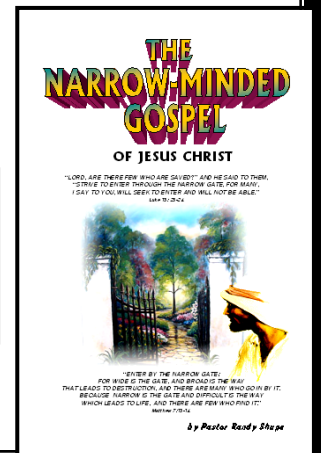


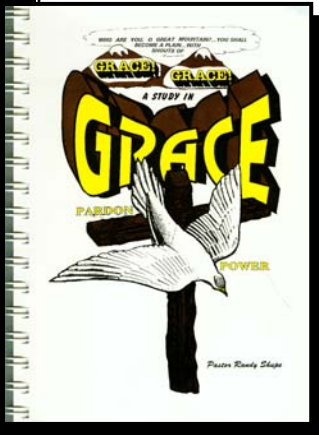
2
 (Mat. 13:11)
THE MYSTERY OF
“THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

In 1991 I wrote
“RESTORING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

And in 2004 I wrote
“THE NARROW-MINDED GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST”

1
 (Eph. 6:19)
THE MYSTERY OF
“THE GOSPEL”





3
(1Tim.3:9)
THE MYSTERY OF

"THE FAITH"

4
(1Tim.3:16)
THE MYSTERY OF

"GODLINESS"

In 1993 I wrote "A STUDY IN GRACE" which is in essence a book about these two mysteries. God's grace is more than "saving grace." It also contains "enabling grace" to live a true life of faith that practices "denying ungodliness, living soberly, righteously and godly in this present age" as Titus 2:11-14 states is the purpose of the grace of God.

We are given strong warning in the Scriptures pertaining to a perversion of the grace of God. Jude states:

"...I FOUND IT NECESSARY TO WRITE TO YOU EXHORTING YOU TO CONTENT EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS. FOR CERTAIN MEN HAVE CREPT IN UNNOTICED...UNGODLY MEN, WHO TURN THE GRACE OF OUR GOD INTO LICENTIOUSNESS..." Jude 3-4

The apostle Peter writes to believers telling them about the need to resist Satan "steadfast in the faith" and embrace the call to suffering knowing that:

"...THE GOD OF ALL GRACE, WHO HAS CALLED US TO HIS ETERNAL GLORY BY CHRIST JESUS, AFTER YOU HAVE SUFFERED AWHILE (WILL) PERFECT, ESTABLISH, STRENGTHEN, AND SETTLE YOU...THIS IS THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD IN WHICH YOU STAND." 1 Pet. 5:8-12

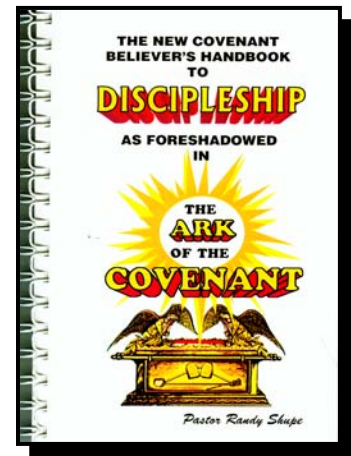
In 1995 I wrote

"THE ARK OF THE COVENANT"

This is a doctrinal book about the trinity and how the believer relates to each person of the Godhead. It is a book about the call to discipleship. If you do not know what discipleship is, this is the book for you for it covers the thirty essential doctrines of the faith: (chart from the book)

5
(Col.2:2-3)
THE MYSTERY OF

"CHRIST AND THE FATHER"



Hosea 2: 16-20

"...You will call me 'MY HUSBAND,' ...I will MAKE A COVENANT... I will BETROTH YOU TO ME FOREVER... in RIGHTEOUSNESS, and JUSTICE, in LOVINGKINDNESS and MERCY... in FAITHFULNESS, And YOU shall KNOW THE LORD."

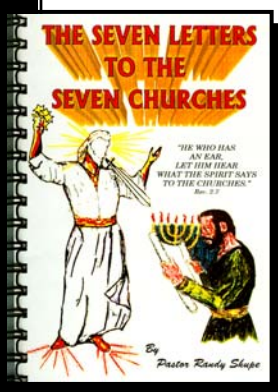
"I HAVE) ...MADE A COVENANT BEFORE THE LORD, to FOLLOW THE LORD, and to KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS and HIS TESTIMONIES and HIS STATUTES, with ALL... (my) HEART and ALL (my) SOUL, to PERFORM THE WORDS OF THIS COVENANT THAT WERE WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK...and (to) TAKE... (my) STAND FOR THE COVENANT."

2 Kings 23:3

"For certain men have CREPT IN UNNOTICED... UNGODLY MEN, who TURN THE GRACE OF GOD into LICENTIOUSNESS..." Jude 4

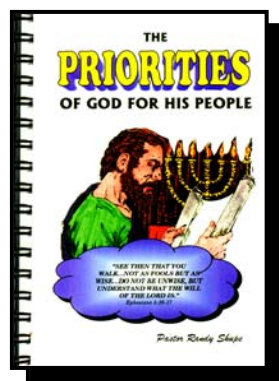
1	2	3
<p>THE GRACE OF GOD (16:8-12)</p> <p>by means of JESUS THE CHRIST Titus 2:11 Eph. 2:4-5</p> <p>typified by the Feast of PASSOVER John 1:29 1 Cor. 5:7</p> <p>to make innocent, righteous JUSTIFICATION Gal. 2:16 Titus 2:7</p> <p>reconciling us to God RELATIONSHIP 2 Cor. 5:18 Eph. 2:12-13</p> <p>knowledge of Christ as THE WAY John 14:6</p> <p>the kingdom mark of RIGHTEOUSNESS Rom. 14:17, Phil. 2:8, Gal. 2:21</p> <p>New Covenant circumcision BAPTISM in WATER Col. 2:11-12 1 Pet. 3:18-21</p> <p>our High Priest, the MEDIATOR OF THE COVENANT Heb. 8:1,6</p> <p>administering to us FAITH Rom. 3:22 Rom. 5:1-2</p>	<p>THE LAW OF GOD (16:8-12)</p> <p>by means of THE HOLY SPIRIT Rom. 8:31, 7:6 2 Cor. 3:6-8</p> <p>typified by the Feast of PENTECOST Acts 2:1-4</p> <p>to set apart, make holy SANCTIFICATION 1 Thess. 4:1-8, 5:23, 1 Pet. 1:2</p> <p>leading us on into paths of DISCIPLESHIP Eph. 4:35, 5:18 Ju. 10:43-44</p> <p>Jesus sends the I.L.S. as THE TRUTH John 8:31-32 John 10:12</p> <p>the kingdom mark of PEACE Rom. 14:17, Gal. 5:22, Eph. 4:3</p> <p>empowering through the BAPTISM in the SPIRIT Acts 1:4-8 Acts 10:44-48</p> <p>sent forth to be the SPIRIT OF CONVICTION Ju. 10:8</p> <p>administering to us HOPE Rom. 15:13 Rom. 5:2-5</p>	<p>THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD (16:8-12)</p> <p>the revelation of GOD THE FATHER Ju. 17:5 Col. 2:2 Eph. 1:17</p> <p>typified by the Feast of TABERNACLES Lev. 23:34-36 Rev. 21:3-6</p> <p>to honor, dignify, magnify GLORIFICATION 2 Cor. 3:18 Rom. 8:29-30</p> <p>God's ultimate goal for us FELLOWSHIP 1 Ju. 1:3-4 Ju. 4:23</p> <p>awareness of eternity as THE LIFE Ju. 10:16, 14:6, Luke 12:16-21</p> <p>the kingdom mark of JOY Rom. 14:17, Gal. 5:22, Jude 24</p> <p>work of purification by the BAPTISM in FIRE Matt. 3:11, 20:22, 1 Pet. 4:12</p> <p>chastening administered by FATHER OF SPIRITS Heb. 12:9-11 1 Cor. 13:12</p> <p>administering to us LOVE Ju. 2:26, 1 Ju. 2:1, 1 Ju. 4:19</p>

These booklets specifically address these three mysteries:



7
(Rev. 1:20)
THE MYSTERY OF

**"7 STARS"/
7 LAMP STANDS**

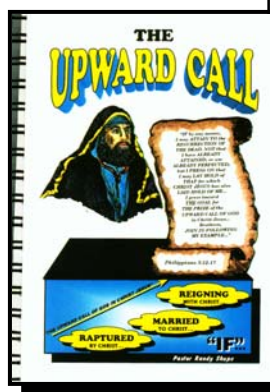


6
(Eph. 1:9-10)
THE MYSTERY OF

"GOD'S WILL"

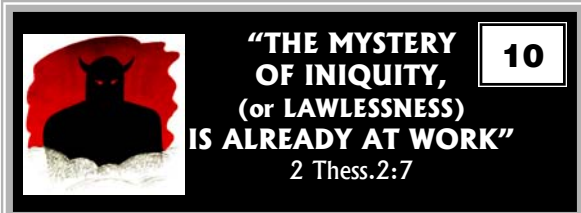
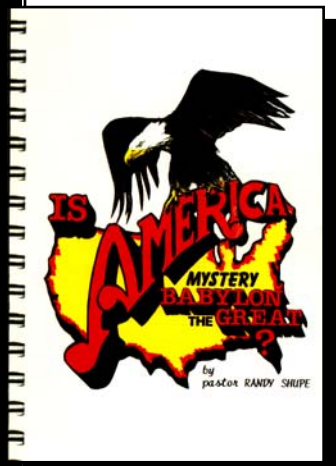
8
(1 Cor. 15:52)
THE MYSTERY OF

**"THE RAPTURE/
RESURRECTION"**



The Lord has also led me to write extensively about the contents of the two "evil" mysteries that Satan utilizes to divert God's people from paths of holiness and truth.

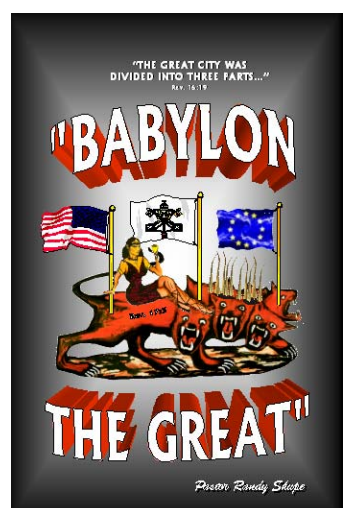
In 1990 I wrote "IS AMERICA MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT?" I am currently working on a more comprehensive revelation of the fullness of these two "evil" mysteries in a new book entitled "BABYLON THE GREAT" Don't order it yet. I have only written the first 30 pages!



SATAN'S MAN OF SIN- ANTICHRIST



SATAN'S COUNTERFEIT "BRIDE"



Here is a current price list for these books:

1. **THE GLORY OF HIS INHERITANCE \$ 9.95** (currently out-of-print, but I will consider printing if we receive enough interest)
2. **RESTORING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD \$ 9.95**
3. **THE NARROW-MINDED GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST \$ 9.95**
4. **A STUDY IN GRACE \$ 8.95**
5. **THE ARK OF THE COVENANT \$ 10.95**
6. **THE SEVEN LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES \$ 7.95**
7. **THE PRIORITIES OF GOD FOR HIS PEOPLE \$ 7.95**
8. **THE UPWARD CALL OF GOD \$ 7.95**
9. **IS AMERICA MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT \$ 8.95**

My intent here is not simply to entice you to buy my books, but rather to illustrate how the Holy Spirit has guided the writing of many of my books around the theme of the 12 mysteries of God. It also brings out how important the mysteries are to God, and hopefully will become cherished by you also!

“AND SO WE HAVE
THE
PROPHETIC WORD
CONFIRMED,
WHICH YOU DO WELL TO
HEED AS A LIGHT THAT
SHINES IN A
DARK PLACE,
UNTIL THE DAY DAWNS
AND THE MORNING
STAR RISES IN
YOUR HEARTS...”

2 Pet. 1:19



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