

“...YOUR UNDERSTANDING BEING ENLIGHTENED;
THAT YOU MAY KNOW WHAT IS THE HOPE OF HIS CALLING,
AND WHAT ARE THE RICHES OF

THE GLORY OF HIS INHERITANCE

Eph. 1:18



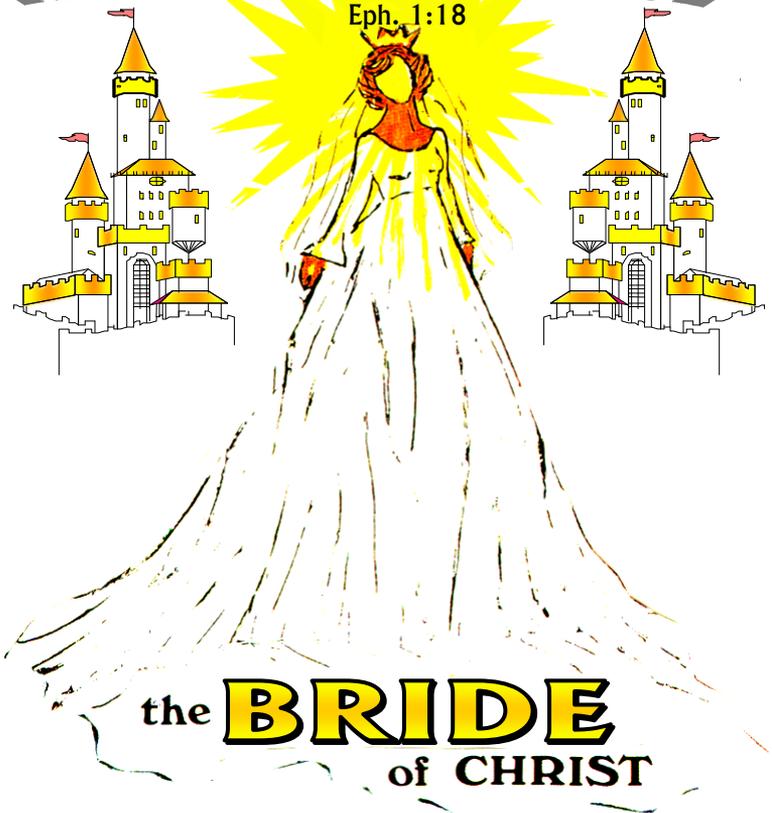
the **BRIDE**
of **CHRIST**

Pastor Randy Shupe

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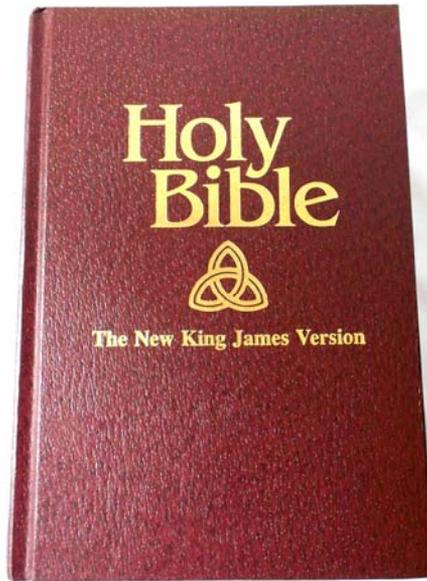
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the **BRIDE**
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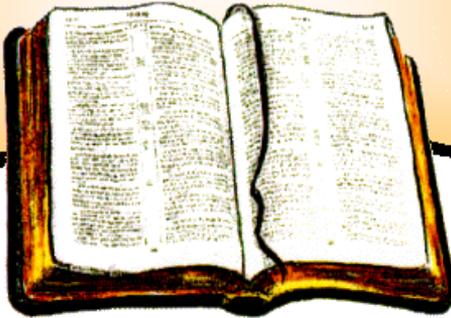
The majority of scripture references quoted in this book are from the New King James Version by Thomas Nelson Publishers.

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

Pastor Randy Shupe

IF

**“THE BIGGEST LITTLE WORD
IN THE BIBLE”**



There are 1,522 “ifs” in the bible...
It appears in every book of the bible...
Its meaning:

~ IF ~

“A CONDITION, A STIPULATION, A SUPPOSITION...”

Webster



A VERY IMPORTANT
PREFACE

**"THE SPIRIT HIMSELF
BEARS WITNESS WITH OUR SPIRIT
THAT WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD,
AND**

IF CHILDREN,
THEN HEIRS- HEIRS OF GOD
AND JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST,

IF INDEED WE SUFFER WITH HIM
THAT WE MAY ALSO BE
GLORIFIED TOGETHER."

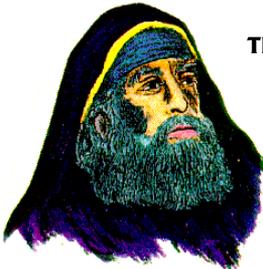
Rom. 8:16-17



"IF"

is the biggest little word used in scripture to draw our attention to the specified conditions attached to God's precious promises.

Sadly, the multitude of "ifs" found in the bible are ignored, minimized, or rationalized away by those prone to twist the content of the scriptures (2 Pet.3:16) in a devious effort to make Christianity more palatable and profitable merchandize. If you think these are hard words, consider that the apostle Paul also often condemned such unscrupulous behavior in personally declaring his commitment to preach the whole counsel of God's Word instead of favored selected bits and pieces of it:



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

Acts 20:26-27

**"FOR WE ARE NOT AS SO MANY,
PEDDLING THE WORD OF GOD;
BUT AS OF SINCERITY, BUT AS FROM GOD,
WE SPEAK IN THE SIGHT OF GOD IN CHRIST."**

2 Cor. 2:17

**"BUT WE HAVE RENOUNCED THE HIDDEN THINGS OF SHAME,
NOT WALKING IN CRAFTINESS NOR HANDLING THE WORD OF GOD DECEITFULLY,
BUT BY MANIFESTATION OF THE TRUTH IN THE SIGHT OF GOD."**

2 Cor. 3:2

In light of today's over indulgence of such rampant deception, Paul's words are still pertinent in exhorting every believer to become a careful student of God's Word in order that they may rightly divide its contents:

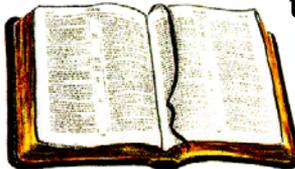
**"BE DILIGENT TO PRESENT YOURSELF APPROVED TO GOD,
A WORKER WHO DOES NOT NEED TO BE ASHAMED,
RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH."**

2 Tim. 2:15

the WISE:

**"RIGHTLY DIVIDE
THE WORD OF
TRUTH."**

2 Tim. 2:15



the FOOLISH:

**"TWIST TOGETHER
THE
SCRIPTURES."**

2 Pet. 3:16

For example, ponder carefully the two "ifs" on the opposite page that are attached to the stated promises of becoming heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. No one possesses an automatic guarantee of being either an heir of God or a joint heir with Christ apart from heeding the conditional "ifs" attached to those stated promises.

IF

→
**CHILDREN,
 THEN HEIRS-
 HEIRS OF GOD
 AND JOINT HEIRS
 WITH CHRIST,**

IF

→
**INDEED WE
 SUFFER WITH HIM
 THAT WE MAY ALSO
 BE GLORIFIED TOGETHER."**

Rom. 8:16-17

For the point of illustration, let us briefly examine these two "ifs" Paul gives as conditions to inheriting the dual promises of becoming (1) an heir of God and (2) a joint heir with Christ.

BECOMING AN HEIR OF GOD- If we have become children of God (via the new birth) then we are heirs of our God through Jesus Christ. Are there stated in God's Word any "ifs" (conditions) to becoming children of God? The answer is yes. Consider this passage: **"IF YOU CONFESS WITH YOUR MOUTH THE LORD JESUS AND BELIEVE IN YOUR HEART THAT GOD HAS RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, YOU WILL BE SAVED."** Rom. 10:9

1. **IF** (condition #1) you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus . . .
2. **IF** (condition #2) you believe in your heart that God Has raised Him from the dead...you will be saved (the promise).

No one can become an heir of God (a child of God) apart from endorsing the stated **IF** conditions. Is the promise of salvation "unconditional" or indeed, is it rather stated to be very conditional? It is important to pay attention to God's "ifs". You can't obtain the promise apart from satisfying the conditions stated in God's "ifs".

BECOMING A JOINT HEIR WITH CHRIST- Likewise, many believers go about claiming the promises of being automatically qualified to reign as joint heirs with Christ simply because they have become an heir of God (child of God via new birth). However, many are guilty of ignoring the second attached **IF** condition of suffering with Christ in order that they may be glorified with Christ in eternity. The specified **IF** clearly states the condition as suffering with Christ in order to reign with Christ. In another place Paul plainly states:



**"THIS IS A FAITHFUL SAYING:
 IF WE DIED WITH HIM, WE SHALL ALSO LIVE WITH HIM,
 IF WE SUFFER WE SHALL ALSO REIGN WITH HIM;
 IF WE DENY HIM HE ALSO WILL DENY US..."**

2 Tim . 2:11-13

In light of such "if" marked scriptures, will every believer truly reign as a joint heir with Christ just because they have become an heir of God via the new birth, or is the promise of being a joint heir with Christ vitally tied to embracing the on-going call to suffer with Him?

To further illustrate the point, consider Paul's expressed goals in life as a Christian some 23 years after his own conversion experience:



“THAT I MAY KNOW HIM AND THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION, AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS, BEING CONFORMED INTO HIS DEATH . . . BRETHREN, I DO NOT COUNT MYSELF TO HAVE APPREHENDED; BUT ONE THING I DO, FORGETTING THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND AND REACHING FORWARD TO THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE AHEAD, I PRESS TOWARD THE GOAL FOR THE PRIZE OF THE UPWARD CALL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.”

Phil 3:10-1:4

The apostle Paul, obviously already an heir of God as a born-again child of God, had a higher vision which he himself was still reaching forward to obtain. Paul pictures this higher goal as a future prize yet to be won rather than a past gift already received.

Is it important to ask, what is the race, and what is the prize which Paul the apostle depicts as the norm not only for himself, but for us as well? Did not Paul say that we were to be followers of him as he followed Christ, and that we have him for an example and a pattern to emulate? (See 1Cor.11:1, Phil. 3:17)

That, dear reader, is the main intention for the writing of this book. May God help you to have a Berean mentality to come with a readiness of mind to hear, and then, like the Berean believers, search the scriptures to see if these things be so. (Acts 17:10-12)

Pastor Randy Shupe

“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

“FOR **IF** **WE SUFFER,**
WE SHALL ALSO REIGN WITH HIM.”

2 Tim. 2:12



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The author's intention for listing a table of contents is to provide a means of quick reference once having completed the book in its entirety.

However, to bypass the block-building steps simply to reach portions of interest is to risk rendering the intent of the book useless and may lead to misinterpretation of the contents. Remember, this book is laced throughout its contents with God's conditional "ifs". Don't skip over them.

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**"...THAT THE FATHER OF GLORY
MAY GIVE UNTO YOU
WISDOM...REVELATION...UNDERSTANDING
...THAT YOU MAY KNOW WHAT ARE
THE RICHES OF**

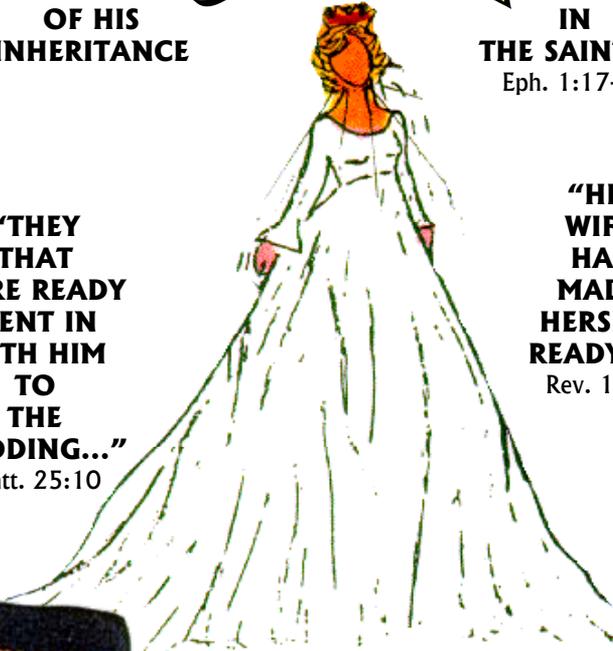
**THE
GLORY**

**OF HIS
INHERITANCE**

**IN
THE SAINTS."**
Eph. 1:17-18

**"THEY
THAT
WERE READY
WENT IN
WITH HIM
TO
THE
WEDDING..."**
Matt. 25:10

**"HIS
WIFE
HAS
MADE
HERSELF
READY..."**
Rev. 19:7



THE BRIDE OF CHRIST



PART ONE

THE NECESSITY OF HAVING VISION

**"WHERE THERE IS NO VISION,
THE PEOPLE PERISH."**

Prov. 29:18 KJ

**"WHERE THERE IS
NO REVELATION,
(prophetic vision)
THE PEOPLE CAST OFF
RESTRAINT."**

Prov. 29:18 NKJ

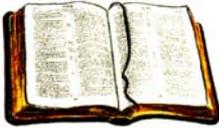
**"WRITE
THE VISION
AND
MAKE IT PLAIN
ON TABLETS,
THAT
HE MAY RUN
WHO READS IT."**

Hab.2:2

Dear reader, the initial act of believing in Christ merely qualifies us to (1) run the race which is now set before us (Heb. 12:1), and (2) understand that the believer must run according to the rules (2 Tim. 2:5), in order to obtain the prize (1Cor. 9:24-27). Consider Paul's specific admonition to all believers pertaining to the race and the prize set before every follower of Christ:

**“DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT THOSE WHO RUN IN A RACE ALL RUN,
BUT ONE RECEIVES THE PRIZE?
RUN IN SUCH A WAY THAT YOU MAY OBTAIN IT.
AND EVERYONE WHO COMPETES FOR THE PRIZE
IS TEMPERATE IN ALL THINGS.
NOW THEY DO IT TO OBTAIN A PERISHABLE CROWN,
BUT WE DO IT
FOR AN IMPERISHABLE CROWN . . .
THEREFORE I DISCIPLINE MY BODY AND BRING IT INTO SUBJECTION
LEST, WHEN I HAVE PREACHED TO OTHERS
I MYSELF SHOULD BECOME DISQUALIFIED.”**

1 Cor. 9:24-27



**“WRITE THE VISION
AND MAKE IT PLAIN
ON TABLETS,
ON TABLETS,
THAT HE MAY
RUN WHO READS IT.”**

Hab. 2:2



The plain vision written on tablets Habakkuk refers to is the Word of God, and it should be viewed in such a way that it produces motivation to run a race for a prize. If the brand of Christianity you are embracing does not produce in you a desire to run a race for a prize yet to be obtained, then the fullness of your vision has been theologically twisted by those who have failed to rightly divide the Word of truth. Beware, for not everything from God is a free gift. Some things are specifically singled out as prizes to be earned by the believer. Note that Paul was motivated throughout his life, as a believer, by a prize mentality as his all-consuming goal:



**“NOT THAT I HAVE ALREADY ATTAINED,
OR AM ALREADY PERFECTED;
BUT I PRESS ON,
THAT I MAY LAY HOLD OF
THAT FOR WHICH CHRIST JESUS
HAS ALSO LAID HOLD OF ME.
BRETHREN,
I DO NOT COUNT MYSELF
TO HAVE APPREHENDED;
BUT ONE THING I DO,
FORGETTING THOSE THINGS
WHICH ARE BEHIND
AND REACHING FORWARD TO
THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE AHEAD,
I PRESS TOWARD THE GOAL FOR THE PRIZE
OF THE UPWARD CALL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.”**

Phil. 3:12-14

Dear reader, may I ask you to consider these words of Paul found in Hebrews 6:1-2 and 2 Cor. 7:1, and then may you consider some penetrating questions?

**“THEREFORE,
LEAVING THE DISCUSSION OF
THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF CHRIST,
LET US GO ON TO PERFECTION,
NOT LAYING AGAIN
THE FOUNDATION OF
REPENTANCE . . . FAITH . . . BAPTISMS . . .
LAYING ON OF HANDS . . . RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD . . .
AND ETERNAL JUDGMENT.”**

Heb. 6:1-2

**“THEREFORE,
HAVING THESE PROMISES,
BELOVED,
LET US CLEANSE OURSELVES FROM ALL
FILTHINESS OF THE FLESH AND SPIRIT,
PERFECTING HOLINESS
IN THE FEAR OF THE LORD.”**

2 Cor. 7:1

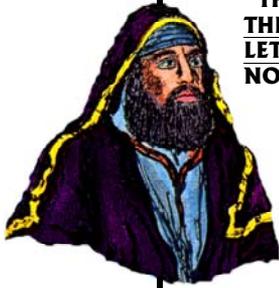


In light of these challenging statements, the following questions are designed to allow you the reader to examine where you are in your theology as it compares with Paul's unique exhortation given to believers in Phil. 3:12-14.



1. What is the race Paul describes that is to be run?
2. What is the prize to be won?
3. How is the prize won?
4. What is the upward call of God in Christ Jesus that Paul sought to lay hold of as a follower of Christ?
5. What does Paul mean by “going on to perfection” as a believer?
6. What does it mean to “perfect holiness” as a believer?
7. What did Paul mean in saying that he was “not already perfected” nor had he “already attained”, and that he had “not yet apprehended” as a born-again believer?

The answers to such penetrating questions on the previous page cannot be found in the midst of the basic foundations of the faith as Paul gives them in Hebrews Chapter 6:



“THEREFORE LEAVING THE DISCUSSION OF THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF CHRIST, LET US GO ON TO PERFECTION, NOT LAYING AGAIN THE FOUNDATION OF

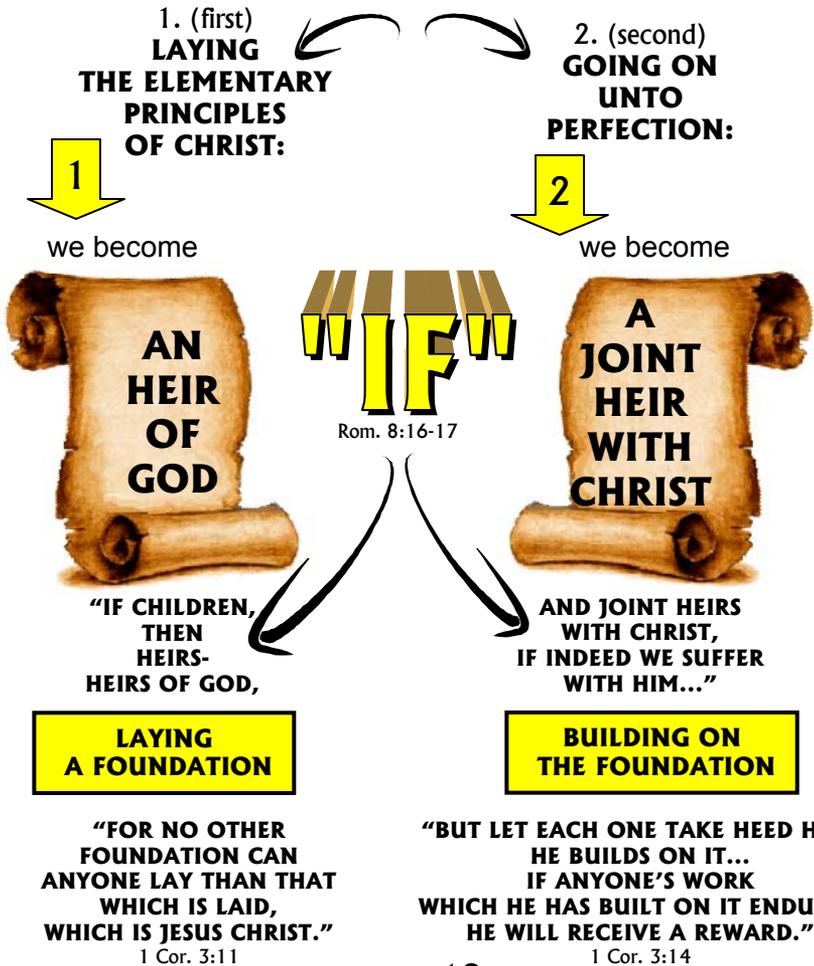
- (1) REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS...
- (2) FAITH TOWARD GOD...
- (3) THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS...

} THE NEW BIRTH

- (4) THE LAYING ON OF HANDS...
- (5) THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD...
- (6) ETERNAL JUDGMENT.”

Heb. 6:1-2

(1) Lay the foundation (2) Go on to perfection. This is Paul’s counsel. He clearly makes two distinct divisions of the Christian experience:

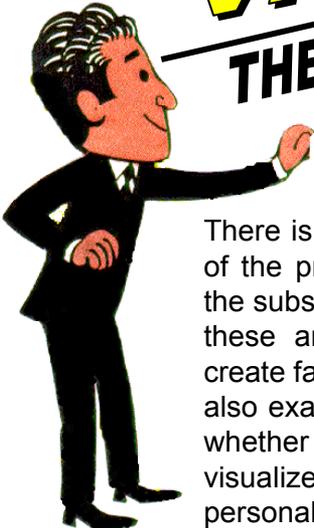


Let me illustrate how it is that so many of God's people extract the promises of God's Word from the conditions attached to them, and thereby possess only a twisted vision of promises devoid of conditions. If isolated, the promises of God's Word create a relaxed "R & R" attitude when they are divorced from the somewhat disturbing conditions attached to them. Such limited thinking produces:

"THE R & R VISION OF CHARLIE CHURCH"

VISUALIZE

THE PROMISES OF GOD:



to be **RAPTURED BY CHRIST...** to be **MARRIED TO CHRIST...** to **REIGN WITH CHRIST...**

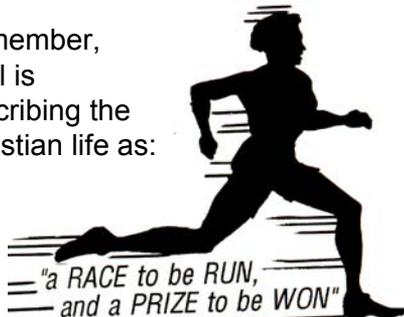
There is nothing wrong with Charlie Church's vision of the promises. The scripture tells us that faith is the substance of the things we hope for (Heb. 11:1), and these are great promises of hope which indeed create faith. However, remember Paul said we must also examine ourselves, and prove ourselves, as to whether we are in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5). To only visualize the promises and not to analyze our personal relationship to the conditions attached to those promises will result in embracing a

"RESTFUL & RELAXING" ATTITUDE

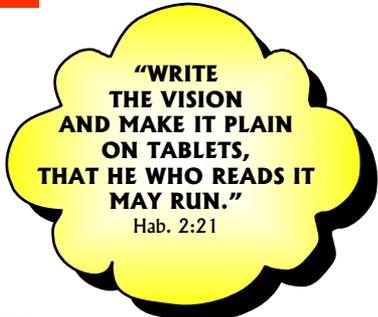
when we should rather be cultivating a

"READ & RUN" ATTITUDE

Remember, Paul is describing the Christian life as:



"a RACE to be RUN,
and a PRIZE to be WON"



"WRITE THE VISION AND MAKE IT PLAIN ON TABLETS, THAT HE WHO READS IT MAY RUN."
Hab. 2:21

What is needed is 20-20 vision. Keep one eye on the promises of God for they are the keys to great faith. However, keep the other eye focused on the conditions attached to those promises for they are the keys to great obedience.

VISUALIZE

THE PROMISES OF GOD:



**RAPTURED
BY CHRIST...**

**MARRIED
TO CHRIST...**

**REIGN
WITH CHRIST...**

ANALYZE

THE CONDITIONS OF GOD:

**RAPTURED
BY CHRIST...**

IF

“BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM IS COMING . . . THE BRIDEGROOM CAME AND **THOSE WHO WERE READY** WENT IN WITH HIM TO THE WEDDING.”
Matt. 25:1-13

**MARRIED
TO CHRIST...**

IF

“LET US REJOICE AND BE GLAD . . . FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB HAS COME AND **HIS WIFE HAS MADE HERSELF READY . . .** (BY BEING CLOTHED WITH) **THE RIGHTEOUS ACTS OF THE SAINTS.**”
Rev. 19:7-8

**REIGN
WITH CHRIST...**

IF

“**IF WE SUFFER, WE SHALL ALSO REIGN WITH HIM.**”
2 Tim. 2:12

“**HE WHO OVERCOMES WILL I GRANT TO SIT WITH ME ON MY THRONE.**”
Rev. 3:21

“**WRITE THE VISION . . . MAKE IT PLAIN ON TABLETS . . . THAT HE MAY RUN WHO READS IT.**”
Hab. 2:2

The apostle Paul sets a good example of one who both visualized and analyzed himself:

VISUALIZE



THE GOAL:

**"IF, BY ANY MEANS,
I MAY ATTAIN TO THE RESURRECTION
FROM THE DEAD . . .
I PRESS TOWARD THE GOAL FOR
THE PRIZE OF THE UPWARD CALL OF
GOD IN CHRIST JESUS . . ."**

Phil. 3:11-14

ANALYZE

Remember, it was Paul who differentiated between what constitutes being an heir of God and that of becoming a joint heir with Christ!

THE REALITY:

**"NOT THAT I HAVE ALREADY ATTAINED,
OR AM ALREADY PERFECTED . . .
BRETHREN, I DO NOT COUNT MYSELF
TO HAVE APPREHENDED . . ."**

Phil. 3:12, 13

Paul set his sights upon the upward call of God in Christ Jesus which begins at the future resurrection from the dead combined with the rapture of the living:

**"THE DEAD IN CHRIST SHALL
RISE FIRST, THEN WE WHO
ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN
SHALL BE CAUGHT UP..."**

1 Thess. 4:16-17

"THE UPWARD CALL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS"

1.
**RAPTURED
BY CHRIST...**

2.
**MARRIED
TO CHRIST...**

3.
**REIGN
WITH CHRIST...**

"IF..."

Dear reader, do you see how vital it is to have vision and goals that motivate us in this present life? Such vision is essential because our priorities in this present temporal life directly impacts the eternal rewards we shall receive in the life to come. Consider Paul's words to this end:



**“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

May you meditate in Philippians Chapter Three written some 23 years after Paul's initial conversion experience and catch the spirit of the apostle as he is driven with zeal and fervency to obtain what he labels as the upward call of God in Christ Jesus! Note how Paul sums up these words with this exhortation to all believers in Christ:

**“AS MANY AS ARE MATURE, HAVE THIS MIND...
FOLLOW MY EXAMPLE AND NOTE THOSE WHO SO WALK
AS YOU HAVE US FOR A PATTERN.”**

Phil. 3:15,17



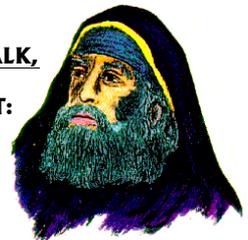
Haven't heard this kind of exhortation preached lately? A. W. Tozer once said,

**“DO NOT BE FOOLED
BY THE WAYS OF THE MULTITUDE.
HISTORY HAS PROVED DOWN THROUGH THE AGES
THAT THE MULTITUDES ARE ALWAYS WRONG”.**

In light of this fact about the multitudes always being wrong, consider that Paul goes on in Phil. 3 with a warning about the way the multitude of Christians walked in his day:

**“ . . . JOIN IN FOLLOWING MY EXAMPLE FOR MANY WALK,
OF WHOM I HAVE TOLD YOU WEEPING,
THAT THEY ARE THE ENEMIES OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST:
WHOSE END IS DESTRUCTION,
WHOSE GOD IS THEIR BELLY,
AND WHOSE GLORY IS IN THEIR SHAME . . .
WHO SET THEIR MIND ON EARTHLY THINGS.”**

Phil. 3:17-19



In case you didn't catch it, they are enemies of the cross of Jesus, not of Jesus Himself! They love Jesus, but not the cross life He calls them to embrace! Many of God's people choose not to embrace the cross life, choose not to be conformed into His death, but rather continue feeding the self-centered, flesh-based life. Remember that Jesus said to every disciple that they were to take up their own cross daily, deny self, and follow after their master (see Luke 9:23).

We have briefly looked at the vision of Paul and how he both visualized the promises and analyzed their conditions in order to keep all things in proper perspective.

Let us now look at yet another apostle with like vision, the apostle Peter. There are two major areas I want to show you, the first being Found in 2 Peter 3:10-17 speaking of vision:

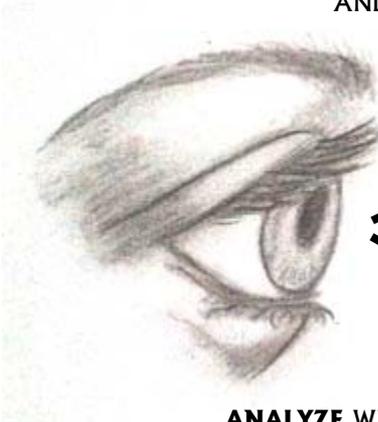


**“BUT THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL COME...
THE HEAVENS WILL PASS AWAY...THE EARTH
AND THE WORKS IN IT WILL BE BURNED UP . . .
THEREFORE, SINCE ALL THESE THINGS WILL
BE DISSOLVED, WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS
OUGHT YOU TO BE IN HOLY
CONDUCT AND GODLINESS . . .
WE, ACCORDING TO HIS PROMISE,
LOOK FOR NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH IN
WHICH DWELLS RIGHTEOUSNESS.
THEREFORE, BELOVED,
LOOKING FORWARD TO THESE THINGS,
BE DILIGENT TO BE FOUND BY HIM
IN PEACE, WITHOUT SPOT AND BLAMELESS . . .
BEWARE LEST YOU ALSO FALL FROM YOUR
OWN STEADFASTNESS, BEING LED AWAY
WITH THE ERROR OF THE WICKED.”**

2 Pet. 3:10-17

VISUALIZE A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH
WHERE RIGHTEOUSNESS DWELLS...

VISUALIZE THIS PRESENT EARTH
AND ITS WORKS TO BE
BURNED UP...



VISUALIZE

ANALYZE

ANALYZE WHAT MANNER
OF PERSONS
WE OUGHT TO BE...

ANALYZE THE NEED TO BE A PEOPLE OF
HOLY CONDUCT AND GODLINESS . . .
A PEOPLE WITHOUT SPOT AND BLAMELESS . . .

Again, the point is simply that where there is prophetic revelation flourishing (vision), it will govern our conduct here on earth as believers. Lack such vision and we become in danger of casting off restraint and living as if this present existence is the real life instead of the life which is to come!

The second area of vision that the apostle Peter gives us is also vital to say the least. You will remember that I defined a foolish virgin as a person who only visualizes the promises of God, but fails to analyze whether he/she is meeting the conditions attached to those promises.

One popular doctrine circulating in the Body of Christ is that of “unconditional eternal security” (once saved, always saved). The Bible does preach eternal security, but it is not unconditional. No promise in God’s word is unconditional. Peter gives us a depiction of true biblical eternal security as he both visualizes and analyzes how it is obtained. Our proof texts are clearly stated in 2 Peter 1:1-11. May we begin by establishing to whom these passages are written, lest we fall into the error of the wicked who, being unlearned and untaught, twist the scriptures to their own destruction (2 Peter 3:16-17).

Consider Peter’s opening statement that sets the stage for whom these words were written:

**“TO THOSE WHO HAVE OBTAINED
LIKE PRECIOUS FAITH WITH US
BY THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF OUR GOD
AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST.”**

2 Peter 1:2



Peter is not addressing the unsaved (no epistle does), nor the unsaved Jews (no epistle does, including Hebrews), but rather Peter plainly clarifies above that he is speaking to born-again, blood-washed believers!

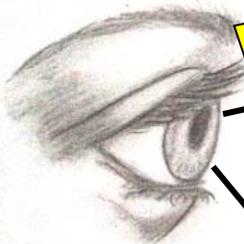
Take time now to carefully read Peter’s words in verses 1-11. Study carefully the chart on the next page and you will see the specified conditions to obtaining the promises of an abundant entrance into the kingdom of Christ, how to make your calling and election sure, and how to never stumble or fall or to be barren or unfruitful Christians. What you will find is that this secure position Peter describes is not the result of a gift received by means of the new birth experience. Rather, having believed, it requires now adding some things to our fundamental faith in Christ.

Peter's position of eternal security for the believer is obtained by adding to faith in Christ seven specific conditions designed to keep us in a position of eternal security:

First, we must:

VISUALIZE

THE PROMISES OF GOD:



“AN ABUNDANT ENTRANCE INTO THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST . . .”

2 Peter 1:11

“MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE . . .”

2 Peter 1:10

“NEVER STUMBLE OR FALL . . .”

2 Peter 1:10

“NOT BARREN OR UNFRUITFUL . . .”

2 Peter 1:8

ANALYZE

THE CONDITIONS OF GOD:

Then we must:

“ADD TO OUR FAITH...
2 Peter 1:5-7

- 1. VIRTUE...
- 2. KNOWLEDGE . . .
- 3. SELF CONTROL . . .
- 4. PERSEVERANCE . . .
- 5. GODLINESS . . .
- 6. BROTHERLY KINDNESS . . .
- 7. LOVE . . .

IF

THESE THINGS ARE YOURS AND ABOUND...”

2 Peter 1:8

Spend considerable time scrutinizing what the apostle Peter presents as “the security of the believer.”

It is not the result of only having experienced the new birth. Eternal security is not a gift of God's grace received at the new birth. Rather, it is plainly stated that such security requires the born-again believer to add to your faith seven enabling essentials in order to inherit the stated promises!

So then, is it indeed “faith plus nothing” as so many grace teachers espouse that describes the Christian life? Peter’s answer is no! **IF** you desire an abundant entrance into the Kingdom, and **IF** you want to make your calling and election sure, and **IF** you desire to never stumble or not be found unfruitful or barren in the knowledge of Christ, then you must add to your faith those seven specific things that are designed to obtain the promises. You can’t have one without the other.



Peter adds one more thoughtful warning for those who do not have these things, and it too deals with vision:

“FOR HE WHO LACKS THESE THINGS IS SHORT-SIGHTED, EVEN TO BLINDNESS, AND HAS FORGOTTEN THAT HE WAS PURGED FROM HIS OLD SINS.”

2 Peter 1:9

The above picture is that of a born-again believer! He is “short-sighted-even to blindness”! He has no vision beyond forgiveness of sins-he has even forgotten about that! Where is his vision of the things needed to add to his faith that is going to provide an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom? Isn’t such an entrance automatically guaranteed to every born-again believer? The answer according to Peter is no. Consider how Paul describes believers whose works are burned up in the fire of judgment:

“ACCORDING TO THE GRACE OF GOD WHICH WAS GIVEN TO ME, AS A WISE MASTER BUILDER I HAVE LAID THE FOUNDATION, AND ANOTHER BUILDS ON IT. BUT LET EACH ONE TAKE HEED HOW HE BUILDS ON IT. FOR NO OTHER FOUNDATION CAN ANYONE LAY THAN THAT WHICH IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST. NOW IF ANYONE BUILDS ON THIS FOUNDATION WITH GOLD, SILVER, PRECIOUS STONES, WOOD, HAY, STRAW, EACH ONE’S WORK WILL BECOME CLEAR; FOR THE DAY WILL DECLARE IT, BECAUSE IT WILL BE REVEALED BY FIRE; AND THE FIRE WILL TEST EACH ONE’S WORK, OF WHAT SORT IT IS. IF ANYONE’S WORK WHICH HE HAS BUILT ON IT ENDURES, HE WILL RECEIVE A REWARD. IF ANYONE’S WORK IS BURNED, HE WILL SUFFER LOSS; BUT HE HIMSELF WILL BE SAVED, YET SO AS THROUGH FIRE.”

1 Cor. 3:10-15

So we find the apostle Paul also warning believers that it is possible to be saved, but suffer loss of rewards in eternity. Notice the basis of loss of eternal rewards is the measurement of the works of the believer. Far better to embrace “add to your faith” what it takes for an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom. The alternative can be “saved, yet so as through fire”. That implies that like a natural fire, you escaped the flames, but lost everything in it.

**"AND NOW ABIDE FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE,
THESE THREE;
BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE."**

I Cor. 13:13

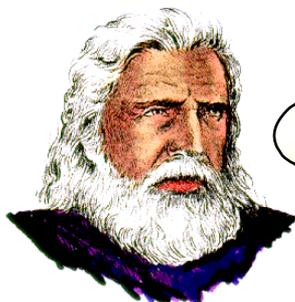
So far we have looked at the vision of the apostle Paul, of the apostle Peter, and now we shall examine the vision of the apostle John.



PAUL
the apostle of
FAITH



PETER
the apostle of
HOPE



JOHN
the apostle of
LOVE

FAITH

Without question, Paul's emphasis in his epistles was the subject of faith. His use of this word occurs more than 170 times. His vision was to reveal how the justified believer shall live by faith, and by his own personal example. He not only fought the good fight of faith, but he also kept the faith (2 Tim. 4:7).

HOPE

Although Peter only uses the word "hope" twice in his two epistles, his theme repeatedly centers on the promises of God as the source of all hope. He spoke of exceedingly great and precious promises being the means of putting on the divine nature of God. He spoke of the promise of His coming and the promise of new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness would dwell. While speaking continually of suffering as being God's means of perfecting the saints, he balances it with a vision of sustained hope. Remember, Paul taught that faith is the substance of the things hoped for (Heb.11:1). We need to add hope to our faith.

LOVE

And now we come to the vision of the apostle John whose message throughout his epistles was love. He uses this word over 50 times in his first little epistle of just five short chapters! While both Paul and Peter teach us to look forward through expressions of faith and hope, it is John who takes us into the very future that we may see what lies ahead for both the

**HEIRS
OF
GOD**

**JOINT HEIRS
WITH
CHRIST**

AND
JOINT HEIRS
WITH
CHRIST,

IF

CHILDREN,
THEN HEIRS-
HEIRS OF GOD

IF

INDEED WE SUFFER WITH HIM,
THAT WE MAY BE
GLORIFIED TOGETHER."

Rom. 6:17

The apostle John, in his vision of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, records:

**“HE WHO OVERCOMES
SHALL INHERIT ALL THINGS . . .”**

Rev. 21:7



A beautiful promise!

However, it is reasonable to assume that he who does not overcome will not inherit all things!

An heir of God may only have a partial inheritance, for that is exactly what being an heir means—you have an inheritance. But, to be a joint heir in a will means equal sharing of the full inheritance. To be a joint heir with Christ simply means that whatever is to be His inheritance will be shared equally with all qualified joint heirs.

Why else would the apostle Paul pray this prayer for the church?



**“THAT THE . . . FATHER OF GLORY MAY GIVE
UNTO YOU THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND
REVELATION IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIM,
THE EYES OF YOUR UNDERSTANDING (vision)
BEING ENLIGHTENED;
THAT YOU MAY KNOW WHAT IS
THE HOPE OF HIS CALLING ,
WHAT ARE THE RICHES OF
THE GLORY OF HIS INHERITANCE
IN THE SAINTS.”**

Eph1:17-18



Before we continue on with John’s vision, let us consider an important principle from Paul concerning heirship:

**“NOW I SAY THAT THE HEIR, AS LONG AS HE IS A CHILD,
DOES NOT DIFFER AT ALL FROM A SLAVE,
THOUGH HE IS MASTER OF ALL,
BUT IS UNDER GUARDIANS AND STEWARDS
UNTIL THE TIME APPOINTED BY THE FATHER.”**

Gal. 4:1-2

Paul borrows an illustration from Roman sonship whereas a child born as an heir apparent, is placed under the tutorship of the father’s servants to train him for the task of full sonship at his father’s side. Although this child is an heir, he will be no different than a slave as long as he remains a child; he must grow up to earn his heirship rights.

Why is Paul using this principle? Because our heavenly Father has also placed His children under the watchful tutorship of the Holy Spirit to train us for full sonship as joint heirs with Christ! We are already heirs of God being children of God; but if we remain as spiritual children, we will never inherit full sonship rights with Christ because we are required to grow up into the full stature and measure of Christ! Consider Paul's words recorded in Ephesians:



**“...TILL WE ALL
COME INTO
THE UNITY OF
THE FAITH
AND THE
KNOWLEDGE OF
THE SON OF GOD,
TO A PERFECT
MAN,
TO THE MEASURE
OF THE STATURE
OF THE FULLNESS
OF CHRIST;**

**THAT WE NO LONGER BE CHILDREN,
TOSSED TO AND FRO AND CARRIED ABOUT
WITH EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE . . .
BUT THAT WE GROW UP IN ALL THINGS INTO HIM
WHO IS THE HEAD, CHRIST . . .”**

Eph. 4:13-15

Let us now examine the apostle John's description of the various stages of growth that exists in the Body of Christ:

**“I WRITE TO
YOU,
LITTLE
CHILDREN,
BECAUSE
YOUR SINS ARE
FORGIVEN YOU
FOR HIS
NAME'S SAKE.”**
1 John 2:13

**“I WRITE TO YOU,
YOUNG MEN,
BECAUSE YOU ARE
STRONG, AND THE
WORD OF GOD
ABIDES IN YOU,
AND YOU HAVE
OVERCOME
THE WICKED ONE.”**
1 Jn. 2:14

**“I HAVE WRITTEN
TO YOU FATHERS,
BECAUSE YOU
HAVE KNOWN HIM
WHO IS FROM
THE BEGINNING.”**
1 Jn. 2:14

God help us to see the need to grow up in Christ, to progress from being babes in Christ, children of God, to young men able to overcome the evil one, and finally, to reach maturity as fathers in the Lord!



Are you beginning to see things more clearly dear reader? Those who choose to remain spiritually as children will not rule and reign with Christ in eternity. Oh yes, they will have eternal life and experience the joy of being with Christ eternally, but they will not be married to Christ as part of His spiritual bride. To illustrate this point, let me now show you John's dual vision of two groups of saved people in eternity who have contrasting functions and positions in the heavenly kingdom to come:

FIRST GROUP:

"THE GREAT MULTITUDE"

Rev. 7:9-17

**" . . . I LOOKED, AND BEHOLD,
A GREAT MULTITUDE
WHICH NO ONE COULD NUMBER,
OF ALL TRIBES, PEOPLES, AND TONGUES,
STANDING BEFORE THE THRONE AND BEFORE
THE LAMB, CLOTHED WITH WHITE ROBES,
WITH PALM BRANCHES IN THEIR HANDS, AND
CRYING OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE, SAYING,
'SALVATION BELONGS TO OUR GOD WHO SITS
ON THE THRONE, AND TO THE LAMB!' . . .
THEN ONE OF THE ELDERS ANSWERED,
SAYING TO ME,
'WHO ARE THESE ARRAYED IN WHITE ROBES,
AND WHERE DID THEY COME FROM?'
AND I SAID TO HIM, 'SIR, YOU KNOW'.
SO HE SAID TO ME,
'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.
AND HE WHO SITS ON THE THRONE
WILL DWELL AMONG THEM.
THEY SHALL NEITHER HUNGER ANYMORE
NOR THIRST ANYMORE . . .
FOR THE LAMB . . .
WILL SHEPHERD THEM AND LEAD THEM . . .
AND GOD WILL
WIPE AWAY EVERY TEAR
FROM THEIR EYES."**

Rev. 7:9-17

Wonderful promises indeed given to that first group of believers. However, now consider a second group of believers with yet another distinct set of even greater promises from Jesus! Consider the even greater promises given to all believers that qualify as overcomers:

SECOND GROUP:

"THE OVERCOMERS"

Rev. 2:26-29, 3:12-13, 3:21-22

**"AND HE WHO OVERCOMES,
AND KEEPS MY WORKS UNTIL THE END,
TO HIM I WILL GIVE POWER
OVER THE NATIONS,
HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON . . .
AS I ALSO HAVE RECEIVED FROM MY FATHER. . .
HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE
SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES."**

Rev. 2:26-29

**"HE WHO OVERCOMES,
I WILL MAKE HIM A PILLAR IN THE TEMPLE OF MY GOD,
AND HE SHALL GO OUT NO MORE.
AND I WILL WRITE ON HIM THE NAME OF MY GOD
AND THE NAME OF THE CITY OF MY GOD,
THE NEW JERUSALEM,
WHICH COMES DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM MY GOD . . .
AND I WILL WRITE ON HIM MY NEW NAME."**

Rev. 3:11-12

**"THEN I SAW THE HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM,
COMING DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD,
PREPARED AS A BRIDE ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND . . .
"COME, I WILL SHOW YOU
THE BRIDE, THE LAMB'S WIFE . . .
AND HE SHOWED ME THE GREAT CITY,
THE HOLY JERUSALEM, DESCENDING OUT OF HEAVEN
FROM GOD HAVING THE GLORY OF GOD . . ."**

Rev. 21:2

**"TO HIM WHO OVERCOMES
I WILL GRANT TO SIT WITH ME ON MY THRONE,
AS I ALSO OVERCAME
AND SAT DOWN WITH MY FATHER ON HIS THRONE . . .
. . . HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES."**

Rev. 3:21-22

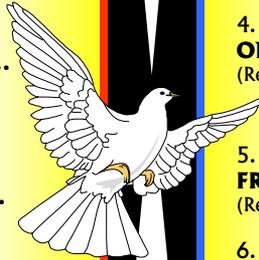
Take the time to examine the scripture references below as they make a stark contrast between two kinds of believers possessing totally different destinies and rewards in eternity:

GREAT MULTITUDE:

1. **VISION LIMITED TO SALVATION...** (Rev. 7:10)
2. **HAVE BEEN WASHED IN THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB...** (Rev. 7:14)
3. **CLOTHED IN ROBES OF WHITE BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB...** (Rev. 7:14)
4. **THEY ARE BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD...** (Rev. 7:15)
5. **THEY SERVE GOD DAY AND NIGHT BEFORE THE THRONE...** (Rev. 7:15)
6. **KING JESUS WILL SHEPHERD THEM...** (Rev. 7:17)
7. **THEY WILL BE IN THE TEMPLE...** (Rev. 7:15)
8. **GOD WILL WIPE AWAY ALL THEIR TEARS...** (Rev. 7:17)

THE OVERCOMERS:

1. **VISION EXTENDED TO OVERCOME...** (Rev. 21:7)
2. **HAVE WASHED IN THE WATER OF THE WORD...** (Eph. 5:26)
3. **CLOTHED IN FINE LINEN WHICH IS THE RIGHTEOUS ACTS OF THE SAINTS...** (Rev. 19:8 NKJ)
4. **THEY SHALL SIT ON THE THRONE...** (Rev. 3:21)
5. **THEY RULE WITH GOD FROM THE THRONE...** (Rev. 2:26)
6. **KING JESUS WILL MARRY THEM...** (Rev. 19:7)
7. **THEY WILL BE PILLARS IN THE TEMPLE...** (Rev. 3:12)
8. **THEY RECEIVE TREASURE INSTEAD OF TEARS...**



**“HE WHO HAS AN EAR,
LET HIM HEAR
WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS
TO THE CHURCHES.”**

Rev. 3:13



HEIR OF GOD:

Rom. 8:16



THEY ARE BEFORE THE THRONE...

Rev. 7:15

**“...BEHOLD,
A GREAT MULTITUDE...
OF ALL NATIONS...
STANDING BEFORE THE THRONE
AND BEFORE THE LAMB,
CLOTHED WITH WHITE
ROBES...CRYING OUT WITH A
LOUD VOICE, SAYING,
‘SALVATION BELONGS TO OUR
GOD WHO SITS ON THE THRONE...
THEY ARE
BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD AND
SERVE HIM DAY AND NIGHT IN HIS
TEMPLE. AND HE WHO SITS ON THE
THRONE WILL DWELL AMONG
THEM...”**

Rev. 7:9-10,15

If the believer's vision is limited to the message of salvation, then he/she will more than likely have a limited inheritance as depicted above.

It will be wonderful to live in heaven, to have Jesus shepherd and lead them as heirs of God. They will serve Him with joy and gratitude for all eternity. As heirs, they will have access into the Holy City. There will be no pain or sorrow for them there because God will wipe away His children's tears when they see what they could have obtained if they only would have extended their vision to the likes of Paul, Peter and John.

JOINT HEIR WITH CHRIST:

Rom. 8:17



THEY SHALL SIT ON HIS THRONE...

Rev. 3:21

**“BEHOLD,
I COME QUICKLY!
HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE
THAT NO ONE MAY TAKE YOUR CROWN.
HE WHO OVERCOMES I WILL MAKE HIM A
PILLAR IN THE TEMPLE OF MY GOD...
AND I WILL WRITE ON HIM
THE NAME OF MY GOD AND
THE NAME OF THE CITY OF MY GOD,
THE NEW JERUSALEM,
THAT COMES DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN
FROM MY GOD.
AND I WILL WRITE ON HIM
MY NEW NAME.”**

Rev. 3:11-12

**“TO HIM WHO OVERCOMES
I WILL GRANT TO HIM TO
SIT WITH ME ON MY THRONE,
AS I OVERCAME
AND SAT DOWN WITH MY FATHER
ON HIS THRONE.”**

Rev. 3:21

If the believer's vision is extended to the message of overcoming, then he/she will have an unlimited inheritance as joint heirs with Christ.

It will be glorious to reign with Christ over His new heavens and new earth as joint heirs with Christ. It will be joy unspeakable and mind boggling to comprehend the idea of being married to Christ, being the center of His attention, and to receive the greatest expression of God's love upon His very own chosen Bride who had vision as chaste virgins and were found ready at His coming.

Perhaps at this point you are having difficulty understanding how Jesus can express a greater love for His Bride than for those who are redeemed, but not part of the Bride of Christ (overcomers). This difficulty of understanding stems from holding a false concept of the depth and nature of what constitutes the love of God.

I'm sure you have heard it said, "God loves us all the same", and "God has no partiality". However, did not Jesus demonstrate a different degree of love in His relationship with Peter than with all the other disciples? Did He not have a more intimate and personal relationship with three of those disciples than He did with the rest? Was not Peter considered the closest out of the three?

Of necessity, I want to inject at this point a mini-teaching on God's kind of love that will help us to understand the special love Christ will show for His Bride in eternity. An old secular song from the 40's poses an important question that we need to be able to answer properly,



A tongue-in-cheek answer I might give would be to exclaim, "It's Greek to me!" That is because there are four different Greek words for conveying the meaning of love. Two are found in biblical Greek and two are found in secular Greek writings. Let us consider their meaning in order that we understand what kind of love it is that God exhibits toward man. Three describe human love of which all of mankind (unsaved\ saved) are capable of manifesting:

THE THREE KINDS OF **HUMAN LOVE**

A yellow rectangular box with a black border. In the center is a red heart with the word "LOVE" written across it in white, bold, capital letters. To the left of the heart, the word "EROS" is written in large, bold, black letters with a white outline, and below it, "MAN/WOMAN" is written in smaller black letters. To the right of the heart, the word "STORGE" is written in large, bold, black letters with a white outline, and below it, "FAMILY TIES" is written in smaller black letters. Below the heart, the word "PHILIA" is written in large, bold, black letters with a white outline, and below it, "CLOSE FRIENDSHIPS" is written in smaller black letters.

"EROS"
MAN/WOMAN

"STORGE"
FAMILY TIES

"PHILIA"
CLOSE FRIENDSHIPS

Aware of the power contained even within the lowest form of human love, know that Satan has greatly perverted all three of these God-given types of love:



Love that God has instituted among mankind is a powerful force. Perverted love contains great demonic power to bind as well. Such perverted love has power to destroy a marriage, a family, close friendships, or even a church. However, perverted love is not our subject. Love is a four letter word, so let us add the fourth type of love found in the Greek language:

L	O	V	E
1.	2.	3.	4.
"EROS"	"STORGE"	"PHILIA"	"AGAPE"
MAN/WOMAN . . . HUSBAND/WIFE . . .	FATHER/SON . . . MOTHER/DAUGHTER . . . CHILDREN/PARENTS . . .	MAN/MAN . . . WOMAN/WOMAN . . . MAN/WOMAN . . .	GOD/MAN . . . MAN/GOD . . . MANKIND TO MANKIND . . .
(Man/woman courtship as in Song of Solomon Husband/wife as in Adam/Eve)	(Abraham/Isaac David/Absalom Hannah/Samuel Jonathan/Saul)	(David/Jonathan Jesus/Peter Paul/Luke Paul/Phoebe)	(Christ to the ungodly, the ability to love our enemies)

Consider with me for a moment, how God has used this fourfold manifestation of love among mankind:



It was Eros love that God first planted in Adam and Eve in order that they may populate the earth. God created in the heart of a man and a woman a desire for one another which was good. It is a drawing together in a love relationship based on a desire for each other, to spend their life with one another. We all came into being through God-ordained Eros love.



When we were born, we slowly became aware of parental love being expressed to us as little babies. God planted parental love in the heart of all His creation, man and animal.



As we grew up, we experienced brotherly love either from our natural brothers and sisters by birth or through those special relationships which were developed with others outside our family: your best friend, which is identical to the pure love relationship recorded in scripture between Jonathan and David. (By the way, this was NOT a homosexual relationship!)



A unique love from God, first received from God through Christ Jesus as He died for us while we were still sinners, ungodly and unlovable. We too are to love the unlovable as the Holy Spirit imparts agape love into our hearts. It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit and not of human effort. It is not based on raw emotion, but rather on the twin pillars of sacrifice and commitment (the core essence of God's love-based covenant). However, agape love is perhaps the most widely misunderstood and abused term in the Body of Christ!

Like the first three forms of love, agape love has not escaped Satan's perversion either. He has perverted all forms of love created by God. I will only address one area of Satan's perversion of agape love which even God's people carry to the unsaved under the label of the love of God, but it is really a manifestation of what I call



"WE ARE ALL GOD'S CHILDREN"

"WE ARE ALL CREATED IN HIS IMAGE"

"SMILE! GOD LOVES YOU!"



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

John 4:1

How to test the spirit of what is presented as being from God is based on this principle governing what is to be accepted as truth:

**“BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES
EVERY WORD SHALL BE ESTABLISHED.” 2 Cor.13:1**

1. “WE ARE ALL GOD’S CHILDREN” – FALSE!

God makes a distinction between those who are and are not His:



JESUS

**“YOU ARE OF YOUR FATHER THE DEVIL
AND THE DESIRES OF YOUR FATHER
YOU WANT TO DO . . .” John 8:38-44**

**“THE FIELD IS THE WORLD, THE GOOD SEEDS ARE THE
SONS OF THE KINGDOM, BUT THE TARES ARE
THE SONS OF THE WICKED ONE.” Matt. 13:38**



JOHN

**“IN THIS THE CHILDREN OF GOD
AND THE CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL ARE MANIFEST:
HE THAT DOES NOT PRACTICE RIGHTEOUSNESS
IS NOT OF GOD.” 1 John 3:10**

**“BELOVED NOW WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD . . .”
(by the new spiritual birth-not physical birth) 1 John 3:2**



PAUL

**“YOU RECEIVED THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION
BY WHOM WE CRY ‘ABBA FATHER’.
THE SPIRIT HIMSELF BEARS WITNESS WITH OUR
SPIRIT THAT WE ARE (THE) CHILDREN OF GOD.”**

Rom. 8:15-17

Such scriptures as stated above easily establishes the falsity of the claim that “we are all God’s children.” Much of mankind remain as the children of the devil apart from the new birth mandate.

2. “WE ARE ALL CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD” – FALSE!

Only Adam was created in God’s image:

**“IN THE DAY THAT GOD CREATED MAN,
HE MADE HIM IN THE LIKENESS OF GOD . . .
AND ADAM BEGOT A SON IN HIS OWN LIKENESS,
AND AFTER HIS OWN IMAGE . . .” Gen. 5:1 & 3**

Scripture does state that Adam was created in the “image and likeness of God” (Gen. 1:26). However, Adam fell short of the glory of God by his sin and his descendants were therefore created in the image of Adam as stated in the verse above (with a sin nature). Therefore it is a false claim to say, “we are all created in the image of God”. Only Adam was created in God’s image. That is why the virgin birth is so vital to the Christian faith. Otherwise Jesus would also be “born in iniquity from the womb” (Psalm 51:5) as a natural descendant of sinful Adam rather than a supernatural descendant of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit.) **33**

Jesus came to restore the image of God to man by means of the new birth. Through it, man receives a sinless nature born of God. God's seed is now found restored in him:

**“WHOEVER HAS BEEN BORN OF GOD DOES NOT SIN,
FOR HIS SEED REMAINS IN HIM, AND HE CANNOT SIN
BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN BORN OF GOD.”**

John 3:9

Sin in us comes from our old nature, the image of Adam, for which Christ died, in order that we may put off Adam's image (sin nature) and put on the image (nature) of Christ. Scripture goes on to tell us that God predestined us to be conformed into the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29) and that we are being constantly transformed into that same image:

**“...WE BEHOLD AS IN A MIRROR THE GLORY OF THE LORD,
WE ARE BEING TRANSFORMED INTO THE SAME IMAGE FROM
GLORY TO GLORY . . . BY THE SPIRIT.”**

2 Cor. 3:18

Through the false presentation of religious humanism, Satan seeks to eliminate the need to be born again with his lies that we are all God's children (no, many are still Satan's children), and also by saying we are all created in His image (no, many are still in the image of Adam). To be in the image of God you must be born again! It is by this event that we receive the image of Christ within.

Let us now consider the third statement we made earlier, which is sadly repeated and taught by many sincere, (but sincerely wrong), born-again Christians:

3. “SMILE, GOD LOVES YOU!” – FALSE!



This is not the gospel Jesus or Paul proclaimed to lost sinners.

To initially speak such a statement of wishy-washy love to the unsaved and wicked is to paint a picture of God as being so emotionally involved to the point that His love becomes blind to the actions of the sinner.

The modern message of “God is love” being conveyed is that God loves the wicked regardless of what they do or how they live. This perverted philosophy stands in direct opposition to what God has said about the wicked in the scriptures.



You won't find John the Baptist or even Jesus Himself emphasizing the "Smile, God Loves You" message, but rather they both heralded the same message: "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!"

Repentance is the first of the elementary principles of Christ (Heb. 6:1), the first foundation stone which leads to faith toward God! Consider carefully this sampling of direct expressions of how God feels emotionally toward the wicked and the sinner:

"FOR YOU ARE NOT A GOD WHO TAKES PLEASURE IN WICKEDNESS . . . YOU HATE ALL WORKERS OF INIQUITY. THE LORD ABHORS THE BLOODTHIRSTY AND DECEITFUL MAN." Psalm 5:4-6

"GOD IS A JUST JUDGE, AND GOD IS ANGRY WITH THE WICKED EVERY DAY." Psalm 7:11

"THE LORD TESTS THE RIGHTEOUS, BUT THE WICKED AND THE ONE WHO LOVES VIOLENCE HIS SOUL HATES." Psalm 11:5

"THOSE WHO ARE OF A PERVERSE HEART ARE AN ABOMINATION TO THE LORD." Prov. 11:20

"THE WAY OF THE WICKED IS AN ABOMINATION TO THE LORD, BUT HE LOVES HIM WHO FOLLOWS RIGHTEOUSNESS."
Prov. 15:9

"EVERYONE WHO IS PROUD IN HEART IS AN ABOMINATION UNTO THE LORD." Prov. 16:5

"BEHOLD, THEREFORE, I BEAT MY FISTS AT THE DISHONEST PROFIT WHICH YOU HAVE MADE, AND AT THE BLOODSHED WHICH HAS BEEN IN YOUR MIDST." Ezek 22:13-14

"Smile God loves you" does not convey how emotionally upset God is with the wicked as expressed above. Notice it is not just the sin He hates as often taught, but sinners themselves, He is angry with them every day, He hates them, they are abhorred by Him, and clearly states that they are an abomination to Him. "Abomination" is a strong word of condemnation in its meaning:

ABOMINATION:

"LOATHSOME, DETESTABLE, HATED EXTREMELY, ABHORRED, DISGUSTING AND REPUGNANT." Webster

A word of admonition to all teachers of God's Word: Be careful how you represent God! He is what His Word says He is. Consider how God warned Job's three friends:

"MY WRATH IS AROUSED AGAINST YOU AND YOUR TWO FRIENDS, FOR YOU HAVE NOT SPOKEN OF ME WHAT IS RIGHT, AS MY SERVANT JOB HAS." Job 42:7-8

This perverted gospel of “smile, God loves you” is based upon the very familiar verse about God’s love found in John 3:16:



**“FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD
THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON,
THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH,
BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.”**

Jn. 3:16

A true statement! However, John 3:16 is an expression of God’s agape love which is based on the principles of sacrifice and covenant commitment! Agape love is not emotion based! We have seen that emotionally God is upset-angry with the wicked every day! If that is true (and it is) there is nothing to tell people to smile about in speaking to the wicked of their relationship to God. The message in a single word is not “smile”, but rather “repent!” Although emotionally upset with the behavior of the wicked, God was so committed to His creation (the world) that He sacrificed His only begotten, beloved Son for a sinful world! This fourth kind of love we are talking about (agape) is a love which God has provided for the unlovable. It is the same love with which Christ commands us to love our enemies. It is not an emotional or reciprocal love like eros, storge or philia! Here is the greatest expression of God’s sacrificial agape love for the unlovable:



**“FOR WHEN WE WERE STILL WITHOUT
STRENGTH, IN DUE TIME,
CHRIST DIED FOR THE UNGODLY.
FOR SCARCELY FOR A RIGHTEOUS MAN
WILL ONE DIE . . .
BUT GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS OWN
(SPECIAL KIND OF) LOVE (AGAPE) TOWARD US,
IN THAT WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS,
CHRIST DIED FOR US.”**

Romans 5:6-8

The message given to sinners must be one which causes men to cry out “What must I do to be saved?” Let me give you a balanced picture of the triune nature of God to help you understand how “God is Love” fits properly. All three aspects must be satisfied in properly conveying “God is love.” The three aspects are:

1. GOD IS A HOLY, RIGHTEOUS JUDGE...
2. GOD IS LOVE...
3. GOD HAS WRATH...

"GOD IS A JUST JUDGE"

Psm. 7:11



**THE
LOVE
OF
GOD**

**THE
WRATH
OF
GOD**

"RIGHTEOUSNESS

AND JUSTICE ARE

THE FOUNDATIONS OF HIS THRONE"

Psm.97:2

GOD SENT HIS SON

First time,
He came in
LOVE

TO THE UNSAVED:

Second time
He comes in
WRATH

TO THE UNSAVED:

**"CHRIST DIED
FOR
THE UNGODLY . . .
GOD THUS DEMONSTRATES
HIS OWN LOVE TOWARD US
IN THAT WHILE
WE WERE STILL SINNERS,
CHRIST DIED FOR US...
(THAT) WE MAY BE SAVED
FROM THE WRATH
TO COME."**

Rom. 5:6-9

**"THE LORD JESUS . . .
IN FLAMING FIRE
TAKING VENGEANCE
ON THOSE WHO
DO NOT KNOW GOD,
AND ON THOSE WHO
DO NOT OBEY
THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.
THESE SHALL BE PUNISHED
WITH EVERLASTING
DESTRUCTION . . ."**

2 Thess. 1:7-9

**"BECAUSE THE SENTENCE AGAINST AN EVIL WORK IS NOT EXECUTED SPEEDILY,
THEREFORE THE HEARTS OF THE SONS OF MEN IS FULLY SET TO DO EVIL."**

Ecclesiastes 8:11

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

2 Pet. 3:9

**"...OUR GOSPEL IS VEILED...
TO THOSE WHO ARE PERISHING,
WHOSE MINDS THE GOD OF THIS AGE HAS BLINDED,
WHO DO NOT BELIEVE,
LEST THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL
OF THE GLORY OF CHRIST WHO IS
THE IMAGE OF GOD,
SHOULD SHINE ON THEM..."**

2 Cor. 4:3-4

**PERVERTED LOVE . . .
FROM THE FATHER OF LIES . . .
IN WHOM THERE IS NO TRUTH . . .**



"All are God's children . . ."

(except those who are mine! Ha, ha)

"All are created in God's image . . ."

(except those who are still in Adam's fallen image, of course! Ha, ha)

"Smile, God loves you"

(Repent? Who needs it? Don't you know that God is love? Ha, ha)

As a teacher, I feel like Paul, as he was teaching upon the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Cor. 12, and then injected his famous chapter 13 on love before returning to his thoughts on the gifts of the Spirit in chapter 14. We too have taken a little diversion from my original purpose of revealing to you that God has in the past—and is presently—manifesting His four types of love upon mankind and that He will—in the future—manifest a select dose of eros love (not agape) on His chosen Bride, who will be taken out of the Body of Christ at the rapture. He will steal away His Bride from the wrath to come, the Bride having been already tested and perfected on earth.

This is so typified in the first Adam as he was put to sleep, a rib was taken from his body and his wife was fashioned from it. Jesus, whom Paul calls the Second Adam in 1 Cor. 15:45, will likewise have His spiritual Bride formed from a part of His Body. This remnant holds a vision of not only being heirs of God, but also have envisioned becoming joint heirs with Christ.

Follow the chart below from the bottom (1) to the top (4), as it reveals a progressive unfolding of God's kind of love expressed at different times for all people. In eternity God's love culminates with a special expression of His special and isolated love for His chosen Bride. It is eros (a husband to his wife) love, just as it was in the beginning with the original Adam and Eve. This is "the last Adam", Jesus (1 Cor.15:45), and His spiritual Bride ("Eve") formed out of the overcoming portion of the Body of Christ, just as the original Eve was formed from a rib taken from the first Adam's body.

4.



**EROS
LOVE**

**GOD'S EROS LOVE
FOR HIS CHOSEN BRIDE**

"THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB HAS COME."
Rev. 19:7

3.



**PHILIA
LOVE**

**GOD'S BROTHERLY LOVE
FOR HIS BRETHREN**

"HE IS NOT ASHAMED TO CALL THEM BRETHREN."
Heb. 2:11

2.



**STORGE
LOVE**

**GOD'S PARENTAL LOVE
FOR THE CHILDREN OF GOD**

"NOW WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD!"
1 Jn.3:2

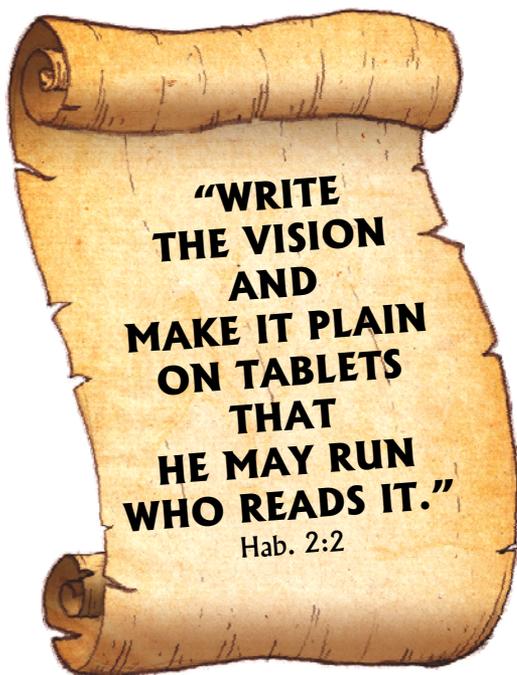
1.



**AGAPE
LOVE**

**GOD'S SACRIFICIAL LOVE
FOR THE UNGODLY,
THE UNLOVABLE, THE UNLIKABLE**

**"WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS,
CHRIST DIED FOR US . . . THE UNGODLY."**
Romans 5:6-8



It has been well said that no one can rise above the level of his/her vision. If you are still without the vision necessary to cause you to read and run the race that Paul describes for every follower of Christ, then Part II of this book may give you an understanding of why this deficiency exists. Possibly, if not probably, this lack of vision stems out of a failure to rightly divide the Word of truth (2 Tim.2:15).



PART TWO

“THE NECESSITY TO RIGHTLY DIVIDE THE WORD OF TRUTH”

“PAUL . . .
IN ALL HIS EPISTLES,
SPEAKING OF
THESE THINGS . . .
SOME HARD TO
UNDERSTAND,
WHICH THOSE WHO
ARE UNTAUGHT . . .
TWIST TO THEIR OWN
DESTRUCTION, AS THEY
DO THE REST OF THE
SCRIPTURES.”

2 Pet. 3:15-16

“BE DILIGENT
TO PRESENT YOURSELF
APPROVED TO GOD,
A WORKER
WHO DOES NOT NEED TO
BE ASHAMED,
RIGHTLY DIVIDING
THE WORD
OF TRUTH.”

2 Tim. 2:15

In Part One, we established a vivid contrast between those lacking vision and those possessing it as producing two contrasting lifestyles:

**1. WHERE THERE WAS
NO VISION:
THE PEOPLE CAST OFF RESTRAINT.**

**2. WHERE THERE
WAS VISION:
THEY RAN THE RACE.**

Likewise, we see here two contrasting positions with different results:

**1. TWIST THE SCRIPTURES
UNTO THEIR OWN
DESTRUCTION**

**2. RIGHTLY DIVIDE
THE WORD OF TRUTH
AND BE APPROVED BY GOD**

There is a verse in scripture which is almost always quoted as a seal to a marriage ceremony, and it goes like this:



**“THEREFORE WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER,
LET NO MAN SEPARATE.”**

Matthew 19:6



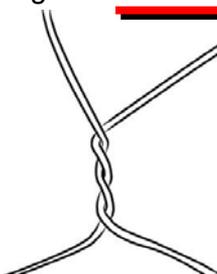
Forgive my play on words but, for the point of illustration, may I suggest also as good advice:



**“What God separates,
let no man join together”**



This is the essence of rightly dividing the word of truth; not twisting together what God has plainly separated. Let us consider the definition of the word ‘twist’ so that we may have a more graphic picture of what it means to twist the scriptures together:



TWIST -

“To combine by winding together as two or more strands of thread to produce string . . .

**To distort or wrest from proper meaning,
to pervert, to intertwine two strands
into one new cord . . .”**

(Webster)



Can you think of one area of scripture we have already discussed which has indeed been “twisted together” into one when, in essence, is plainly stated to have been separated into two distinct parts? It is the dual concept of being:

(1) HEIRS OF GOD and (2) JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST

**“YOU HAVE RECEIVED THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION
BY WHOM WE CRY OUT, ‘ABBA FATHER’.
THE SPIRIT HIMSELF BEARS WITNESS WITH OUR SPIRIT
THAT WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD.
AND, IF CHILDREN, THEN HEIRS,
HEIRS OF GOD AND JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST,
IF WE SUFFER WITH HIM,
THAT WE MAY ALSO BE GLORIFIED TOGETHER.”**

Romans 8:15-17

**HEIRS
OF GOD**

IF

**WE ARE
CHILDREN...**

**JOINT HEIRS
WITH CHRIST**

IF

**WE SUFFER
WITH HIM...**

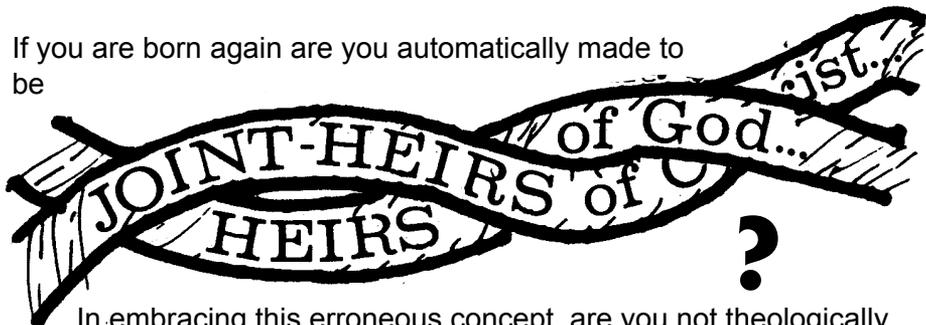
1. RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH:

This proper, balanced doctrinal position will always harmonize and marry together with other similar truths. For example: Phil. 1:29 which states, "For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake." One truth follows another, one truth is to be built upon the foundation of another. To rightly divide the Word of truth will show us what is our present foundational reality as heirs of God and set before us, as something yet to be obtained, how to become joint-heirs with Christ as we learn to embrace the call of suffering with Him. How else do you explain Paul's own expressed ongoing goals in Christ by saying, "That I may gain Christ"? (Phil. 3:8), or "That I may know Him"? (Phil. 3:10)

2. TWIST THE SCRIPTURES TOGETHER:

Treat these two themes as being one and the same and we can easily become unmotivated because we think we have something secured that we really do not actually possess. We can, by self-deception, put in our "win column" as already completed something which we have not even begun to pursue!

If you are born again are you automatically made to be

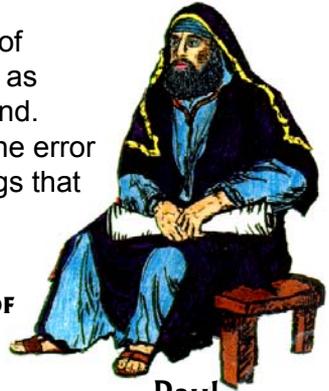


In embracing this erroneous concept, are you not theologically "twisting together" what God has obviously separated?



Peter

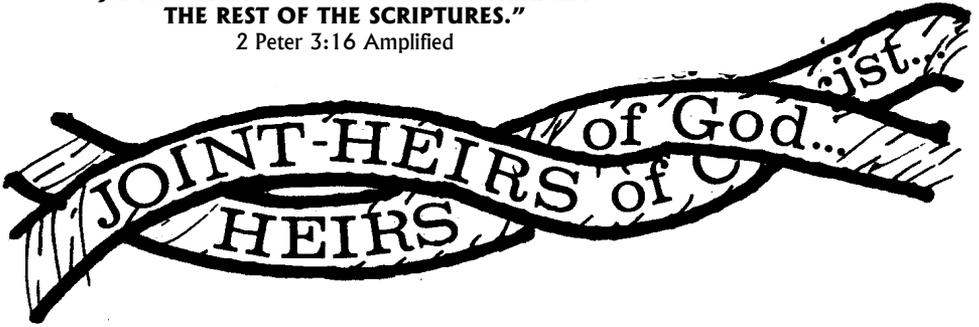
The apostle Peter spoke of some of Paul's teachings as being difficult to understand. He states the danger of the error of "twisting together" things that were meant to be kept separated:



Paul

"THERE ARE SOME THINGS IN THOSE EPISTLES OF PAUL THAT ARE DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND, WHICH THE IGNORANT AND UNSTABLE TWIST AND MISCONSTRUE TO THEIR OWN UTTER DESTRUCTION, JUST AS THEY DISTORT AND MISINTERPRET THE REST OF THE SCRIPTURES."

2 Peter 3:16 Amplified



To rightly divide the Word of truth, we must not join together what God has doctrinally separated.

**“THERE ARE SOME THINGS IN THOSE EPISTLES OF PAUL
THAT ARE DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND,
WHICH THE IGNORANT AND UNSTABLE TWIST AND MISCONSTRUE
TO THEIR OWN UTTER DESTRUCTION,
JUST AS THEY DISTORT AND MISINTERPRET
THE REST OF THE SCRIPTURES.”**

2 Peter 3:16 Amplified

Take note of Peter stating that the epistles of Paul have been twisted, misconstrued, distorted and misinterpreted by the ignorant and the unstable, leading to their own destruction. (2 Peter 3:16 Amp.) Think about how often Paul himself often prefaced some facet of teaching with the admonition to those in the church, “I do not want you to be ignorant brethren”? It is a fact that Paul was continually addressing ignorance in the church pertaining to holding improper doctrinal positions based on ignorance.

It is interesting that the word Peter uses as leading to their own ‘destruction’ can also mean ‘to be rendered useless’. When brethren fail to rightly divide the Word of truth as Paul instructed, the result is that God’s people are “rendered useless” due to their doctrines being twisted together to the point that there is nothing left still to be obtained in the Christian life, for they erroneously believe they “got it all when they got saved”. Poor Paul, he did not seem to understand that he also “got it all when he was saved”. Rather, Paul, after having been saved, still had several objectives he kept in front of him that he considered were yet to be obtained as a “saved” Christian. Here he is 26 years after his conversion experience:

**“THAT I MAY GAIN CHRIST . . . THAT I MAY ATTAIN
TO THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD,
NOT THAT I HAVE ALREADY ATTAINED,
OR AM ALREADY PERFECTED . . .
THAT I MAY LAY HOLD OF THAT
FOR WHICH CHRIST JESUS HAS ALSO
LAID HOLD OF ME . . . BRETHREN,
I DO NOT COUNT MYSELF TO HAVE APPREHENDED
I REACH FORWARD . . . I PRESS ON . . .
I PRESS TOWARD THE GOAL
FOR THE PRIZE OF THE UPWARD CALL OF GOD
IN CHRIST JESUS . . .”**

Phil. 3:17



Is this what you are being taught? If not, why not? Have God’s priorities for the Christian changed since the passing of Paul? If Paul lived in our day, would he change his emphasis? I think not! I believe he would still invite us as followers of Christ with these same words that he spoke to the brethren in his day:

**“BRETHREN, JOIN IN FOLLOWING MY EXAMPLE . . .
YOU HAVE US FOR A PATTERN.”**

Phil. 3:17

The problem is that the concept of salvation in modern-day theology is not viewed as it was in Paul's day. In our over-simplification of the gospel the fullness of the meaning of salvation has been drastically reduced. It is important to see that salvation is not always to be interpreted as pertaining to eternal life.

Let us consider

~THE MEANING OF SALVATION~

If we are to rightly divide the Word of truth, we must begin with properly defining the meaning of the word salvation. If being saved only means receiving eternal life by means of the new birth through faith in Jesus Christ, we are cast into immediate confusion when we read Paul's use of the word in passages like this:

**"WORK OUT
YOUR OWN SALVATION
WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING . . ."**

Phil. 2:12



How are we to reconcile Paul's work-based use of salvation above with this warning against a work-based salvation?



**"FOR BY GRACE
YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED
THROUGH FAITH,
AND THAT NOT OF
YOURSELVES; IT IS THE GIFT OF
GOD, NOT OF WORKS . . ."**

Eph. 2:8-9

Or consider the same Paul who said:

**"AND YOU ARE
COMPLETE
IN HIM . . ."**

Col. 2:10



**"HE WHO HAS
BEGUN A GOOD
WORK IN YOU WILL
COMPLETE IT . . ."**

Phil. 1:6

Do you begin to see what Peter was saying about Paul's epistles being hard to understand if we are untaught?

I am not saved by works, but I am to work out my own salvation, but it is not of myself???

I am complete in Him, but He will complete what He has begun???

WHAT IS

SALVATION?

SALVATION

GREEK DEFINITION: "SOTERIA"



1. To **SAVE** . . .
 2. To **DELIVER** . . .
 3. To **HEAL** . . .
 4. Have **SAFETY** . . .
 5. To **RESCUE** . . .
- (Strongs – 4991)

JESUS' DEFINITION:



**"THE SPIRIT HAS
ANOINTED ME TO:**

1. **PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR...**
2. **PREACH DELIVERANCE TO THE CAPTIVES...**
3. **RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND...
HEAL THE BROKENHEARTED...**
4. **PREACH THE YEAR OF THE LORD...**
5. **SET AT LIBERTY THE OPPRESSED..."**

(Luke 4:17- 21)

Considering the fullness of the meaning of the Greek word translated as "salvation ("soteria"), can you see that casting out of demon spirits is an act of salvation (deliverance to the captives), but it does not bring eternal life in this instance? Can you see that healing the sick is a manifestation of salvation (restore sight to the blind or heal the brokenhearted through raising the dead) though it too does not bring eternal life in this use either? Can you understand that at the rapture it too will be a form of salvation (obtain deliverance and safety from the wrath to come) but, it alone, in this instance does not mean eternal life?

To be saved from our sins is the first encounter with God's salvation. We indeed receive eternal life through becoming born again through grace, by faith, as a gift of God and not of our own works as the scripture in Ephesians 2:8-9 reveals. So when Paul says, 'Work out your own salvation', he is telling those who are saved unto eternal life to also work out deliverance, health and safety by laying hold of the remaining promises in God's Word that also apply to the concept of salvation! Dear reader, we must expand our understanding of salvation beyond the limited view of the means by which we obtain eternal life! How else do we understand the apostle James saying:

**"IS ANY AMONG YOU SICK? LET HIM...BE ANOINTED WITH OIL AND
THE PRAYER OF FAITH WILL SAVE THE SICK
AND THE LORD WILL RAISE HIM UP."**

Jas. 5:14-15

We don't receive eternal life by being anointed with oil, do we? And yet James says this action will "save" the sick. Salvation in scripture is not limited to receiving eternal life!

**“AND THE LORD GOD FORMED MAN OF THE DUST OF THE GROUND, (the body)
AND BREATHED INTO HIS NOSTRILS THE BREATH OF LIFE; (the spirit)
AND MAN BECAME A LIVING BEING.” (the soul)**

Gen 2:7

Based upon what God created initially above, study what is presented below very carefully. It is God’s complete plan of salvation for the complete man that God created:

SALVATION

FOR THE TOTAL MAN GOD CREATED

SPIRIT

THE HEART OF MAN

“...UNLESS ONE IS BORN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT, HE CANNOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD. THAT WHICH IS BORN OF THE FLESH IS FLESH, AND THAT WHICH IS BORN OF THE SPIRIT IS SPIRIT. DO NOT MARVEL THAT I SAID TO YOU “YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN.”

Jn. 3:5-8

SOUL

THE MIND, WILL, EMOTIONS OF MAN

“...WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING; FOR IT IS GOD WHO WORKS IN YOU ...”

Phil. 2:12-13

“...RECEIVING THE END OF YOUR FAITH -THE SALVATION OF YOUR SOULS...”

1 Pet. 1:9

“...WE ARE NOT OF THOSE WHO DRAW BACK TO PERDITION, BUT OF THOSE WHO BELIEVE TO THE SAVING OF THE SOUL.”

Heb. 10:39

BODY

THE PHYSICAL OUTWARD MAN

“...WE OURSELVES GROAN WITHIN OURSELVES, EAGERLY WAITING FOR THE ADOPTION, THE REDEMPTION OF OUR BODY...”

Rom. 8:23-24

“...WHEN THIS CORRUPTIBLE HAS PUT ON INCORRUPTION, AND THIS MORTALITY HAS PUT ON IMMORTALITY, THEN SHALL BE BROUGHT TO PASS THE SAYING... ‘DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY.’ ”

1 Cor. 15:54

PAST

“FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED THROUGH FAITH . . . IT IS A GIFT OF GOD AND NOT OF WORKS . . . ”

Eph. 2:8-9

PRESENT

“WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING . . . ”

Phil. 2:12

FUTURE

“WE OURSELVES . . . EAGERLY WAIT. . . THE REDEMPTION OF OUR BODY. FOR WE ARE SAVED BY HOPE.”

Rom. 8:23-24

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD INTO THREE CATEGORIES:

that which is PAST, that which is PRESENT, that which is FUTURE

Salvation is greater in meaning than being saved from the penalty of sin and the receiving of the gift of eternal life. Salvation also involves the restoring of the soul and the eventual redemption of the body. Salvation begins in the spirit, is worked out in the soul, and will be finalized in the body through the resurrection of the dead. This is the past, present, and future aspects of salvation. If we understand this we can proceed on in our examination of rightly dividing the Word of truth.

If you grasp these principles, you will find the New Testament will no longer contain any areas which seem to be conflicting theology. Rather, you will find the scriptures begin to flow together with beautiful harmony as they were intended to, when and if the Word is rightly divided rather than erroneously twisted together.

SALVATION

that which is

PAST
(tense)

that which is

PRESENT
(tense)

that which is

FUTURE
(tense)

is our

JUSTIFICATION

is our

SANCTIFICATION

is our

GLORIFICATION

it is by

GRACE

it is by

WORKS

it is unto

REWARDS

it is the

**UNMERITED
FAVOR
of God**

it is the

**MERITED
FAVOR
of God**

it is at the

**JUDGMENT
SEAT
of Christ**

Even a casual reader of the New Testament epistles would acknowledge the frequent use of such words as 'justified', 'sanctified', 'glorified', 'grace', 'works' and 'rewards'.

This is important: Failure to rightly divide these truths and relate them to the proper aspect of salvation is the root cause of a lack of vision in the Body of Christ. For the most part, Paul's stated goals and vision are completely foreign to the majority of professing Christians today in spite of his admonition to "join in following my example" (Phil. 3:17).

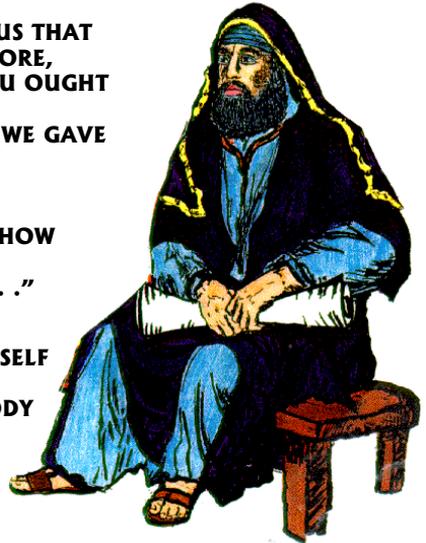
We do not see today such like vision as Paul presents, but rather a twisting together of the doctrines of justification and sanctification as if both took place on the cross of Calvary instead of just our justification (forgiveness of sins by grace through faith). Those holding this erroneous position ignore the many scriptures written to all justified believers urging them to now become sanctified completely. Consider these few in which Paul urges believers unto embracing acts of complete sanctification yet to be completed:

**"FINALLY BRETHREN,
WE URGE AND EXHORT IN THE LORD JESUS THAT
YOU SHOULD ABOUND MORE AND MORE,
JUST AS YOU RECEIVED FROM US HOW YOU OUGHT
TO WALK AND TO PLEASE GOD.
FOR YOU KNOW WHAT COMMANDMENTS WE GAVE
YOU THROUGH THE LORD JESUS.
FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD,
YOUR SANCTIFICATION . . .
THAT EACH OF YOU SHOULD KNOW HOW
TO POSSESS HIS OWN VESSEL
IN SANCTIFICATION AND HONOR . . ."**

1 Thess. 4:1-4

**"NOW MAY THE GOD OF PEACE HIMSELF
SANCTIFY YOU COMPLETELY;
YOUR WHOLE SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY
BE PRESERVED BLAMELESS
AT THE COMING OF THE LORD."**

1 Thess. 5:23



**"BUT IN A GREAT HOUSE THERE ARE NOT ONLY VESSELS OF GOLD AND SILVER,
BUT OF WOOD AND CLAY, SOME FOR HONOR AND SOME FOR DISHONOR.
THEREFORE IF ANYONE CLEANSSES HIMSELF FROM THE LATTER,
HE WILL BE A VESSEL OF HONOR,
SANCTIFIED AND USEFUL FOR THE MASTER,
PREPARED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK."**

2 Tim 2:20-21

The Greek word which is translated sanctification is “hagiasmos”. The very same Greek word, (hagiasmos), is also often translated several places in scripture as “holiness”. Therefore there is no difference between sanctification and holiness:

**“ . . . SO NOW
PRESENT YOUR MEMBERS
AS SLAVES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS
FOR HOLINESS (HAGIASMOS)
BUT NOW BEING
SET FREE FROM SIN,
AND HAVING
YOUR FRUIT TO HOLINESS...”**
Rom. 6:19-22



Look at the statements below. Are these not strange statements from the apostle Paul to believers if sanctification was indeed a thing of the past that is already completed at the cross of Christ?

1. It is the will of God – your **SANCTIFICATION . . .**
2. That you possess your vessel in **SANCTIFICATION . . .**
3. That you be **SANCTIFIED** completely – spirit, soul and body . . .
4. Be vessels of honor, **SANCTIFIED** and useful to the Master, prepared for every good work . . .
5. Become slaves of **SANCTIFICATION . . .**
6. Have fruit to **SANCTIFICATION . . .**

But isn't there a scripture that says Jesus is our sanctification? Yes! It is in 1 Cor. 1:30, but look at it carefully for it says so much more:



**“BUT OF HIM
YOU ARE IN
CHRIST JESUS,
WHO BECAME FOR US
WISDOM FROM GOD –
AND RIGHTEOUSNESS
AND SANCTIFICATION
AND REDEMPTION,
THAT AS IT IS WRITTEN,
'HE WHO GLORIES,
LET HIM GLORY
IN THE LORD.'”**
1 Cor. 1:31

Actually, as you can see stated by Paul above, Jesus is our everything! Whatever God calls us to be it is attained by means of Jesus at work in us. He is our healer, our baptizer, our all and all. In calling us to complete sanctification, Jesus is stated to be the source of that sanctification.

UNDERSTANDING CHRIST'S WORK IN US:



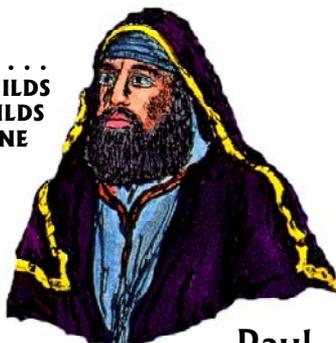
Jesus

**"HE WHO ABIDES IN ME AND I IN HIM BEARS MUCH FRUIT;
FOR WITHOUT ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING . . .
BY THIS IS MY FATHER GLORIFIED, THAT YOU BEAR MUCH FRUIT . . .
AND THAT YOUR FRUIT SHOULD REMAIN."**

Jn. 15:5-16

**"FOR WE ARE GOD'S FELLOW WORKERS,
YOU ARE GOD'S FIELD, YOU ARE GOD'S BUILDING . . .
I HAVE LAID THE FOUNDATION AND ANOTHER BUILDS
UPON IT. LET EACH ONE TAKE HEED HOW HE BUILDS
ON IT FOR NO OTHER FOUNDATION CAN ANYONE
LAY THAN THAT WHICH IS LAID,
WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST . . .
IF ANYONE'S WORK WHICH
HE HAS BUILT ON IT ENDURES,
HE WILL RECEIVE A REWARD.
IF ANYONE'S WORK IS BURNED,
HE WILL SUFFER LOSS
BUT HE HIMSELF WILL BE SAVED . . ."**

1 Cor. 3:9-15



Paul

Again, beware of twisting together the things Jesus and Paul describe above which are to be divided, not joined together.

RIGHTLY DIVIDED TRUTHS:

**JESUS IS OUR
RIGHTEOUSNESS
AND REDEMPTION**

(1 Cor. 1:30)

**JUSTIFICATION
(COMPLETED)**

**"AND YOU ARE
COMPLETE IN HIM."**

Col. 2:10

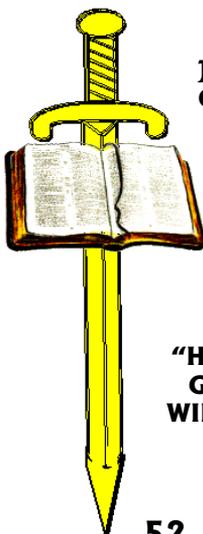
**JESUS IS ALSO
OUR SANCTIFICATION**

(1 Cor. 1:30)

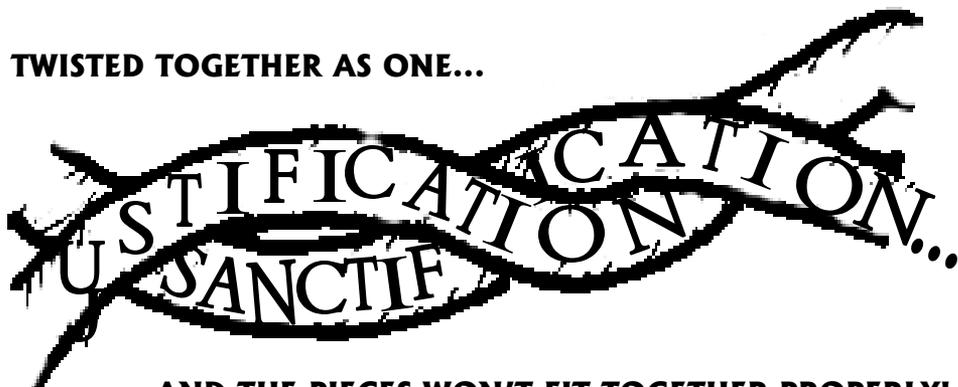
**SANCTIFICATION
(INCOMPLETE)**

**"HE WHO HAS BEGUN A
GOOD WORK IN YOU
WILL COMPLETE IT . . ."**

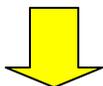
Phil. 1:6



TWISTED TOGETHER AS ONE...



AND THE PIECES WON'T FIT TOGETHER PROPERLY!



????

**"THAT YOU
BE SANCTIFIED COMPLETELY,
SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY . . .
HE WHO CALLS
YOU WILL DO IT."
1 Thess. 5:23-24**

???

**"THIS IS
THE WILL OF GOD
. . . YOUR
SANCTIFICATION . . ."
1 Thess. 4:4**



???

**"BEING
SET FREE FROM SIN,
YOU HAVE YOUR
FRUIT UNTO
SANCTIFICATION."
Rom. 6:19-22**

???

**"HE WHO HAS
BEGUN A GOOD
WORK IN YOU WILL
COMPLETE IT."
Phil. 1:6**

???

**"BELOVED,
LET US CLEANSE OURSELVES . . .
PERFECTING HOLINESS
IN THE FEAR OF GOD."
2 Cor. 7:1**

The pieces will only fit together properly by first rightly dividing the Word of truth. Put all the verses together concerning the present emphasis of the Holy Spirit pertaining to sanctification and they will fit together in perfect harmony with one another:

**“BRETHREN,
I DO NOT COUNT MYSELF TO
HAVE APPREHENDED...”**

Phil.3:13

**“NOT THAT I HAVE
ALREADY ATTAINED,
OR AM ALREADY PERFECTED...”**

Phil. 3:12

**“FORGETTING THOSE
THINGS...BEHIND, AND
REACHING FORWARD
TO THOSE THINGS
WHICH ARE AHEAD...”**

Phil. 3:13

**“THAT I MAY
LAY HOLD
OF THAT
FOR WHICH
CHRIST JESUS
HAS ALSO LAID
HOLD OF ME...”**

Phil.3:12

**“I PRESS TOWARD
THE GOAL FOR THE PRIZE
OF THE UPWARD CALL
OF GOD...”**

Phil. 3:14

Don't mix together God's gifts of His grace with His promised prizes for maintaining good works! Don't mix together things that lead to eternal life with things that lead to eternal rewards. Keep them separated (rightly divided) just as they are presented in God's Word. Washing in in the water of the Word has different results than washing in the blood of Christ :

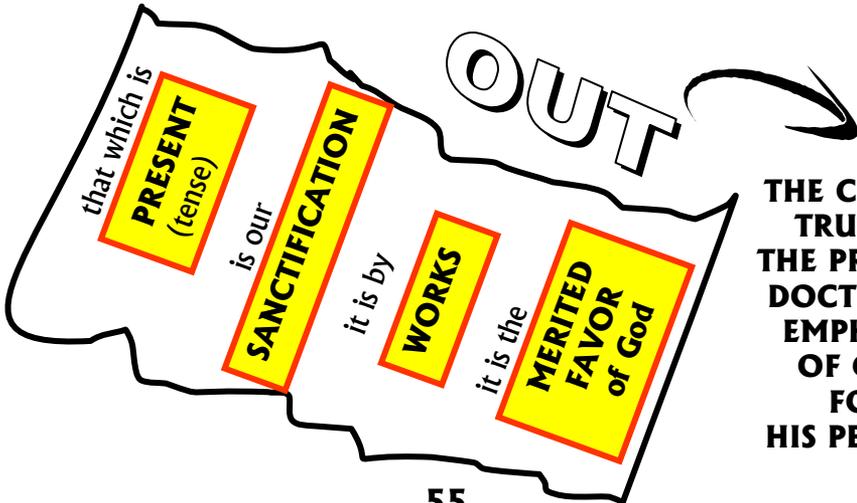
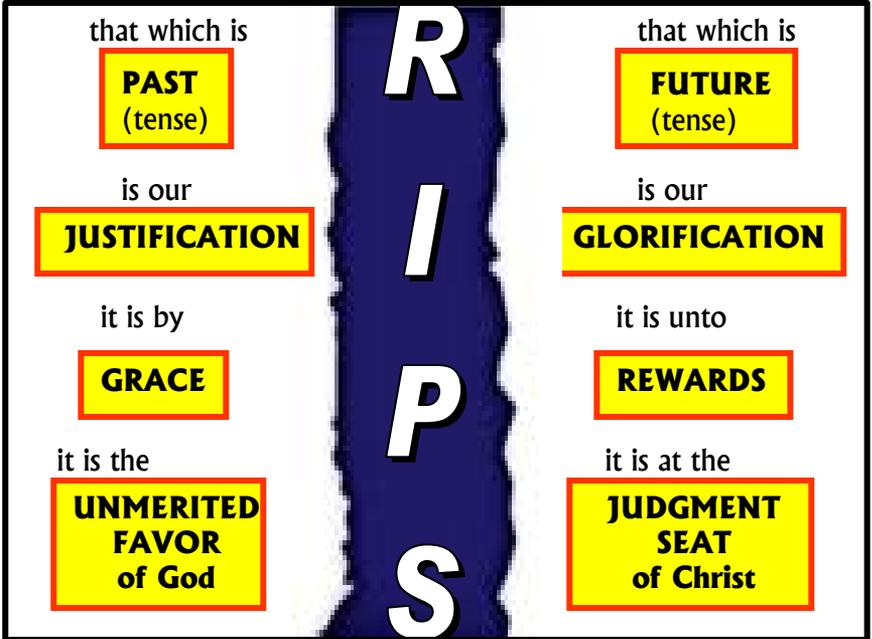
**“...CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT
THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY IT AND CLEANSE IT WITH THE WASHING
OF WATER BY THE WORD, THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT IT TO
HIMSELF A GLORIOUS CHURCH,
NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE OR ANY SUCH THING,
BUT THAT IT SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH...”**

Eph. 5:25-27

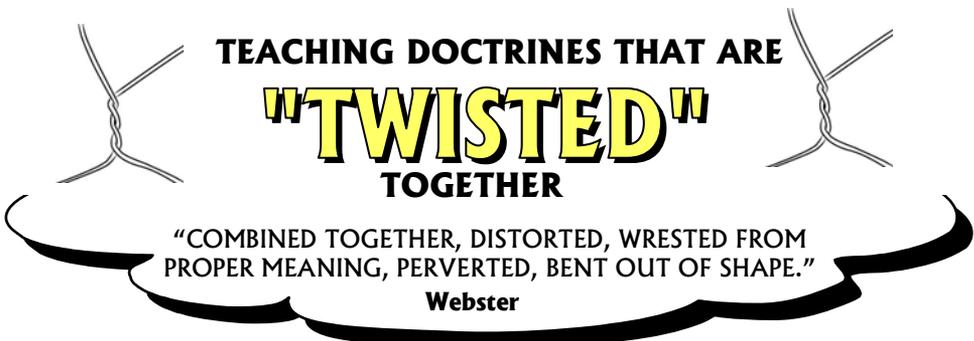
“...GIVING HEED TO
SEDUCING SPIRITS AND

DOCTRINES
TEACH”
DEMONS

1 Timothy
4:1 Amp.



THE CENTER
TRUTHS-
THE PRESENT
DOCTRINAL
EMPHASIS
OF GOD
FOR
HIS PEOPLE!



TEACHING DOCTRINES THAT ARE "TWISTED" TOGETHER

"COMBINED TOGETHER, DISTORTED, WRESTED FROM PROPER MEANING, PERVERTED, BENT OUT OF SHAPE."

Webster

Where the Word plainly separates the three doctrines of justification, sanctification, and glorification from each other, "doctrines that demons teach" will twist together those doctrines. Justification and glorification become an expression of things that were obtained by the death of Christ on the cross. Everything becomes past tense, already completed, an immediate possession of the believer. Out the window goes all forms of motivation such as Paul presents to run a race in order to win a prize. The chart below illustrates the twisting together of justification and glorification as if obtained via the new birth. In other words, a believer expects to be glorified because he/she has been totally justified:

"TWISTED SALVATION"

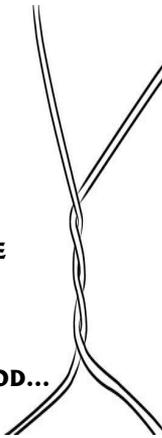
**PAST AND PRESENT,
WE HAVE BEEN
JUSTIFIED AND
ALREADY SANCTIFIED...**

**WE HAVE BEEN
TOTALLY SANCTIFIED
AT THE NEW BIRTH...**

**IT IS BY GRACE ALONE
BECAUSE OUR WORKS ARE
LIKE FILTHY RAGS...**

**OUR WORKS ARE
AN INSULT TO THE
UNMERITED FAVOR OF GOD...**

**WORKS ARE VIEWED AS
LEGALISTIC BONDAGE...**



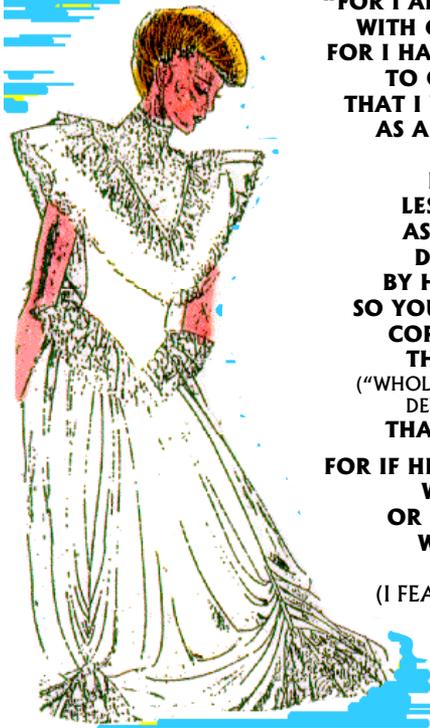
**IN THE FUTURE,
WHEN THE RAPTURE COMES,
EVERYONE WHO HAS EVER
BELIEVED WILL GO TO BE
GLORIFIED BY CHRIST...**

**BELIEVERS WILL BE CHANGED
INSTANTLY INTO THE IMAGE
OF JESUS AT THE RAPTURE...**

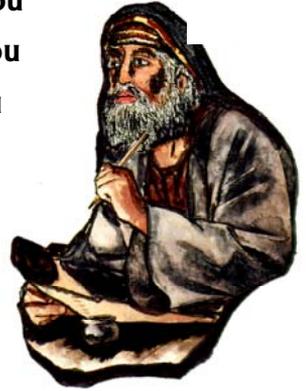
**ANY REWARDS RECEIVED
WILL BE BY GOD'S GRACE...**

**WE WILL ALL RULE AND
REIGN WITH CHRIST AS
HEIRS OF GOD
AND JOINT-HEIRS WITH
CHRIST BY GRACE ALONE...**

Of course, to make this doctrine flow, you must develop the same attitude toward all contrary and opposing scriptures as Martin Luther personally developed toward the Book of James. Luther labeled it an "epistle of straw" ripping it out of his Bible as worthlessly uninspired because he could not understand James' position stated on works. Condemning the author is an easier solution than reconciling what he has said with what is believed to be true.



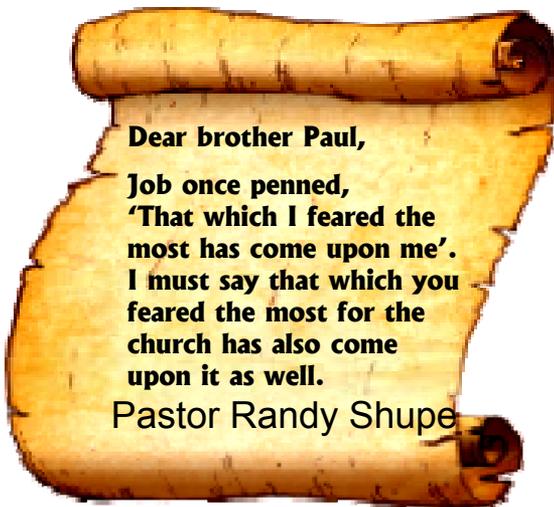
**“FOR I AM JEALOUS FOR YOU
WITH GODLY JEALOUSY,
FOR I HAVE BETROTHED YOU
TO ONE HUSBAND,
THAT I MAY PRESENT YOU
AS A CHASTE VIRGIN
TO CHRIST
BUT I FEAR,
LEST SOMEHOW,
AS THE SERPENT
DECEIVED EVE
BY HIS CRAFTINESS,
SO YOUR MINDS MAY BE
CORRUPTED FROM
THE SIMPLICITY
(“WHOLE-HEARTED AND PURE
DEVOTION- Amp.”)
THAT IS IN CHRIST.**



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

2 Cor. 11:1-4

Living in the 21st century after Paul penned these words of concern for the espoused bride of Jesus Christ, I feel compelled to answer Paul's letter with a short reply of confirmation:



**Dear brother Paul,
Job once penned,
'That which I feared the
most has come upon me'.
I must say that which you
feared the most for the
church has also come
upon it as well.**

Pastor Randy Shupe

However bad is the present corruption, we find segments of believers today just as Paul found them in the church at Berea, determined to avoid the pitfalls of false doctrines:

**“THESE WERE MORE FAIR-MINDED THAN THOSE IN THESSALONICA,
IN THAT THEY RECEIVED THE WORD WITH ALL READINESS,
AND SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY
TO FIND OUT WHETHER THESE THINGS WERE SO.
THEREFORE, MANY OF THEM BELIEVED...”**

Acts 17:11-12

If you have grasped the concept of what constitutes “twisting the scriptures”, may you also lay hold of what is meant by “rightly dividing the Word of truth”. Here again are the three key categories into which we may divide the bulk of Paul’s doctrinal teachings:

JUSTIFICATION

Greek: **“TO MAKE INNOCENT
RIGHTEOUS.”**

THE PAST ASPECT OF SALVATION...

**“THEREFORE HAVING BEEN JUSTIFIED BY FAITH,
WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD
THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.”**

Rom. 5:1

**“BEING JUSTIFIED FREELY BY HIS GRACE
THROUGH THE REDEMPTION
THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS.”**

Rom. 3:24

SANCTIFICATION

Greek: **“TO SET APART,
HOLY IN CONDUCT.”**

THE PRESENT ASPECT ...

**“HAVING BEEN SET FREE FROM SIN,
AND HAVING BECOME SLAVES UNTO GOD,
YOU HAVE YOUR FRUIT UNTO HOLINESS.”**

(HAGIASMOS – SANCTIFICATION)

Rom. 6:22

**“FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD,
YOUR SANCTIFICATION...
GOD DID NOT CALL US TO
UNCLEANNESS BUT IN HOLINESS.”**
(HAGIASMOS – SANCTIFICATION)

1 Thess. 5:3,7

**“MAY THE GOD OF PEACE
SANCTIFY YOU COMPLETELY...
SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY...
BLAMELESS AT HIS COMING.”**

1 Thess. 4:23

GLORIFICATION

Greek: **“TO HONOR,
DIGNIFY, MAGNIFY.”**

THE FUTURE ASPECT ...

**“AS ONE STAR DIFFERS
FROM ANOTHER STAR IN GLORY,
SO ALSO WILL BE
THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD...”**

1 Cor. 15:41-42

**“ WE EAGERLY AWAIT FOR OUR SAVIOR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,
WHO WILL TRANSFORM OUR LOWLY BODY THAT IT MAY BE
CONFORMED TO HIS GLORIOUS BODY...”**

Phil. 3:20-21

It is important to see that our justification, sanctification, and glorification, all find fulfillment in and through Jesus Christ. However, we must allow Him to complete the good work He has begun in us (Phil. 1:6).

JUSTIFIED- IN HIM AND THROUGH HIM

Greek: "TO MAKE INNOCENT, RIGHTEOUS."

"...IN HIM WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD."

Eph. 1:7

"THROUGH ONE MAN'S RIGHTEOUS ACT THE FREE GIFT CAME TO ALL MEN, RESULTING IN JUSTIFICATION.."

Rom. 5:18

SANCTIFIED- IN HIM AND THROUGH HIM

Greek: "TO SET APART, HOLY IN CONDUCT."

"BUT OF HIM YOU ARE IN CHRIST JESUS, WHO BECAME FOR US... RIGHTEOUSNESS AND REDEMPTION, AND SANCTIFICATION..."

1 Cor. 1:30

"BEING CONFIDENT OF THIS VERY THING, THAT HE WHO HAS BEGUN A GOOD WORK IN YOU WILL COMPLETE IT...."

Phil. 1:6

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

2 Cor. 3:18

GLORIFIED- IN HIM AND THROUGH HIM

Greek: "TO HONOR, DIGNIFY, MAGNIFY."

"IF WE SUFFER WITH HIM THAT WE MAY BE GLORIFIED TOGETHER."

Rom. 8:16

"WE WAIT FOR THE SAVIOR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO WILL TRANSFORM OUR LOWLY BODY THAT IT MAY BE CONFORMED TO HIS GLORIOUS BODY."

Phil. 3:20-21

"CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY. HIM WE PREACH,

WARNING EVERY MAN AND TEACHING EVERY MAN, THAT WE MAY PRESENT EVERY MAN PERFECT IN CHRIST."

Col. 1:27-28

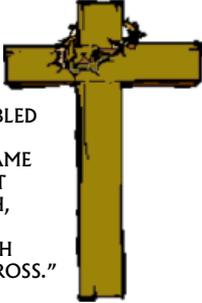


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THE NEED TO BE DOUBLE-CROSSED

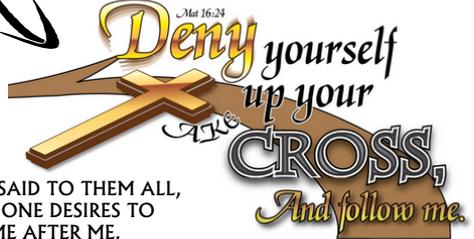
Let me give you a vivid illustration which may help you to see the clear distinction which must be made between our justification and our sanctification and also to see the impact sanctification has upon our glorification. There are actually two crosses in the life of every believer:

"HIS CROSS"



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

"OUR CROSS"



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

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

THE CROSS OF OUR

JUSTIFICATION

"TO MAKE INNOCENT, TO MAKE RIGHTEOUS."

THE CROSS OF OUR

SANCTIFICATION

"TO SET APART, HOLY IN CONDUCT."

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

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

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

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

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

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

The old hymn, "The Old Rugged Cross" presents an erroneous concept:



Yes, we will exchange a cross for a crown, but that famous old hymn has its crosses mixed up. We will not exchange His cross for a crown, but rather it will be our cross which, if borne, will be exchanged for a crown. Consider what the scriptures record about believers receiving crowns in heaven, and please, notice how they are obtained, for they are all prizes earned, not gifts of grace!



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

James 1:12



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

2 Tim. 4:7-8



**"DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT THOSE WHO
RUN IN A RACE ALL RUN,
BUT ONE RECEIVES THE PRIZE?
RUN IN SUCH A WAY THAT YOU MAY OBTAIN IT.
AND EVERYONE WHO COMPETES FOR THE PRIZE
IS TEMPERATE IN ALL THINGS...
WE (RUN) FOR AN IMPERISHABLE CROWN...
I DISCIPLINE MY BODY AND BRING IT INTO
SUBJECTION, LEST, WHEN I HAVE PREACHED TO
OTHERS I MYSELF SHOULD BECOME DISQUALIFIED."**

1 Cor. 9:24-27



4.

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

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



5.

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

Rev. 2:20



6.

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

1 Pet. 5:2-4



**“BEHOLD,
I COME QUICKLY!
HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE,
THAT NO ONE MAY
TAKE YOUR CROWN. ”**

Rev. 3:11



Did you observe the basis for receiving crowns in heaven? They are all revealed to be rewards-not gifts!

- **CROWN OF LIFE** – to those who endure (suffer) temptation (suffer in resisting temptation).

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

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

CROWN OF REJOICING– is a soul winner’s crown, for one who makes disciples.

CROWN OF LIFE – to those who are called to be faithful unto death.

CROWN OF GLORY- given to faithful pastors and teachers that labor among God’s people.



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



How we need to purge our minds from the unscriptural position that everybody in heaven will be equally rewarded, equally glorified by grace and will have the same position in heaven as Moses and Paul. Both Daniel and Paul reveal that glorification will vary in heaven and is directly related to what we do on earth as God's people. Consider Daniel's exhortation:

"AND MANY OF THOSE WHO SLEEP IN THE DUST OF THE EARTH SHALL AWAKE, SOME TO EVERLASTING LIFE, SOME TO SHAME AND EVERLASTING CONTEMPT. THOSE WHO ARE WISE SHALL SHINE LIKE THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE FIRMAMENT, AND THOSE WHO TURN MANY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE THE STARS FOREVER AND EVER."

Daniel 12:2-3



Paul amplifies this revelation of Daniel:



"THERE ARE CELESTIAL BODIES AND TERRESTRIAL BODIES; BUT THE GLORY OF THE CELESTIAL IS ONE, AND THE GLORY OF THE TERRESTRIAL IS ANOTHER. THERE IS ONE GLORY OF THE SUN, ANOTHER GLORY OF THE MOON, AND ANOTHER GLORY OF THE STARS; BUT ONE STAR DIFFERS FROM ANOTHER STAR IN GLORY. SO ALSO IS THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD."

1 Cor. 15:40-42

Do you remember the definition of the word glorification?

GLORIFICATION – "to give honor, to magnify, to dignify."

God fully intends to glorify ("give honor, magnify, dignify") His saints. The apostle Peter reminds of this intent of God:

"THAT THE GENUINENESS OF YOUR FAITH, BEING MUCH MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD... MAY BE FOUND TO PRAISE, HONOR, AND GLORY AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST."

God is going to glorify His saints in different degrees!
Listen to what Peter states:

**“...THAT THE GENUINENESS OF YOUR FAITH,
BEING MUCH MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD...
MAY BE FOUND TO PRAISE, HONOR, AND GLORY
AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.”**

1 Pet. 1:7



What will take place at the resurrection of the dead (which includes the rapture) will be for some merely this mortal putting on immortality (1 Cor. 15:52). The fact that Paul says, “We shall all be changed” does not imply that we shall all be glorified. Glorification is the manifestation of God’s rewards to the saints and is best illustrated by the various crowns enumerated in scripture. To receive a crown is to receive praise, honor, and glory according to one’s level of performance! Paul explains that the degree of hardship and trial we receive and embrace in this life will affect the level of our glorification in the life to come:

**“FOR OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION,
WHICH IS BUT FOR A MOMENT,
IS WORKING FOR US A FAR MORE
EXCEEDING AND ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY...”**

2 Cor. 4:17



**“IF INDEED WE SUFFER WITH HIM,
THAT WE MAY ALSO BE GLORIFIED TOGETHER.
FOR I CONSIDER THAT THE SUFFERINGS
OF THIS PRESENT TIME ARE NOT WORTHY
TO BE COMPARED WITH THE GLORY
WHICH SHALL BE REVEALED IN US.”**

Rom. 8:18-19

Listen to how the apostle John states it:

**“BELOVED, NOW WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD;
AND IT HAS NOT YET BEEN REVEALED
WHAT WE SHALL BE, BUT WE KNOW...
WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM...
AND EVERYONE WHO HAS THIS HOPE IN HIM
PURIFIES HIMSELF, JUST AS HE IS PURE.”**

1 John 3:2-3





VERSE 2:
(the promise)

**“BELOVED, NOW WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD;
AND IT HAS NOT YET BEEN REVEALED WHAT WE
SHALL BE, BUT WE KNOW...WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM...”**

VERSE 3:
(the condition)

**AND EVERYONE WHO HAS THIS HOPE IN HIM
PURIFIES HIMSELF, JUST AS HE IS PURE.”**

1 John 3:2-3

Many people like to quote verse two above because it says without qualification, “we shall be like Him”, but then ignore verse three stating that if you have the hope of “being like Him”, then you must “purify yourself as He is pure”. That is a qualifier. Likewise, the apostle Peter writes to believers in saying:

**“REST YOUR HOPE FULLY UPON THE GRACE THAT IS
BROUGHT TO YOU AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST,
AS OBEDIENT CHILDREN, NOT CONFORMING YOURSELVES
TO YOUR FORMER LUSTS, AS IN YOUR IGNORANCE,
BUT AS HE WHO CALLED YOU IS HOLY, YOU ALSO BE HOLY
IN ALL YOUR CONDUCT, BECAUSE IT IS WRITTEN,
‘BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY’... THE FATHER WHO WITHOUT
PARTIALITY JUDGES ACCORDING TO EACH ONE’S WORK.”**



1 Peter 1:15-17

Likewise Paul is writing to believers when he said:



**“...YOU SHALL BE MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS,
SAYS THE LORD ALMIGHTY.’
THEREFORE, HAVING THESE PROMISES,
BELOVED, LET US CLEANSE OURSELVES FROM ALL
FILTHINESS OF THE FLESH AND SPIRIT,
PERFECTING HOLINESS (SANCTIFICATION)
IN THE FEAR OF THE LORD.”**

2 Cor. 6:18, 7:1

The three passages above from three different apostles reveal how important it is to read in context. The very next verse in each example above takes us from statements of justification to statements of sanctification. In scripture often statements of justification are followed by statements of sanctification. Stop reading the context and you will come up short of receiving the whole counsel of God. Glorification is conditional to our sanctification and is not the result of only being a partaker of justification. However, no one can become sanctified without first becoming justified. It is Christ who justifies and Christ who sanctifies as we yield to the Spirit of sanctification (1 Pet. 1:2) who has come to lead us on the road to glory:

**“...BECAUSE WE CONTINUE TO BEHOLD IN THE WORD OF GOD,
AS IN A MIRROR THE GLORY OF THE LORD, WE ARE CONSTANTLY BEING
TRANSFIGURED INTO HIS VERY OWN IMAGE IN EVER INCREASING
SPLENDOR AND FROM ONE DEGREE OF GLORY TO ANOTHER...”**

2 Cor. 3:18 Amplified

Preachers who tell their people that they will be instantly transformed into the image of Christ in a twinkling of an eye are insulting the Spirit of sanctification which desires to conform us into Christ's image from one degree of glory to another (2 Cor. 3:18). That is a life-long, painful process. To think that those who refuse to be led by the Spirit of sanctification into this process of self-denial in taking up their cross will mysteriously be instantly and painlessly transformed into the same image of Jesus, the Lord of glory, are among those who are twisting the scriptures unto their own destruction (2 Pet. 3:16).

The purpose of God from the beginning has been to bring a people down the path which leads to glory, and no step can be skipped or ignored and still achieve the end result.

THE PATHWAY TO **THE GLORY** OF GOD

step
4.

MAN RECEIVES A DEGREE OF ETERNAL GLORY AS HIS REWARD

"WE SHALL BE GLORIFIED TOGETHER..."

Rom. 8:17

"CONFORMED TO HIS GLORIOUS BODY..."

Phil. 3:21

step
3.

MAN IS BEING CONFORMED INTO THAT IMAGE BY GOD'S SPIRIT

"...BEHOLDING THE GLORY OF THE LORD... WE ARE BEING TRANSFORMED INTO THE SAME IMAGE FROM GLORY TO GLORY... BY THE SPIRIT..."

2 Cor. 3:18

step
2.

GOD SENDS THE LORD OF GLORY TO PUT THE DIVINE IMAGE BACK IN MAN

"THEY... CRUCIFIED THE LORD OF GLORY."

1 Cor. 2:8

step
1.

MAN, AFTER BEING CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD, FALLS BY SIN, LOSING THE DIVINE IMAGE OF GOD'S GLORY

"FOR ALL HAVE SINNED AND FALL SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD."

Rom. 3:23

The chart below reveals how it is that God's glory is passed on to man by the Lord of Glory, Jesus Christ:



"WE SEE JESUS... BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY..."
Heb. 2:10

GLORIFICATION
OF MAN IN ETERNITY...

REDEEMED MAN BEHOLDS THE GLORY OF THE LORD IN THE WORD AND IS BEING TRANSFORMED INTO THE SAME IMAGE FROM ONE DEGREE OF GLORY TO ANOTHER...
2 Cor. 3:18

SANCTIFICATION
OF MAN ON EARTH...

JESUS, THE LORD OF GLORY, THE SECOND ADAM, BY HIS CROSS SPANS THE GAP THE FIRST ADAM CREATED, RESTORING MAN TO THE PATH OF GOD'S GLORY...
2 Cor. 5:17

JUSTIFICATION
OF MAN ON EARTH...

ADAM SINS AND FALLS SHORT OF GOD'S GLORY...
Gen. 3:7 Rom. 3:23

ALIENATION
OF MAN ON EARTH...

FIRST ADAM CREATED IN THE IMAGE AND THE LIKENESS OF GOD...
Gen. 1:26

DOMINATION
BY MAN IN EDEN...

In the great passages of Revelation describing the return of our Lord Jesus Christ we find these words:

**"I SAW
HEAVEN
OPENED,
AND
BEHOLD,
A WHITE
HORSE.
AND HE
WHO SAT
ON HIM
WAS CALLED
FAITHFUL
AND TRUE...**



**AND IN
RIGHTEOUS-
NESS
HE JUDGES
AND
MAKES
WAR.
AND
ON HIS
HEAD
WERE**

Rev. 19:12

"MANY CROWNS"



We are called to (1) follow in His steps (1 Pet. 2:21), (2) to overcome as He overcame (Rev. 3:21), (3) to suffer as He suffered (2 Tim. 2:12), (4) to be conformed into His image (Rom. 8:29,) and (5) into the perfect measure and stature of Christ (Eph. 4:13). If this is so, is it then not reasonable to assume that the many crowns on His head are the very same crowns that are offered to us? Look carefully at each crown. Did not Jesus Himself qualify for every one of those crowns? Now they are set before us to pursue as followers of Christ!

CROWN OF LIFE – for overcoming temptation (Jas. 1:12).

CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS – for fighting the good fight, for running the race, and keeping the faith (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

IMPERISHABLE CROWN – for being temperate (self-controlled) in all things and disciplining the physical body (1 Cor. 9:27).

CROWN OF REJOICING – for being a soul winner and one who makes disciples (Phil.4:1).

CROWN OF LIFE –for being faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10).

CROWN OF GLORY –for shepherding the flock as elders/overseers (1 Pet. 5:1-4).

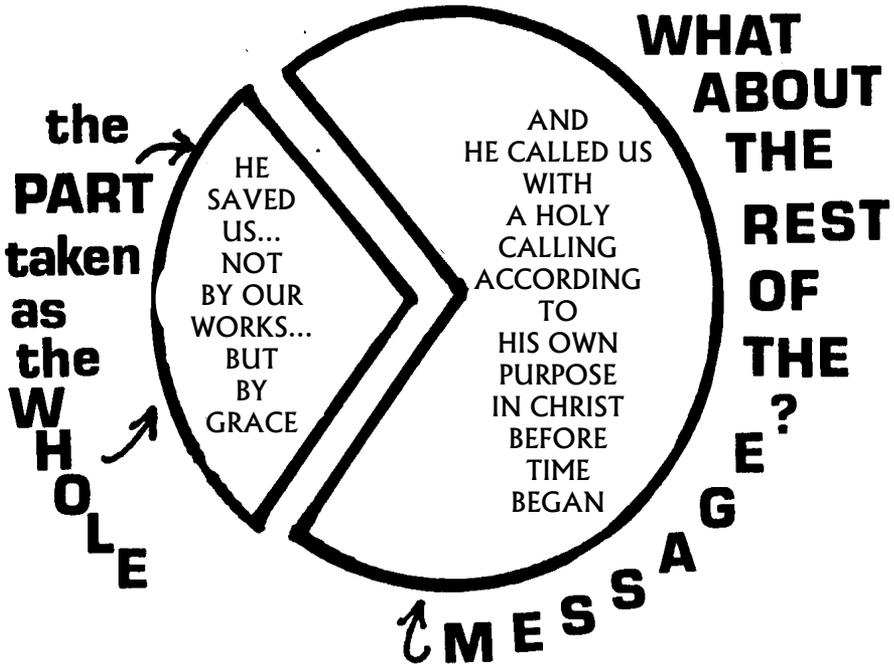
One of the greatest reasons for having a limited spiritual vision is that man continually takes a part of the truth as if it was the whole truth. Let me illustrate for you:



“...WHO SAVED US AND CALLED US WITH A HOLY CALLING, NOT ACCORDING TO OUR WORKS, BUT ACCORDING TO HIS OWN PURPOSE AND GRACE WHICH WAS GIVEN TO US IN CHRIST JESUS BEFORE TIME BEGAN.”

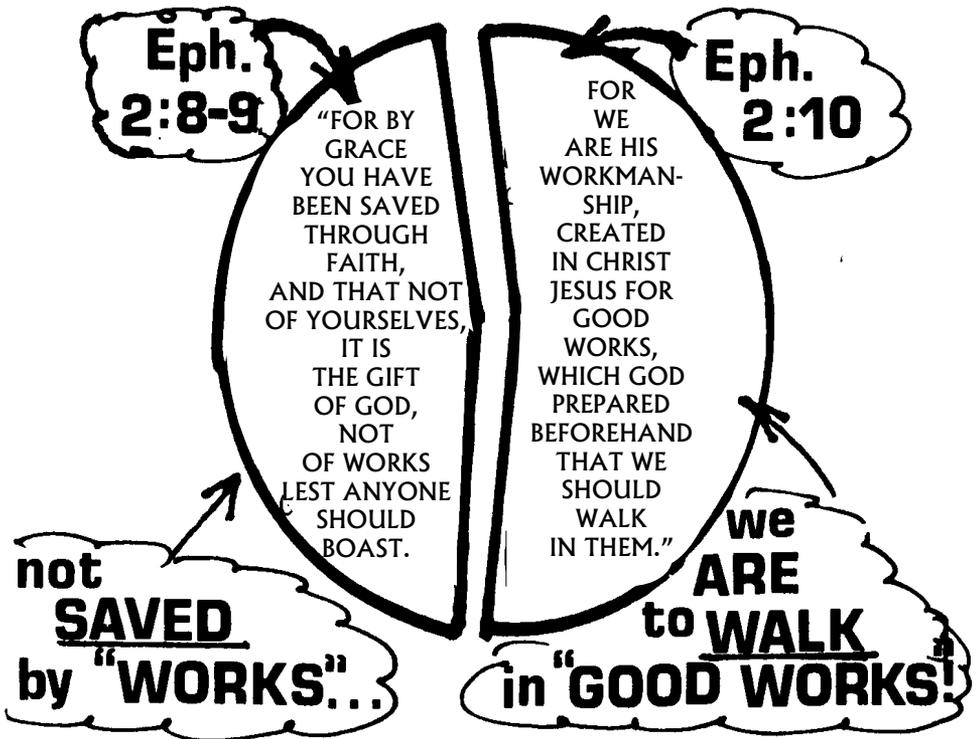
2 Tim. 1:9

Let us divide this verse into two sections. One is foundational, but is only part of the whole message being expressed:



What has happened is that a piece has been taken for the whole! The message that He saved us... not by works... but by Grace is the foundational message of justification. However, as wonderful as that is, He also called us with a holy calling which is the message of sanctification to achieve His own purpose in Christ. The message of glorification is to bring many sons to glory (Heb. 2:10), but also to have many brethren conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29). When our vision is limited to thinking that God’s ultimate purpose is to save us by His grace and not by works, we develop a mental block towards works having any place in the life of a believer that is saved by grace.

When we take a part for the whole, our approach to the scriptures will be like that of 2 Tim. 1:9 in which we limit the scope of the revelation to only fundamental purposes. Let me illustrate the significance of this error by using a widely quoted verse about salvation:



Why are only verses 8-9 quoted and verse 10 consistently left out? My goodness! Verse 10 begins with the word “For” making it vitally connected to verses 8 and 9. Keep them together and you will have the whole counsel of God rather than half of it. Verses 8 and 9 emphasize that salvation is “not of works” but verse 10 balances out that truth by stating that we were “saved for good works.”

May I give you some advice? Read God’s Word in context until the subject changes. It is only then that we can say we heard all that the scripture contains. Yes, it is important that we know that we are “not saved **BY** works.” However, it is also very important that we know that we were “saved **FOR** good works” and that God intends for us to walk in them!

**WE ARE
JUSTIFIED**

“HAVING BEEN JUSTIFIED BY FAITH... THROUGH ONE MAN’S RIGHTEOUS ACT THE FREE GIFT CAME TO ALL MEN, RESULTING IN JUSTIFICATION ...”
Rom. 5:1,18

“ FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED THROUGH FAITH... IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD, NOT OF WORKS...”
Eph. 2:8-9

BY

GRACE

“FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN,

**WE ARE
SANCTIFIED**

“IF ANYONE CLEANSES HIMSELF... HE WILL BE A VESSEL OF HONOR, SANCTIFIED, AND USEFUL FOR THE MASTER, PREPARED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK.”
2 Tim. 2:21

“FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD, YOUR SANCTIFICATION... FOR GOD DID NOT CALL US IN UNCLEANNES, BUT IN HOLINESS.”
1 Thess. 4:3-4,7

BY

WORKS

TEACHING US THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY, IN THIS PRESENT AGE,

**WE ARE
GLORIFIED**

“JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST IF WE SUFFER WITH HIM. THAT WE MAY BE GLORIFIED TOGETHER.”
Rom. 8:17

“IF WE ENDURE [SUFFER] WE SHALL ALSO REIGN WITH HIM.”
2 Tim. 2:12

BY

REWARDS

LOOKING FOR THE BLESSED HOPE AND GLORIOUS APPEARING OF OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST.

WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM EVERY LAWLESS DEED, AND PURIFY FOR HIMSELF HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE, ZEALOUS FOR GOOD WORKS.” Titus 2:11-14

The apostle Paul put more into one sentence than many could say in several paragraphs. These passages from Titus declare the full gospel in one continuous sentence, and no one has the right to separate any thought from the other and call it ‘the gospel message’.

Here is what Paul presents as a mini-capsule of why Christ came bringing salvation to mankind:

JUSTIFICATION

Greek: "TO MAKE INNOCENT, RIGHTEOUS."

PAST

"FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN,

Titus 2:11

SANCTIFICATION

Greek: "TO SET APART, HOLY IN CONDUCT."

PRESENT

TEACHING US THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY IN THIS PRESENT AGE,

(vs.12)

GLORIFICATION

Greek: "TO HONOR, DIGNIFY, MAGNIFY."

FUTURE

LOOKING FOR THE BLESSED HOPE AND GLORIOUS APPEARING OF OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST,

(vs. 13)

CHRIST'S TWO REASONS FOR REDEEMING US

WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM EVERY LAWLESS DEED AND

PURIFY FOR HIMSELF HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE, ZEALOUS FOR GOOD WORKS."

(vs.14)

ONE SENTENCE



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

Acts 20:26-27

We live in an age where it is easier and more profitable not to declare the whole counsel of God, but rather draw a line after justification and preach only its content of love and grace. The emphasis of Paul in teaching believers to deny ungodliness, worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age, is widely ignored even though Paul clearly emphasizes that this is the message that grace was sent to teach.

It is much easier and painless to leave off the fact that Jesus not only gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, but also to purify His own special people who would be zealous for good works. Are you zealous for good works, or do you believe as many do, the distortion of the often quoted verse, "And our righteousness are like filthy rags"? (Isa. 64:6). Better read the verses found above that popular quote: "And we need to be saved..." The context is speaking of unsaved people, not saved people! The only time your works are like filthy rags is when you substitute works in place of grace to be justified in God's sight! Every cult makes this error, but the multitude of professing believers make the fatal mistake of throwing out works because they are saved by grace. Listen again to Paul's clear dissertation from Titus on

GRACE AND WORKS

"BUT WHEN THE KINDNESS AND THE LOVE OF GOD OUR SAVIOR TOWARD MAN APPEARED, NOT BY WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH WE HAVE DONE, BUT ACCORDING TO HIS MERCY HE SAVED US, THROUGH THE WASHING OF REGENERATION AND RENEWING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHOM HE Poured OUT ON US ABUNDANTLY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR SAVIOR, THAT HAVING BEEN JUSTIFIED BY HIS GRACE WE SHOULD BECOME HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE.

THIS IS A FAITHFUL SAYING, AND THESE THINGS I WANT YOU TO AFFIRM CONSTANTLY, THAT THOSE WHO HAVE BELIEVED IN GOD SHOULD BE CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS. THESE THINGS ARE GOOD AND PROFITABLE TO MEN... LET OUR PEOPLE ALSO LEARN TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS... THAT THEY MAY NOT BE UNFRUITFUL."
Titus 3:4-5,14

"I HAVE NOT SHUNNED TO DECLARE TO YOU THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD"

Acts 20:27

One of the great heartaches I have experienced in the pastorate comes when an emphasis is placed on developing a people zealous for good works and some of the saints rise up with the accusation of legalism and critical judgment of the teaching lacking the emphasis of love and grace. Dear ones, what do you think is the current emphasis of the Holy Spirit upon a people who are already rooted and grounded in love and grace? Is it not proper to be instructing those who have been fully justified to also become fully sanctified? Is this not what Paul was addressing in Hebrews when he exhorted the saints with these words:

“FOR THOUGH BY THIS TIME YOU OUGHT TO BE TEACHERS, BUT 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. BUT SOLID FOOD BELONGS TO THOSE WHO ARE OF FULL AGE...



THEREFORE LEAVING THE DISCUSSION OF THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF CHRIST, LET US GO UNTO PERFECTION, NOT LAYING AGAIN THE FOUNDATION OF REPENTANCE... OF FAITH TOWARD GOD... OF BAPTISMS, OF LAYING ON OF HANDS, OF THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD, AND OF ETERNAL JUDGMENT.”

Heb. 5:12-14, 6:1-2

It is he who remains a babe that still requires milk when he ought to be eating solid food. We humans are the only species of God's creation that in the natural continue drinking milk after being weaned as infants. It appears that this same malady exists in the spiritual realm as it does in the natural. Paul found need to make this same charge to the saints at Corinth:



“AND I BRETHREN, COULD NOT SPEAK TO YOU AS TO SPIRITUAL PEOPLE BUT AS TO CARNAL, AS TO BABES IN CHRIST. FOR I FED YOU WITH MILK AND NOT WITH SOLID FOOD; FOR UNTIL NOW YOU WERE NOT ABLE TO RECEIVE IT, AND EVEN NOW YOU ARE STILL NOT ABLE; FOR YOU ARE STILL CARNAL... AND BEHAVING LIKE MERE MEN.”

1 Cor. 3:1-4

LEADS US INTO

**JUSTIFICATION
BY GRACE**

THE WORKING OF THE SPIRIT
OF ADOPTION IN US...
Rom. 8:15-16

**SANCTIFICATION
BY WORKS**

THE WORKING OF THE SPIRIT
OF SANCTIFICATION IN US...
2 Cor. 3:18 & 1 Pet. 1:2

2 Tim. 2:19

**THE SOLID FOUNDATION OF GOD
STANDS HAVING THIS SEAL:**

1.

**"THE
LORD
KNOWS
THOSE
WHO
ARE
HIS,**



2.

**"LET
EVERYONE
WHO NAMES
THE NAME
OF CHRIST
DEPART
FROM
INIQUITY"**

THOSE WHOM HE HAS
**JUSTIFIED
BY GRACE:**

"HAVING BEEN
JUSTIFIED BY HIS GRACE
WE SHOULD
BECOME HEIRS
ACCORDING TO
THE HOPE
OF
ETERNAL LIFE."
Titus 3:7

HE HAS CALLED TO BE
**SANCTIFIED
BY WORKS:**

IF ANYONE CLEANSSES HIMSELF...
HE WILL BE
**A VESSEL FOR HONOR,
SANCTIFIED**
AND USEFUL FOR THE MASTER,
PREPARED FOR
EVERY
GOOD WORK."
2 Tim. 2:21

I cannot stress to you how important it is to grasp the content of the above diagram for it is the essence of being able to rightly divide the Word of truth in so many doctrinal areas. Notice the "solid foundation of God" is not stated as "once saved, always saved", but rather it is God calling His people to "depart from iniquity." Notice too, that justification produces eternal life, but it is sanctification that produces good works leading to eternal rewards.

REWARDS

We now come to the third sub-topic, and that is rewards. Let me ask you the most important question you may ever be asked as a follower of Christ:

**UPON WHAT BASIS WILL YOU RECEIVE
ETERNAL REWARDS IN HEAVEN,
WILL IT BE BY GRACE OR BY WORKS?**



Ponder this question as well:

**SINCE
GRACE
IS THE
UNMERITED
FAVOR
OF GOD**



**WOULD NOT
WORKS
BE THE
MERITED
FAVOR
OF GOD?**

MERIT: "WHAT IS DESERVED, TO EARN, EXCELLENCE
DESERVING HONOR, SOMETHING THAT DESERVES A
REWARD, TO TREAT A PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS
MERITS, TO BE WORTHY OF, TO DESERVE..."

Webster

We know that God has expressed unmerited favor as a gift of His mercy and grace and not according to works of righteousness which we have done (Titus 3:4-5). That being said, does God also have merited favor which He will also bestow upon those worthy and deserving? Let our Savior speak for Himself:



**"AND BEHOLD, I AM COMING QUICKLY,
AND MY REWARD IS WITH ME,
TO GIVE TO EVERY ONE ACCORDING TO HIS WORK."**

Rev. 22:12

**"BEHOLD, I AM COMING SOON,
AND I SHALL BRING MY WAGES AND REWARDS WITH ME,
TO REPAY AND RENDER TO EACH ONE JUST WHAT HIS
OWNS ACTIONS AND HIS OWN WORK MERIT."**

Amplified

Not only is Jesus clear about the validity of the existence of works of merit in God's sight, but Paul the apostle also spoke of rewards being based upon our works:



“...AND EACH ONE WILL RECEIVE HIS OWN REWARD ACCORDING TO HIS OWN LABOR.... ACCORDING TO THE GRACE OF GOD WHICH WAS GIVEN TO ME, AS A WISE MASTER BUILDER I HAVE LAID THE FOUNDATION, AND ANOTHER BUILDS ON IT. BUT LET EACH ONE TAKE HEED HOW HE BUILDS ON IT. FOR NO OTHER FOUNDATION CAN ANYONE LAY THAN THAT WHICH IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST. ...EACH ONE'S WORK WILL BECOME MANIFEST... IF ANYONE'S WORK WHICH HE HAS BUILT ON IT ENDURES, HE WILL RECEIVE A REWARD. IF ANYONE'S WORK IS BURNED, HE WILL SUFFER LOSS (OF REWARD), BUT HE HIMSELF SHALL BE SAVED, YET SO AS THROUGH FIRE.”

1 Cor. 3:8-15

Notice that one can be saved but suffer loss of reward in heaven. This is an important point as it will impact us for all eternity. You can remain an heir of God (Rom. 8:16), which is an heir of eternal life through justification by grace (Titus 3:7), but without works being built on the proper foundation, you can suffer loss of reward; namely, the reward of being a joint-heir with Christ as the Bride of Christ. Let me be clear: Justification makes us members of the Body of Christ, but it is sanctification that makes us members of the Bride of Christ. One is a gift of God's grace, the other is an earned position, a prize to be won! This is the clear teaching of the apostle Paul throughout his epistles. Paul reveals that our rewards are part of our inheritance and are a result of what we do here on earth:

“AND WHATEVER YOU DO, DO IT HEARTILY AS TO THE LORD AND NOT TO MEN, KNOWING THAT FROM THE LORD YOU WILL RECEIVE THE REWARD OF THE INHERITANCE; FOR YOU SERVE THE LORD CHRIST.”

Col. 3:23-24



If you don't think Jesus cares about our works, consider how He addresses the churches in Revelation just 40 years after the birth of the church. He appears to each of the seven churches as the Righteous Judge. To each church He says:



"I KNOW YOUR WORKS..." Rev. 2:2

"I KNOW YOUR WORKS..." Rev. 2:9

"I KNOW YOUR WORKS..." Rev. 2:13

"I KNOW YOUR WORKS..." Rev. 2:19

"I KNOW YOUR WORKS..." Rev. 3:1

"I KNOW YOUR WORKS..." Rev. 3:8

"I KNOW YOUR WORKS..." Rev. 3:15

**"I HAVE NOT FOUND YOUR WORKS
PERFECT BEFORE GOD"**

Rev. 2:2

In fact, to five of the seven churches
Jesus says, **"REPENT OR ELSE!"**

(Rev. 2:5, 2:16, 2:21, 2:22, 3:2, 3:19)

Considering the importance Jesus places on works
in His churches, how can we listen to people telling
us "all our works are like filthy rags"?

Saint of God, every crown in heaven is stated to be a reward, not a
gift! Rewards are based on the merited favor of God, not the
unmerited favor of God. Let this sink in:

**THE
UNMERITED
FAVOR OF GOD
WILL
GET YOU
TO
HEAVEN
SOMEDAY...**



**THE
MERITED
FAVOR OF GOD
WILL
REWARD
YOU WHEN
YOU GET TO
HEAVEN!**

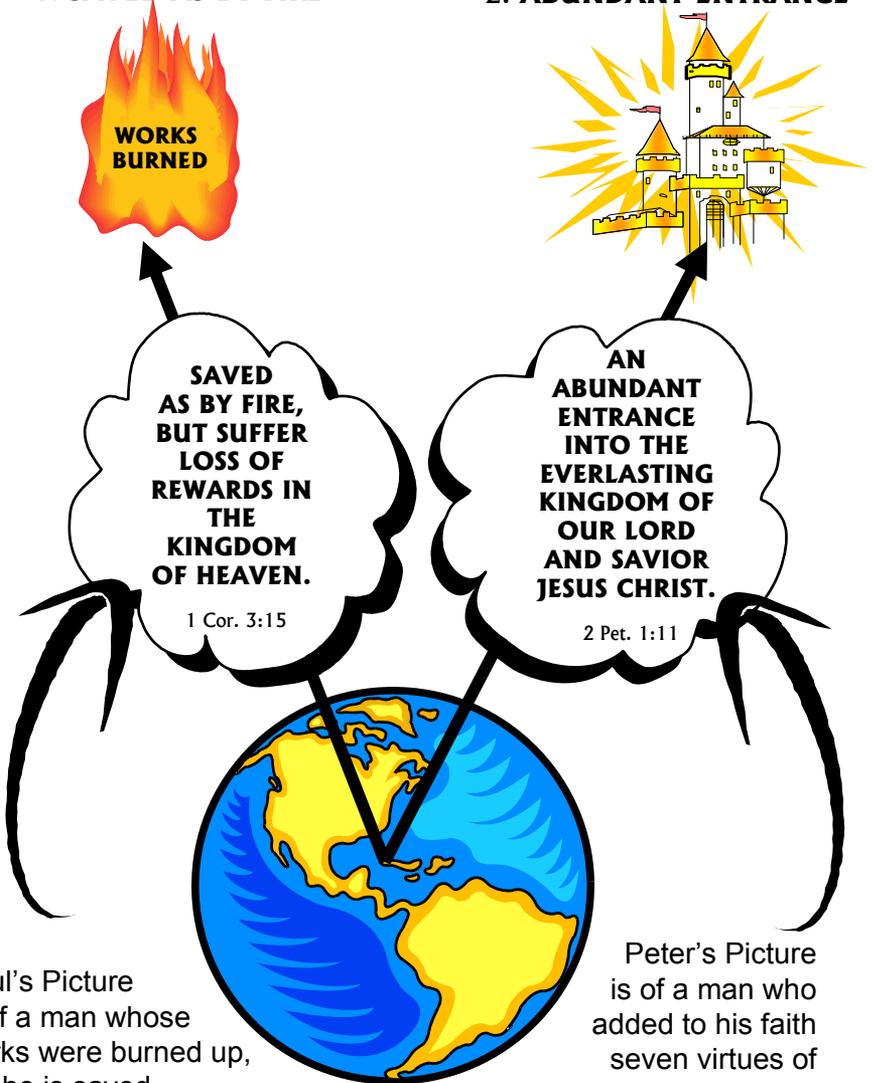
**"BEHOLD, I AM COMING SOON,
AND I SHALL BRING MY WAGES AND REWARDS
WITH ME, TO REPAY AND RENDER TO EACH ONE
JUST WHAT HIS OWN ACTIONS
AND HIS OWN WORK MERIT."**

Rev. 22:12 Amplified

What kind of entrance do you want to have into heaven?
Paul and Peter give us two contrasting views:

1. SAVED AS BY FIRE

2. ABUNDANT ENTRANCE



Paul's Picture is of a man whose works were burned up, but he is saved as if by fire, but loses rewards...

Peter's Picture is of a man who added to his faith seven virtues of godly character to obtain an abundant entrance...

"GODLINESS IS PROFITABLE FOR ALL THINGS, HAVING PROMISE OF THE LIFE WHICH NOW IS AND OF THAT WHICH IS TO COME."

1 Tim. 4:8



Psm. 7:11

**RIGHTEOUSNESS
AND JUSTICE ARE THE
FOUNDATIONS OF HIS THRONE.”** Psm. 97:2

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

Too many of God’s people have conjured up in their minds a picture of what heaven will be like that is contrary to what is revealed in the Word of God. To speak of everybody being equally rewarded, and equally glorified, and everyone reigning with Christ as a gift of grace, is simply the product of ignoring the scriptures in favor of man’s own vain imaginations.

God has offered every believer the opportunity to become a joint-heir with Christ. This is a conditional promise which we shall discuss in the next section. For the moment, let us meditate on what we shall all face when it is time for us to leave this life:

“FOR WE SHALL ALL STAND BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST. FOR IT IS WRITTEN: ...EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW... EVERY TONGUE SHALL CONFESS TO GOD... EACH ONE OF US SHALL GIVE ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF TO GOD.”

Rom. 14:10



“WE MAKE IT OUR AIM... TO BE WELL PLEASING TO HIM. FOR WE MUST ALL APPEAR AT THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST, THAT EACH ONE MAY RECEIVE THE THINGS DONE IN THE BODY, ACCORDING TO WHAT HE HAS DONE, WHETHER GOOD OR BAD.”

2 Cor. 5:10

What kind of day will that be for you? The apostle Paul looked forward to his day at the Judgment Seat of Christ because it would be the day he would be rewarded for his labors:



**“THE TIME OF MY DEPARTURE IS AT HAND.
I HAVE FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT,
I HAVE FINISHED THE RACE,
I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH.
FINALLY, THERE IS LAID UP FOR ME THE
CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,
WHICH THE LORD, THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE,
WILL GIVE ME ON THAT DAY,
AND NOT TO ME ONLY, BUT ALSO TO ALL
WHO HAVE LOVED HIS APPEARING.”**

2 Tim. 4:6-8

Will our testimony be like Paul's? Can we measure ourselves as did Paul? Paul tells us this is exactly what we must analytically do:

**“EXAMINE AND TEST AND EVALUATE
YOUR OWN SELVES TO SEE WHETHER
YOU ARE HOLDING TO YOUR FAITH
AND SHOWING THE PROPER FRUITS
OF IT. TEST AND PROVE
YOURSELVES...”**

2 Cor. 13:5 Amplified



Do not think that everyone must have the magnitude of Paul's life as a follower of Christ, for we do not run the race against Paul, but against what God has called us individually to obtain. Remember Paul said:



**“AND WHATEVER YOU DO,
DO IT HEARTILY AS TO THE LORD
AND NOT TO MEN,
KNOWING THAT FROM THE LORD
YOU WILL RECEIVE THE REWARD
OF THE INHERITANCE...”**

Col. 3:23-24

Paul spoke a strong warning to those who err in using others as the basis of measurement for themselves:

**“THEY, MEASURING THEMSELVES BY THEMSELVES
AND COMPARING THEMSELVES AMONG THEMSELVES,
ARE NOT WISE.”**

2 Cor. 10:12

The danger is simply of comparing yourself with someone with gift realms higher than you possess, and thereby fall into condemnation, or even worse, you compare yourself with the multitude who are “at ease in Zion” and take a false security that at least you are as good as they are portraying. God has given us the only acceptable standard by which to measure ourselves:

“AND ALL OF US,
AS WITH
AN UNVEILED FACE
BECAUSE WE CONTINUE
TO BEHOLD IN
THE WORD OF GOD
AS IN A MIRROR
THE GLORY OF THE LORD,
ARE CONSTANTLY
BEING TRANSFIGURED INTO
HIS VERY OWN IMAGE
IN EVER INCREASING
SPLENDOR AND
FROM ONE DEGREE OF
GLORY TO ANOTHER FOR
THIS COMES FROM THE
LORD, THE SPIRIT.”

2 Cor. 3:18 Amplified

“BUT BE DOERS
OF THE WORD
AND NOT HEARERS ONLY,
DECEIVING YOURSELVES.
A HEARER
OF THE WORD
IS LIKE A MAN OBSERVING
HIS NATURAL FACE
IN A MIRROR;
FOR HE OBSERVES HIMSELF,
GOES AWAY,
AND IMMEDIATELY FORGETS
WHAT KIND OF MAN
HE WAS.”

Jas. 1:22-24



FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE!

May I say to you dear reader that this is one pastor who is grieved from hearing saints say, "What is my ministry"? or "What is my gift"? Every believer is called to be conformed into the image of Christ and that image is to be made evident wherever you are planted! Therefore

**BE A MOTHER AND A WIFE FOR JESUS!
 BE A HUSBAND AND A FATHER FOR JESUS!
 BE A TURNED-ON YOUNG PERSON FOR JESUS!
 BE THE VERY BEST EMPLOYEE AT WORK FOR JESUS!**

Live to fulfill the mandate to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age (Titus 2:12). That is a ministry that will keep you very busy for God. Most of us spend our waking hours in some act of servitude to an employer. Here is what Paul tells us to be like on the job:

"SERVANTS, BE OBEDIENT TO THOSE WHO ARE YOUR MASTERS (OR EMPLOYERS) ACCORDING TO THE FLESH, WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING, IN SINCERITY OF HEART, AS TO CHRIST; NOT WITH EYESERVICE, AS MEN-PLEASERS, BUT AS SERVANTS OF CHRIST, DOING THE WILL OF GOD FROM THE HEART... KNOWING... HE WILL RECEIVE THE SAME FROM THE LORD..."

Eph. 6:5-8



Consider this mandate given by Jesus, for it certainly applies to every situation in life in which we are found before men:

“YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH... YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD... LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN.”

Matt. 5:13-16



God, our Father, watches everything we do, every business transaction, every conversation we have, and He is ever sifting and analyzing our motives:



“AND THERE IS NO CREATURE HIDDEN FROM HIS SIGHT, BUT ALL THINGS ARE NAKED AND OPEN TO THE EYES OF HIM TO WHOM WE MUST GIVE ACCOUNT.”

Heb. 4:13

“THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE IN EVERY PLACE KEEPING WATCH ON THE EVIL AND THE GOOD.”

Prov. 15:3

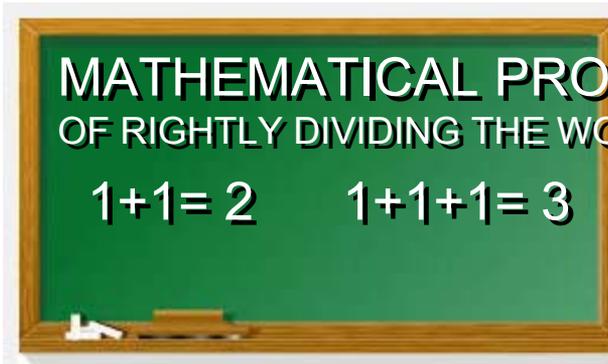
“FOR HIS EYES ARE ON THE WAYS OF MAN, AND HE SEES ALL HIS STEPS... THEREFORE HE KNOWS THEIR WORKS.”

Job 34:21,25

Are you ready to answer the question I asked you before: On what basis will we be rewarded in heaven, God's grace (His unmerited favor) or by our works (the merited favor of God)? Have you understood how we must rightly divide the Word of truth:

- 1. YOU ARE JUSTIFIED BY GRACE...**
- 2. YOU ARE SANCTIFIED BY WORKS...**
- 3. YOU WILL BE GLORIFIED BY REWARDS...**

The traditional viewpoint for rightly dividing the Word of truth is dividing it into two categories (1) Old Testament vs. New Testament, and (2) Law vs. Grace). However, there is another way by which you might be convinced that the Word of God is rightly divided into sections of three: (1) justification, sanctification, glorification and (2) grace, works, rewards. Even a casual reader of the Word of God soon becomes cognizant of the repetition of certain numbers such as listed below:



2 WITNESSES... Rev. 11:3

2 IMMUTABLE THINGS... Heb. 6:18

2 SOLID FOUNDATION OF GOD... 2 Tim. 2:19

3 RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE, JOY... Rom. 14:17

3 WAY, TRUTH, LIFE... Jn. 14:6

3 FAITH, HOPE, LOVE... 1 Cor. 13:13

6 THE NUMBER OF MAN...
Rev. 13:18

666 THE NUMBER OF ANTICHRIST...
Rev. 13:18

1 GOD... **12** APOSTLES OF THE LAMB...

1 LORD... **12** TRIBES OF ISRAEL...

1 FAITH... **12** GATES TO THE CITY...

1 BAPTISM... **12** FOUNDATIONS ...
Eph. 4:4-6 Rev. 21:10-21

4 KINDS OF HEARTS... Mark 4:1-20

4 AREAS OF DECEPTION... Col. 2:8

4 LIVING CREATURES... Rev. 4:6

4 KINDS OF FLESH... 1 Cor. 15:39

7 PIECES OF ARMOR... Eph. 6:13-18

7 THINGS TO ADD TO FAITH... 2 Pet. 1:5-7

7 LETTERS TO 7 CHURCHES... Rev. 1-3

7 DAYS OF CREATION... Gen. 1

7 YEARS OF TRIBULATION...

7 SEALS...

7 TRUMPETS...

7 VIALS...

7 THUNDERS... Rev. 6-18

7 SPIRITS OF GOD... Rev. 4:5

7 FEASTS OF THE LORD... Lev. 23

40 DAYS OF FASTING... Matt. 4:2

40 YEARS IN WILDERNESS... Deut. 8:2

9 GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT... 1 Cor. 12:8-10

9 FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT... Gal. 5:22-23

10 COMMANDMENTS... Ex. 20

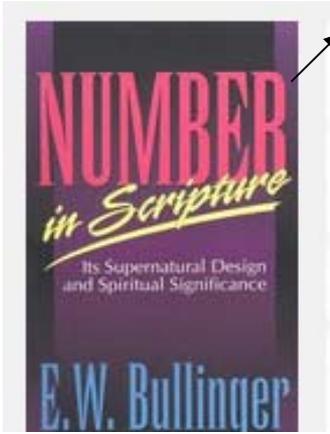
10 POUNDS... Luke. 19

10 VIRGINS... Matt. 25

10 DAYS OF TRIAL... Rev. 2:10

85

Since God is a God of order as seen in His universe, we can expect the Word of God also to reflect divine order. Numerics in scripture is a vast subject. We are going to highlight the first 12 numbers and reveal their significance. A book I will highly recommend to you on this subject is:



Biblical Themes Associated With Selected Numbers	
Number	Traditional Meanings
1	Unity, oneness, primacy.
2	Division, duality, opposition, difference.
3	Divine perfection, Trinity, completion, solidity.
4	The world, creation, material completeness.
5	Grace, heavenly favour.
6	Man under the curse of sin, labour, time.
7	Spiritual perfection, rest.
8	Jesus, resurrection, new beginnings, superabundance.
9	Finality, endings, judgment.
10	Perfection of Divine order, completeness.
11	Disorganisation, disorder, disintegration, imperfection.
12	Perfect government.
13	Rebellion, corruption, apostacy, substitution, atonement.
40	Probation, trials, testing.

THE NUMBER ONE- is the number of unity or oneness.

It is an indivisible number. Many cults, including the Jews, take the oneness of God as meaning there is only one person in the Godhead, using Deut. 6:4 as proof:

“HEAR, O ISRAEL: THE LORD OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE!”

Deut. 6:4

However, Jesus puts this erroneous interpretation of the physical oneness of God to naught with His prayer in John 17:21-23:

**“THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE, AS YOU, FATHER, ARE IN ME,
AND I IN YOU; THAT THEY ALSO MAY BE ONE IN US...
THAT THEY MAY BE ONE JUST AS WE ARE ONE...I IN THEM, AND YOU IN ME,
THAT THEY MAY BE MADE PERFECT IN ONE...”**

John 17:21-23

Obviously, Jesus is speaking of unity as the meaning of being one just as the Father and the Son are one. Paul the apostle, as well, speaks of oneness being related to unity:

**“ENDEAVORING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT
IN THE BOND OF PEACE.
THERE IS ONE BODY AND ONE SPIRIT... ONE HOPE...
ONE LORD... ONE FAITH... ONE BAPTISM... ONE GOD...”**

THE NUMBER TWO- has a twofold meaning depending on whether you are looking at the subject of harmony or disharmony.

1. **TWO** as a number of witness (in harmony)

*"If **TWO** of you agree..."* (Matt. 18:19)

*"And I will give power to my **TWO** witnesses..."* (Rev. 11:3)

*"...by these **TWO** immutable things..."* (Heb. 6:17)

*"by the mouth of **TWO** witnesses every word shall be established."* (2 Cor. 13:1)

*"On these **TWO** commandments hang all the Law and all the Prophets."* (Matt. 22:40)

*"The Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them **TWO** by **TWO** before His face..."* (Luke 10:1)

*"It is also written in your law that the testimony of **TWO** men is true."* (John 8:17)

*"And the **TWO** shall become one flesh."* (Eph. 5:31)

2. **TWO** as a number depicting choice (disharmony-opposites)

*"How long will you falter between **TWO** opinions?
If the Lord is God, follow Him;
but if Baal, then follow him..."* (1 Kings 18:21)

*"...I have set before you life and death,
blessing and cursing;
good and evil,
therefore choose..."* (Deut. 30:19)

*"There will be **TWO** men in the field,
one will be taken and the other left.
TWO women will be grinding at the mill:
one will be taken and the other left."* (Matt. 24:40-41)

*"For the flesh lusts against the spirit...
and these (**TWO**) are contrary to one another..."*
(Gal. 5:17)

Let us reflect further upon the number **TWO**. We know that the scriptures are comprised of two covenants which are commonly referred to as the old and the new, and also as covenants of law and grace. Most Christians believe these two covenants are directly opposed to each other, but are they really?

**ARE THE COVENANTS
DISHARMONIOUS OPPOSITES
CONTRARY TO EACH OTHER?**



**OR ARE THE COVENANTS
HARMONIOUS WITNESSES
OF TWO IN AGREEMENT?**

Can we simply relegate (banish, send away, consign to some obscure destination-Web.) the Old Testament with a single stamp of "law" and likewise stamp the New Testament "grace"?

Did the unchanging God deal in opposite terms with them and us? Did the Old Testament saints obtain justification differently than we do today?

Let us make a simple comparison of justification under the Old Covenant and justification under the New Covenant. You will remember our definition of the word "justification":

JUSTIFICATION
Greek- "to make innocent, to make righteous."

JUSTIFICATION

Greek-

“to make innocent, to make righteous.”

OLD COVENANT

1. God's law revealed to the people their sins:

“WHATEVER THE LAW SAYS, IT SAYS TO THOSE WHO ARE UNDER THE LAW, THAT EVERY MOUTH MAY BE STOPPED, AND ALL THE WORLD MAY BECOME GUILTY BEFORE GOD. THEREFORE BY THE DEEDS OF THE LAW, NO FLESH WILL BE JUSTIFIED... FOR BY THE LAW IS THE KNOWLEDGE OF SIN.”
Rom. 3:19-20

NEW COVENANT

1. God's law still reveals to the people their sins:

“ BUT WE KNOW THAT THE LAW IS GOOD IF ONE USES IT LAWFULLY, KNOWING THIS: THAT THE LAW IS NOT MADE FOR A RIGHTEOUS PERSON, BUT FOR THE LAWLESS AND INSUBORDINATE, FOR THE UNGODLY AND FOR SINNERS.”
1 Tim. 1:8-9
“I WOULD NOT HAVE KNOWN SIN EXCEPT THROUGH THE LAW.”
Rom. 7:7

2. A sacrifice was required to cover their sins year by year:

“AND ACCORDING TO THE LAW ALMOST ALL THINGS ARE PURGED WITH BLOOD, AND WITHOUT SHEDDING OF BLOOD THERE IS NO REMISSION.”
Heb. 9:22
“AND EVERY PRIEST STANDS MINISTERING DAILY AND OFFERING REPEATEDLY THE SAME SACRIFICES...”
Heb. 10:11

2. A sacrifice was required to forgive their sins forever:

“CHRIST WAS OFFERED ONCE TO BEAR THE SINS OF MANY.”
Heb. 9:2
“HE HAS APPEARED TO PUT AWAY SIN BY THE SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF.”
Heb. 9:26
“FOR BY ONE OFFERING HE HAS PERFECTED FOREVER THOSE WHO ARE BEING SANCTIFIED.”
Heb. 10:14

3. The Blood was carried by the High Priest into the Holiest of All to complete the atonement:

“NOT EVEN THE FIRST COVENANT WAS DEDICATED WITHOUT BLOOD... HE SPRINKLED WITH BLOOD BOTH THE TABERNACLE AND ALL THE VESSELS...”
Heb. 9:18-22

3. The blood was carried by our High Priest into heaven itself to complete our forgiveness:

“WITH HIS OWN BLOOD HE ENTERED THE MOST HOLY PLACE ONCE FOR ALL... INTO HEAVEN ITSELF, TO APPEAR... FOR US.”
Heb. 9:12 & 24

The point of all that I have labored to reveal to you is that both the Old Covenant and the New Covenant are covenants of grace (how man becomes justified-innocent, righteous). It is very wrong to doctrinally label the Old Covenant as a covenant based on “law” and the New Covenant based upon “grace”. Both covenants contain justification by grace from an unchanging God! The difference between the two is that we have a better covenant based on better promises and better sacrifices:

“BY SO MUCH MORE JESUS HAS BECOME THE MEDIATOR OF A BETTER COVENANT.”

Heb. 7:22

“BUT NOW HE HAS OBTAINED A MORE EXCELLENT MINISTRY, INASMUCH AS HE IS ALSO MEDIATOR OF A BETTER COVENANT, WHICH WAS BASED ON BETTER PROMISES.”

Heb. 8:6

“...THE COPIES OF THE THINGS IN THE HEAVENS SHOULD BE PURIFIED WITH THESE, BUT THE HEAVENLY THINGS THEMSELVES WITH BETTER SACRIFICES THAN THESE.

FOR CHRIST HAS NOT ENTERED THE HOLY PLACES MADE WITH HANDS, WHICH ARE COPIES OF THE TRUE, BUT INTO HEAVEN ITSELF, NOW TO APPEAR IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD FOR US...” Heb 9:23-27

Certainly law and grace are opposites as are faith and works. Paul labors to establish this throughout his epistles. His theme is that justification can never come by the deeds of the law (by the keeping of the ten commandments). Consider Paul's clear statement in this area:



“KNOWING THAT A MAN IS NOT JUSTIFIED BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW BUT BY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST... FOR BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW NO FLESH SHALL BE JUSTIFIED.”

Gal. 2:16

The Old Testament and the New Testament become God's two witnesses as to how justification, sanctification, and glorification are obtained from an unchanging God! We must change our thinking as to how we are to rightly divide the Word of truth lest as so many, we develop a mental block toward the Old Testament and our relationship to the contents of it by forming a disdain towards works and the rightful use of the law. The Old Testament and the New Testament are both permeated with grace and law and were never intended by God to be so simply defined as one being a book of law and the other a book of grace. They are God's two witnesses that He is an unchanging God in how He brings salvation to man.

THE UNCHANGING GOD

I want to inject here a truth that if truly comprehended and embraced, can change your whole outlook on the Word of God and enable you to receive life-changing principles from the Old Testament as well as from the New:

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

Mal. 3:6

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

Heb. 13:8

"GOD IS A JUST JUDGE"



Psm. 7:11

RIGHTEOUSNESS

AND JUSTICE ARE THE

FOUNDATIONS OF HIS THRONE." Psm. 97:2

**"WHAT
HE
WAS
BEFORE,**

PAST

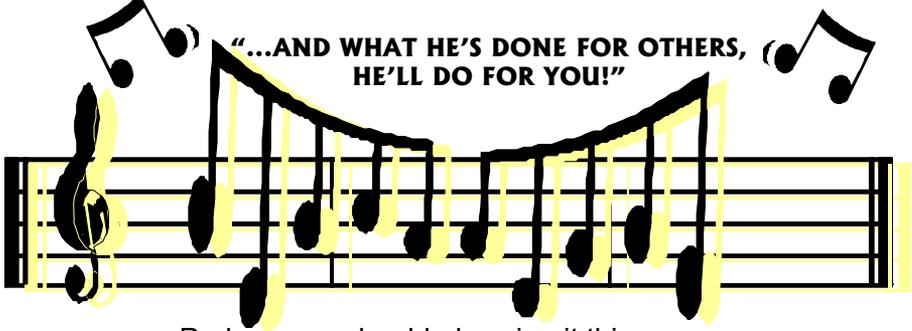
**HE
NOW
IS,**

PRESENT

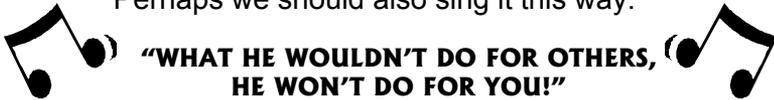
**AND
WILL
BE
FOR-
EVER"**

FUTURE

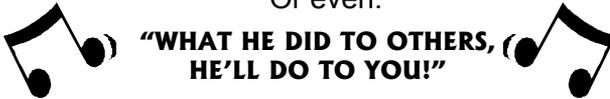
You may remember an old tune which goes like this:



Perhaps we should also sing it this way:



Or even:



It is vital that we see that the two covenants are ministered by an unchanging God! These two covenants are two witnesses that God is unchanging. No man shall ever stand before the Righteous Judge and be able to accuse Him of making unrighteous judgments.

If we would begin to look at some of the doctrines that are circulating among the saints today in light of an unchanging God, we would see them for the false doctrines that they really are! Let us consider, for an example, the doctrine of "once saved, always saved", or as it is also known as "unconditional eternal security". This is considered to be the result of being only under grace making it impossible for the believer to ever lose his salvation or eternal life even as the result of continuing in sin. He may suffer loss in heaven, but is absolutely assured of eternal life because of being under a grace covenant. What is being said is that the unchanging Righteous Judge will do for man today what He would not do for Adam, who was also a child of God who possessed eternal life. But we know that Adam did lose his state of eternal life, by choice, through sin. Please do not think I am saying that every time a New Covenant believer sins, he loses eternal life, but I am saying that the New Covenant gives severe warnings of the possibility of departing from the faith and drawing back unto perdition. Many of these severe warnings are found in the book of Hebrews, which is rationalized away today as being a book written only to non-believing Jews. Hebrews is written to Christians!

Actually, what the Book of Hebrews presents is evidence of an unchanging God, even in the midst of changing from the Old to the New Covenant, God remains the same in how He deals with man. Consider two examples with me:

1. GOD IS UNCHANGING TOWARD THOSE WHO PRACTICE WILLFUL SIN:

OLD COVENANT

“FOR IF WE SIN WILLFULLY AFTER WE HAVE RECEIVED THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH, THERE IS NO LONGER A SACRIFICE FOR SINS, BUT A CERTAIN EXPECTATION OF JUDGMENT... ANYONE WHO REJECTED MOSES LAW DIES WITHOUT MERCY ON THE TESTIMONY OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES...”

Heb. 10:26-28

NEW COVENANT

“OF HOW MUCH WORSE PUNISHMENT DO YOU SUPPOSE, WILL HE BE THOUGHT WORTHY WHO HAS TRAMPLED THE SON OF GOD UNDERFOOT, COUNTED THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT BY WHICH HE WAS SANCTIFIED A COMMON THING, AND INSULTED THE SPIRIT OF GRACE?... FOR THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE.”

Heb. 10:29-30

(If you will compare Numbers 15:28-31 and Luke 12:45-48 together, you will see that both in the Old Covenant and New Covenant we find identical judgments for unintentional sins and for presumptuous sins, with the latter receiving the harsher judgment of being cut off.)

2. GOD IS UNCHANGING IN HIS REQUIREMENT THAT WE MUST CONTINUE IN THE FAITH:

OLD COVENANT

“THEREFORE AS THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYS: TODAY IF YOU WILL HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS IN THE REBELLION, IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS, WHERE YOUR FATHERS TESTED ME, PROVED ME, AND SAW MY WORKS FORTY YEARS. THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THAT GENERATION, AND SAID, THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEARTS, AND HAVE NOT KNOWN MY WAYS, SO I SWORE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.”

Heb. 3:7-11

NEW COVENANT

“BEWARE BRETHREN, LEST THERE BE IN ANY OF YOU AN EVIL HEART OF UNBELIEF IN DEPARTING FROM THE LIVING GOD... LEST YOU BE HARDENED THROUGH THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN. FOR WE HAVE BECOME PARTAKERS OF CHRIST IF WE HOLD THE BEGINNING OF OUR CONFIDENCE STEADFAST TO THE END, WHILE IT IS SAID, TODAY, IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS IN THE REBELLION...”

Heb. 3:12-15

Inescapable evidence is presented here from Hebrews side-by-side. The Old Covenant is a clear example for all in the New Covenant that God is an unchanging God. We continue the comparison in Hebrews Chapter Three and Chapter Four:

OLD COVENANT

“FOR WHO HAVING HEARD REBELLED? INDEED, WAS IT NOT ALL WHO CAME OUT OF EGYPT, LED BY MOSES? NOW WHOM WAS HE ANGRY FORTY YEARS? WAS IT NOT WITH THOSE WHO SINNED, WHOSE CORPSES FELL IN THE WILDERNESS? AND TO WHOM DID HE SWEAR THAT THEY WOULD NOT ENTER HIS REST, BUT TO THOSE WHO DID NOT OBEY? SO WE SEE THAT THEY COULD NOT ENTER IN BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF.”

Heb. 3:16-19

NEW COVENANT

“THEREFORE, SINCE A PROMISE REMAINS OF ENTERING HIS REST, LET US FEAR LEST ANY OF YOU SEEM TO COME SHORT OF IT. FOR INDEED THE GOSPEL WAS PREACHED TO US AS WELL AS TO THEM, BUT THE WORD WHICH THEY HEARD DID NOT PROFIT THEM NOT BEING MIXED WITH FAITH... LET US THEREFORE BE DILIGENT TO ENTER THAT REST, LEST ANYONE FALL AFTER THE SAME EXAMPLE OF DISOBEDIENCE.”

Heb. 4:1-11

Lest we dismiss what is said here under the premises that Hebrews is not for Christians, may we also consider the apostle Paul's words of comparison found in Romans 11:



“I SPEAK TO YOU GENTILES; INASMUCH AS I AM AN APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES... DO NOT BOAST AGAINST THE BRANCHES (JEWS)... YOU WILL SAY, "BRANCHES WERE BROKEN OFF THAT I MIGHT BE GRAFTED IN." WELL SAID. BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF THEY WERE BROKEN OFF, AND YOU STAND BY FAITH. DO NOT BE HAUGHTY, BUT FEAR. FOR IF GOD DID NOT SPARE THE NATURAL BRANCHES, HE MAY NOT SPARE YOU EITHER. THEREFORE CONSIDER THE GOODNESS AND SEVERITY OF GOD: ON THOSE WHO FELL, SEVERITY; BUT TOWARD YOU, GOODNESS, IF YOU CONTINUE IN HIS GOODNESS. OTHERWISE YOU ALSO WILL BE CUT OFF. AND THEY ALSO, IF THEY DO NOT CONTINUE IN UNBELIEF, WILL BE GRAFTED IN, FOR GOD IS ABLE TO GRAFT THEM IN AGAIN.”

Rom. 11:13-23

I have often wondered why many teachers today only cover the first eight chapters when dealing with the Book of Romans and leave out the next three chapters (9-11) as if it was not a message to the church? It is because these remaining chapters don't harmonize with the replacement theology being presently taught to the gentile church! The church is not the replacement for Israel!

Paul clearly tells us in Romans Chapter 11 and verse 25 what are his purposes for all he has spoken in the previous three chapters:



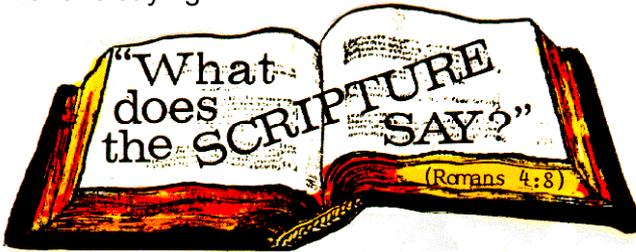
**“FOR I DO NOT DESIRE, BRETHREN,
THAT YOU SHOULD BE IGNORANT OF THIS MYSTERY
LEST YOU SHOULD BE WISE IN YOUR OWN OPINION...”**

Rom. 11:25

**“LEST YOU BE SELF-OPINIONATED-WISE IN YOUR OWN
CONCEITS- I DO NOT WANT YOU TO MISS
THIS HIDDEN TRUTH AND MYSTERY...”**

Amplified

The great ailment within much of the church today is the result of the ignorance of this mystery which has led the church to indeed become high-minded and wise in conceit concerning their “special relationship” to God that has become greater than the Jews. Take a survey of Christians and sadly, most believers and many pastors will tell you that God is through with the Jew and has made the church His new “chosen ones” as sole possessors of the New Covenant. However, Paul would often challenge those who lacked understanding with this saying:



Here are a few things that the scriptures have to say about the Jew and their relationship to God:

1. SALVATION IS OF THE JEWS:

“YOU WORSHIP WHAT YOU DO NOT KNOW, WE KNOW WHAT WE WORSHIP, FOR SALVATION IS OF THE JEWS.”

Jn. 4:22

2. THE NEW COVENANT WAS NOT CREATED FOR THE GENTILES BUT FOR THE JEWS:

“BEHOLD THE DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL MAKE A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH... FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL... I WILL PUT MY LAWS IN THEIR IN THEIR MIND AND WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS, AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.... I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR UNRIGHTEOUSNESS AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE. IN THAT HE SAYS, A NEW COVENANT, HE HAS MADE THE FIRST OBSOLETE...”

Heb. 8:8-13

3. THE GENTILES ARE GRAFTED INTO THIS NEW COVENANT, BUT NOT TO REPLACE THE JEW AS GOD'S PEOPLE.

"AND THE HOLY SPIRIT ALSO WITNESSED TO US FOR AFTER HE HAD SAID BEFORE, "THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS... I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR HEARTS, AND IN THEIR MINDS I WILL WRITE THEM," THEN HE ADDS, "THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE."

Heb. 10:15-17

"DO NOT BOAST AGAINST THE BRANCHES... REMEMBER THAT YOU DO NOT SUPPORT THE ROOT, BUT THE ROOT SUPPORTS YOU.... IF THEY DO NOT CONTINUE IN UNBELIEF, WILL BE GRAFTED IN, FOR GOD IS ABLE TO GRAFT THEM IN AGAIN.... IF YOU WERE GRAFTED CONTRARY TO NATURE INTO A GOOD OLIVE TREE, HOW MUCH MORE WILL THESE, WHO ARE NATURAL BRANCHES, BE GRAFTED INTO THEIR OWN OLIVE TREE? FOR I DO NOT DESIRE, BRETHREN, THAT YOU SHOULD BE IGNORANT OF THIS MYSTERY, LEST YOU SHOULD BE WISE IN YOUR OWN OPINION (OF YOURSELVES)... HARDENING IN PART HAS HAPPENED TO ISRAEL UNTIL THE FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES HAS COME IN. AND SO ALL ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED... FOR THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."

Rom. 11:18-27

4. GOD'S PURPOSE WAS TO MAKE THE JEW JEALOUS OF THE GENTILE BEING A PARTAKER OF A JEWISH COVENANT:

"...HAVE THEY STUMBLERD THAT THEY SHOULD FALL? CERTAINLY NOT! BUT THROUGH THEIR FALL, TO PROVOKE THEM TO JEALOUSY, SALVATION HAS COME TO THE GENTILES."

Rom. 11:11

5. GOD IS COMBINING THE JEW AND THE GENTILE INTO THE SAME BODY AS FELLOW HEIRS (NOTICE IT IS NOT THE JEW JOINING THE GENTILE, BUT THE GENTILE JOINING THE JEW):

"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: THAT THE GENTILES SHOULD BE FELLOW HEIRS OF THE SAME BODY, AND PARTAKERS OF HIS PROMISE IN CHRIST THROUGH THE GOSPEL."

Eph. 3:5-6

"THEREFORE REMEMBER... GENTILES... THAT AT THAT TIME YOU WERE WITHOUT CHRIST, BEING ALIENS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL AND STRANGERS TO THE COVENANTS OF PROMISE, HAVING NO HOPE AND WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD..."

Eph. 2:11-12

My purpose in bringing forth these thoughts is the same as the apostle Paul: lest we become wise in our own opinion. Whether we like it or not, the church is not “center stage” in God’s dealings with man. The church is an expression of God’s mercy and of His goodness. He includes it as a means of salvation to be offered to the Gentiles. It does not make us lesser citizens in the kingdom of God, but neither does it make us greater citizens than the natural branches. High-mindedness plagues the church of today as it was even in Paul’s day. It is embodied in these two false concepts:

- 1. THAT WE WILL RULE AND REIGN WITH CHRIST SIMPLY BECAUSE OF OUR POSITION IN CHRIST OBTAINED THROUGH THE NEW BIRTH.**
- 2. THE CHURCH WILL AUTOMATICALLY INHERIT THE POSITION OF THE BRIDE OF CHRIST IN THE LIFE TO COME AS AN ACT OF GRACE.**

I realize we are getting far away from our study of numerics and the significance of the number “two”, but I am going to inject, at this point, another concept which I earnestly pray you may see to be a vital truth in being able to rightly divide the Word of truth. What I want to show you is how the Old Covenant saints became partakers of the New Covenant promises in Christ. You may remember from Hebrews 11 these words:

(ABRAHAM) “...WAITED FOR A CITY WHICH HAD FOUNDATIONS WHOSE BUILDER AND MAKER IS GOD.” Heb. 11:10

(ABRAHAM WAS AMONG THOSE WHO) “DIED IN FAITH, NOT HAVING RECEIVED THE PROMISES, BUT HAVING SEEN THEM AFAR OFF WERE ASSURED OF THEM, AND EMBRACED THEM, AND CONFESSED THAT THEY WERE STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON THE EARTH.... THEY DESIRE A BETTER... A HEAVENLY COUNTRY. THEREFORE GOD IS NOT ASHAMED TO BE CALLED THEIR GOD, FOR HE HAS PREPARED A CITY FOR THEM.”

Heb. 11:13-16

“AND ALL THESE, HAVING OBTAINED A GOOD TESTIMONY THROUGH FAITH, DID NOT RECEIVE THE PROMISE, GOD HAVING PROVIDED SOMETHING BETTER FOR US, THAT THEY SHOULD NOT BE MADE PERFECT APART FROM US.”

Heb. 11:39-40



Using Abraham as a representative figure of the Old Testament saints, let me show you how he shall receive the promise of a city whose builder and maker is God, which God has prepared for him, and how Abraham was not made perfect (complete) apart from us.

Let us begin by seeing Paul's exhortation to the saints pertaining to the need to understand God's will:

**"...DO NOT BE UNWISE,
BUT UNDERSTAND
WHAT
THE WILL OF
THE LORD IS..."**

Eph. 5:17

**"...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



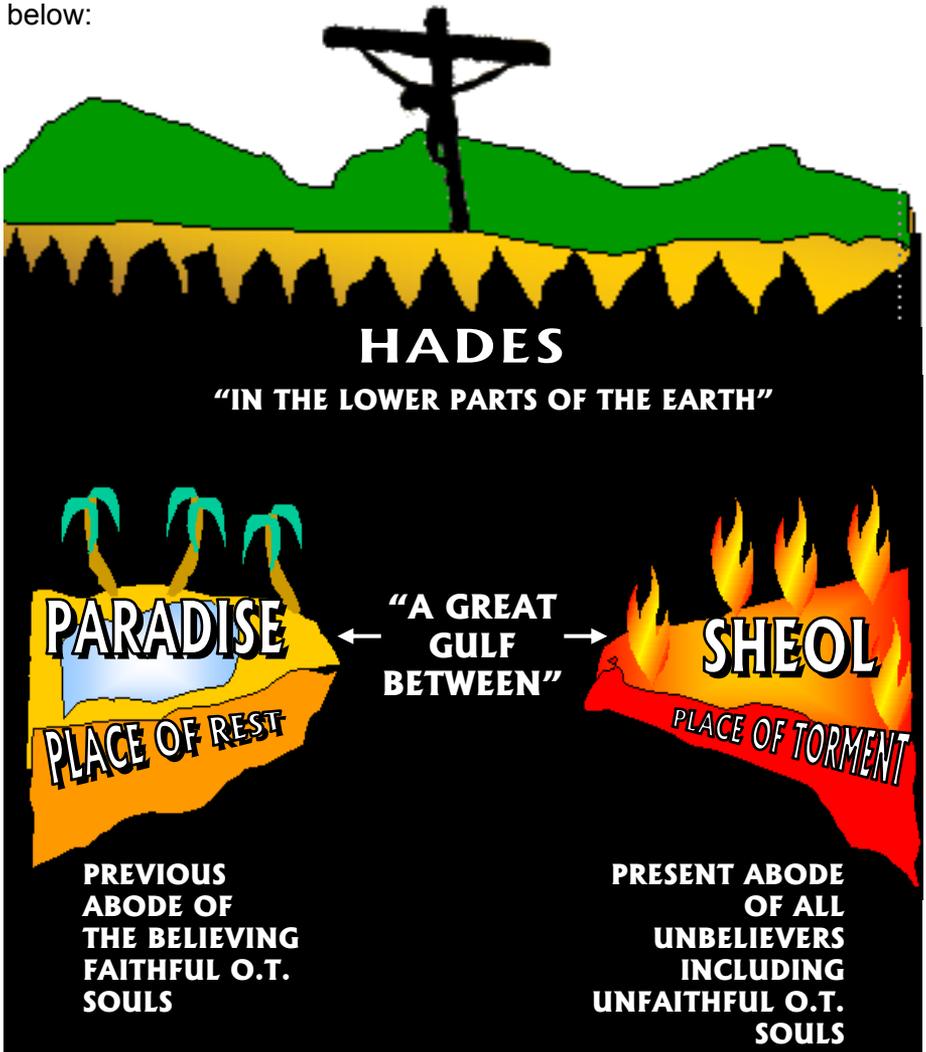
THE MYSTERY

("HIDDEN TRUTH")

OF GOD'S WILL



God's plan has always been to bring together in one, not only the church, but also the Old Covenant saints that they may all be fellow heirs of the same body (Eph. 3:6). Since Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant (Heb. 8:6) as Moses was of the Old Covenant, it becomes necessary to somehow gather together the Old Covenant saints in a position which would cause them to become dependent upon Christ to bring them unto completion or perfection. You may remember that in Luke 16 Jesus revealed that Abraham was in Paradise which was in Hades in the lower parts of the earth. I want to illustrate this truth and show you how Abraham, as well as all the Old Covenant saints who kept the covenant by faith, were made perfect in Christ and brought into the New Covenant of promise. Consider carefully the diagram below:



"WHEN THE FULLNESS OF THE TIME HAD COME, GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON... BORN UNDER THE LAW, TO REDEEM THOSE WHO WERE UNDER THE LAW..." Eph. 4:4

"IN THE FULLNESS OF THE TIMES... (GOD WILL) GATHER TOGETHER IN ONE...IN CHRIST..." Eph. 1:9

"HE THAT ASCENDED... FIRST DESCENDED INTO THE LOWER PARTS OF THE EARTH." Eph. 4:8-9

AND THE GRAVES WERE OPENED, MANY BODIES OF THE SAINTS... WERE RAISED... Matt. 27:52



1

HADES

"IN THE LOWER PARTS OF THE EARTH"

5

"WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE..."

Eph. 4:8

"THE GOSPEL WAS PREACHED TO THOSE WHO ARE DEAD, THAT THEY MIGHT BE JUDGED ACCORDING TO MEN IN THE FLESH, BUT LIVE ACCORDING TO GOD IN THE SPIRIT."

1 Pet. 4:6

"BEING PUT TO DEATH... MADE ALIVE BY THE SPIRIT, BY WHOM HE ALSO WENT AND PREACHED TO THE SPIRITS IN PRISON WHO WERE DISOBEDIENT..."

1 Pet. 3:18-20

2

4 **JESUS CROSSED OVER INTO PARADISE**

PARADISE
PLACE OF REST

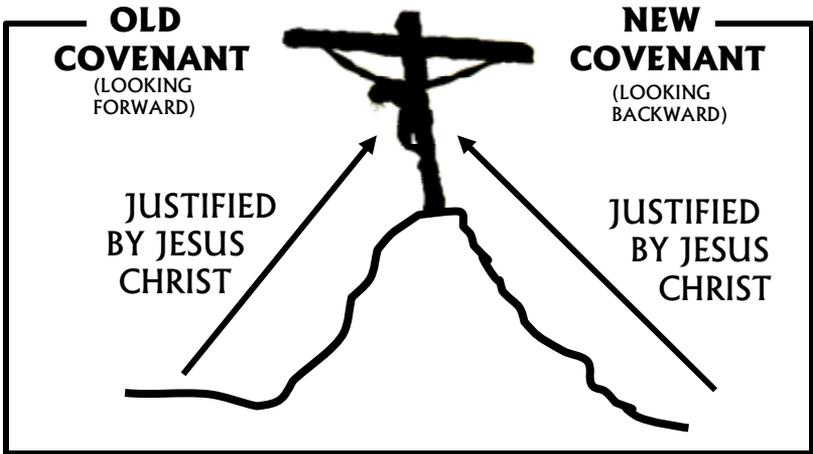
"THE GREAT GULF BETWEEN"

3 **SHEOL**
PLACE OF TORMENT

JESUS POSSIBLY PROCLAIMING Rev. 1:18:

"I AM HE WHO LIVES, AND WAS DEAD, AND AM ALIVE FOREVERMORE.. AND I HAVE THE KEYS OF HADES AND OF DEATH."

In light of the revealed mystery of God's will to gather together all things in Christ, do you see why Abraham was in a place of temporary confinement in the lower parts of the earth rather than in heaven? He was to await Him who was to come to redeem those under the law. The Old Covenant sacrifices, Hebrews tells us, could not take away sins, but rather they covered sins until the perfect sacrifice would come (see Heb. 9). Had Jesus not raised from the dead, not only would we still be in our sins, as Paul says in 1 Cor. 15:17, but Abraham and the Old Covenant saints would still be in paradise and would never receive the promises they embraced in Hebrews 11.



We all know that Jesus Christ is the first fruits from the dead (1 Cor. 15:20). Do you see that Abraham, and those who were resurrected at Christ's resurrection, are also among the first fruits from the dead in Christ? Consider Paul's words:

“BUT NOW CHRIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD, AND HAS BECOME THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP. FOR SINCE BY MAN CAME DEATH, BY MAN ALSO CAME THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD. FOR AS IN ADAM ALL DIE, EVEN SO IN CHRIST ALL SHALL BE MADE ALIVE. BUT EACH ONE IN HIS OWN ORDER: CHRIST THE FIRSTFRUITS, AFTERWARD THOSE THAT ARE CHRIST’S AT HIS COMING. THEN COMES THE END.”

1 Cor. 15:20-23



The resurrection is patterned after an Old Testament harvest principle in which the crops were gathered in three stages:



**1.
FIRST
FRUITS**

“YOU SHALL
BRING A SHEAF OF
THE FIRST FRUITS OF
YOUR HARVEST
TO THE PRIEST...”
Lev. 23:10

**CHRIST
THE FIRST-
FRUITS**

1 Cor. 15:20, 23

**2.
MAIN
HARVEST**

“WHEN YOU REAP
THE HARVEST
OF YOUR LAND
YOU SHALL NOT
WHOLLY REAP...”
Lev. 23:22A

**AFTERWARD
THOSE
THAT ARE
CHRIST’S
AT HIS
COMING...**

1 Cor. 15:23

**3.
GLEANINGS**

“YOU SHALL NOT
WHOLLY REAP
THE CORNERS
OF YOUR
FIELD,
NOR SHALL
YOU GATHER
THE GLEANINGS
OF YOUR HARVEST.”
Lev. 19:9

**THEN
COMES
THE END...**

1 Cor. 15:24

The resurrection of the dead is what these three harvest principles portray in type and shadow. Christ will harvest all three Himself.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

“SO IN CHRIST ALL SHALL BE MADE ALIVE...” 1 Cor. 15:22

“HE WILL GATHER TOGETHER IN ONE ALL THINGS IN CHRIST,
BOTH... IN HEAVEN... ON EARTH-IN HIM” Eph. 1:9

1

FIRST FRUITS

“WHEN HE
ASCENDED
HE LED
CAPTIVITY
CAPTIVE...”
Eph. 4:8

“AND COMING OUT
OF THE GRAVES
AFTER HIS
RESURRECTION,
THEY WENT INTO
THE HOLY CITY
AND APPEARED
TO MANY”

Matt. 27:53

2

MAIN HARVEST

“FOR THE LORD...
WILL DESCEND
FROM HEAVEN...
WITH THE TRUMPET
OF GOD...
THE DEAD
IN CHRIST
SHALL RISE FIRST,
THEN WE...
SHALL BE CAUGHT
UP TOGETHER
TO MEET
THE LORD
IN THE AIR...”

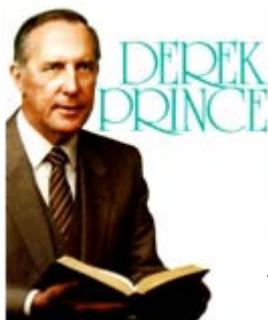
1 Thess. 4:16-17

3

GLEANINGS

“ONE LIKE THE
SON OF MAN...
HAVING...
A SHARP
SICKLE...
...THRUST IN
YOUR SICKLE
AND REAP
FOR
THE
HARVEST
OF
THE EARTH
IS RIPE...”

Rev. 14:15-16



Derek Prince, one of my favorite bible teachers, was fond of saying to his students:

**“RECAPITULATION
IS THE ESSENCE OF LEARNING.”**

Here then is a recapitulation of what we have looked at so far as being our main purpose in this present segment of our study:

- 1. TO REVEAL THAT THE CHURCH IS NOT CENTER STAGE IN GOD'S PURPOSES BECAUSE HIS NEW COVENANT BELONGS TO THE JEW, OF WHICH THE GENTILES HAVE BECOME PARTAKERS.**
- 2. THE GENTILES BECAME FELLOW HEIRS WITH THE JEW AND NOT THE JEW JOINING THE CHURCH.**
- 3. THE PROMISES OF THE NEW COVENANT BELONG EQUALLY TO THE OLD COVENANT SAINTS. WE SAW ABRAHAM AS AN EXAMPLE OF ONE WHO WILL BE A PARTAKER OF THE CITY WHICH REVELATION CALLS THE NEW JERUSALEM.**
- 4. THIS FOUNDATION ENABLES US TO SEE THAT THE OLD COVENANT OVERCOMERS SHALL ALSO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE BRIDE OF CHRIST, JUST AS NEW COVENANT BELIEVERS ARE ELIGIBLE “IF” THEY, LIKEWISE, OVERCOME.**
- 5. THIS FOUNDATION WILL OPEN THE OLD COVENANT SAINTS TO BE EXAMPLES TO US AS THE WORD SO OFTEN USES THEM** (see 1 Cor. 10:1-11 and Heb. 11 and 12:1-3).
- 6. THIS FOUNDATION WILL ROOT YOU IN THE TRUTH THAT GOD IS AN UNCHANGING GOD WHO WILL NOT DO FOR YOU WHAT HE WOULD NOT DO FOR OTHERS; HE IS THE SAME YESTERDAY, TODAY AND FOREVER! CONVERSELY, HE WILL DO TO YOU WHAT HE HAS DONE TO OTHERS, AS PAUL CLEARLY WARNS US IN ROMANS 11.**
- 7. WE GAIN INSIGHT TO THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S WILL WHICH PAUL REMINDS US THAT HE WHO DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THE WILL OF GOD IS FOOLISH AND UNWISE.** (see Eph. 5:15-17)

As to our purpose for looking at significance the number **TWO** in scripture, I pray that you are convinced that God's covenants best represent “two harmonious witnesses in agreement”, and not “disharmonious opposites” that are contrary to one another. May we now look at the signification of the number **THREE** in scripture.

THE NUMBER THREE- is the number of divine completion. When God designs, creates, or designates something as complete, it appears in groupings of three. As a student of God's Word, I have developed the careful habit of looking for truths expressed in threes whenever God calls us to some area of completion. Three is His number of divine completion.

When God declares something as being **ONE**, it will be manifested in **THREE** expressions. Let us consider some examples:

~ 1 ~

UNITY AND ONENESS

"THE LORD
OUR GOD...
THE LORD IS
Gen. 6:4



"LET US MAKE MAN
IN OUR IMAGE,
ACCORDING TO
OUR LIKENESS..."
Gen. 1:26



"FOR IN HIM DWELLS
ALL THE FULLNESS
OF THE GODHEAD
BODILY" Col. 2:9a



"AND YOU
ARE COMPLETE
IN HIM..."
Col. 2:9b



"I AM...
WHO IS, WHO WAS,
AND WHO IS TO COME,
THE ALMIGHTY."
Rev. 1:8



~ 3 ~

DIVINE COMPLETENESS

1. **SON**
 2. **FATHER**
 3. **HOLY SPIRIT**
- Matt. 28:19

1. **SPIRIT**
 2. **SOUL**
 3. **BODY**
- 1 Thess. 5:23

1. **THE WAY**
 2. **THE TRUTH**
 3. **THE LIFE**
- John 14:6

1. **WE LIVE**
 2. **WE MOVE**
 3. **HAVE OUR BEING**
- Acts 17:28

1. **PROPHET** Acts 3:22
2. **PRIEST** Heb. 8:1
3. **KING** Rev. 19:16

“AND HIS NAME IS CALLED THE WORD OF GOD.”

Rev. 19:13



“IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD... AND THE WORD WAS GOD... AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH...”

John 1:1, 14

THE WORD OF GOD

FIRST WITNESS:



SECOND WITNESS:



“...MY TWO WITNESSES...”

“BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY WORD SHALL BE ESTABLISHED.”

2 Cor. 13:5

1. COMPLETE SALVATION:

DIVINELY COMPLETE

1. JUSTIFICATION
2. SANCTIFICATION
3. GLORIFICATION

2. COMPLETE GOSPEL:

DIVINELY COMPLETE

1. GRACE
2. WORKS
3. REWARDS

3. COMPLETE FAITH:

DIVINELY COMPLETE

1. FAITH
2. WORKS
3. REWARDS

“BE DILIGENT TO PRESENT YOURSELF APPROVED TO GOD, A WORKER WHO DOES NOT NEED TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH. BUT SHUN PROFANE AND VAIN BABBLINGS, FOR THEY WILL INCREASE TO MORE UNGODLINESS AND THEIR MESSAGE WILL SPREAD LIKE CANCER...”

I promised you a brief look at several more numbers and their significance. May they provoke you to further study in this area to strengthen your ability to rightly divide the Word of truth.

4

WORLD

4 CONTINENTS...
 4 ELEMENTS
 (FIRE, AIR,
 WATER, EARTH)...
 4 DIVISIONS OF A DAY
 (MORN, NOON,
 EVEN, NIGHT...)
 4 SEASONS
 (SUMMER, FALL,
 WINTER, SPRING)...
 4 DIRECTIONS
 (N,S,E,W)...

5

GRACE

DEUTERONOMY
 IS
 THE FIFTH BOOK
 OF THE OLD
 COVENANT AND
 HEAVILY DEPICTS
 GOD'S GRACE.
 ALSO
 THE TABERNACLE
 IS LACED WITH
 THE NUMBER
 FIVE.

6

MAN

THE
 NUMBER
 OF MAN
 IS SIX. ...
 MAN
 WAS CREATED
 ON THE
 SIXTH DAY...
 MAN IS TO WORK
 SIX DAYS...
 (Gen. 1)

7

PERFECTION

7 PIECES OF ARMOR...
 (Eph. 6)
 7 THINGS TO ADD
 TO YOUR FAITH...
 (2 Pet. 1)
 7 THINGS BRING UNITY...
 (Eph. 4)
 7 LETTERS TO
 7 CHURCHES...
 (Rev. 1-3)
 7 FEASTS OF THE LORD...
 (Lev.23)

8

NEW BEGINNINGS

CIRCUMCISION
 ON 8TH DAY
 (Luke 2:21)
 NOAH'S FAMILY 8
 SAVED FROM FLOOD
 (2 Pet. 2:5)
 (1 Pet. 3:20)

9

HOLY SPIRIT

9 GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT
 (1 Cor. 12)
 9 FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT
 (Gal. 5)
 9 OBJECTIVES
 OF THE SPIRIT
 (Jn. 14,15,16)

10

TESTING

10 COMMANDMENTS...
 10 PERCENT TITHE...
 10 POUNDS GIVEN TO
 TEST STEWARDSHIP...
 10 VIRGINS...
 (Matt. 25)

11

CONFUSION

"MYSTERY NUMBER"
 VAGUE IN SCRIPT.
 ADDS TO
 DIVIDE ORDER (10 + 1)
 SUBTRACTS FROM
 GOVERNMENTAL
 PERFECTION (12-1)
 (SATAN'S NUMBER?)

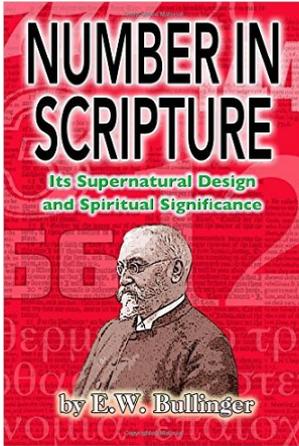
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12

GOVERNMENTAL ORDER

12 APOSTLES OF LAMB...
 12 TRIBES OF ISRAEL...
 12 FOUNDATIONS...
 12 GATES...
 12 ANGELS...
 (Rev. 21:11-21)

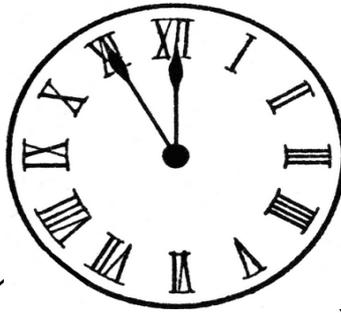
Once again I am going to recommend this old classic book by E.W. Bullinger to you. I cannot tell you how much this book has meant to me as a Bible teacher. Pastor Randy Shupe



“E.W. Bullinger’s classic work, *Number in Scripture*, is an invaluable guide to the study of Bible Numerics. Bullinger’s two-fold approach to the subject first examines the supernatural design of the Bible. He notes the amazing patterns of numbers and numerical features of the Scriptures that give evidence of their Designer. The second section highlights the spiritual significance and symbolic connotations of numbers which are repeated in different contexts throughout the Bible. An example is the number seven or the use of “666” in the book of Revelation. This study will provide a treasure trove of insights and practical applications for pastors, teachers, and Bible students.

Bullinger’s two-fold approach to the subject of biblical numbers first examines the supernatural design of the Bible. He notes the patterns and numerical features of the Scriptures that are evidence of their Designer. The second section highlights the spiritual significance and symbolic connotations of numbers that are repeated in different contexts throughout the Bible. A balanced, biblically solid examination of the numbers throughout Scripture Widely referenced, monumental work.” (*Christianbook.com.*)

“AND DO THIS, KNOWING THE TIME, THAT NOW IT IS HIGH TIME TO AWAKE OUT OF SLEEP;

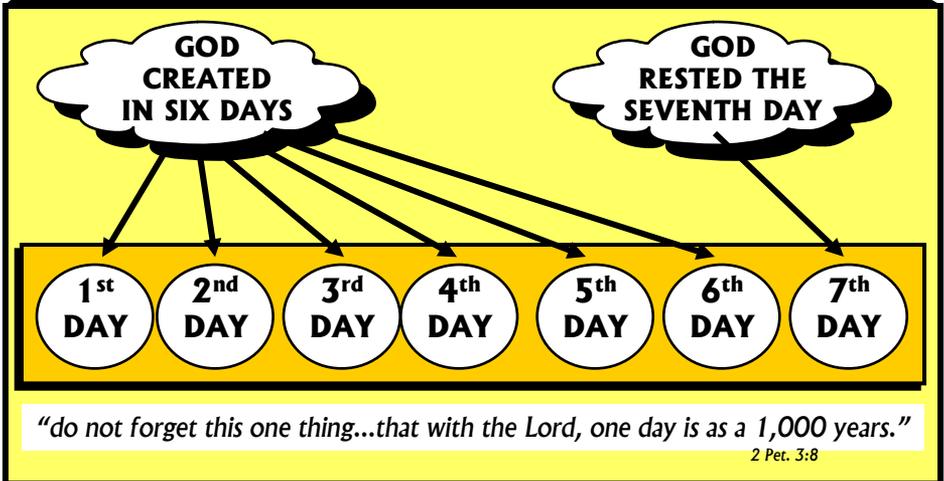


FOR OUR SALVATION IS NEARER THAN WHEN WE FIRST BELIEVED. THE NIGHT IS FAR SPENT, THE DAY IS AT HAND....”
Rom. 13:11-12

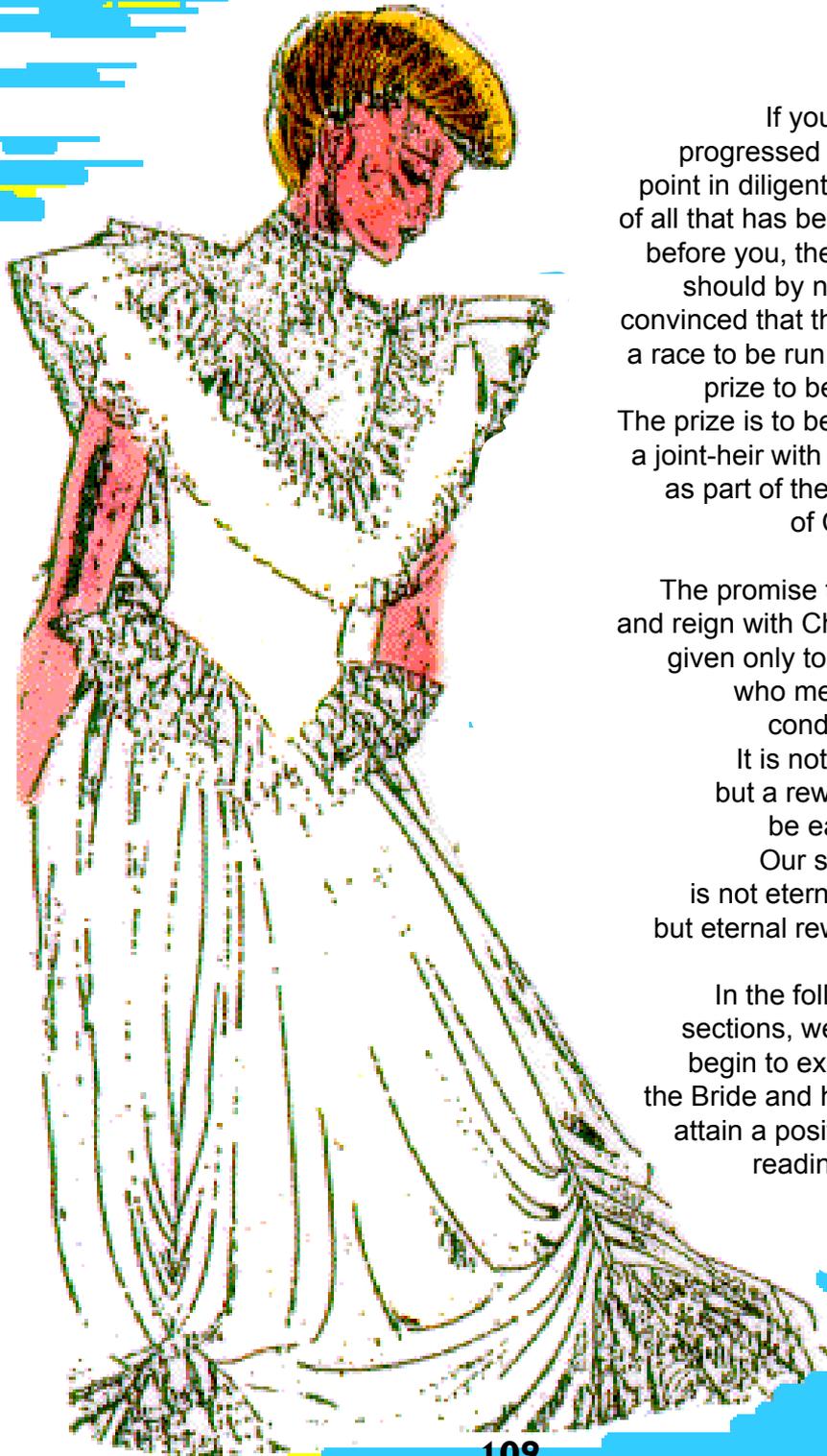
“THIS IS THE HISTORY OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH WHEN THEY WERE CREATED, IN THE DAY THAT THE LORD GOD MADE THE EARTH...”
Gen. 2:4

“AND ON THE SEVENTH DAY GOD ENDED HIS WORK WHICH HE HAD DONE... THEN GOD BLESSED THE SEVENTH DAY AND SANCTIFIED IT, BECAUSE IN IT HE RESTED FROM ALL HIS WORK WHICH GOD HAD CREATED AND MADE.”
Gen. 2:1-3

“BUT, BELOVED, DO NOT FORGET ONE THING, THAT WITH THE LORD ONE DAY IS AS A THOUSAND YEARS, AND A THOUSAND YEARS AS ONE DAY.”
2 Pet.. 3:8



Although God could have spoken it all into existence with one single utterance. He gave us numerical evidence as where we are in the seven days of creation. Man is presently in his 6,000th year on earth. The seventh day of creation represents the 7,000th year which will be the millennial reign of Christ on earth. Man will not reign beyond the 6,000 years God has given him for in the 7th day Christ will reign!



If you have progressed to this point in diligent study of all that has been set before you, then you should by now be convinced that there is a race to be run and a prize to be won. The prize is to become a joint-heir with Christ as part of the Bride of Christ.

The promise to rule and reign with Christ is given only to those who meet the conditions. It is not a gift, but a reward to be earned. Our subject is not eternal life, but eternal rewards.

In the following sections, we shall begin to examine the Bride and how to attain a position of readiness...

**“EYE HAS NOT SEEN,
NOR EAR HEARD,
NOR HAS ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN
THE THINGS WHICH GOD HAS
PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.**

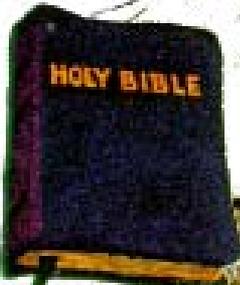
**BUT GOD HAS REVEALED THEM
TO US THROUGH HIS SPIRIT.”**

1 Cor.2:9-10



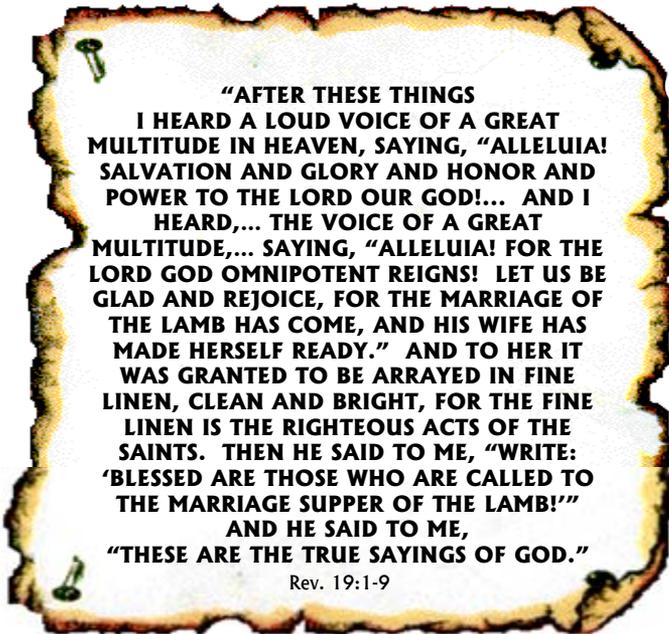
**“THEY
THAT
WERE READY
WENT IN
WITH HIM
TO
THE
WEDDING...”**
Matt. 25:10

**“HIS
WIFE
HAS
MADE
HERSELF
READY...”**
Rev. 19:7



THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

THE PREPARATION OF THE BRIDE



There are several things which are noteworthy in these passages, in addition to the fact that the Bride has made herself ready.

May I take a moment to bring these others points to your attention to strengthen what I have labored to establish in the previous two chapters. It is the great multitude which raises their voice in acknowledgement that the Bride has made herself ready. They do not speak as though they themselves are the Bride saying, “We are ready”, but rather, “His wife has made herself ready”.

You should remember our look at the greater multitude of Rev. 7:9-17 and the stark contrast I showed you of the great multitude as compared to the overcomer. I stressed to you that this was a picture of the heirs of God (the great multitude) and the joint-heirs with Christ (Bride of Christ).

The point to be made here is that this is another vivid reminder that the Church in totality does not inherit all things simply as a result of being born-again believers. There is a difference between an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ. It is he that overcomes that shall inherit all things (Rev. 21:7)

Another point which is noteworthy is that there are some who, although not part of the Bride, are chosen to be guests of honor at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Remember, Jesus Christ, as the Righteous Judge, will give unto every man just what his own deeds merit:

**“BEHOLD,
I AM COMING SOON,
AND I SHALL BRING
MY WAGES AND REWARDS
WITH ME,
TO REPAY AND RENDER
TO EACH ONE
JUST WHAT
HIS OWN ACTIONS
AND HIS OWN WORK MERIT.”**

Rev. 22:12 Amplified



Also Psalm 45 gives us a prophetic picture of the Bride of Christ as she is presented to the King of Kings, and she comes in with a whole bridal company of virgins accompanying her:



**“THE ROYAL
DAUGHTER IS ALL
GLORIOUS WITHIN
THE PALACE; HER
CLOTHING IS
WOVEN WITH
GOLD. SHE SHALL
BE BROUGHT TO
THE KING IN ROBES
OF MANY COLORS;
THE VIRGINS, HER
COMPANIONS WHO
FOLLOW HER,
SHALL BE BROUGHT
TO YOU. WITH
GLADNESS AND
REJOICING THEY
SHALL BE
BROUGHT; THEY
SHALL ENTER THE
KING’S PALACE.”**

Psalm 45:13-15

**“BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE CALLED TO
THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB!”** Rev. 19:9

What I am saying is that the Bride of Christ is not the only reward in heaven. It is the greatest, of course, but the Righteous Judge will span the gap between the one who is “saved by fire and suffers loss in heaven” (see 1 Cor. 13:15) and the special Bride of Christ by awarding to each one just what his own work merits!

It would be beneficial to consider the parable Jesus told about the marriage supper in Luke 14:15-24 and see what the qualification is determined for being invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Those in the parable did not esteem the marriage supper invitation very highly, as you can see by the reasons they gave for not attending:



**“BUT THEY WITH
ONE ACCORD BEGAN
TO MAKE EXCUSES.**

**‘I BOUGHT A PIECE OF GROUND,
AND I MUST GO AND SEE IT...’**

**‘I HAVE BOUGHT FIVE YOKE OF OXEN,
AND I AM GOING TO TEST THEM...’**

**‘I MARRIED A WIFE, AND THEREFORE
I CANNOT COME...’**

**THE MASTER...BEING ANGRY, SAID...
‘NONE OF THOSE MEN WHO WERE
INVITED SHALL TASTE OF MY SUPPER.’”**

Luke 14:16-24

There are multitudes of born-again believers with priorities in their lives that are just excuses used to rationalize why they cannot respond to the invitation of God’s Word to draw into a deeper commitment with Him. They consume their time with wrong priorities even after having accepted the free gift of forgiveness of sins. They shall remain here and forever as only knowing Christ as Savior from their sin.

Paul expressed a fear for the church who he has betrothed to one husband as chaste virgins, that they would be deceived by Satan’s craftiness, from whole-hearted and sincere and pure devotion to Christ by means of the preaching of a different gospel:



**“I HAVE BETROTHED YOU
TO ONE HUSBAND,
TO PRESENT YOU AS A
CHASTE VIRGIN TO CHRIST.
BUT NOW I AM FEARFUL...
YOUR MINDS MAY BE CORRUPTED
AND SEDUCED FROM
WHOLEHEARTED AND SINCERE,
AND PURE DEVOTION TO CHRIST...
(THROUGH) ANOTHER JESUS...
A DIFFERENT SPIRIT...
A DIFFERENT GOSPEL...”**

2 Cor. 11:2-4 Amplified



The craftiness by which Satan has indeed corrupted and seduced born-again believers from wholehearted, sincere, and pure devotion to Christ is exactly what Paul said it would be: "another Jesus, a different spirit, and a different gospel".

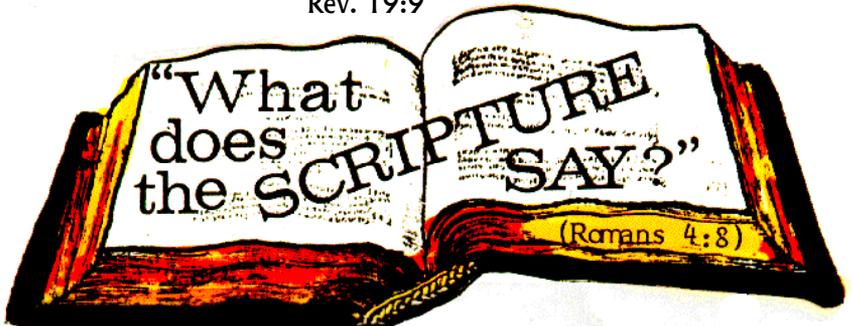
Today, we find preached a gospel that is crossless, costless, and even Christ-less, and encourages the making of excuses and the development of wrong priorities simply by the subtle idea that when we all get to heaven we are going to get it all as a gift of amazing grace. Friend, grace will get you there, but it will be works that will reward you when you get there!

The last point I want to bring you before going on to the preparation of the Bride is simply an exhortation to meditate upon the closing words of Rev. 19:9:

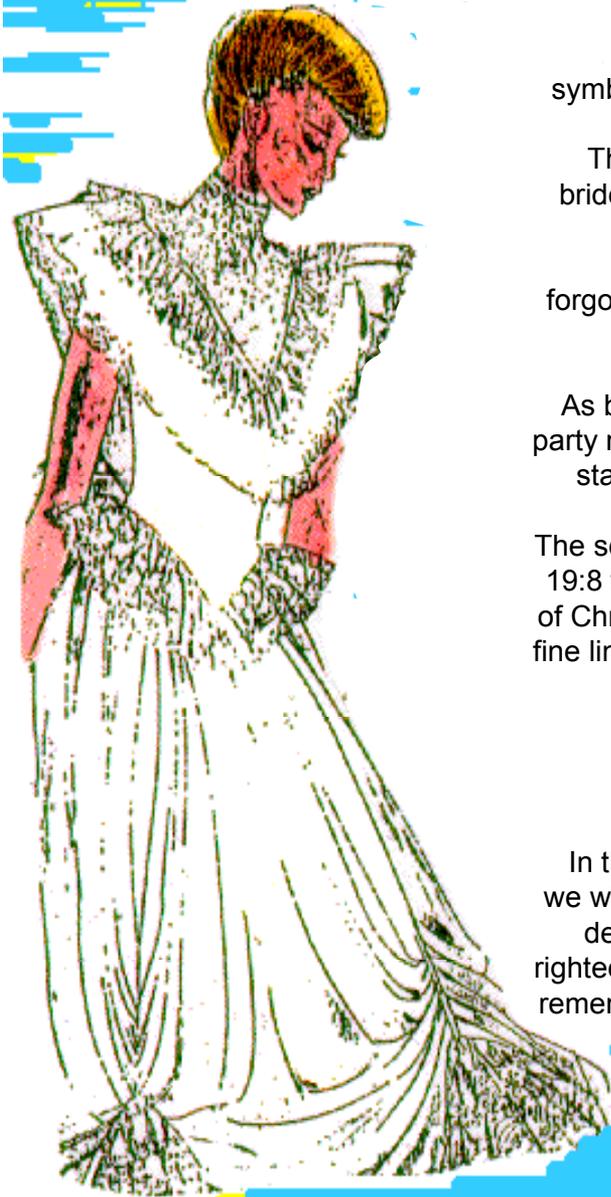


**"THESE ARE THE
TRUE SAYINGS
OF GOD."**

Rev. 19:9



THE PREPARATION OF THE BRIDE



A wedding dress is symbolic of the purity and chastity of the Bride.

The impact of seeing a bride which is adorned in “fine linen, clean and bright” is not easily forgotten as she so vividly stands out among all others.

As beautiful as her bridal party may be, she is center stage in the eyes of all.

The scripture in Revelation 19:8 tells us that the Bride of Christ will be adorned in fine linen, clean and bright, and this fine linen is comprised of the Righteous acts of the saints.

In the next four chapters we will be dealing with the definition of what those righteous acts are. May we remember that fine linen is comprised of fine woven threads and represents much tedious labor.

**“AND WHATEVER YOU DO,
DO IT HEARTILY AS TO THE LORD, AND NOT TO MEN,
KNOWING THAT FROM THE LORD
YOU WILL RECEIVE THE REWARD
OF THE INHERITANCE...”**

Col. 3:23-24

**“EYE HAS NOT SEEN,
NOR EAR HEARD,
NOR HAS ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN
THE THINGS WHICH GOD HAS
PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.**

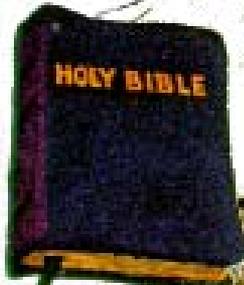
**BUT GOD HAS REVEALED THEM
TO US THROUGH HIS SPIRIT.”**

1 Cor.2:9-10



**“THEY
THAT
WERE READY
WENT IN
WITH HIM
TO
THE
WEDDING...”**
Matt. 25:10

**“HIS
WIFE
HAS
MADE
HERSELF
READY...”**
Rev. 19:7



THE BRIDE OF CHRIST



PART THREE

THE NECESSITY OF HAVING

FAITH, HOPE & LOVE

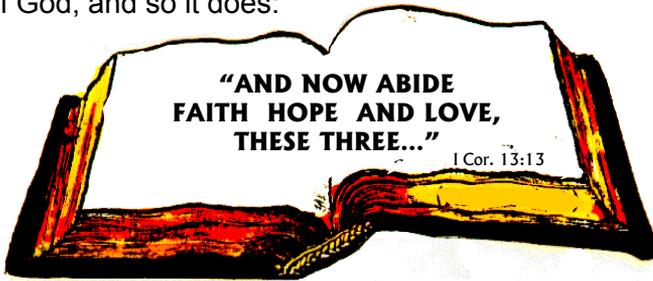
**"WE GIVE THANKS
TO GOD ALWAYS
FOR YOU ALL...
REMEMBERING WITHOUT
CEASING
YOUR
WORK
OF FAITH,
LABOR
OF LOVE,
AND
PATIENCE
OF HOPE
IN OUR LORD
JESUS CHRIST..."**

1 Thess. 1:2-3

**"AND
NOW ABIDE
FAITH,
HOPE,
AND
LOVE,
THESE THREE;
BUT
THE GREATEST
OF
THESE
IS LOVE."**

1 Cor. 13:13

Since the Bride of Christ is presented in scripture as the highest degree of reward that can be obtained (to be joint-heirs with Christ Jesus), it would stand to reason that the means by which that reward is obtained would also stand out with preeminence in the Word of God, and so it does:



Three, you will remember, is the number of divine completeness. When God designs something, He intends for it to be complete. It will have three ingredients that spell out that completeness.

Let us consider one of the early churches which the apostle Paul had much to say about concerning them as followers of Christ:

TO THE CHURCH OF THE THESSALONIANS:



**"...WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD ALWAYS
FOR YOU ALL...
REMEMBERING WITHOUT CEASING
YOUR WORK OF FAITH,
LABOR OF LOVE,
AND PATIENCE OF HOPE...
YOU HAVE BECOME FOLLOWERS OF US
AND OF THE LORD,
HAVING
RECEIVED THE WORD IN MUCH
AFFLICTION, WITH JOY OF
THE HOLY SPIRIT, SO THAT YOU BECAME
EXAMPLES TO ALL...WHO BELIEVE.
FOR FROM YOU THE WORD OF THE LORD HAS
SOUNDED FORTH...IN EVERY PLACE.
YOUR FAITH TOWARD GOD HAS GONE OUT,
SO THAT WE DO NOT NEED
TO SAY ANYTHING...
YOU TURNED TO GOD FROM IDOLS TO SERVE
THE LIVING AND TRUE GOD,
AND TO WAIT FOR HIS SON FROM
HEAVEN...EVEN JESUS WHO
DELIVERS US FROM
THE WRATH TO COME."**

1 Thess. 1:1-10

Looking at the detailed list below, I think you will agree that it is quite a hearty commendation that Paul bestows on this faithful segment of the church. Oh, how today's church would do well to take heed and use this example as a measuring stick to examine it's priorities:

1. **YOUR WORK OF FAITH...**
2. **YOUR LABOR OF LOVE...**
3. **YOUR PATIENCE OF HOPE...**
4. **YOU BECAME FOLLOWERS OF US AND THE LORD...**
5. **YOU RECEIVED THE WORD IN MUCH AFFLICTION WITH THE JOY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT...**
6. **YOU BECAME EXAMPLES TO ALL WHO BELIEVE...**
7. **FROM YOU THE WORD SOUNDED FORTH IN EVERY PLACE...**
8. **YOUR FAITH HAS GONE OUT SO WE (LEADERSHIP) DO NOT NEED TO SAY ANYTHING (TO THE SHEEP)**
9. **YOU TURNED FROM IDOLS...**
10. **YOU SERVED THE LIVING AND TRUE GOD...**

(Every believer would do well to take heed and measure his/her own spiritual condition by these same standards.)

We can see that Paul has foremost on his mind the characteristics of their:



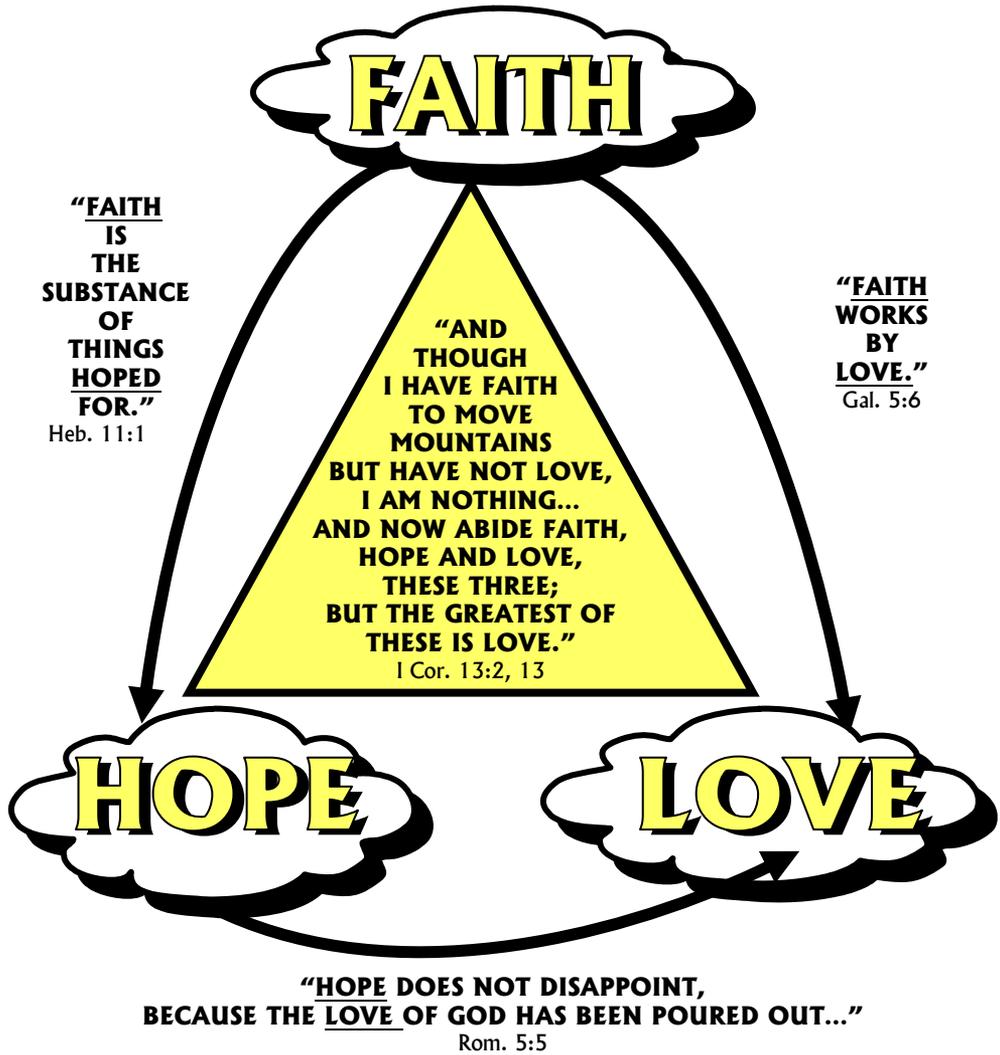
It is well to note that Paul amplifies these three verb-bearing virtues with equally descriptive adjectives:

FAITH IS HARD WORK!
LOVE TAKES MUCH LABOR!
HOPE REQUIRES MUCH PATIENCE!

One problem which plagues the church in America is a lack of willingness to faithfully work and labor with patience!

If it does not come quick and easy-forget it! Americans suffer from a case of the automation syndrome: when we desire something we simply put in our quarter, pull the lever, and out it (better) come! The “claim it and frame it” and “confess it and possess it” segment of Christianity had better take another look at the recorded patience of Joseph, Noah and Abraham who, rather than instantaneously being gratified, they waited many-a-year to inherit those promises from the unchanging God!

As we examine faith, hope, and love, may we understand that while we may separate them one from another for the sake of study, in practice, they are inseparable as the Word clearly states:



The Bride of Christ will be clothed with righteous acts of faith, hope, and love. One might easily suppose that the bulk, if not all, of the New Testament instruction to the believer could be divided among these three categories as various acts of faith, acts of hope, and acts of love.

Let me use a natural illustration to emphasize the necessity to develop all three. You will remember that Paul told us of the need to "run the race with endurance..." (Heb. 12:2) I am sure you are familiar with a physical endurance race called

"THE TRIATHLON"

(an endurance race comprised of three events)

a **TEST** of
how well
you
can:



RUN...

a **TEST** of
how well
you
can:



SWIM...

a **TEST** of
how well
you
can:

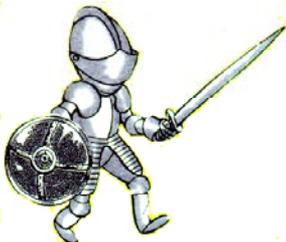


RIDE...

Likewise, our spiritual race as Christians has three events:

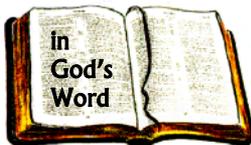
a **TEST** of
endurance
in fighting
the good
fight
of

FAITH...



a **TEST** of
endurance
in laying hold of
God's promises
by means
of

HOPE...



a **TEST** of
endurance
in showing forth in
difficult times the
ability to

LOVE...



Paul reminds us that, “if you have faith to move mountains, but have not love, you are nothing” (see I Cor. 13:2), and also that “faith works (operates) by love” (see Gal. 5:6). We also remember that “faith is the substance of what we hope for” (see Heb 11:1). So we see a great dependence and inter-relationship between “faith, hope, and love”. You must become proficient in the enabling might of the Holy Spirit in all three areas to successfully run the race. “Great faith” cannot be separated from the need of “great love” motivating it.

May I remind you again that we are speaking of a “work of faith, a patience (patient endurance) of hope, and a labor of love”. That implies it is not effortless, painless, or costless. If you have ever watched an athlete train for competition, you have some idea of the cost of such preparation. Many hours of discipline, denial, and hardship precede the glorious victory of receiving some medal, or title, or honor bestowed by men. It is this very illustration that Paul uses as depicting the Christian race set before us:



“DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT THOSE WHO RUN IN A RACE ALL RUN, BUT ONE RECEIVES THE PRIZE? RUN IN SUCH A WAY THAT YOU MAY OBTAIN IT (THE PRIZE). AND EVERYONE WHO COMPETES FOR THE PRIZE IS TEMPERATE (EXERCISES SELF-CONTROL) IN ALL THINGS. NOW THEY DO IT (DISCIPLINE THEMSELVES) TO OBTAIN A PERISHABLE CROWN (GLORY FROM MEN) BUT WE (DISCIPLINE OURSELVES) FOR AN IMPERISHABLE CROWN. THEREFORE I RUN THUS: NOT WITH UNCERTAINTY. THUS I FIGHT: NOT AS ONE WHO BEATS THE AIR. BUT I DISCIPLINE MY BODY AND BRING IT INTO SUBJECTION, LEST, WHEN I HAVE PREACHED (THE RACE) TO OTHERS, I MYSELF SHOULD BECOME DISQUALIFIED.”

(FROM THE PRIZE).

I Cor. 9:24-27

Note that even Paul recognizes that it is possible to be disqualified by a lack of disciplining the body, and that he could preach this needful qualifying truth to others and then not receive the prize himself. It is not what we know to be truth that qualifies us for the prize, but rather how much we perform what we know! Obviously, Paul was a man who constantly analyzed himself, for we see him saying at the time of his departure from this life, these words —>



“FOR I AM ALREADY BEING Poured OUT AS A DRINK OFFERING, AND THE TIME OF MY DEPARTURE IS AT HAND. I HAVE FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT, I HAVE FINISHED THE RACE, I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH. FINALLY (THEREFORE) THERE IS LAID UP FOR ME THE CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHICH THE LORD THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE, WILL GIVE TO ME ON THAT DAY...”

2 Tim 4:6-8

Notice Paul connects his promised crown of righteousness to the fact that he has fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith. His crown is an earned prize for his effort, not a gift of God’s grace!

I need to inject at this point how it is that a believer cultivates faith, hope, and love:

FAITH

“FAITH COMES BY HEARING... THE WORD OF GOD”

Rom. 10:17

There is no shortcut to obtaining faith. It requires intense meditation, and study, and even memorization of truth. Jesus said this about taking heed to what we hear and what effect it brings:

“IF ANY MAN HAS EARS TO HEAR LET HIM BE LISTENING AND 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 YOU WHO HEAR.’ ”

Mark 4:23-25 Amplified



This spiritual principle of Jesus governs the natural realm as well. Who gets the straight A’s in college? It is the valedictorian book worm that sacrifices personal pleasure for the gaining of knowledge. Why do they make such a sacrifice? Simply because of vision and purpose being foremost on their minds. It is in the testing time of “finals” that the evidence of diligent study manifests itself. Likewise, in the time of testing that we find out the real worth of our faith.

HOPE

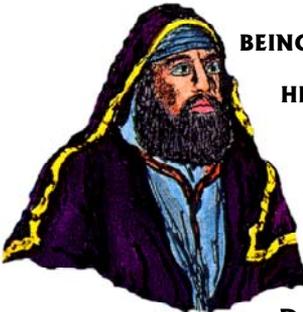
**"I WAIT FOR THE LORD,
MY SOUL WAITS,
AND IN HIS WORD, I DO HOPE."**

Psm. 130:5

Hope, like faith, also comes by means of the Word of God. Specifically, hope comes from embracing the promises of God's Word. Paul said that hope that is seen is not really hope (Rom. 8:24), revealing that hope is in the future, the unseen realm. In fact, we know that faith can only consist of the things that we hope for (Heb. 11:1). That means you cannot express faith apart from hope. There is a lot of silliness coming forth in faith teaching in the area of emphasis being placed upon confessing and possessing. May I say to you that you can only confess the promises of God's Word as an expression of faith, and that it can only be expressed through the revealed promises stated in God's Word? If God did not promise it, then you will not receive it! Note how both Paul and Peter always tied the promises of God to expressing faith and hope:

(ABRAHAM) **"IN HOPE BELIEVED...
HE DID NOT WAVER AT
THE PROMISE OF GOD
THROUGH UNBELIEF, BUT WAS
STRENGTHENED IN FAITH...
BEING FULLY CONVINCED THAT WHAT
HE HAD PROMISED
HE WAS ALSO ABLE TO PERFORM."**

Rom. 4:18-21



Paul

**"THESE ALL DIED IN FAITH, NOT HAVING
RECEIVED THE PROMISES, BUT HAVING
SEEN THEM AFAR OFF (PROMISES) WERE
ASSURED OF THEM, EMBRACED THEM
(PROMISES) AND CONFESSED THAT THEY
WERE STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS
ON THE EARTH..."**

Heb. 11:13

**"HIS DIVINE POWER HAS GIVEN TO US
ALL THINGS THAT PERTAIN TO LIFE AND
GODLINESS... BY WHICH HAVE BEEN
GIVEN TO US EXCEEDINGLY GREAT AND
PRECIOUS PROMISES THAT THROUGH
THESE YOU MAY BE PARTAKERS OF THE
DIVINE NATURE... AND ESCAPE THE
CORRUPTION THAT IS IN THE WORLD
THROUGH LUST."**

2 Pet. 1:3-4



Peter

We see that Peter reveals that God’s stated promises are given for the equipping of the saints for living a life of godliness and to be enabled to escape lust. God’s promises should not be perverted to be the very means to fulfill one’s lustful, covetous desires presented under the guise of faith. This is the error of the “faith for prosperity” message—personal greed under the guise of faith.

Neither should we expect the promise to be acquired easily or effortlessly, but with great cost:



Paul

“AND WE DESIRE THAT EACH ONE OF YOU SHOW THE SAME DILIGENCE TO THE FULL ASSURANCE OF HOPE UNTIL THE END, THAT YOU DO NOT BECOME SLUGGISH (LAZY) BUT IMITATE THOSE WHO THROUGH FAITH AND PATIENCE INHERIT THE PROMISES.”

Heb. 6:11-12

LOVE

“THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS...LOVE”

Gal. 5:22

“Love”, being listed first in the list fruit of the Spirit, does not mean it comes first, but rather is a capstone result of the presence of all the fruit of the Holy Spirit as it is revealed. If you compare the fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:2-23 to the definition of love in I Cor. 13, you can see love encompasses nearly all the fruit of the Spirit. As Paul describes what love consists of, we can see its parallel given in the list of what comprises the fruit of God’s Spirit. Love is the fruit of the Holy Spirit at work in the life of the believer:

DEFINITION OF LOVE:

- LOVE SUFFERS LONG...**
- LOVE IS KIND...**
- LOVE IS NOT PUFFED UP...**
- LOVE IS NOT RUDE...**
- LOVE IS NOT PROVOKED...**
- LOVE REJOICES IN TRUTH...**
- LOVE ENDURES ALL THINGS...**
- LOVE DOES NOT ENVY**
- LOVE BEARS ALL...**

(list in 1 Cor. 13)

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT:

- LONGSUFFERING...**
- KINDNESS...**
- MEEKNESS (HUMILITY)**
- GENTLENESS...**
- SELF-CONTROL...**
- JOY...**
- FAITHFULNESS...**
- PEACE...**
- LOVE...**

(list in Gal. 5:22-23)

In the midst of perverted teaching which emphatically emphasizes “faith plus nothing”, Peter states specifically seven things that are indeed to be added to our faith as a follower of Christ:



**“... GIVING ALL DILIGENCE, ADD TO YOUR FAITH VIRTUE,
TO VIRTUE KNOWLEDGE, TO KNOWLEDGE SELF-CONTROL,
TO SELF-CONTROL PERSEVERANCE,
TO PERSEVERANCE GODLINESS,
TO GODLINESS BROTHERLY KINDNESS,
AND TO BROTHERLY KINDNESS LOVE...
FOR IF YOU DO THESE THINGS...
AN ENTRANCE WILL BE SUPPLIED TO YOU ABUNDANTLY
INTO THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM OF OUR LORD
AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.”**

2 Pet. 1:5-11

The next thing I want to show you about faith, hope, and love are their corresponding counterparts. By that, I mean those areas of the Christian walk which directly produce faith, hope, and love. Remember that “three” is the number of divine completeness. Let me show you the three key areas which comprise the conditions to reigning with Christ as joint-heirs with Christ. These are the keys to the preparation of the Bride, the very means by which we are compelled to become a people of faith, hope, and love:

**“TO HIM WHO
OVERCOMES I
WILL GRANT TO
SIT WITH ME ON
MY THRONE
AS I OVERCAME
AND SAT DOWN
ON MY FATHER’S
THRONE.
HE WHO HAS AN
EAR LET HIM
HEAR WHAT THE
SPIRIT SAYS TO
THE CHURCHES.”**

Rev.. 3:21-22

**“IF WE SUFFER
(WITH HIM)
WE SHALL
ALSO REIGN
WITH HIM”**

2 Tim. 2:12

**“JOINT-HEIRS
WITH CHRIST
IF WE SUFFER
WITH HIM...”**

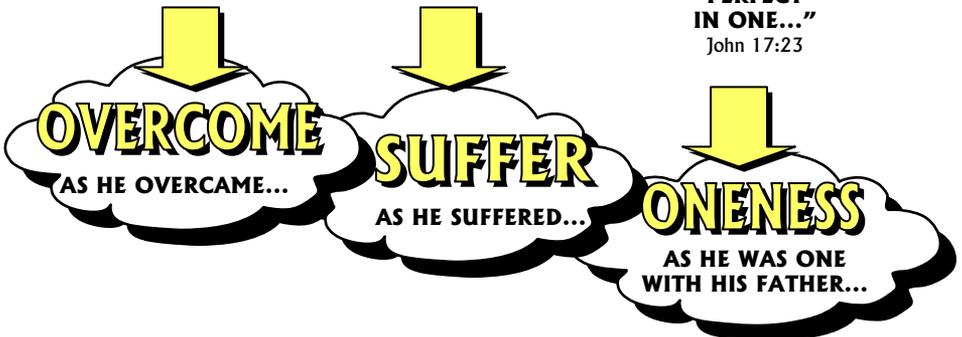
Rom. 8:17

**“...ENDEAVORING
TO KEEP
THE UNITY
OF THE SPIRIT
IN THE BOND
OF PEACE.”**

Eph. 4:3

**“...THAT THEY
MAY
BE MADE
PERFECT
IN ONE...”**

John 17:23



Let us now expand our growing list of defining what flies under the banners of faith, hope, and love. In addition to the call to be a people of who by faith overcome, by hope endure suffering, and by love become one, like our Master, we now add what it is we are to overcome, what it is we are to suffer, and what it entails to become a people of oneness with God and with one another:

FAITH

"TO HIM WHO OVERCOMES I WILL GRANT TO SIT WITH ME ON MY THRONE AS I OVERCAME AND SAT DOWN ON MY FATHER'S THRONE. HE WHO HAS AN EAR TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES."
Rev. 3:21-22

HOPE

"IF WE SUFFER (WITH HIM) WE SHALL ALSO REIGN WITH HIM."
2 Tim. 2:12

"JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST IF WE SUFFER WITH HIM..."
Rom. 8:17

LOVE

"...ENDEAVORING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE."
Eph. 4:3

"...THAT THEY MAY BE MADE PERFECT IN ONE..."
John 17:23

OVERCOME

THE WORLD
1 Jn. 4:4

THE FLESH
Rom. 12:21

THE DEVIL
1 Jn. 2:14

SUFFER

TEMPTATION
James 1:12

PERSECUTION
Psalm 34:19

AFFLICTION
1 Pet. 2:20

WRONGFULLY
Acts 5:41

REPROACH
Eph. 4:3

ONENESS

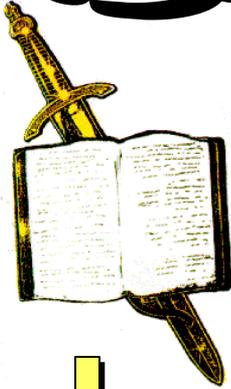
OF THE SPIRIT
Eph. 4:3

OF THE FAITH
Eph. 4:13

Let me add three more items to our chart for your consideration and perhaps you will begin to see a harmonizing together of what previously has been a conglomeration of various truths in your mind:

FAITH
to
OVERCOME
by

**THE
WORD**



"FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS QUICK AND POWERFUL, AND SHARPER THAN ANY TWO-EDGED SWORD..."

Heb. 4:12

"TAKE THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD..."

Eph. 6:17

"ALL SCRIPTURE IS PROFITABLE FOR DOCTRINE ... REPROOF ... CORRECTION... INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE COMPLETE, THOROUGHLY EQUIPPED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK."

2 Tim. 3:16-17

HOPE
to endure
SUFFERING
by

**THE
CROSS**

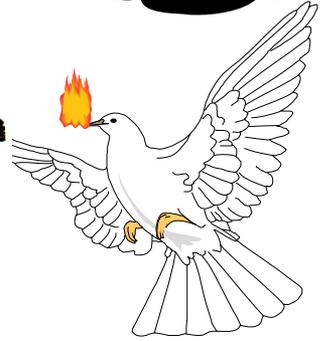


"FOR CHRIST... TO PREACH THE GOSPEL, NOT WITH THE WISDOM OF WORDS LEST THE CROSS OF CHRIST SHOULD BE MADE OF NO EFFECT. FOR THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS... TO US WHO ARE BEING SAVED, IT IS THE POWER OF GOD..."

1 Cor. 1:17-18

LOVE
to create
ONENESS
by

**THE
SPIRIT**



"THIS IS THE WORD OF THE LORD... 'NOT BY MIGHT NOR BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT,' SAYS THE LORD OF HOSTS."

Zech. 4:6

"BUT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS LOVE..."

Gal. 5:22

Remember the old Roloids TV commercial, "How do you spell relief?"

How does God spell RELIEF?

P-O-W-E-R!

"FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS... POWERFUL..."

Heb. 4:12

"THE CROSS IS THE POWER OF GOD..."

1 Cor. 1:18

"BUT TRULY I AM FULL OF POWER BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD..."

Mic. 3:8



1



2



3

3 DIVINE COMPLETENESS

"THIS IS HE WHO CAME BY WATER AND BLOOD-JESUS CHRIST; NOT ONLY BY WATER, BUT BY WATER AND BLOOD.

AND IT IS THE SPIRIT WHO BEARS WITNESS, BECAUSE THE SPIRIT IS TRUTH.

FOR THERE ARE THREE WHO BEAR WITNESS IN HEAVEN:

THE FATHER, THE WORD, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT;

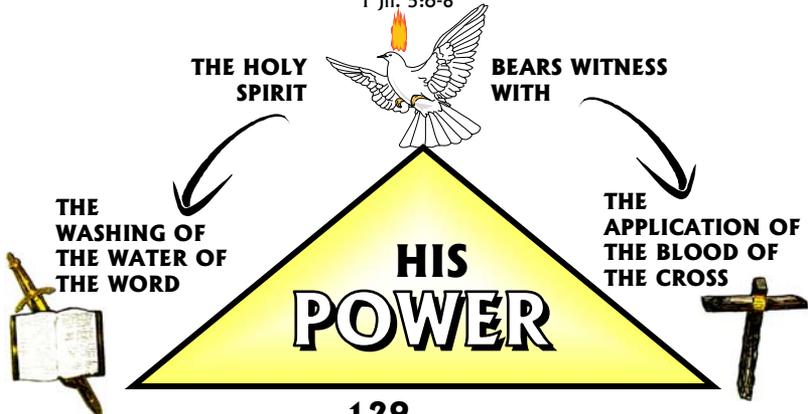
AND THESE THREE ARE ONE (IN AGREEMENT)

AND THERE ARE THREE THAT BEAR WITNESS ON EARTH:

THE SPIRIT, THE WATER, AND THE BLOOD;

AND THESE THREE AGREE AS ONE."

1 Jn. 5:6-8

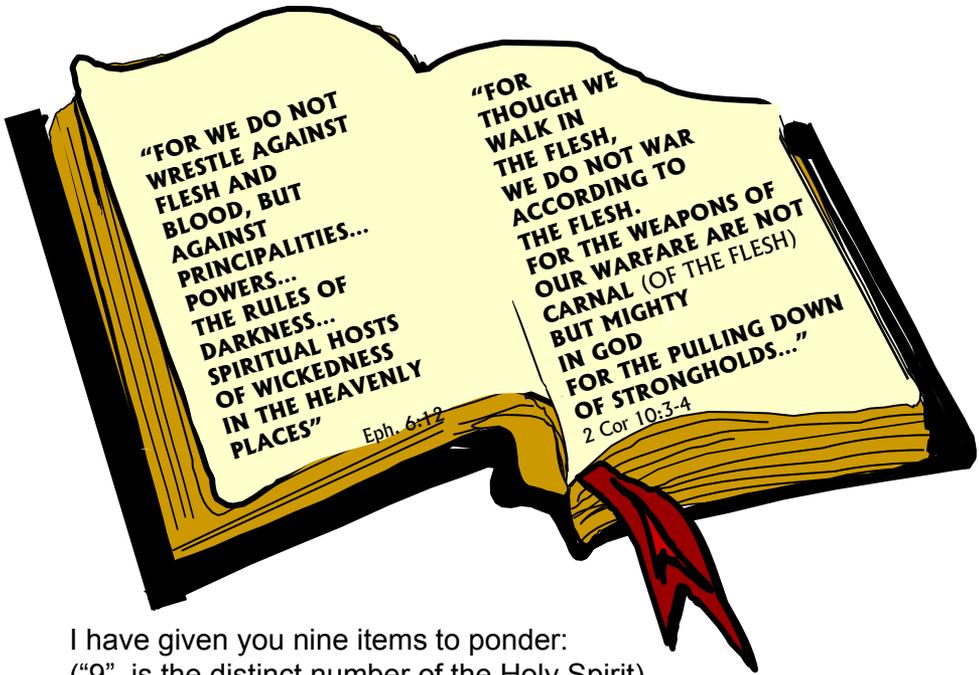


You may have heard it humorously said, "The Christian life is not difficult, it is impossible!" In the natural, that is true - but with the supernatural power of God at work, we must declare as Jeremiah did:

**"AH, LORD GOD! BEHOLD,
YOU HAVE MADE THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH BY
YOUR GREAT POWER AND OUTSTRETCHED ARM.
THERE IS NOTHING TOO DIFFICULT FOR YOU."**

Jer. 32:17

The attempt to fight the good fight and finish the race while keeping the faith with natural power is doomed to failure! We must realize two vital truths:



I have given you nine items to ponder:
("9" is the distinct number of the Holy Spirit)

- | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. FAITH | 4. OVERCOME | 7. THE WORD |
| 2. HOPE | 5. SUFFER | 8. THE CROSS |
| 3. LOVE | 6. ONENESS | 9. THE SPIRIT |

In the remainder of this book we shall speak of these things many times because they are the key ingredients to inheriting all things as a joint-heir with Christ. The Holy Spirit is waiting to hear the cry of your spirit in true desire to be presented as a chaste virgin to Christ! (see 2 Cor. 11:1-2)

You may remember the story in the Old Testament of father Abraham sending his nameless servant forth to find a bride for his son Isaac (see Gen. 24). The unchanging God, our heavenly Father, has sent out His nameless servant the Holy Spirit, to find a Bride for His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ!

Just as in the type and shadow,
the servant is looked among God's people,
and that is what the Holy Spirit is ultimately doing:
seeking the perfect Bride for Christ
from

AMONG GOD'S PEOPLE!



**“EYE HAS NOT SEEN,
NOR EAR HEARD,
NOR HAS ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN
THE THINGS WHICH GOD HAS
PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.**

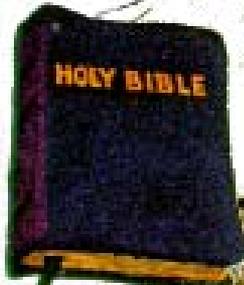
**BUT GOD HAS REVEALED THEM
TO US THROUGH HIS SPIRIT.”**

1 Cor.2:9-10



**“THEY
THAT
WERE READY
WENT IN
WITH HIM
TO
THE
WEDDING...”**
Matt. 25:10

**“HIS
WIFE
HAS
MADE
HERSELF
READY...”**
Rev. 19:7



THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

IN PREPARATION FOR WHAT IS AHEAD...

May we take a moment to summarize what will be the theme and purpose for the remainder of the book. These are the seven foundations upon which we are building:

1. There is a prize yet to be won in the Christian life, and that is to qualify for the upward call of God in Christ Jesus, the Bride of Christ, becoming joint-heirs with Christ (1 Cor. 9:24, Phil. 3:14, Rev. 19:7-8, Rom. 8:17)

2. The prize is for (1) running the race that is set before us (Heb. 11:2), (2) being conformed into the image of God's Son (Rom. 8:29 and Eph. 4:13), (3) progressing from one degree of glory to another (2 Cor. 3:18), (4) a life-long process of progressive change by yielding to the work of the Holy Spirit.

3. Our present emphasis is upon achieving eternal rewards, not eternal life! We begin the race as heirs of God with the gift of eternal life (Titus 3:7). Jesus is going to reward every man according to his deeds and actions (Rev. 22:12). A man may fail to achieve rewards, but still maintain eternal life according to Paul in 1 Cor. 3:15.

4. There are three major areas in which we are to become like Jesus:

- 1) We must overcome as He overcame (Rev. 3:21).
- 2) We must suffer as He suffered (1 Pet. 4:13-19, Phil 1:29).
- 3) We are to be one in unity as Jesus is one
with His Father John 17:21-23.

5. There are three major doctrines which will bring us through in our calling:

- | | | |
|---|---|----------------------------|
| 1) FAITH
2) HOPE
3) LOVE | } | 1 Cor. 13:13, 1 Thess. 1:3 |
|---|---|----------------------------|

(The bulk of New Testament instruction falls under these three major categories.)

6. There are three major sources of supernatural power available to every believer to develop faith, hope, and love. They are:

1. **The WORD OF GOD** (Heb. 4:12)
2. **The CROSS OF CHRIST** (1 Cor. 1:17-18)
3. **The HOLY SPIRIT** (Zech. 4:6, Gal. 5:22)

(these three agree as one according to 1 John 5:6-8.)

7. The ultimate purpose of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is to prepare him/her for Bridehood. It requires a desire in the heart of the believer, as the desire had to be present in Rebekah, to go with Abraham's servant to be presented as a bride to Abraham's son, Isaac. As Rebekah received the gifts the servant bore from the son for her, likewise, we must receive the gifts the Spirit bears on behalf of the Son of God. (Rev. 22:17, Gen. 24, John 16:14)

The next three chapters deal with overcoming, suffering, and unity/oneness. We shall teach them in reverse, beginning with unity/oneness. Ignore this requirement and you can go no further. You will be disqualified because the Bride of Christ will be a corporate expression of believers. We are to run the race together, to be built together, joined together knit together. Failure to respond to this working together will disqualify the rebellious from the Bride of Christ. God does not have any "Lone Ranger" believers being prepared for the Bride. Disdain for, and separation from the church assembly by any professing believer, is a choice made against inheriting Bridehood. May the Lord give you understanding in how the enemy is corrupting the minds of the espoused virgins of Christ. (See 2 Cor. 11:1-4 again!)



PART FOUR

THE NECESSITY TO
EMBRACE CORPORATE

ONENESS

**"I PRAY...
THAT THEY ALL
MAY BE ONE...
THAT THEY MAY BE
ONE JUST AS WE
ARE ONE...
THAT THEY MAY BE
MADE PERFECT
IN ONE..."**

John 17:20-23

**"BEHOLD,
HOW GOOD AND
PLEASANT IT IS FOR
BRETHREN TO
DWELL TOGETHER
IN UNITY."**

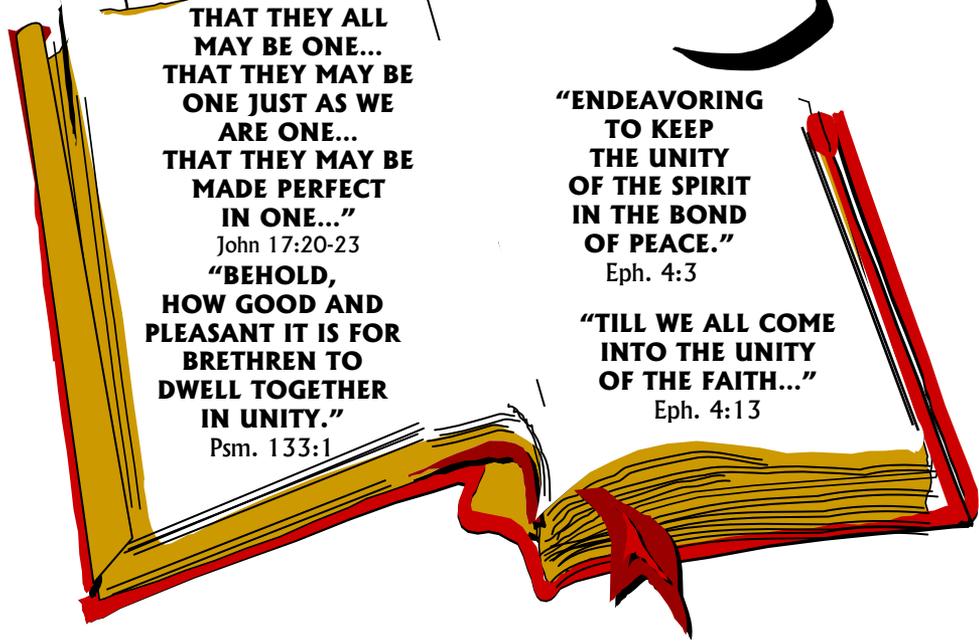
Psm. 133:1

**"ENDEAVORING
TO KEEP
THE UNITY
OF THE SPIRIT
IN THE BOND
OF PEACE."**

Eph. 4:3

**"TILL WE ALL COME
INTO THE UNITY
OF THE FAITH..."**

Eph. 4:13



THE ONENESS OF GOD



**“OH, RIGHTEOUS FATHER...
SANCTIFY THEM BY YOUR TRUTH.
YOUR WORD IS TRUTH...
AND FOR THEIR SAKES
I SANCTIFY MYSELF
THAT THEY ALSO MAY BE
SANCTIFIED BY THE TRUTH.
I DO NOT PRAY FOR
THESE ALONE,
BUT ALSO FOR THOSE
WHO WILL BELIEVE IN ME...
THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE...
THAT THEY MAY ALSO
BE ONE IN US...
THAT THEY MAY BE ONE
JUST AS WE ARE ONE...
THAT THEY MAY BE
MADE PERFECT IN ONE...”**

John 17:1-23 excerpts

Note carefully that Jesus prays to His Father for (1) His present disciples, and (2) for all who will believe in Him. That means He was praying for you and me. His subject is quite clear: “oneness” is His will for every believer. Paul tells us in Eph. 5:17:

**“THEREFORE DO NOT BE UNWISE,
BUT UNDERSTAND WHAT THE WILL OF THE LORD IS.”**

Eph. 5:17

Here is a clear expression of God’s will:

**THAT THEY MAY ALL BE ONE...
THAT THEY BE ONE IN US...
THAT THEY BE ONE AS WE ARE ONE...
THAT THEY MAY BE MADE PERFECT IN ONE...**

The mandate is quite clear: We are to be one... one in God... as God is one... that we may be made perfect in (by) that oneness.

Note that “We are to be one as Jesus and the Father are one”. The question needful to pose is “How is God one?” My head aches whenever I listened to some theologian trying to explain the physical oneness of the Godhead as meaning “three-in-one” (three distinct persons, but seen only as one single God)

The Jews also emphatically preach that there is only one God, but their own scriptures prove otherwise. It has bothered me also that the cults preach either “Jesus only” or “Jehovah only” and even Christianity preaches “one God in three Persons”. I have come to accept the scriptures in their simplicity as saying,

THERE ARE THREE IN THE GODHEAD
(the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit)
AND THEY ARE ONE IN UNITY
(in agreement with each other).

In the year 2010 I taught an in-depth study in which I sought to clarify what the scriptures taught about this controversial subject. I am going to inject into the re-writing of this book here in 2016 some of that teaching for your consideration. You can view free this entire DVD series on my website at PastorRandyShupe.com. The series is entitled, “The Other Lord’s Prayer.”

I will give you some scriptures to ponder here, but please, do not let it become a point of division between you and me, and especially concerning the message of this book. The point in bringing it up at all is simply to clarify how we can become one as Jesus and the Father are one. Does He want us to be one physically? Impossible! Rather, we shall see that God means one in unity and agreement. Let us begin with a statement I made in that 2010 teaching series as an expression of a trinity that harmonizes with the scriptures:

**“GOD” IS A DIVINE TRIUNE
GODHEAD**

“GOD” –ELOHIM,
A PLURAL NOUN
USED 2,197 TIMES

Col. 2:9

“GOD” WHO SPEAKS
IN PLURAL TERMS:
“US...OUR...WE...”

**WE ARE TO WORSHIP “ELOHIM” AS A TRIUNE GODHEAD,
A DIVINE ETERNAL FAMILY, CONSISTING OF
GOD THE FATHER, GOD THE SON, GOD THE SPIRIT.**

**RATHER THAN THE “THREE-IN-ONE” CONCEPT OF GOD
INVENTED IN THE 3RD AND 5TH CENTURY,
SCRIPTURE DEPICTS A DIVINE FAMILY OF THREE
COETERNAL PERSONAGES FUNCTIONING IN PERFECT
ONENESS OF AGREEMENT WITH ONE ANOTHER.**

**ALTHOUGH ALL ARE DIVINE PERSONAGES,
THEY ARE NOT COEQUAL IN POSITION AND AUTHORITY.
GOD THE FATHER IS GREATER THAN ALL.**

**"...THAT THEY MAY BE ONE
AS WE ARE ONE"**

**FIRST QUESTION:
HOW IS GOD ONE?**

**SECOND QUESTION:
HOW CAN WE BE ONE?**

**THIRD QUESTION:
BE ONE WITH WHOM?**



You will never be able to answer the last two questions stated here unless you properly answer the first: "How is God one?" Ask someone in Judaism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Jesus only Pentecostalism, cultic Mormonism or Jehovah Witnesses, and you will get six different answers pertaining to the oneness of God.

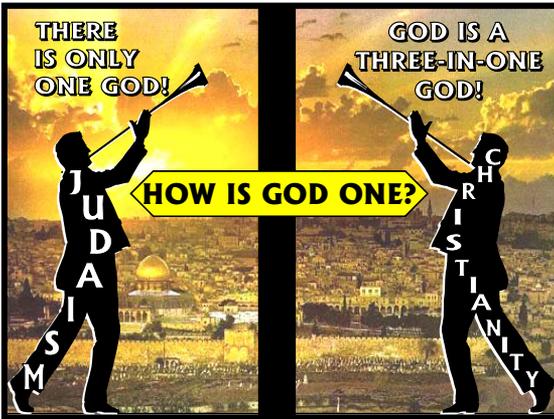
THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD!

J U D A I S M

HOW IS GOD ONE?

GOD IS A THREE-IN-ONE GOD!

C H R I S T I A N I T Y



Judaism will emphatically quote you the Shema prayer: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!" (Deut. 6:4) Equally, Protestantism will counter with a statement that God is a "three-in-one" God, but will not be able to support that claim using scripture, but rather will refer you to God being like an egg: three parts-one egg!

TO THE JEW:

THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD!

J U D A I S M

Deut. 6:4

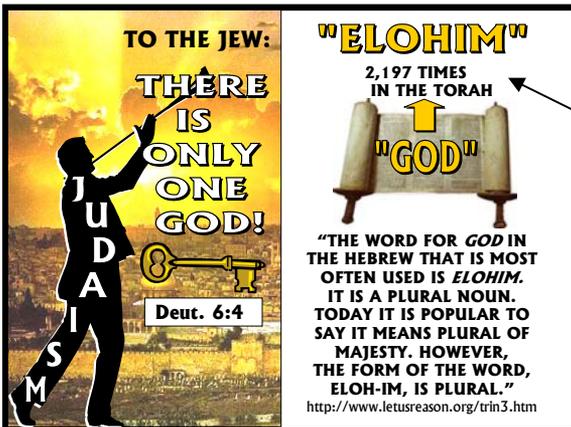
"ELOHIM"

2,197 TIMES IN THE TORAH

"GOD"

"THE WORD FOR GOD IN THE HEBREW THAT IS MOST OFTEN USED IS ELOHIM. IT IS A PLURAL NOUN. TODAY IT IS POPULAR TO SAY IT MEANS PLURAL OF MAJESTY. HOWEVER, THE FORM OF THE WORD, ELOH-IM, IS PLURAL."

<http://www.letusreason.org/trin3.htm>



The most widely used name for God in the Hebrew scriptures is "Elohim", a plural name for God referring to Himself as "we", "us" and "our". The rationalizing away of this plurality of God is equally pathetic in Judaism as it is in Protestantism with its lame 3-in-one egg analogy.

The Jewish rabbis dismiss this controversy with God's name "Elohim" by applying it to God's "plurality in majesty" rather than plurality in existence. However, the fact that God applies it to Himself in many verses such as these show that it is a bad analogy by the rabbis.

<p>"PLURAL IN MAJESTY"?</p> <p>"ELOHIM" (PLURAL NOUN)</p>	<p>PLURAL IN EXISTENCE?</p>
<p>"THEN GOD SAID, 'LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE, ACCORDING TO OUR LIKENESS'" Gen. 1:26</p>	<p>"THEN THE LORD GOD SAID, 'BEHOLD, THE MAN HAS BECOME LIKE ONE OF US, KNOWING GOOD AND EVIL...'" Gen. 3:22</p>
<p>"AND THE LORD SAID, 'LET US GO DOWN AND THERE CONFUSE THEIR LANGUAGE...'" Gen. 11:17</p>	<p>"AND I HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LORD SAYING: 'WHOM SHALL I SEND, AND WHO WILL GO FOR US?'" Isa. 6:8</p>

Look carefully at these verses. It is God speaking in the first person describing Himself as being very plural in existence. He describes Himself as "us", and "our".

<p>"THEN GOD SAID, 'LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE, ACCORDING TO OUR LIKENESS'" Gen. 1:26</p>	<p>"THEN THE LORD GOD SAID, 'BEHOLD, THE MAN HAS BECOME LIKE ONE OF US, KNOWING GOOD AND EVIL...'" Gen. 3:22</p>
<p>"ELOHIM" PLURAL NOUN</p>	
<p>"AND THE LORD SAID, 'LET US GO DOWN AND THERE CONFUSE THEIR LANGUAGE...'" Gen. 11:17</p>	<p>"AND I HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LORD SAYING: 'WHOM SHALL I SEND, AND WHO WILL GO FOR US?'" Isa. 6:8</p>

Now see that the apostle Paul views God properly and in a plural sense as a "Godhead." In fact, he states Jesus represents the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9). Hebrews states Jesus is "the express image of His person" (Heb.1:3). Jesus told Philip, "If you have seen Me you have seen the Father" (Jn. 14:9). This does not mean that Jesus claims to be the Father, but rather that He is the express image of His person.

<p>(PLURAL NOUN) "ELOHIM"</p> <p>↓ IS ↓</p> <p>A TRINITY</p> <p>A (PLURAL) TRIUNE GODHEAD</p> <p>CONSISTING OF GOD THE FATHER, GOD THE SON, GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT</p>	<p>"FOR IT PLEASSED THE FATHER THAT IN HIM ALL THE FULLNESS SHOULD DWELL..." Col. 1:19</p> <p>"FOR IN HIM DWELLS ALL THE FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY..." Col. 2:9</p>
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 <p>(PLURAL NOUN) "ELOHIM"</p> <p>↓ IS ↓</p> <p>A TRINITY</p> <p>A (PLURAL) TRIUNE GODHEAD</p> <p>CONSISTING OF GOD THE FATHER, GOD THE SON, GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT</p>	 <p>"GOD HAS SPOKEN TO US BY HIS SON, WHOM HE APPOINTED HEIR OF ALL THINGS, THROUGH WHOM HE ALSO MADE THE WORLDS; WHO BEING THE BRIGHTNESS OF HIS GLORY AND</p> <p>THE EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS PERSON</p> <p>BY HIMSELF PURGED OUR SINS, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE MAJESTY ON HIGH..."</p> <p>Heb. 1:1-3</p>
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 <p>(PLURAL NOUN) "ELOHIM"</p> <p>↓ IS ↓</p> <p>A TRINITY</p> <p>A (PLURAL) TRIUNE GODHEAD</p> <p>CONSISTING OF GOD THE FATHER, GOD THE SON, GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT</p>	<p>ON THE THRONE: GOD THE FATHER (Rev. 4:1-4)</p> <p>MIDST OF THE THRONE: THE SON OF GOD (Rev. 5:6)</p>  <p>BEFORE THE THRONE: THE SPIRIT OF GOD (Rev. 4:5)</p>
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 <p>(PLURAL NOUN) "ELOHIM"</p> <p>↓ IS ↓</p> <p>A TRINITY</p> <p>A (PLURAL) TRIUNE GODHEAD</p> <p>CONSISTING OF GOD THE FATHER, GOD THE SON, GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT</p>	<p>"BUT HE, BEING FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, GAZED INTO HEAVEN AND SAW THE GLORY OF GOD, AND JESUS STANDING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, AND HE SAID 'LOOK! I SEE THE HEAVENS OPENED, AND THE SON OF MAN STANDING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD!'"</p> <p>Acts 7:55</p>
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Look carefully at these glimpses into Heaven itself. What are we shown as constituting God in these verses? One God who is both Jesus and the Father? No! What we are shown is God the Father on His throne and Jesus His Son standing at His right hand. Is this a heavenly vision of God the Father and God the Son as a three-in-one God? No again! We see two persons of the Godhead, God the Father and God the Son. Here in Revelation we are again given a plural picture of God in three persons. God the Father has a throne, Jesus has a throne, and the Holy Spirit is pictured as before the throne, not as a three-in-one God.

When Stephen was being stoned, the heavens were opened and he was shown two persons of the Godhead standing right beside one another. Actually every vision scripture records of Heaven shows variations of a plural Godhead. Never do we see a single, stand-alone image of God being "one." This is a false depiction of the "oneness of God."

Consider this smattering of various teachings pertaining to God. Judaism, Pentecostalism, Catholicism, Mormonism, Jehovah Witnesses, even Protestantism, are all embracing twisted concepts of what constitutes God.

<p>JUDAISM'S "ONE GOD" (DENY THE EXISTENCE OF THE SON OF GOD)</p> <p>JESUS ONLY "ONENESS" PENTECOSTALS (JESUS IS THE FATHER, JESUS IS THE SPIRIT)</p>		<p>JEHOVAH WITNESSES "ONE GOD" (DENY THE EXISTENCE OF THE SON OF GOD)</p> <p>MORMON'S "MANY GODS" (COMPRISED OF PERFECTED MEN- JESUS INCLUDED)</p>
<p>CATHOLICISM'S "ONE GOD" FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT, PLUS MARY, "THE MOTHER OF GOD, THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN"</p>	<p>"NOW THE SERPENT WAS MORE CUNNING THAN ANY BEAST... WHICH THE LORD GOD HAD MADE" Gen. 3:1</p>	<p>CHRISTIANITY'S "ONE GOD" FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT, (MYSTICALLY ONE GOD, MANIFESTS AS THREE)</p>

Although Protestantism got its name from breaking away from Catholicism, it still clings to Catholicism's view of the Godhead as a "three-in-one" God. History will confirm that this concept was invented by the Catholic hierarchy in the 3rd to 5th century.

ORIGIN OF THE THREE-IN-ONE GOD: "THE TRINITY"

<p>BIRTHED IN THE 3RD CENTURY (CONSTANTINE CREED)</p> <p>BISHOPS DECREE: FATHER & SON BECOME ONE</p>	<p>REFINED IN THE 5TH CENTURY (ANTHANASIOUS CREED)</p> <p>BISHOPS DECREE: FATHER, SON, & SPIRIT BECOME ONE</p>
 <p>"WE WORSHIP ONE GOD IN TRINITY... THE FATHER IS GOD, THE SON IS GOD, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD; AND YET THEY ARE NOT THREE GODS, BUT ONE GOD... NONE IS GREATER OR LESS THAN ANOTHER... THE WHOLE THREE PERSONS ARE COEQUAL"</p>	

However, this was not the teaching of the apostle Paul!

Study this comparison carefully for one is tradition-based while the other is scripture-based.

Jesus emphatically stated that the Father was greater than Himself (Jn. 14:28). So did the apostle Paul exalt the Father above the Son. (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

<p>A DIVINE TRINITY</p> <p>"WORSHIP ONE GOD IN TRINITY... THE FATHER IS GOD, THE SON IS GOD, THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD; AND YET THEY ARE NOT THREE GODS, BUT ONE GOD... NONE IS GREATER OR LESS THAN ANOTHER... THE WHOLE THREE PERSONS ARE COEQUAL"</p> <p>TRADITION-BASED</p>	<p>A DIVINE GODHEAD</p> <p>WORSHIP "ELOHIM" AS A TRIUNE GODHEAD, A DIVINE ETERNAL FAMILY: GOD THE FATHER, GOD THE SON, GOD THE SPIRIT... RATHER THAN A "THREE-IN-ONE" GOD, SCRIPTURE DEPICTS A DIVINE FAMILY OF THREE COETERNAL PERSONAGES FUNCTIONING IN PERFECT ONENESS OF AGREEMENT WITH EACH ANOTHER. ALTHOUGH ALL ARE DIVINE PERSONAGES, THEY ARE NOT COEQUAL IN POSITION AND AUTHORITY</p> <p>SCRIPTURE-BASED</p>
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FIRST QUESTION:
HOW IS GOD ONE?

HE IS **NOT**
 A COEQUAL,
 "THREE-IN-ONE"
 GOD!

**"SATAN'S
 SUBTLE
 SUBSTITUTE"** →



**"...TO ROOT OUT
 AND
 TO PULL DOWN,
 TO DESTROY
 AND
 THROW DOWN,
 TO
 BUILD
 AND PLANT"
 Jer. 1:10**

(NOT THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH
 FOR THE FIRST 300-500 YEARS)

The concept of a "three-in-one" God was not the teaching of the apostle Paul or any of the other apostles Jesus appointed. This is a doctrine of men instituted in the 5th century by the king of tradition, Catholicism.

**"GOD" IS A DIVINE TRIUNE
 GODHEAD**

"GOD" -ELOHIM,
 A PLURAL NOUN
 USED 2,197 TIMES

Col. 2:9

"GOD" WHO SPEAKS
 IN PLURAL TERMS:
 "US...OUR...WE..."

WE ARE TO WORSHIP "ELOHIM" AS A TRIUNE GODHEAD, A DIVINE ETERNAL FAMILY, CONSISTING OF GOD THE FATHER, GOD THE SON, GOD THE SPIRIT.

RATHER THAN THE "THREE-IN-ONE" CONCEPT OF GOD INVENTED IN THE 3RD AND 5TH CENTURY, SCRIPTURE DEPICTS A DIVINE FAMILY OF THREE COETERNAL PERSONAGES FUNCTIONING IN PERFECT ONENESS OF AGREEMENT WITH ONE ANOTHER.

ALTHOUGH ALL ARE DIVINE PERSONAGES, THEY ARE NOT COEQUAL IN POSITION AND AUTHORITY. GOD THE FATHER IS GREATER THAN ALL.

When I get to heaven, I expect to see two thrones, the Father's and the Son's as Rev. 5 reveals. No throne is mentioned for the Spirit, but rather He is stated to be before the Throne as Rev. 1:4, 4:5 reveal. I expect to see not one God, but three: The eternal Father, the eternal Son, and the eternal Holy Spirit. I do not believe as do the Mormons, that there are many gods, or that we mortals can become gods.

**DIVINE COMPLETENESS
 IN A TRIUNE GODHEAD**



**GOD
 THE FATHER**

**THE
 DIVINE
 FAMILY OF GOD**

**GOD
 THE SON**

**GOD
 THE SPIRIT**

I simply believe in a triune Godhead as Paul described consisting of three "Gods" who are a divine family, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who function in perfect oneness and harmony with one another.

John Chapter 17 will tell you very clearly about Jesus coming to bear witness to the truth about God the Father as Head of the divine family of God. In fact, the whole gospel of John speaks of the testimony of the Father by Jesus 129 times in just 21 Chapters. It is the main theme of the gospel of John.

"FOR THIS CAUSE I HAVE COME INTO THE WORLD, THAT I SHOULD BEAR WITNESS TO THE TRUTH..."
Jn. 18:37



"IT IS THE SPIRIT WHO BEARS WITNESS, BECAUSE THE SPIRIT IS TRUTH. FOR THERE ARE THREE WHO BEAR WITNESS IN HEAVEN: THE FATHER, THE WORD AND THE HOLY SPIRIT; AND THESE THREE ARE ONE (UNITED) "
1 Jn. 5:6-7

Jesus' emphasis is that the Father is greater than the Son of God. Although Jesus claims to be God, He states that God the Father is greater than God the Son. This is a testimony of divine submission. Jesus came to reveal the Father and to show His total submission to His authority.

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS PERTAINING TO THE FATHER:

"...FOR MY FATHER IS GREATER THAN I."

Jn. 14:28



"...FOR MY FATHER ...IS GREATER THAN ALL"

Jn. 10: 28

Likewise does the apostle Paul bear witness to this truth of a divine hierarchy of submission existing in the Godhead. This stands in direct opposition to the "co-equal" status given to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the "three-in-one" trinity.

"...MY FATHER IS GREATER THAN ALL"

"THEN COMES THE END, WHEN HE (CHRIST) DELIVERS THE KINGDOM TO GOD THE FATHER, WHEN HE PUTS AN END TO ALL RULE AND ALL AUTHORITY AND POWER. FOR HE MUST REIGN TILL HE HAS PUT ALL ENEMIES UNDER HIS FEET..."

FOR ' HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET.' BUT WHEN HE SAYS 'ALL THINGS ARE PUT UNDER HIM,' IT IS EVIDENT THAT HE WHO PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIM IS EXCEPTED.

NOW WHEN ALL THINGS ARE MADE SUBJECT TO HIM, THEN THE SON HIMSELF WILL ALSO BE SUBJECT TO HIM WHO PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIM. THAT GOD (THE FATHER) MAY BE ALL AND IN ALL"

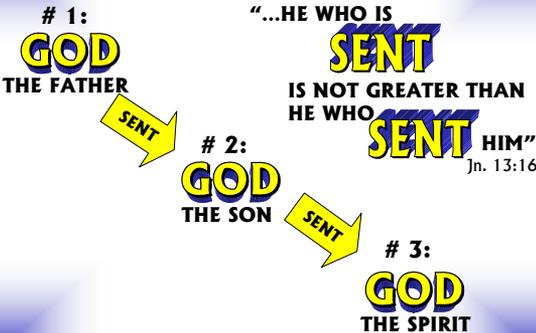
1 Cor. 15:24-28

"...MY FATHER IS GREATER THAN ALL"



Both God the Son and the Holy Spirit while on earth prayed to God the Father in Heaven. Do you realize how silly it is for the "three-in-one" trinity concept in which God the Son is praying to Himself as God the Father? Is it not ridiculous for God the Father to say from Heaven, This is My Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him", when according to the "three-in-one" concept of God, the Father would be speaking of Himself as the Son? According to Jesus here in John 13:16, "He who is sent is not greater than He who sent Him." God the Father sent the Son and the Son sent the Holy Spirit. How then can they be "co-equal"?

"...MY FATHER IS GREATER THAN ALL"

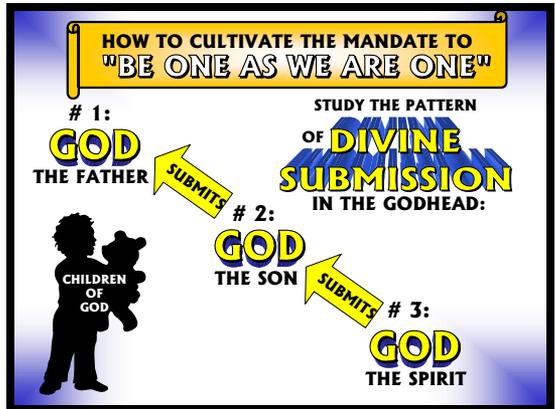
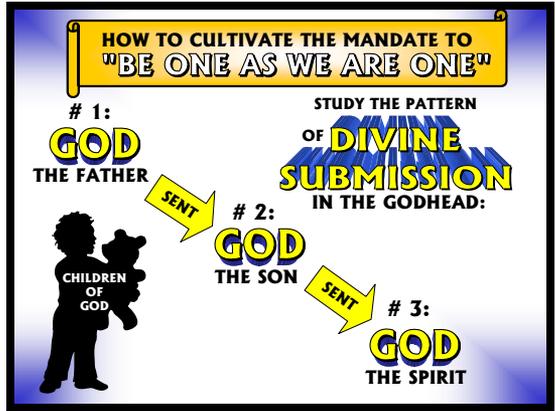


Read John 14 through John 16 and you will see Jesus revealing that the Holy Spirit does not speak of Himself, but He speaks of Jesus. Likewise, Jesus did not speak on His own authority, but He spoke the words the Father gave Him. This whole story is about submission within the Godhead as a pattern for us as His children to follow!

"...MY FATHER IS GREATER THAN ALL"



There is only one way for us to “be one as God the Father and God the Son were one.” It is not by means of believing in a “three-in-one God” as the pattern. Rather it is by believing that the whole Godhead was submitted one to another in a hierarchy in which God the Father is greater than all. This is a pattern that we, as “children of God”, adopted into the divine family of God, learn how to follow the example set for us by Jesus the Son of God and the Holy Spirit of God. They are all God, but they are not pursuing their own will, but rather the will of God the Father!



When we come as God’s children to the Father, we come through the hierarchy established by Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Paul tells us clearly in these verses from Ephesians 2 :18 how the Godhead functions together on our behalf. Yes, the Shema is right: God is one, but He is one in unity!





**“THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE...
THAT THEY MAY ALSO
BE ONE IN US...
THAT THEY MAY BE ONE
JUST AS WE ARE ONE...
THAT THEY MAY BE
MADE PERFECT IN ONE...”**

John 17:1-23 excerpts



DON'T BE FOOLED BY SATAN'S SUBTLE SUBSTITUTE FOR THE ONENESS OF GOD

What Jesus states above is the will of God for all His followers. It is a mandate that has been clouded over and mystified by the creation of God as a “three-in-one” God who is only one God, but can manifest as three separate identities: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If true, lost is all the instruction Jesus gave His followers by means of His interaction with His Father, it becomes meaningless to us as His followers because such a “oneness” cannot be instituted by us. Jesus’ dependence upon His Father is just dependence upon Himself in His role as Jesus’ Father. God as Father is well pleased in Himself as the Son. Confusing? Yes, because this false concept comes from the author of confusion, Satan himself.

However, if the Godhead consists of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, a divine family of God, as all visions of Heaven support, then we have a pattern which can be emulated by us as the children of God, adopted into God’s family through the work of His Son. We too then, have the same God the Father in Heaven, to whom we can pray, as did Jesus His Son. We too then, can walk in a pleasing manner on earth and have God our Father in Heaven to testify of us as well, “This is my beloved son/daughter in whom I am also well pleased.” We too then, can look to the submission of Jesus on earth to His Heavenly Father as a pattern to be followed by us on earth. We can follow the same pattern of submission to the Holy Spirit, who is submitted to Jesus Christ, who in turn is submitted to God our Father. We will find the scriptures to have real substance in saying to us in a practical manner, “For through Him, we have access by one Spirit, to the Father” (Eph. 2:18).

The oneness of God is **UNITY** as stated above in Jesus’ fourfold statement that He now prays to become active for every believer!



“THAT THEY MAY BE MADE PERFECT IN ONE”

Jn. 17:23

Whether you are in agreement with what I have just presented about a triune Godhead or not, I am sure you will agree there is oneness of agreement and unity among the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit:



“A THREEFOLD CORD IS NOT QUICKLY BROKEN”

Ecc. 4:12

This threefold cord, being divine in origin, can never be broken, as Satan found out in his rebellion against the Godhead, and again when he tried to separate Jesus’ loyalty to the Father in the wilderness temptation.

Let me now show you another three-fold cord of unity which depicts God’s plan of completeness for His people being made perfect in one:



“A THREEFOLD CORD IS NOT QUICKLY BROKEN”

Ecc. 4:12

We find God’s plan of divine completeness for His people revealed in these three passages depicting a call to unity. This is God’s plan “that they be made perfect in one” (Jn.17:23).

GOD'S CALL TO HIS PEOPLE FOR UNITY:

**"BEHOLD,
HOW GOOD
AND HOW
PLEASANT IT IS
FOR BRETHREN
TO DWELL
TOGETHER
IN
UNITY..."**

Psm. 133:1

**"HAVE A WALK
WORTHY OF
THE CALLING...
ENDEAVORING
TO KEEP
THE UNITY
OF THE SPIRIT
IN THE BOND
OF PEACE."**

Eph. 4:1-3

**"...TILL
WE ALL
COME
INTO
THE UNITY
OF
THE
FAITH."**

Eph. 4:13

UNITY

OF THE SPIRIT

Eph. 4:1-3

1.

**"THAT
THEY
MAY BE
MADE PERFECT
IN ONE."**

2.

3.

UNITY

OF THE BRETHREN

Psm. 133:1

UNITY

OF THE FAITH

Eph. 4:13



"A THREEFOLD CORD IS NOT QUICKLY BROKEN "

Ecc. 4:12



THE UNITY OF THE BRETHREN

"NOW I PLEAD WITH YOU BRETHREN... THAT YOU ALL SPEAK THE SAME THING, AND THAT THERE BE NO DIVISIONS AMONG YOU, BUT THAT YOU BE PERFECTLY JOINED TOGETHER IN THE SAME MIND AND IN THE SAME JUDGMENT."

1 Cor. 1:10

Let me paraphrase what is being said so far in a graphic way so that you may see the magnitude of the problem among the brethren that needs to be corrected:

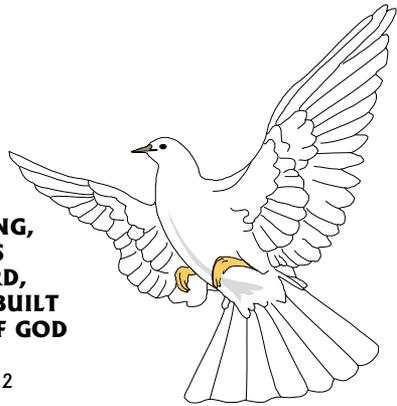
"IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BRETHREN TO BE UNDER SERIOUS OBLIGATION TO ONE ANOTHER, MAKING A STRENUOUS EFFORT TO ENDEAVOR TO GUARD, AND MAINTAIN, AND KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT, BY THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, IN A BOND OF PEACE
(the nine fruits of the Spirit)
LIKewise, THE BRETHREN ARE TO SETTLE DOWN, REMAIN TOGETHER, ENDURE TOGETHER IN ONE GATHERING WHOSE PURPOSE IS TO FORM A CONNECTED BODY, WITHOUT INTERRUPTION OF ASSEMBLY, UNITED IN ACTION AND COOPERATION AND WHO SPEAK THE SAME THING, NOT ALLOWING/CAUSING DIVISIONS, BUT RATHER, BEING PERFECTLY JOINED TOGETHER IN THE SAME MIND AND IN THE SAME JUDGMENT."

Brethren, it is not the Charismatics that plague the body of Christ, but rather what we might call "cruise-a-matics". Those nomad wanderers who go from place to place, stay a little while until they become offended by someone (usually the pastor), something (usually what the pastor teaches), and whoosh!... away they go, and not without leaving just enough insinuations behind to sow division and discord among the brethren.

**“YOU ALSO AS LIVING STONES,
ARE BEING BUILT UP A SPIRITUAL
HOUSE...”** 1 Pet. 2:5

**“...IN WHOM THE WHOLE BUILDING,
BEING JOINED TOGETHER, GROWS
INTO A HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD,
IN WHOM YOU ALSO ARE BEING BUILT
TOGETHER FOR A HABITATION OF GOD
IN THE SPIRIT.”**

Eph. 2:21-22



**“DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT YOU ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD
AND THAT THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELLS IN YOU?
IF ANYONE DEFILES THE TEMPLE OF GOD,
GOD WILL DESTROY HIM. FOR THE TEMPLE OF GOD IS HOLY,
WHICH TEMPLE YOU ARE.”**

1 Cor. 3:16-17

I know, (as well as you do), that individually our bodies are considered by God to be the temple of God (see 1 Cor. 6:19). However, do you also know that there is in God's sight a corporate building, a holy temple, being joined together, built together, growing together, in which the whole building is comprised of individual living stones functioning together as one?

1 Cor. 3:16-17 above, equally applies to the corporate building being built by the Holy Spirit, as well as our individual physical bodies. Hear the warning of God to His people: If anyone destroys (meaning “renders useless”) the corporate building which the Holy Spirit is joining and building together in oneness, God will destroy that “living stone” from usefulness in the Body of Christ!

To sow discord among the brethren, to tear down what God's Holy Spirit is attempting to build up, is treading on dangerous ground! If you are a “living stone” as Peter describes, then you had better “settle down, remain, endure, make a serious effort and become obligated to a local body of believers with the purpose of forming a connected body, united in action and cooperation, without division, being perfectly joined together”, or else you can forget about laying hold of the prize of the Bride of Christ! This is reward for corporate participation, not for an individual achievement.



**“... THE WHOLE BODY,
JOINED AND KNIT TOGETHER
BY WHAT EVERY JOINT SUPPLIES,
ACCORDING TO
THE EFFECTIVE WORKING
BY WHICH EVERY PART DOES IT’S SHARE,
CAUSING GROWTH OF THE BODY
FOR THE EDIFYING OF ITSELF IN LOVE.”**

Eph. 4:16

Every local church is a vivid expression of the Body of Christ. If you are not part of a local expression of that body, there is no way you can be fulfilling the mandate to

**BE JOINED AND KNIT TOGETHER...
BE EFFECTIVELY WORKING IN THE BODY...
DOING YOUR SHARE AS A PART OF THAT BODY...
CAUSING GROWTH OF THE BODY...
EDIFYING ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE...**

It is so much easier to float about from assembly to assembly and never embrace the responsibility to become knit and joined together, working out and practicing the great list of “one anothers” that are spelled out in God’s Word. Are you aware of the volume of commandments given to New Testament believers concerning their relationships to one another? Here they are:



**UNITY
OF
THE
BRETHREN
FROM
A TO Z**



- a. **TO FELLOWSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER** (1 Jn. 1:7 and Heb. 10:25)
- b. **TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER** (Jn. 13:34-35)
- c. **TO DEPEND UPON ONE ANOTHER** (Rom. 12:5)
- d. **TO GIVE HONOR/AFFECTION TO ONE ANOTHER** (Rom. 12:10)
- e. **TO BE OF THE SAME MIND ONE TO ANOTHER** (Rom. 12:16)
- f. **TO NOT JUDGE ONE ANOTHER** (Rom. 14:13)
- g. **TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT ONE ANOTHER** (Rom. 15:7)
- h. **TO GREET ONE ANOTHER** (Rom. 16:16)
- i. **TO CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER** (1 Cor. 12:25)

- j. **THROUGH LOVE, SERVE ONE ANOTHER** (Gal. 5:13)
- k. **TO BEAR THE BURDENS OF ONE ANOTHER** (Gal. 6:2)
- l. **TO BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER** (Eph. 4:32)
- m. **TO COMFORT AND EDIFY ONE ANOTHER** (I Thess. 5:11)
- n. **WITHOUT GRUMBLING TO ONE ANOTHER** (I Pet. 4:9)
- o. **TO HAVE FERVENT LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER** (I Pet. 4:8)
- p. **TO NOT SPEAK EVIL OF ONE ANOTHER** (Jm. 4:11)
- q. **TO NOT GRUMBLE AGAINST ONE ANOTHER** (Jm. 5:9)
- r. **TO CONFESS OUR FAULTS ONE TO ANOTHER** (Jm. 5:16)
- s. **TO PRAY ONE FOR ANOTHER** (Jm. 5:16)
- t. **TO BE SUBMISSIVE ONE TO ANOTHER** (I Pet. 5:6)
- u. **TO FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER** (Eph. 4:32)
- v. **TO ADMONISH ONE ANOTHER** (Rom. 15:14)
- w. **TO WAIT FOR ONE ANOTHER** (Rom. 11:33)
- x. **TO CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER** (Heb. 10:24)
- y. **TO STIR ONE ANOTHER TO LOVE/GOOD WORKS** (Heb. 10:24)
- z. **TO HAVE COMPASSION ON ONE ANOTHER** (I Pet. 3:8)

If you were to commit to memory this alphabet from A to Z and allow these principles to begin to guide and govern your life, you too could say with the Psalmist:



**“BEHOLD,
HOW GOOD
AND HOW PLEASANT IT IS
FOR BRETHREN TO
DWELL TOGETHER IN UNITY!....
FOR THERE THE LORD
COMMANDED THE BLESSING-
LIFE FOREVERMORE.”**

Psm. 133:1,3

Dwelling together in unity is like the dew of Herman on Mt. Zion, for it was there that God gave the blessing. If you will research this reference you will find that was the time God gave His people His covenant law (Lev. 25 and Deut. 4&5), setting forth the commandments which govern relationships one with another! Here in this list of “one anothers”, we have God’s commandments (not options or suggestions) which are to govern every phase of our relationship between new covenant believers!



**“EXAMINE
AND TEST
AND EVALUATE
YOUR OWN SELVES,
TO SEE WHETHER YOU ARE HOLDING TO
YOUR FAITH AND SHOWING THE PROPER
FRUITS OF IT.
TEST AND PROVE YOURSELVES...”**
2 Cor. 13:5 Amplified

UNITY OF THE BRETHREN

“BUT BE DOERS OF THE WORD, AND NOT HEARERS ONLY, DECEIVING YOURSELVES.”
James 1:22

1. Am I doing my share as part of the Body according to Eph. 4:16?
2. Am I like minded, in one accord, of one mind, doing nothing out of selfish ambition, esteeming others better than myself and looking out for the interests of others according to Phil. 2:2-4?
3. Am I putting on tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, bearing with one another and putting on love, the bond of perfection according to Col.3:12-14 ?
4. Am I in line with practicing these truths in all relationships with the brethren according to Eph. 5:19-33, 6:1-9 and Col. 3:18-25, 4:1?
5. Am I practicing the one anothers with the brethren which make up the Body of Christ?



A DEEPER LOOK AT THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT...

Leaving, for a moment, our study of the unity of the brethren (for there is yet another area we must examine), let us take a look at a deeper meaning to the brethren being In unity with the Spirit. We have seen, so far, that the Spirit is building and joining together the living stones into a holy temple unto the Lord.

(I Pet. 2:5, Eph. 2:21-22, I Cor. 3:16-17)

It is in the local congregation that this building and joining together takes place, for it is impossible for us to be built and joined together universally with the entire body of Christ. We may have a common bond through the new birth as fellow citizens of the household of God (Eph. 1:19), but, as we saw in the “A to Z” commandments for unity of the brethren, it demands close fellowship with one another.

I want to deal with how we are to walk after the Spirit and to be in unity with the Spirit as individuals.

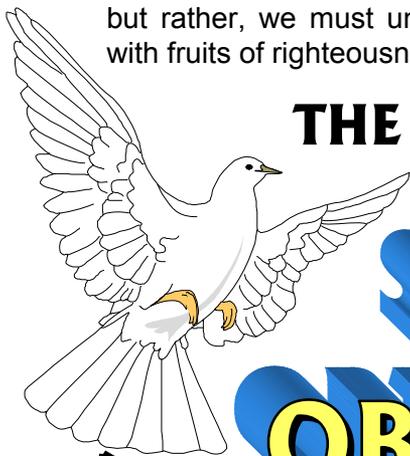
UNITY:

**“ONENESS OF MIND AND PURPOSE..
IN ONE ACCORD AND IN AGREEMENT,
MAINTAINING COMMON GOALS
AND OBJECTIVES.”**

Webster

I am sure we all know the commandment to walk after the Spirit (Gal. 5:16&25). Our common understanding of this is to pursue the Fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), or the gifts of the Spirit (I Cor. 12), but, dear ones, the fruit and the gifts of the Spirit are not the meaning of walking after the Spirit, it is merely evidence of walking after the Spirit. Why do you choose to bear fruit? What is your motive in doing so? It takes vision and motivation of the benefits of fruit-bearing to choose to embrace the cost of doing so.

The point simply is that we must be in oneness of mind, in agreement, in accord with the goals and objectives of the Holy Spirit. It is not enough just to read the commandment to be filled with the fruits of righteousness (see Phil. 1:11), but rather, we must understand why we need to be filled with fruits of righteousness.

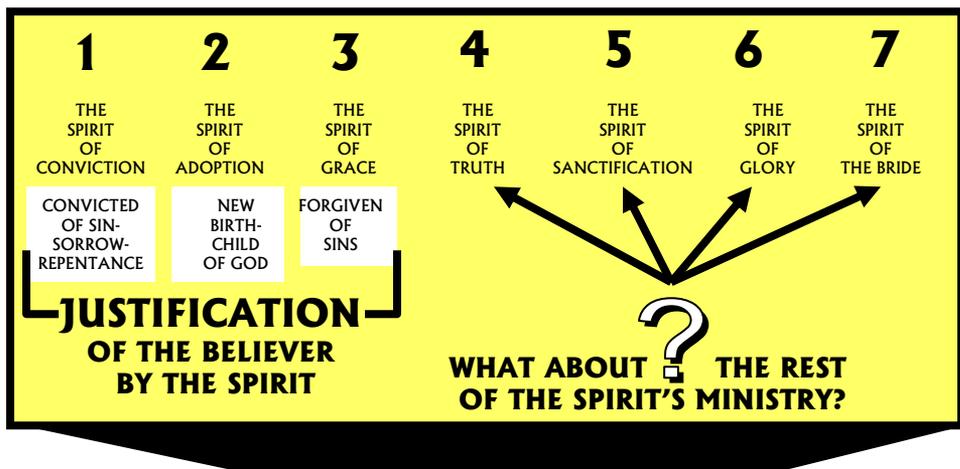


THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS SEVEN OBJECTIVES

1. **HE IS THE SPIRIT OF CONVICTION** Jn. 16:8
2. **HE IS THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION** Rom. 8:15-16
3. **HE IS THE SPIRIT OF GRACE** Heb. 8:15-16
4. **HE IS THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH** Jn. 16:30,
Jn. 17:17
5. **HE IS THE SPIRIT OF SANCTIFICATION** 2 Cor. 3:18
1 Pet. 1:2
6. **HE IS THE SPIRIT OF GLORY** 1 Pet. 4:13-14
7. **HE IS THE SPIRIT OF THE BRIDE** Rev.22:17

In the chart on the previous page, you can see that in the descriptive titles given to the Holy Spirit in these passages, there are seven progressive goals and objectives set before every follower of Christ. In the chart below, I have attempted to show what is the normal progression of far too many of God's people. They rapidly progress through the first three stated objectives and then draw a line as if they have arrived, parroting, "It is finished!" This is like one well-known ex-President of the United States that prematurely proclaimed, "Mission accomplished!"

Having repented, become born again and received forgiveness of sins by grace, what else is there? Nothing! ... they say! However, actually only a foundation has been laid. There is much more set before them:



"AND AS HE SPOKE THESE WORDS, MANY BELIEVED IN HIM, THEN JESUS SAID TO THOSE... WHO BELIEVED HIM, IF YOU CONTINUE IN MY WORD YOU WILL KNOW THE TRUTH AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE." .John 8:30-32

"WHEN THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH HAS COME, HE WILL GUIDE YOU INTO ALL TRUTH..." John 16:13

" ... HE WHO HAS BEGUN A GOOD WORK IN YOU WILL COMPLETE IT UNTIL THE DAY OF JESUS CHRIST. " .Phil. 1:6

Far too many of God's people have taken the half for the whole. Yes, Col. 2:10 does say, "and you are complete in Him", but this too, is only half the story. The justification of the believer (first three steps) have indeed been completed. However, Phil. 1:6 reminds us, "He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the Day of Christ." This speaks of the ongoing sanctification and glorification of the believer that is yet to be completed! This is the other half of the story!

“BUT THE SPIRIT SEARCHES ALL THINGS, YES THE DEEP THINGS OF GOD... NO ONE KNOWS THE THINGS OF GOD EXCEPT THE SPIRIT OF GOD... WE HAVE ... RECEIVED... THE SPIRIT WHO IS FROM GOD THAT WE MIGHT KNOW THE THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN FREELY GIVEN TO US BY GOD.”

1 Cor. 2:10-12

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

2 Cor. 3:18



After we are completely justified by the Spirit of conviction, the Spirit of adoption, and the Spirit of grace, we are then to continue in the Word. We must go on in the ministry of the Holy Spirit embracing the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of sanctification, and the Spirit of glory. It is in these advanced roles that the Spirit will perfect the Bride!

Unless we are in unity with the Spirit, having the same mind and purpose for ourselves as He does, and unless we are in agreement and accord, maintaining common objectives and goals, how can we walk after the Spirit? Is it not written:



“CAN TWO WALK TOGETHER EXCEPT THEY BE

AGREED?”

Amos 3:3

“EYE HAS NOT SEEN, NOR EAR HEARD, NOR HAS ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN THE THINGS WHICH GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM. BUT GOD HAS REVEALED THEM TO US THROUGH HIS SPIRIT.”

1 Cor.2:9-10

Actually, the above verse was written by Paul as a rebuke to believers, including us today. Brethren lack vision to see what is plainly revealed in God's Word or hear His corrective words pertaining to what "eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has entered into the heart of man"- things that **HAVE** been revealed to us by God's Spirit! Note this is a category **ABOVE** those things God has planned for those whom He loves. Rather, these are the things prepared for those who love God!

**“EYE HAS NOT SEEN,
NOR EAR HEARD,
NOR HAS ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN
THE THINGS WHICH GOD HAS
PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.**

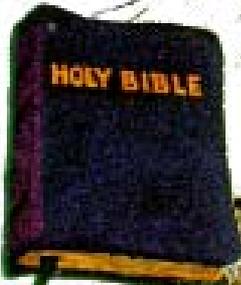
**BUT GOD HAS REVEALED THEM
TO US THROUGH HIS SPIRIT.”**

1 Cor.2:9-10



**“THEY
THAT
WERE READY
WENT IN
WITH HIM
TO
THE
WEDDING...”**
Matt. 25:10

**“HIS
WIFE
HAS
MADE
HERSELF
READY...”**
Rev. 19:7



THE BRIDE OF CHRIST



"A THREEFOLD CORD IS NOT QUICKLY BROKEN"

Ecc. 4:12

THE UNITY OF THE FAITH

We come to the last of the three areas of unity to which we are called. Let us look once again at our text scripture:

"TILL WE ALL COME TO THE UNITY OF THE FAITH..."

Eph. 4:13

Notice that this passage does not say, "... till we all come to the unity of 'faith'" but rather, till we all come to the unity of 'the' faith. There is only one faith (Eph. 4:5) and we are to come into unity with it rather than adapting it (the faith) to fit us all. The concept I am addressing is the one that teaches "if unity is to come, we must first lay aside our doctrinal differences that we may become one." This is false theology. Let me show you where the real problem lies. Look again at our text scripture, but this time let us read from verse 11 to put the mandate of being in unity in its context:



***"AND HE HIMSELF GAVE SOME TO BE APOSTLES,
SOME PROPHETS, SOME EVANGELISTS,
AND PASTORS AND TEACHERS,
FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS
FOR THE WORK OF MINISTRY,
FOR THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST,
TILL WE ALL COME TO
THE UNITY OF THE FAITH...
THAT WE SHOULD NO LONGER BE CHILDREN
TOSSED TO AND FRO AND CARRIED ABOUT
WITH EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE."***

Eph. 4:11-14

It is understandable that as we observe much of the Body of Christ today, it is not found in such desired unity. Consider that two of those five gifts of Christ to His Body, namely apostles and prophets, have been eliminated from existence by means of the commonly taught concept that these two gifts ceased with the end of the early church era. Paul does not imply that these gifts were temporary, but rather were to be the very means by which the unity of the faith would be accomplished.

Consider the following as proof that God did not intend for any of His five-fold gifts to cease:

“HE GAVE APOSTLES, PROPHETS, EVANGELISTS, PASTORS AND TEACHERS FOR THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST TILL (UNTIL)



- (1) WE ALL COME INTO THE UNITY OF THE FAITH,**
- (2) TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD,**
- (3) TO A PERFECT MAN,**
- (4) TO THE MEASURE AND THE STATURE OF THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST.”**

I certainly don't see the Body of Christ in the unity of the faith, or having achieved the knowledge of the Son of God, or to having arrived at the level of a perfect man, and I certainly can say the Body of Christ has not yet attained to the measure and stature of the fullness of Christ!

In fact, is it not true that ever since the apostles disappeared in a doctrinal sense, the Body of Christ has spiraled downward rather than going upward in the stature and measure of Christ. When you read Paul's epistles, does not the burden and responsibility of correcting false doctrines fall upon him? Is that not indeed the basic content and purpose of Paul writing his epistles? So, here in Ephesians, we see the mandate given to protect the body from every wind of doctrine (see verse 14).

Since this book is primarily a teaching aid, let me take time here to inject a mini-teaching on the subject of apostles. Were there more than the twelve apostles of the Lamb? You can get the answer simply by observing **WHEN** Jesus gave the five-fold ministry gifts to men:

**“WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH...
HE GAVE GIFTS UNTO MEN...
HE GAVE SOME TO BE APOSTLES... PROPHETS...”**

Eph. 4:7-11

Jesus not only appointed twelve apostles of the Lamb while He was on earth, but “when He ascended on high” He gave the gift of more apostles and prophets! He gave them after He ascended! Think about this: The twelve apostles of the Lamb are not the only apostles given in scripture! In addition to the office of “pastors, teachers and evangelists”, He gave more apostles and prophets after He ascended!

It is commonly taught that the apostle Paul was selected by God to replace fallen Judas as one of the apostles of the Lamb because there must be twelve apostles maintained according to Acts 1:19-20 which says, "For he was numbered with us...Let another take his office." However, scripture proves that Paul did not replace Judas, but rather it was indeed Matthias. If so, Paul became the thirteenth apostle appointed by God. The needful point is that there were more than twelve apostles appointed. In fact, as we shall see, there are 20 named in scripture! First let us establish that Matthias indeed was chosen as Judas' replacement:

MATTHIAS REPLACED JUDAS AND NOT PAUL. HE WAS CONFIRMED BY BOTH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND BY PAUL HIMSELF AS BEING "NUMBERED AMONG THE TWELVE" (Acts 1:16-26... VS.26).

BEFORE PAUL IS EVEN CALLED, THE HOLY SPIRIT RECORDS IN ACTS 2:14, "BUT PETER STANDING WITH THE ELEVEN..." (PETER AND THE ELEVEN MAKE TWELVE WITHOUT PAUL OR JUDAS, MEANING THE HOLY SPIRIT COUNTED MATTHIAS AS AMONG THE TWELVE.) (again in Acts 6:2)

CONSIDER PAUL'S OWN TESTIMONY IN I COR. 15:5: "HE WAS SEEN BY CEPHAS, THEN BY THE TWELVE" (VS. 5) ... AFTERWARD HE WAS SEEN BY JAMES... THEN LAST OF ALL HE WAS SEEN BY ME ALSO, AS ONE BORN OUT OF DUE TIME" (VS. 8)

HERE, PAUL IS DISTINGUISHING HIMSELF FROM THE TWELVE, AND SINCE JUDAS IS GONE, THE TWELFTH MAN WAS MATTHIAS, NOT PAUL.

Why is this so important? Because if Paul is not the one who replaced Judas, then he must be one of the first apostles appointed after Jesus ascended. If apostles did not cease with the original twelve, can it be there are apostles today? What if I could show you eight more apostles named in scripture other than the original twelve? Here they are:

JAMES, THE LORD'S BROTHER –The Holy Spirit did not want it to be assumed that the James singled out as among the apostles of the Lamb was "James, the Lord's brother". However, In Gal. 1:19, the Holy Spirit calls James, the Lord's brother, an apostle. When did he become one? After the Lord ascended!

2. **ANDRONICUS** – Rom. 16:7
3. **JUNIA** – Rom. 16:7
4. **SILVANUS** – Rom. 16:7
5. **BARNABAS** – Acts 14:14, I Cor. 9:1-6
6. **TIMOTHY** – 1 Thess. 1:1-6 – Note, three men are writing this letter (vs 1). Note the plurality of “we” all through Vs. 1-5, then note vs. 6 of Chapter Two, “we-the apostles of Christ”.
7. **APOLLOS** – I Cor. 4:6-9 (again note the plurality in context, then Vs. 9 “We the apostles” refers to Paul and Apollos.)
8. **EPAPHRODITUS** – Phil. 2:25 is erroneously translated as “messenger” but it is the same Greek word “apostolos” and should be translated as “apostle” as it is everywhere else. Only the Amplified Bible renders it correctly as “apostle.”

I hope you were not side-tracked too much with this information, but it is essential to see that the apostles were God’s gift to the Body of Christ to keep the unity of the faith by correcting false doctrine and exposing false teachers. What we have today is a return to “every man doing that which was right in his own sight”. Where we do not have the apostolic covering, we have division and splits over every wind of doctrine. The apostles were the means to prevent this from happening. Let me give you an illustration which may help you to see the plight we are in.

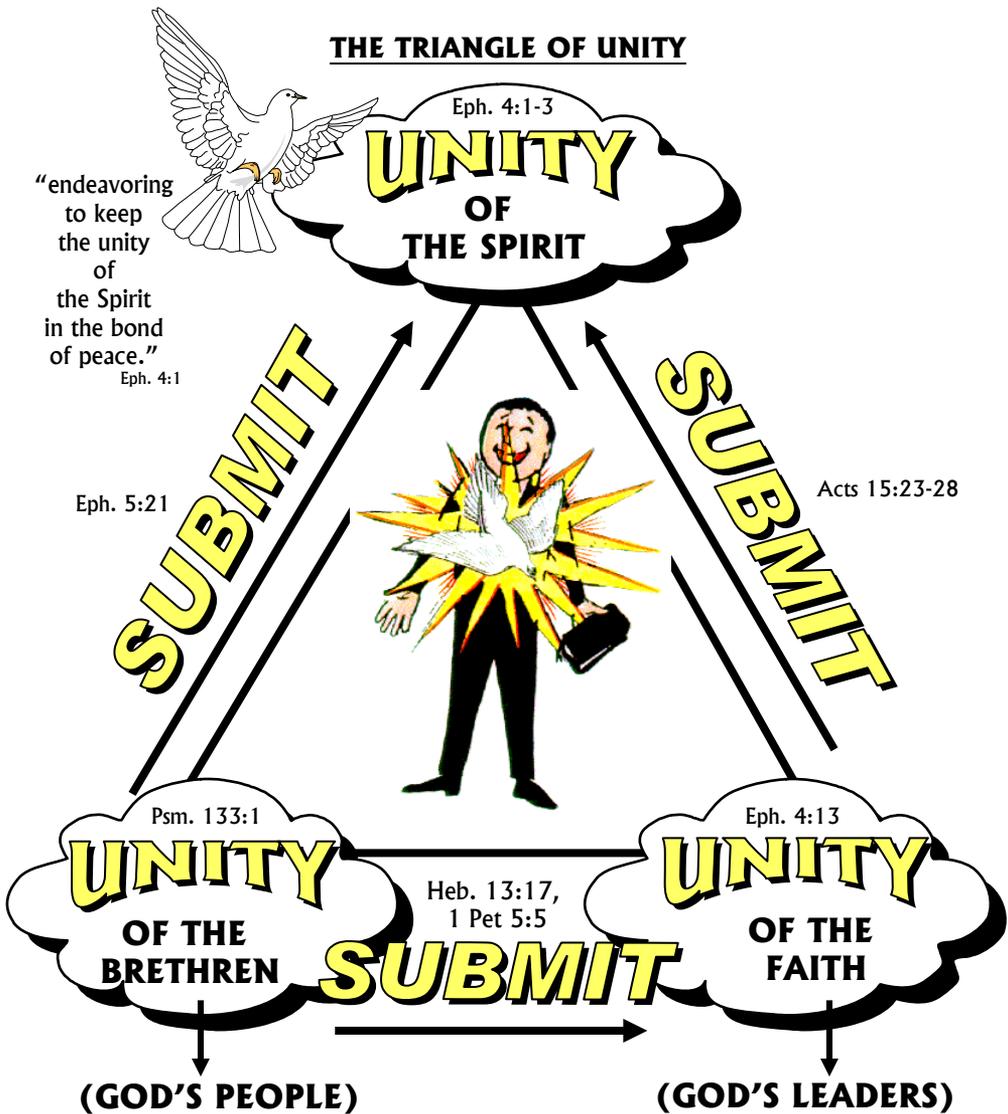
**IF YOU TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR HAND,
YOU WILL SEE IT HAS FIVE EXTENSIONS:
ONE THUMB AND FOUR FINGERS.
THE THUMB WORKS IN CONJUNCTION WITH ALL FOUR FINGERS,
BUT THE FINGERS ARE NOT ABLE TO FUNCTION VERY WELL APART
FROM THE THUMB (TRY A FEW EXERCISES AND YOU WILL SEE
WHAT I MEAN). LET US LIKEN THE THUMB TO THE POSITION OF
THE APOSTLE AND THE INDEX FINGER TO THE PROPHETS,
AND THEN “CUT THEM OFF” BY FOLDING THEM UNDER.
SEE HOW THE DEXTERITY OF THOSE REMAINING THREE FINGERS IS
LIMITED? THEY CAN FUNCTION ONLY AS A CUMBERSOME CLAW
WHEN DIVORCED FROM THE THUMB AND INDEX FINGER.**

**“EVANGELISTS...
PASTORS...
TEACHERS...”**

**“APOSTLES
AND
PROPHETS”**



THE TRIANGLE OF UNITY



The key stated above is the word “submit”. We are to submit to one another (Eph. 5:21), to submit to God (James 4:7), and to submit to our elders or spiritual leaders who rule over us (Heb. 13:17 and 1 Pet. 5:5). Of course, we assume the leaders are submitted to God and to one another, giving the people of God an example to follow (1 Pet. 5:3 and 1 Cor. 11:1).

SUBMIT “To yield, surrender, comply, obey. To yield to the decision of a higher authority or principle.” (Webster)

SUBMISSIVE “Ready to submit, unresistingly or humbly obedient in attitude and conduct.” (Webster)

SUBMIT “To yield, surrender, comply, obey. To yield to the decision of a higher authority or principle.” (Webster)

SUBMISSIVE “Included or ready to submit, unresistingly or humbly obedient in attitude and conduct.” (Webster)

The definitions of “submit and submissive” remind me of the story of the little boy in the restaurant who, in defiance of his mother’s command to sit down in his chair, blurted out to this mother, “I am sitting down on the **OUTSIDE**, but on the **INSIDE**, I’m **STILL** standing up!” That was exactly what was wrong with the “children” of Israel: they too were sitting down on the outside, but standing up on the inside. God is not impressed by any of our outward acts of submission while the inward man rebels. May we ever remember this principle of God toward man:

**“FOR THE LORD DOES NOT SEE AS MAN SEES;
FOR MAN LOOKS AT THE OUTWARD APPEARANCE,
BUT THE LORD LOOKS AT THE HEART.”**

I Sam. 16:7

Over the many years of ministry, I have learned that what appears to be a wonderful Christian (outward appearance) may not be what God is seeing (inwardly). I am no longer surprised at some of the things that happen to such wonderful Christians and hear bewildered saints cry out, “But God, he/she had it all together! Why did this or that happen to him/her?” In such times may we also remember this principle of God:

“... THE CURSE CAUSELESS WILL NOT COME.”

Prov. 26:2

May I warn you dear reader, never alter your doctrines according to what you see occurring within the Body of Christ. Only you and God have insight as to what is going on inside you, in the depths of your heart.

Now, back to our look at the “triangle of unity”. The key, then, is a submissive attitude to the Spirit, to the brethren, and to your elders or spiritual leaders (five-fold ministry gifts). Let me now show you the opposite key (there is always one, you know) to causing division, strife, and discord. Let us again use the same basic triangle:

THE SPIRIT OF DIVISION

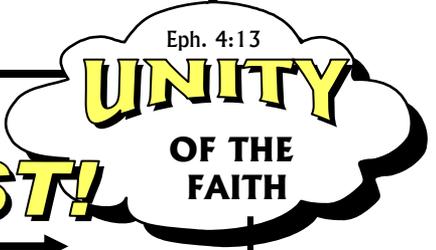
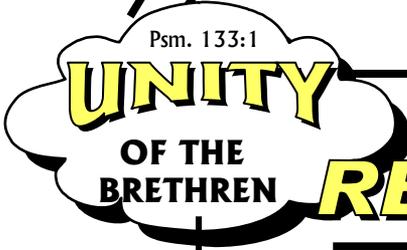


RESIST!

RESIST!

Titus 1:10-11
Acts 7:51

2 Timothy 3:3:8
3 John 9-10



RESIST!

Jude 16,19

(GOD'S PEOPLE)

(GOD'S LEADERS)

The key word stated above becomes "resist".
Resist the brethren, resist God, and resist God's appointed leaders!

RESIST

"To withstand, oppose, to strive against, to offer opposition, to form an impediment (obstruction), to hinder, a force acting in opposition to another force to destroy or diminish its effectiveness". Webster

Let us consider the examples given in the above scripture references and we shall see that what exists now, also existed then, simply because the force behind it all is the same spirit of division, Satan himself.

THE SPIRIT OF DIVISION



**“FOR THERE ARE MANY INSUBORDINATE,
BOTH IDLE TALKERS AND DECEIVERS...
WHOSE MOUTH MUST BE STOPPED,
WHO SUBVERT WHOLE HOUSEHOLDS,
TEACHING THINGS THEY OUGHT NOT,
FOR THE SAKE OF DISHONEST GAIN...
THEY PROFESS TO KNOW GOD,
BUT IN WORKS THEY DENY HIM,
BEING ABOMINABLE, DISOBEDIENT
AND DISQUALIFIED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK.”**

Titus 1:10-16

**“THESE ARE MURMURERS, COMPLAINERS,
WALKING AFTER THEIR OWN LUSTS,
AND THEY MOUTH GREAT SWELLING WORDS,
FLATTERING PEOPLE TO GAIN ADVANTAGE...
THESE ARE SENSUAL PERSONS,
WHO CAUSE DIVISIONS, NOT HAVING THE SPIRIT.”**

Jude 16,19

**“NOW AS JANNES AND JAMBRES RESISTED MOSES,
SO DO THESE RESIST THE TRUTH: MEN OF CORRUPT
MINDS, DISAPPROVED CONCERNING THE FAITH.”**

2 Tim. 3:8

**“YOU STIFF-NECKED AND UNCIRCUMCISED
IN HEART AND EARS! YOU ALWAYS RESIST
THE HOLY SPIRIT, AS YOUR FATHERS DID,
SO DO YOU.”**

Acts 7:51

**“DIOTREPES,
WHO LOVES TO HAVE THE PREEMINENCE AMONG THEM,
DOES NOT RECEIVE US...
PRATING (TALKING NONSENSE)**

**AGAINST US WITH MALICIOUS WORDS.
AND NOT CONTENT WITH THAT,**

**HE HIMSELF DOES NOT RECEIVE THE BRETHREN,
AND FORBIDS THOSE WHO WISH TO,
PUTTING THEM OUT OF THE CHURCH.”**

3 John 9-10

**“NOW I URGE YOU, BRETHREN,
NOTE THOSE WHO CAUSE
DIVISIONS AND OFFENSES,
CONTRARY TO THE DOCTRINE
WHICH YOU HAVE LEARNED,
AND AVOID THEM.**

**FOR THOSE THAT ARE SUCH
DO NOT SERVE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,...
BUT BY SMOOTH WORDS AND FLATTERING
SPEECH DECEIVE THE HEARTS OF THE SIMPLE.”**

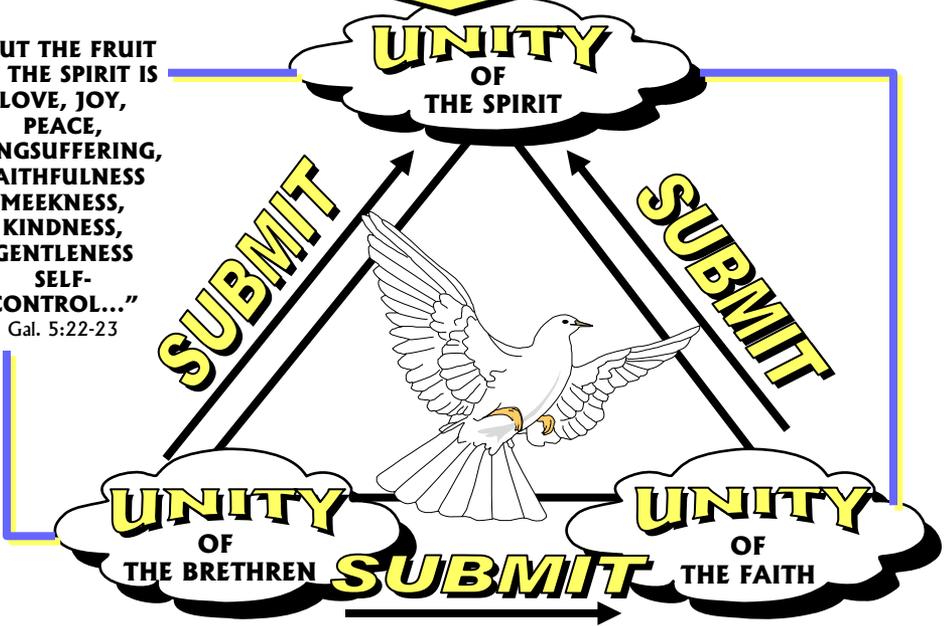
Rom. 16:17-18

“...THE PRINCE
AND POWER
OF THE AIR,
THE SPIRIT THAT
NOW WORKS IN
THE SONS OF
DISOBEDIENCE.”
Eph. 2:2



“CHOOSE FOR YOURSELVES THIS DAY
WHOM YOU SHALL SERVE...”
Joshua 24:15

“BUT THE FRUIT
OF THE SPIRIT IS
LOVE, JOY,
PEACE,
LONGSUFFERING,
FAITHFULNESS
MEEKNESS,
KINDNESS,
GENTLENESS
SELF-
CONTROL...”
Gal. 5:22-23

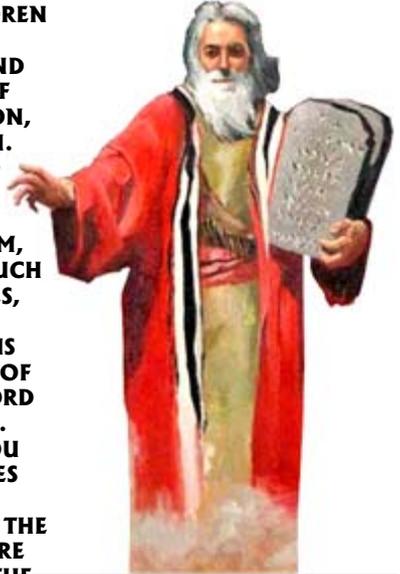


The Old Testament is full of vivid examples of God's people who made the choice to resist rather than submit. It is also very vivid how God dealt with those who withstood, opposed, strove, hindered and sought to destroy and diminish the effectiveness of the work of God. One such account that has always staggered my reasoning is that of the "two-hundred-fifty princes of Israel":



AARON
THE HIGH PRIEST

**“AND THEY ROSE UP
BEFORE MOSES WITH
SOME OF THE CHILDREN
OF ISRAEL,
TWO HUNDRED AND
FIFTY LEADERS OF
THE CONGREGATION,
MEN OF RENOWN.
THEY GATHERED
AGAINST MOSES
AND AARON,
AND SAID TO THEM,
“YOU TAKE TOO MUCH
UPON YOURSELVES,
FOR ALL THE
CONGREGATION IS
HOLY, EVERY ONE OF
THEM, AND THE LORD
IS AMONG THEM.
WHY THEN DO YOU
EXALT YOURSELVES
ABOVE THE
CONGREGATION OF THE
LORD?... AND A FIRE
CAME OUT FROM THE
LORD AND CONSUMED
THE TWO HUNDRED
AND FIFTY MEN...”**
(see Numbers 16:1-40)



MOSES
THE LAW-GIVER

This story is simply an application of the principle Paul used often, “a little leaven leavens (corrupts) the whole lump” (1 Cor. 5:6). If you were among that congregation back then, you might feel secure in the midst of the multitude of the 250 men of renown. Certainly they all can't be wrong. However, the Late A.W. Tozer once said, “Beware of the multitudes, they are always wrong.” A great multitude of the Body of Christ is following the wrong spirit when it comes to the subject of unity. May I say to you today that the pattern is clear in the Word as to how unity is to be achieved. It is not through compromise of truth for the sake of unity. Shall we see the multitude make the right choice before the return of the Lord? I pray so, but I do know that the Bride of Christ will, and is, making that choice presently and is being effectively joined and knit together, even if they are small in number.



**“OH, RIGHTEOUS FATHER...
SANCTIFY THEM BY YOUR TRUTH.
YOUR WORD IS TRUTH...
AND FOR THEIR SAKES
I SANCTIFY MYSELF
THAT THEY ALSO MAY BE
SANCTIFIED BY THE TRUTH.
I DO NOT PRAY FOR
THESE ALONE,
BUT ALSO FOR THOSE
WHO WILL BELIEVE IN ME...
THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE...
THAT THEY MAY ALSO
BE ONE IN US...
THAT THEY MAY BE ONE
JUST AS WE ARE ONE...
THAT THEY MAY BE
MADE PERFECT IN ONE...”**

John 17:1-23 excerpts

THE ONENESS OF THE TRIUNE GODHEAD:

UNITY of the FATHER UNITY of the SON UNITY of the SPIRIT

THE ONENESS OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD:

UNITY of the BRETHREN UNITY of the SPIRIT UNITY of the FAITH

“A THREEFOLD CORD IS NOT QUICKLY BROKEN”

Ecc. 4:12

**“EYE HAS NOT SEEN,
NOR EAR HEARD,
NOR HAS ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN
THE THINGS WHICH GOD HAS
PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.**

**BUT GOD HAS REVEALED THEM
TO US THROUGH HIS SPIRIT.”**

1 Cor.2:9-10

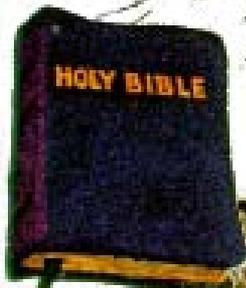


**“THEY
THAT
WERE READY
WENT IN
WITH HIM
TO
THE
WEDDING...”**

Matt. 25:10

**“HIS
WIFE
HAS
MADE
HERSELF
READY...”**

Rev. 19:7



THE BRIDE OF CHRIST



PART FIVE

THE NECESSITY TO **SUFFER** WITH CHRIST



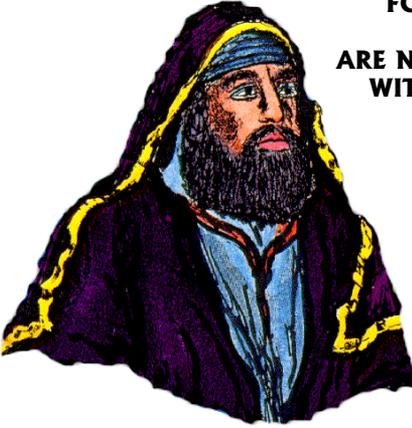
**"FOR TO YOU
IT HAS BEEN
GRANTED ON
BEHALF OF
CHRIST,
NOT ONLY TO
BELIEVE IN HIM,
BUT ALSO
TO SUFFER
FOR HIS SAKE,
HAVING
THE SAME
CONFLICT..."**
Phil. 1:29-30

**"JOINT-HEIRS
WITH CHRIST,
IF WE
SUFFER
WITH HIM,
THAT WE MAY
ALSO BE GLORIFIED
TOGETHER.
FOR I CONSIDER...
THE SUFFERINGS OF
THIS PRESENT TIME
ARE NOT WORTHY
TO BE COMPARED
WITH THE GLORY..."**
Rom.. 8:17-18

I could easily fill any meeting place if I displayed banners proclaiming “Blessing and prosperity—God’s Will For You.” However, I doubt if as many would show up with a banner displaying, “Suffering—God’s Plan for Spiritual Blessings!” However, in reality, suffering is indeed the key to true blessing and prosperity where it counts the most—in eternity. Paul reminds us:

**“IF WE SUFFER WITH HIM,
THAT WE MAY ALSO
BE GLORIFIED TOGETHER...
FOR I CONSIDER THE SUFFERINGS
OF THIS PRESENT TIME
ARE NOT WORTHY TO BE COMPARED
WITH THE GLORY WHICH SHALL BE
REVEALED IN US.”**

Rom. 8:17-8



**“FOR OUR LIGHT
AFFLICTION,
WHICH IS
BUT FOR A MOMENT,
IS WORKING FOR US
A FAR MORE EXCEEDING
AND ETERNAL WEIGHT
OF GLORY.”**

2 Cor. 4:17

Is this your outlook and your confession concerning suffering, or are you listening to those who teach that if you suffer, then you are lacking in faith? Was Paul, the apostle of faith, lacking in faith? Some people say that if he only had enough faith, he would not have suffered his thorn in the flesh. Not meaning to be unkind, but at its best, that amounts to

PURE



**“SENSELESS EXAGGERATED
TALK OR WRITING,
WORTHLESS STUFF.”**

Webster

Let us compare that modern-day “hogwash faith” concept with what Paul describes as true faith as it was manifested in the church at Thessalonica:



**“WE ARE BOUND TO THANK
GOD ALWAYS FOR YOU
BRETHREN, AS IT IS FITTING,
BECAUSE YOUR FAITH GROWS
EXCEEDINGLY... WE OURSELVES
BOAST OF YOU AMONG THE
CHURCHES OF GOD FOR YOUR
PATIENCE AND FAITH IN ALL
YOUR PERSECUTIONS AND
TRIBULATIONS THAT YOU
ENDURE
(SAME GREEK WORD FOR
SUFFER-“KAKOPATHEO”
MEANING SUFFER TROUBLE,
ENDURE HARDSHIP)
WHICH IS MANIFEST EVIDENCE
OF THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT
OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE
COUNTED WORTHY OF THE
KINGDOM OF GOD,
FOR WHICH YOU ALSO
SUFFER.”**

2 Thess. 1:3-5

Let me share with you a basic principle which will help bring sanity to your understanding of the relationship between faith and suffering. I love this illustration, for it comes right from the Word of God, in context. Do you know how important it is not to lift out a verse from its context? Do you know that “half-a-truth” is a potentially deadly poison? First, let us read through the scriptures, and then I will graphically illustrate them for you. Let us begin with the apostle Peter’s view of suffering:

**“BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT;
BECAUSE YOUR ADVERSARY
THE DEVIL WALKS ABOUT
LIKE A ROARING LION,
SEEKING WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR.
RESISTING HIM, STEADFAST IN THE
FAITH, KNOWING THAT
THE SAME SUFFERINGS ARE
EXPERIENCED BY YOUR
BROTHERHOOD IN THE WORLD.
BUT MAY THE GOD OF ALL GRACE,
WHO HAS CALLED US TO HIS
ETERNAL GLORY BY CHRIST JESUS,
AFTER YOU HAVE SUFFERED A
WHILE, PERFECT, ESTABLISH,
STRENGTHEN, AND SETTLE YOU...
THIS IS THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD
IN WHICH YOU STAND.”**

1 Peter 5:8-12



Give sufficient time to absorb this important triangle revealed by the apostle Peter as containing “the true grace of God in which we stand”:

3

**BUT MAY THE GOD OF ALL GRACE,
WHO CALLED US TO HIS ETERNAL GLORY
BY CHRIST JESUS,
AFTER YOU HAVE SUFFERED A WHILE,
PERFECT, ESTABLISH,
STRENGTHEN, AND SETTLE YOU...
THIS IS THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD
IN WHICH YOU STAND.”**

1 Pet. 5:10,12



**“BE SOBER,
BE VIGILANT;
BECAUSE
YOUR ADVERSARY
THE DEVIL WALKS
ABOUT LIKE A
ROARING LION
SEEKING WHOM HE
MAY DEVOUR.**

1 Pet. 5:8

**RESIST HIM,
STEADFAST
IN THE FAITH,
KNOWING
THAT THE SAME
SUFFERINGS
ARE EXPERIENCED
BY YOUR
BROTHERHOOD
IN THE WORLD.**

1 Pet. 5:9

1

STEP #1



**“BE SOBER,
BE VIGILANT;
BECAUSE
YOUR
ADVERSARY
THE DEVIL
WALKS ABOUT
LIKE A ROARING
LION
SEEKING WHOM
HE MAY
DEVOUR.”**

1 Pet. 5:8

You have an adversary who is the devil. He is walking about looking for whom he may devour.

God has called us to His eternal glory as “joint-heirs” with Christ. If we suffer with Him (Rom. 8:17), we shall be gloried with Him and shall reign with Him. (2 Tim. 2:12)

Jesus said, “If you overcome as I overcame, you will sit with Me on My throne.” (paraphrase of Rev. 3:21).

If we are to suffer, there must be a source of suffering, and if we are to overcome, there must be something to overcome, and that is why God allows Satan to roam the earth as your adversary!

The scripture is quite plain in stating that God is using the devil for the purpose of perfecting, establishing, strengthening, and settling the saints. We are called to be made perfect, to grow up in all things, to learn how to rule and reign with Christ as we are conformed into His very own image. May I show you two startling scriptures pertaining to Jesus, whose steps we are to follow:

**“THOUGH HE WERE A SON,
YET HE LEARNED OBEDIENCE
BY THE THINGS WHICH HE
SUFFERED. ... AND HAVING BEEN
PERFECTED, HE BECAME THE
AUTHOR OF ETERNAL
SALVATION...”**

Heb. 5:8-9

**“FOR IT WAS FITTING FOR HIM IN ...
BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY,
TO MAKE THE AUTHOR
OF THEIR SALVATION
PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERINGS.”**

Heb. 2:10



If Jesus, the author of our salvation, who was sent by the Father to bring many sons to glory, was perfected by the things He suffered, and learned obedience by the things He suffered, why do we think we can avoid suffering and still be perfected?

What great man in scripture did God use suffering in order to “perfect, strengthen, establish and settle” by allowing the devil into his life without cause?

**“THERE WAS A MAN
IN THE LAND OF UZ,
WHOSE NAME WAS JOB;
AND THAT MAN
WAS BLAMELESS AND UPRIGHT,
AND ONE WHO FEARED GOD
AND SHUNNED EVIL.”**

Job 1:1



(In this account, notice the submissive role that Satan must obey being under God’s authority.)



“NOW THERE WAS A DAY WHEN THE SONS OF GOD CAME TO PRESENT THEMSELVES BEFORE THE LORD, AND SATAN ALSO CAME AMONG THEM. AND ‘HE LORD SAID TO SATAN, ‘FROM WHERE DO YOU COME?’ SO SATAN ANSWERED THE LORD AND SAID, ‘FROM GOING TO AND FRO ON THE EARTH, AND FROM WALKING BACK AND FORTH ON IT.’ THEN THE LORD SAID TO SATAN, ‘HAVE YOU CONSIDERED MY SERVANT JOB, THAT THERE IS NONE LIKE HIM ON THE EARTH, A BLAMELESS AND UPRIGHT MAN, ONE WHO FEARS GOD AND SHUNS EVIL?’ SO SATAN ANSWERED THE LORD AND SAID, ‘DOES JOB FEAR GOD FOR NOTHING? HAVE YOU NOT MADE A HEDGE ABOUT HIM, AROUND HIS HOUSEHOLD, AND AROUND ALL THAT HE HAS... YOU HAVE BLESSED THE WORK OF HIS HANDS, AND HIS POSSESSIONS HAVE INCREASED ...’ ”

Job Chapter 1 excerpts

Notice that Satan is under obligation to give account to God and that he is powerless against Job’s protection which God placed about him. Satan had no access to Job, his household, or his possessions, for Job was being blessed for his godliness.

It is Important to see that Job had given no place to the devil! We are thus instructed by Paul as well not to give place to the Devil (Eph. 4:27). Job shunned evil, which prevented Satan from being able to penetrate God's hedge of protection about him.

Next we see a significant change in Job's protection and blessing and the scripture reveals to us why God allowed it to happen:

SATAN'S CHALLENGE TO GOD:



**"BUT NOW, STRETCH OUT YOUR HAND
AND TOUCH ALL THAT HE HAS,
AND HE WILL SURELY CURSE
YOU TO YOUR FACE!"**

Job 1:11

**"STRETCH OUT YOUR HAND NOW,
AND TOUCH HIS BONE
AND HIS FLESH,
AND HE WILL SURELY CURSE
YOU TO YOUR FACE!"**

Job 2:5



The challenge that Satan made to God concerning Job is the same challenge he makes against the saints today! Let me paraphrase it for you:

**YOUR SERVANTS SERVE YOU BECAUSE
YOU BLESS, PROSPER AND
PROTECT THEM.
IF YOU CEASE DOING SO,
THEY WILL CURSE YOU TO YOUR FACE!**

I pray that you are beginning to see why the "faith/prosperity message" is so dangerous! Saints are being taught that God is their "shield and butler". It is a man-centered gospel, rather than a God-centered gospel, and many are taught to serve God for what blessings they can get from Him!

God accepts Satan's challenge to demonstrate that his accusation is a false one. Let me show you a passage of scripture from the New Testament which depicts how God intends to use the Church to demonstrate to Satan the same lesson he demonstrated through Job:

**"...TO THE INTENT THAT NOW
THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD
MIGHT BE MADE KNOWN
BY THE CHURCH
TO THE PRINCIPALITIES
AND POWERS
IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES."**

Eph. 3:10

**"THE PURPOSE IS THAT THROUGH
THE CHURCH THE COMPLICATED,
MANY-SIDED WISDOM OF GOD IN
ALL ITS INFINITE VARIETY AND
INNUMERABLE ASPECTS MIGHT
NOW BE MADE KNOWN TO
THE ANGELIC RULERS
AND AUTHORITIES
IN THE HEAVENLY SPHERE."**

Amplified

THE CHURCH



**"WE...WRESTLE AGAINST
PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS
IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES"**

Eph. 6:12

THE WISDOM OF GOD

**"...WISDOM
OF GOD
MIGHT BE MADE KNOWN
BY THE CHURCH
TO THE PRINCIPALITIES
AND POWERS
IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES."**

Eph. 3:10

MADE KNOWN BY

**PRINCIPALITIES
AND POWERS
IN HEAVENLY PLACES**

UNTO

**THE
CHURCH
ON EARTH**

JOB IS A TYPE AND SHADOW — OF THE CHURCH:

1. HE WAS BLAMELESS AND UPRIGHT, HE FEARED GOD AND HATED EVIL.

2. HE WAS BLESSED AND PROTECTED BY HIS GOD FROM SATAN.

3. HE WAS CHOSEN BY GOD AS PROOF THAT HE SERVED GOD FOR WHO HE WAS AND NOT WHAT GOD COULD GIVE HIM. (SATAN IS CHALLENGING THE WISDOM OF GOD IN HIS DEALINGS WITH JOB!)

1. THE CHURCH IS ALSO BLAMELESS AND UPRIGHT, IN CHRIST.

2. GOD ALSO BLESSES AND PROTECTS HIS SERVANTS WHO FEAR GOD/HATE EVIL.

3. THE CHURCH IS CHOSEN BY GOD TO DEMONSTRATE TO PRINCIPALITIES/POWERS GOD'S WISDOM. (SATAN IS CHALLENGING GOD'S WISDOM IN HIS DEALINGS WITH THE CHURCH!)

Satan challenged God that Job would curse Him to His face if he was given adversity instead of blessing. God accepted the challenge, but laid down the ground rules by which the test would be governed:

FIRST TEST:

“SO THE LORD SAID TO SATAN, ‘BEHOLD, ALL THAT HE HAS IS IN YOUR POWER, ONLY DO NOT LAY A HAND ON HIS PERSON.’”

Job 1:12

SECOND TEST:

“SO THE LORD SAID TO SATAN, ‘BEHOLD, HE IS IN YOUR HAND, BUT SPARE HIS LIFE.’”

Job 2:6



The point that needs to be stressed here is that nothing happened to Job which God did not allow, and that God governs the testing of His saints. By comparing this truth to our earlier scriptures from 1 Peter 5, we can see that as Satan, our adversary, seeks to devour us, it is God who has called us to His eternal glory and is allowing the suffering “for a while” with the objective of “perfecting, establishing, settling, and strengthening us”. However, Like Job, nothing will come to us without God’s divine O.K. which are governed by His specified limitations.

Also, we must take note that Job was oblivious to the fact that Satan was his adversary, for we see him continually attributing Satan’s destruction to God with a blind submission to God, saying, “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord”. (Job 1:21)

Though our trial is like Job’s in that we are being tested as to whether we would also curse God to His face, but unlike Job, we are not ignorant that Satan is our adversary of which 1 Peter 5:9 tells us to “resist him, steadfast in the faith”. We function under a new covenant which has given us power and authority through Jesus Christ that Job did not have.

In pursuing this thought further, let me show you the outcome of Job's testing:

**PASSED
THE
FIRST
TEST...**

**"IN ALL THIS JOB DID NOT SIN NOR CHARGE
GOD WITH WRONG."** Job 1:22

**PASSED
THE
SECOND
TEST AS
WELL...**

**"...HIS WIFE SAID TO HIM,
'DO YOU STILL HOLD TO YOUR INTEGRITY?
CURSE GOD AND DIE!'
BUT HE SAID TO HER,
'YOU SPEAK AS ONE OF
THE FOOLISH WOMEN SPEAKS.
SHALL WE INDEED ACCEPT GOOD FROM GOD,
AND SHALL WE NOT ACCEPT ADVERSITY?'
IN THIS JOB DID NOT SIN WITH HIS LIPS."**

Job 1:22

Think for a moment about Job's statement, "Shall we accept good from God and not accept adversity?" What is your answer to that question in light of the fact that we have been called to not only believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake? (Phil. 1:29). Can you see that perfection and obedience are obtained through suffering? What about Peter telling us that all the brotherhood are experiencing the same sufferings allowed by God?

If Job's statement isn't enough proof of God giving both good and adversity, let us consider the added testimony of Solomon:

**"CONSIDER
THE WORK OF GOD;
FOR WHO CAN MAKE
STRAIGHT WHAT HE HAS
MADE CROOKED?
IN THE DAY OF PROSPERITY
BE JOYFUL,
BUT IN
THE DAY OF ADVERSITY
CONSIDER:
SURELY GOD
HAS
APPOINTED
THE ONE
AS WELL AS THE OTHER..."**





1

STEP #1

**“BE SOBER,
BE VIGILANT;
BECAUSE
YOUR
ADVERSARY
THE DEVIL
WALKS ABOUT
LIKE A
ROARING
LION
SEEKING
WHOM HE
MAY
DEVOUR.”**

1 Pet. 5:8

Satan is your adversary and he will be allowed by God to bring adversity to demonstrate to fallen principalities and powers the wisdom of God in granting salvation unto you. However, be sure that you give no place to the devil, and don't allow him in by your sin!

That is why James says, “submit unto God and resist the devil” (Jam. 4:7).



2

STEP #2

**“RESIST HIM,
STEADFAST
IN THE FAITH,
KNOWING THAT
THE
SAME SUFFERINGS
ARE EXPERIENCED
BY YOUR
BROTHER-
HOOD IN
THE WORLD.”**

1 Pet. 5:9

In response to Satan, you must resist him steadfast in the faith, and know that your brotherhood is also suffering the same trials throughout the world.

I want to stress that the scripture says we need steadfastness in our resisting of the devil. Somehow we think that by mentioning the Name of Jesus, the adversary immediately flees! However, James says, “resist him and he shall flee” (Jam. 4:7), but it does not say he will flee immediately! Consider the lingering affliction that the prophet Habakkuk describes:

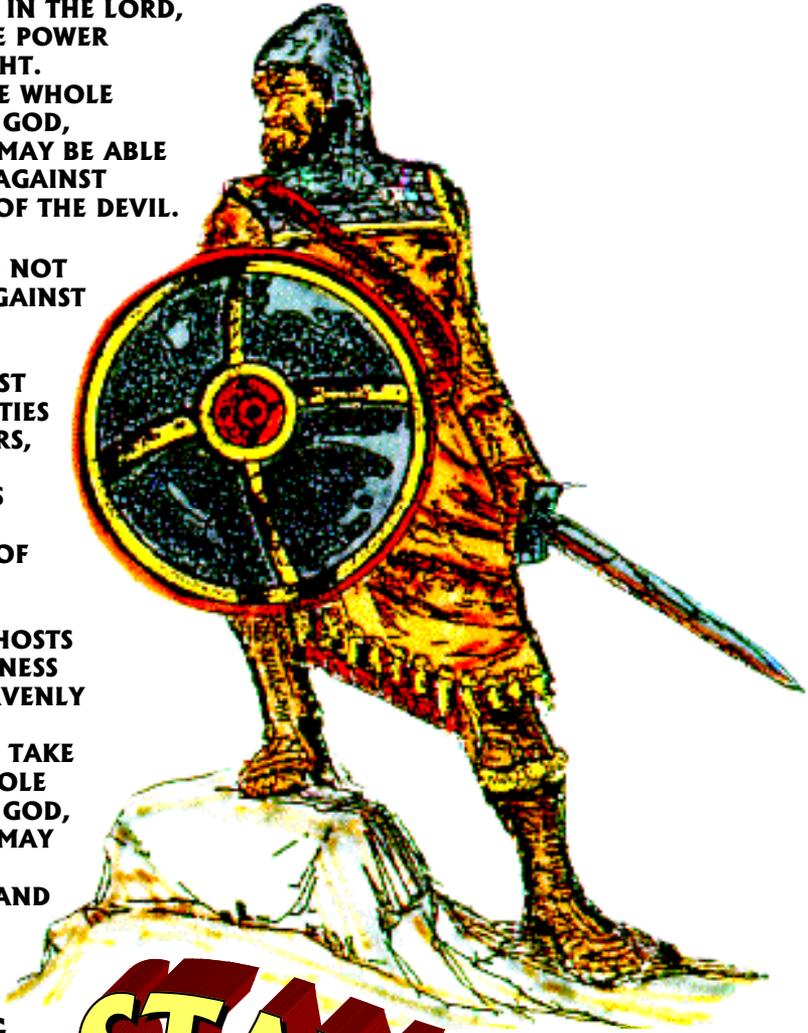
**“THOUGH THE FIG TREE MAY NOT BLOSSOM,
NOR FRUIT BE ON THE VINES;
THOUGH THE LABOR OF THE OLIVE MAY FAIL,
AND THE FIELDS YIELD NO FOOD;
THOUGH THE FLOCK BE CUT OFF FROM THE FOLD,
AND THERE WILL BE NO HERD IN THE STALLS-
YET I WILL REJOICE IN THE LORD,
I WILL JOY IN THE GOD OF MY SALVATION.
THE LORD GOD IS MY STRENGTH;
HE WILL MAKE MY FEET LIKE DEER'S FEET,
AND HE WILL MAKE ME WALK ON MY HIGH HILLS.”**

Hab. 3:17-18

Paul the apostle, in Ephesians 6, stresses the need for the saints to have steadfastness in battle:

**“FINALLY, MY BRETHREN,
BE STRONG IN THE LORD,
AND IN THE POWER
OF HIS MIGHT.
PUT ON THE WHOLE
ARMOR OF GOD,
THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE
TO STAND AGAINST
THE WILES OF THE DEVIL.**

**FOR WE DO NOT
WRESTLE AGAINST
FLESH AND
BLOOD,
BUT AGAINST
PRINCIPALITIES
AND POWERS,
AGAINST
THE RULERS
OF THE
DARKNESS OF
THIS AGE,
AGAINST
SPIRITUAL HOSTS
OF WICKEDNESS
IN THE HEAVENLY
PLACES.
THEREFORE TAKE
UP THE WHOLE
ARMOR OF GOD,
THAT YOU MAY
BE ABLE
TO WITHSTAND
IN THE
EVIL DAY,
AND
HAVING
DONE ALL,
TO**



STAND!!

Eph. 6:10-13

God calls us to suffer in resisting, not in complacency. It is in the time of standing without results that our faith is tested and perfected. "Faith is the substance of the things hoped for" (Heb. 11:1). Too many of the saints go belly up as soon as the magic wand of using the phrase, "in Jesus' name", does not work. The word translated as "suffer", as I mentioned before, is the same Greek word also translated as "endure". Paul said:

"YOU MUST ENDURE HARDSHIP AS A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST." 2 Tim. 2:3



"IF WE ENDURE WE SHALL ALSO REIGN WITH HIM..."

2 Tim. 2:12

"FOR YOU HAVE NEED OF ENDURANCE..."

Heb. 10:36

"RUN THE RACE WITH ENDURANCE..."

Heb. 12:2

An endurance runner increases his ability to endure by systematically pushing himself a little further every time.

God is more interested in our spiritual growth than in seeing the devil flee at the mere mention of the name of Jesus.

STEP #3

3

"THE GOD OF ALL GRACE, WHO CALLED US TO HIS ETERNAL GLORY BY CHRIST JESUS, AFTER YOU HAVE SUFFERED A WHILE, PERFECT, ESTABLISH, STRENGTHEN, AND SETTLE YOU..."

1Pet. 5:10

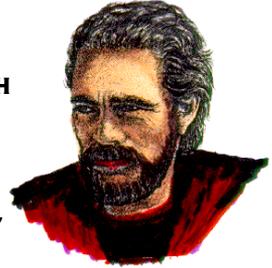


After you have suffered (endured) a while, you will be perfected, established, strengthened and settled more than you were before the trial. That is what Peter is teaching. The early church knew this and it is evident in the teaching of the apostles Peter and James, as well as Paul.

The apostle James tells us that we should count suffering as all joy:

“MY BRETHREN, COUNT IT ALL JOY WHEN YOU FALL INTO VARIOUS TRIALS. KNOWING THAT THE TESTING OF YOUR FAITH PRODUCES PATIENCE (ENDURANCE/PERSEVERANCE). BUT LET PATIENCE (ENDURANCE) HAVE ITS PERFECT WORK, THAT YOU MAY BE PERFECT AND COMPLETE, LACKING NOTHING.”

James 1:2-4



The apostle Peter also tells us that trials test the level of our faith in order that we may receive praise, honor, and glory later:

“IN THIS YOU GREATLY REJOICE, THOUGH FOR NOW, FOR A LITTLE WHILE, IF NEED BE, YOU HAVE BEEN GRIEVED BY VARIOUS TRIALS, THAT THE GENUINENESS OF YOUR FAITH... MAY BE FOUND TO PRAISE, HONOR, AND GLORY AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.”

1 Peter 1:6-7



Peter also tells us that these trying events are not to be considered as strange happenings when suffering comes to the believer:

“BELOVED, DO NOT THINK IT STRANGE CONCERNING THE FIERY TRIAL WHICH IS TO TRY YOU, AS THOUGH SOME STRANGE THING HAPPENED TO YOU; BUT REJOICE, TO THE EXTENT THAT YOU PARTAKE OF CHRIST’S SUFFERINGS, THAT WHEN HIS GLORY IS REVEALED, YOU MAY ALSO BE GLAD WITH EXCEEDING JOY.”

1 Peter 3:12-13

The apostle Paul had the very same outlook on the subjects of suffering, trials, and afflictions as did James and Peter:

“LET US ALSO BE FULL OF JOY NOW! LET US EXULT AND TRIUMPH IN OUR TROUBLES AND REJOICE IN OUR SUFFERINGS, KNOWING THAT PRESSURE, AND AFFLICTION, AND HARDSHIP, PRODUCES PATIENT AND UNSWERVING ENDURANCE AND ENDURANCE DEVELOPS MATURITY OF CHARACTER.”

Rom. 5:3-4 Amplified



Does your view agree with that of the apostle Peter, James, and Paul? Or, do you view it all “gloom and doom”, rather than counting it all joy? Do you lack the same vision of God’s purposes for suffering as expressed by His apostles? Consider Paul:

“FOR I CONSIDER THE SUFFERINGS OF THIS PRESENT TIME ARE NOT WORTHY TO BE COMPARED WITH THE GLORY THAT SHALL BE REVEALED IN US.”

Rom. 8:18

“FOR OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION, WHICH IS BUT FOR A MOMENT, IS WORKING FOR US A FAR MORE EXCEEDING AND ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY.”

2 Cor. 4:17

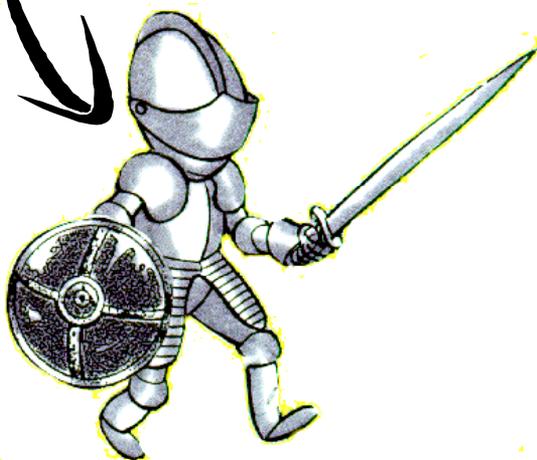
How do you see yourself properly dressed to meet the devil?

as:



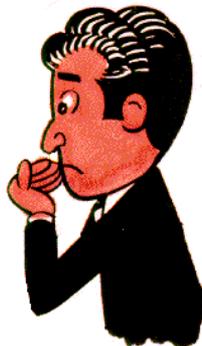
IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY CONTROLLED CAPSULE

or as:



CLOTHED IN THE ARMOR OF GOD FOR EVERY CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

Which is the true blessing of God: one which keeps you from exposure to the elements or one that exposes you to danger in order to be able to perfect, establish, strengthen and settle you in this life, and afterward reward you with praise, honor, and glory, in the life to come?



“God, bless me with such suffering!”

Before we go on to define what are the seven types of suffering revealed in God's Word, let me recapitulate (1) the benefits we receive, and (2) the reasons God allows His saints to suffer:

1. THAT WE MAY DEMONSTRATE ON BEHALF OF GOD TO THE WICKED PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS GOD'S WISDOM IN BRINGING FORTH THE CHURCH.

(Job 1&2, Eph. 3:10)

2. TO QUALIFY US TO REIGN WITH CHRIST, TO BE JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST, TO BE GLORIFIED TOGETHER WITH CHRIST.

(2 Tim. 2:12, Rom. 8:17-18, 2 Cor. 4:17, 1 Pet. 4:13)

3. TO TEST AND PERFECT THE GENUINENESS OF OUR FAITH THAT IT MAY BE FOUND WORTHY OF PRAISE, HONOR AND GLORY. (1 Pet. 1:6-7, Jas. 1:2-4)

4. TO DEVELOP IN US ENDURANCE AND MATURITY OF CHARACTER. (Rom. 5:3-4 Amplified)

5. TO PERFECT ESTABLISH, STRENGTHEN, AND SETTLE US. (1 Pet. 5:8-10)

The fruit of such a list as this is proof that it comes from God, for the devil does not develop these things in the children of God any more than he develops these things in his own children. Cultivate that the devil is a tool in God's hand to perfect the saints and to give them a better choice.

This prophetic verse in Revelation 20 bears out the fact that God is using the devil to achieve His purposes:

"HE LAID HOLD OF THE DRAGON, THAT SERPENT OF OLD, WHO IS THE DEVIL AND SATAN, AND BOUND HIM FOR A THOUSAND YEARS... SO THAT HE SHOULD DECEIVE THE NATIONS NO MORE TILL THE THOUSAND YEARS WERE FINISHED. BUT AFTER THESE THINGS HE MUST BE RELEASED FOR A LITTLE WHILE."

Rev. 20:2-4



I pray that you will give serious meditation to the flow chart below. A careful study of it will reveal that suffering is not a light subject in the Word of God. For the most part, suffering is designed to work in us the very character and virtue of our Lord Jesus Christ. However, note well that there are two types of suffering listed that are not going to be rewarded by God at all.

THE CALL TO SUFFER

**“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

THE FOUR PURPOSES OF SUFFERING



THE FIVE TYPES OF SUFFERING UNTO REWARDS



THE TWO TYPES OF SUFFERING WHICH HAVE NO REWARDS



As stated, there are seven types of suffering mentioned in the Bible. Five types are “for His Name’s sake” and two are, for a lack of a better phrase, for “stupidity’s sake”. Five will bring you eternal rewards for your suffering and the other two will just bring you suffering. My pastoral experience has been that many people suffer for their faults and are chastened for their disobedience to God, and yet they believe they are “suffering for Jesus”. I have met enough obnoxious saints who are witnessing for Jesus by cramming it down people’s throats and then when they suffer reprisal, they say they are being persecuted for the gospel. To lose your job for witnessing at work can occur because you witness instead of work. How can you then say, “Oh, I was fired for Jesus’ sake?” Let me show you what the scripture states to be the proper way to witness:

**“BUT SANCTIFY THE LORD GOD IN YOUR HEARTS,
AND ALWAYS BE READY TO GIVE A DEFENSE TO
EVERYONE WHO ASKS YOU
A REASON FOR THE HOPE THAT IS IN YOU
WITH MEEKNESS AND FEAR.”**

1 Peter 3:15

**“WALK IN WISDOM TOWARD THOSE WHO ARE OUTSIDE.
LET YOUR SPEECH ALWAYS BE WITH GRACE,
SEASONED WITH SALT,
THAT YOU MAY KNOW HOW TO ANSWER EACH ONE.”**

Col. 4:5-6

**“THE LORD HAS GIVEN ME THE TONGUE OF THE LEARNED,
THAT I SHOULD KNOW HOW TO SPEAK A WORD IN SEASON
TO HIM WHO IS WEARY.”**

Isa. 50: 4

It is pretty obvious from these passages that witnessing is to be a response to an inquiry or question from an unbeliever. Jesus warned His followers about “casting pearls before swine”, and about the need to be “wise as serpents and harmless as doves.” Here is why:

**“DO NOT GIVE WHAT IS HOLY
TO THE DOGS;
NOR CAST YOUR PEARLS
BEFORE SWINE,
LEST THEY TRAMPLE THEM
UNDER THEIR FEET,
AND TURN AND TEAR YOU IN PIECES.”**

Matt. 7:16



To be found the best witness at work, we should be found to be the best worker! Jesus states:

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

Matt.5:16

That means be honest! Be trustworthy! Be punctual! Be loyal! Be faithful! Then you qualify to give a reason of the hope that is in you by giving credit to God:

“SERVANTS, BE OBEDIENT TO THOSE WHO ARE YOUR MASTERS...WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING, IN SINCERITY OF HEART, AS UNTO CHRIST...WITH GOOD WILL DOING SERVICE, AS TO THE LORD, AND NOT UNTO MEN...” Eph. 6:5-7

There are many ways we can suffer for our faults. Being a bad witness at work is one of them. Listen to the counsel of the apostle Peter:

“FOR WHAT CREDIT IS IT IF, WHEN YOU ARE BEATEN FOR YOUR FAULTS?”

1 Pet. 2:20

“LET NONE OF YOU SUFFER AS AN EVILDOER, OR AS A BUSYBODY IN OTHER PEOPLE’S MATTERS...”

1 Pet. 4:15



Much could be said about busybodies and gossips causing much suffering to others and also to themselves when their malicious deeds are eventually exposed.

Before we continue on, let us take a brief moment to speak of the second type of suffering which does not cause us to inherit eternal rewards, but rather just misery here on earth. I am speaking of suffering chastisement. In this area, I fear many of God’s people are mistaking chastisement from God as suffering for Jesus’ sake.

“NOW NO CHASTENING SEEMS JOYFUL FOR THE PRESENT, BUT GRIEVOUS; NEVERTHELESS, AFTERWARD IT YIELDS THE PEACEABLE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN TRAINED BY IT.”

Heb. 12:11

The key lies in being able to recognize God’s chastisement when it is at work!





**“BUT LET A MAN EXAMINE
HIMSELF...HE WHO EATS AND DRINKS
IN AN UNWORTHY MANNER, EATS AND
DRINKS JUDGMENT TO HIMSELF...
FOR THIS REASON MANY ARE WEAK
AND SICK AMONG YOU AND
MANY SLEEP.**

**FOR IF WE WOULD
JUDGE OURSELVES,
WE WOULD NOT BE JUDGED.
FOR WHEN WE ARE JUDGED,
WE ARE CHASTENED BY THE LORD THAT WE MAY
NOT BE CONDEMNED WITH THE WORLD.”**

1 Cor. 11:28-32



Unforgiveness is the number one killer in the Body of Christ! Jesus warns His own people that unless they forgive, they will be turned over to the tormentors until they do forgive ((see Matt. 18:21-35). That secret sin has taken many so-called wonderful Christians to a pre-mature death! Consider the prophet Jeremiah's warning:



**“BUT I WILL CORRECT YOU IN JUSTICE,
AND WILL NOT LET YOU GO UNPUNISHED.**

**FOR THUS SAYS THE LORD:
‘YOUR AFFLICTION IS INCURABLE,
YOUR WOUND IS SEVERE. THERE IS NO
ONE TO PLEAD YOUR CAUSE, THAT YOU
MAY BE BOUND UP...YOU HAVE NO
HEALING MEDICINES...FOR I HAVE
WOUNDED YOU...WITH
CHASTISEMENT...FOR THE MULTITUDE OF
YOUR INIQUITIES, BECAUSE YOUR SINS
HAVE INCREASED. WHY DO YOU CRY
ABOUT YOUR AFFLICTION?
YOUR SORROW IS INCURABLE BECAUSE
OF THE MULTITUDE OF YOUR INIQUITIES,
BECAUSE YOUR SINS HAVE INCREASED
I HAVE DONE THESE THINGS TO YOU’.”**

Jer. 30:12-15

Do not rationalize away these scriptures as part of the Old Covenant law that is no longer applicable to those now under grace. Paul, in the passages above in First Corinthians, is writing to New Covenant believers. He is warning those under grace there is a reason why many are sick and many have died! God is an unchanging God. His covenants may change, but His chastisement principles do not. Listen to Paul's warning from God, for it is just as severe as Jeremiah's:

**“DO NOT BE DECEIVED, GOD IS NOT MOCKED;
FOR WHATEVER A MAN SOWS, THAT HE WILL ALSO REAP.
FOR HE WHO SOWS TO HIS FLESH WILL OF THE FLESH
REAP CORRUPTION, BUT HE WHO SOWS TO THE SPIRIT WILL
OF THE SPIRIT REAP EVERLASTING LIFE.”**

Gal. 6:7

**“BUT THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD
DEPARTED FROM SAUL,
AND A DISTRESSING SPIRIT
FROM THE LORD TROUBLED HIM.”**

1 Sam 16:14

The great deadly example of one who continued to sow to the flesh was King Saul. Note that it was the Lord who (1) took away the Spirit of the Lord from Saul and (2) it was the Lord who sent him a distressing spirit to trouble him.



Seeing this severe judgment of God on King Saul caused King David to cry out in Psalm 51, “Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take your Holy Spirit from me” (Psm. 51:11). Jesus must have had this severe judgment in mind in telling the parable of the unforgiving servant who was threatened with being turned over to the tormentors until he would forgive (Matt.18:22-35).

As we leave this topic, we would do well to do much more analyzing and less rationalizing of our own behavior before God. David ended up bearing the testimony of being a man after God’s own heart who would do all of His will (see Acts 13:22). We all know he was not a man of sinless perfection, but he certainly knew how to repent when confronted by God as Psalm 51 bears out. Consider these passages recorded of David, for they reveal what God looks for in us:



**“SEARCH ME O, GOD,
AND KNOW MY HEART; TRY ME...
AND SEE IF THERE IS ANY
WICKED WAY IN ME,
AND LEAD ME IN THE WAY EVERLASTING...”**

Psalms 139:23-24

**“WHO CAN UNDERSTAND HIS ERRORS?
CLEANSE ME FROM SECRET FAULTS.
KEEP BACK YOUR SERVANT ALSO FROM
PRESUMPTUOUS SINS; LET THEM NOT HAVE
DOMINION OVER ME. THEN I SHALL BE
BLAMELESS, AND I SHALL BE INNOCENT OF
GREAT TRANSGRESSION.**

**LET THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH
AND THE MEDITATION OF MY HEART
BE ACCEPTABLE IN YOUR SIGHT, O LORD,
MY STRENGTH AND MY REDEEMER.”**

Psalms 19:12-14

**“AND YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN
THE EXHORTATION WHICH SPEAKS TO YOU
AS TO SONS:
‘MY SON, DO NOT DESPISE
THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD,
NOR BE DISCOURAGED
WHEN YOU ARE REBUKED BY HIM;
FOR WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE CHASTENS,
AND SCOURGES EVERY SON
WHOM HE RECEIVES.’
IF YOU ENDURE CHASTENING,
GOD DEALS WITH YOU AS WITH SONS;
FOR WHAT SON IS THERE WHOM A FATHER
DOES NOT CHASTEN? BUT IF YOU ARE
WITHOUT CHASTENING, OF WHICH ALL HAVE
BECOME PARTAKERS, THEN YOU ARE
ILLEGITIMATE AND NOT SONS.
FURTHERMORE, WE HAVE HAD HUMAN
FATHERS WHO HAVE CORRECTED US,
AND WE PAID THEM RESPECT.
SHALL WE NOT MUCH MORE READILY
BE IN SUBJECTION TO THE FATHER OF SPIRITS
AND LIVE? FOR THEY INDEED FOR A FEW DAYS
CHASTENED US AS SEEMED BEST TO THEM,
BUT HE FOR OUR PROFIT, THAT WE MAY BE
PARTAKERS OF HIS HOLINESS.
NOW NO CHASTENING SEEMS TO BE JOYFUL
FOR THE PRESENT, BUT GRIEVOUS;
NEVERTHELESS, AFTERWARD IT YIELDS THE
PEACEABLE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS TO
THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN TRAINED BY IT.
THEREFORE, STRENGTHEN THE HANDS THAT
HANG DOWN, AND THE FEEBLE KNEES,
AND MAKE STRAIGHT PATHS FOR YOUR FEET,
SO THAT WHAT IS LAME MAY NOT BE
DISLOCATED, BUT RATHER BE HEALED.”**

Heb 12:5-13

THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD

We have been working our way through the chart below depicting proper and improper forms of suffering. We have established the call to suffer with Christ. We have also established four reasons why God calls His people to embrace suffering. We spent a little time looking at the two ways in which we should avoid suffering. They were (1) suffering for our own faults and (2) suffering due to the chastening of the Lord. It is far better to obey God than to suffer in either of these two non-rewarding categories!

Now we come to the final leg of our chart on suffering. What is listed at the bottom of this chart are the five types of suffering that the scriptures depict as producing eternal rewards in the lives of those who embrace the biblical call to suffering. Let us begin to examine each one:

THE CALL TO SUFFER

**"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

THE FOUR PURPOSES OF SUFFERING

**DEMONSTRATE
TO
PRINCIPALITIES
AND POWERS
THE WISDOM
OF GOD.**

Eph. 3:10, 6:12,
Job 1-2

**TO DEVELOP
UNSWERVING
ENDURANCE
AND
MATURITY OF
CHARACTER.**

Jas. 1:3-4
Rom. 5:3-4

**TO
TEST
AND PERFECT
OUR FAITH
UNTO ETERNAL
REWARDS.**

1 Pet. 1:6-7,
4:12-14, 5:9-10

**TO EARN
THE RIGHT
TO REIGN
AS
JOINT-HEIRS.**

Rom. 8:17-18,
2 Cor. 4:17,
2 Tim. 2:12

THE TWO TYPES OF SUFFERING WHICH HAVE NO REWARDS

**1.
SUFFER
FOR FAULTS**
1 Pet. 2:20

**2.
SUFFER
CHASTENING**
1 Cor. 10:5

THE FIVE TYPES OF SUFFERING UNTO REWARDS

**1.
SUFFER
TEMPTATION**
Jas. 1:12

**2.
SUFFER
PERSECUTION**
2 Tim. 3:12

**3.
SUFFER
AFFLICTION**
2 Tim. 3:12

**4.
SUFFER
WRONGFULLY**
1 Pet. 2:20

**5.
SUFFER
REPROACH**
Acts 5:41

You will remember in Part II of this book, "Righting Dividing the Word of Truth", that we considered the subject of bible numerics as evidence that the Word is being rightly divided. Here again, we see this numerical premise demonstrated:

**5
TYPES OF
SUFFERING**

- 1. TEMPTATION-** Jm. 1:12
- 2. PERSECUTION-** 2 Tim. 3:12
- 3. AFFLICTION-** Psm. 34:19
- 4. WRONGFULLY-** 1 Pet. 2:20
- 5. REPROACH-** Acts 5:41

**5
IS THE NUMBER
OF GRACE**

**"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

**"... WHICH IS MANIFEST EVIDENCE
OF THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT
OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE
COUNTED WORTHY OF
THE KINGDOM OF GOD,
FOR WHICH YOU ALSO SUFFER."**

2 Thess. 1:5

Ponder the reasons that God, as an act of His grace, allows His people to suffer:

**"... THAT YOU MAY BE COUNTED WORTHY OF THE KINGDOM OF
GOD, FOR WHICH YOU ALSO SUFFER."**

2 Thess. 1:5

**"IF INDEED WE SUFFER WITH HIM,
THAT WE MAY ALSO BE GLORIFIED TOGETHER.
FOR I CONSIDER THAT THE SUFFERINGS OF THIS PRESENT
TIME ARE NOT WORTHY TO BE COMPARED WITH THE GLORY
WHICH SHALL BE REVEALED IN US."**

Rom. 8:17-18

**"FOR OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION, WHICH IS BUT FOR A MOMENT
IS WORKING FOR US A FAR MORE EXCEEDING AND
ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY."**

2 Cor. 4:17

Do you have the same outlook toward suffering as Paul expresses in these three passages? Rarely do we see God's grace being compared to suffering, but that is exactly what Paul does:



“AND LEST I SHOULD BE EXALTED ABOVE MEASURE BY THE ABUNDANCE OF THE REVELATIONS, A THORN IN THE FLESH WAS GIVEN TO ME, A MESSENGER OF SATAN TO BUFFET ME, LEST I BE EXALTED ABOVE MEASURE. CONCERNING THIS THING I PLEADED WITH THE LORD THREE TIMES THAT IT MIGHT DEPART FROM ME. AND HE SAID TO ME, ‘MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU, FOR MY STRENGTH IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS.’ THEREFORE MOST GLADLY I WILL RATHER BOAST IN MY INFIRMITIES, THAT THE POWER OF CHRIST MAY REST UPON ME. THEREFORE I TAKE PLEASURE IN INFIRMITIES, IN REPROACHES, IN NEEDS, IN PERSECUTIONS, IN DISTRESSES, FOR CHRIST’S SAKE. FOR WHEN I AM WEAK, THEN I AM STRONG.”

2 Cor. 12:7-10

Far too long teachers have majored in what was Paul's thorn in the flesh rather than grasping the revelation of what that thorn did for him! Again, just like Job, we find God allowing a messenger of Satan to afflict, without justification or cause, God's righteous servant! However, consider the good fruit Paul produced through this trial of suffering:

1. SUFFERING KEPT PAUL HUMBLE:

“AND LEST I BE EXALTED ABOVE MEASURE BY THE ABUNDANCE OF REVELATIONS, A THORN... WAS GIVEN TO ME, A MESSENGER OF SATAN TO BUFFET ME.” (vs. 7)

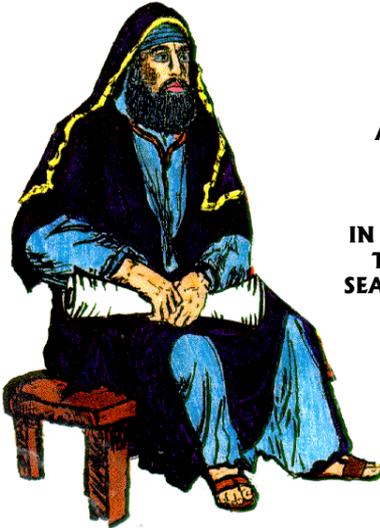
2. SUFFERING MADE PAUL WEAK AND DEPENDENT ON GOD’S STRENGTH RATHER THAN HIS OWN:

“FOR WHEN I AM WEAK, THEN I AM STRONG... FOR THEN THE POWER OF CHRIST RESTS ON ME...” (vs 9-10)

3. SUFFERING ENABLED GOD’S GRACE TO BE PAUL’S SUFFICIENCY:

“MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU, FOR MY STRENGTH IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS.” (vs. 9)

Paul's thorn is clearly stated to be a messenger of Satan that buffeted him. In context, you will see that in chapter 11:24-30, he gives a long list in which he summarizes as the source of his weakness becoming the means of receiving God's strength:



**“...IN STRIPES ABOVE MEASURE,
IN PRISONS MORE FREQUENTLY,
IN DEATHS OFTEN. FIVE TIMES
I RECEIVED FORTY STRIPES...
THREE TIMES I WAS BEATEN WITH
RODS; ONCE I WAS STONED;
THREE TIMES I WAS SHIPWRECKED;
A NIGHT AND A DAY...IN THE DEEP;
IN PERILS OF
MY OWN COUNTRYMEN...
IN PERILS OF THE GENTILES...
IN PERILS OF THE CITY... IN PERILS OF
THE WILDERNESS...IN PERILS OF THE
SEA... IN PERILS OF FALSE BRETHREN...
IN WEARISSNESS... IN TOIL...
IN SLEEPLESSNESS...IN HUNGER...
IN THIRST...IN FASTINGS...
IN COLD ...
AND NAKEDNESS...
WHO IS WEAK,
AND I AM NOT WEAK?...
IF I MUST BOAST, I WILL BOAST IN
THE THINGS WHICH CONCERN
MY INFIRMITY...”**

2 Cor. 11:23-30

After stating all that he had received from this buffeting messenger of Satan, Paul sums it up by saying:

**“THEREFORE, I TAKE PLEASURE IN INFIRMITIES,
IN REPROACHES, IN NEEDS, IN PERSECUTIONS,
IN DISTRESSES, FOR CHRIST'S SAKE...”**

2 Cor. 12:10

We may never be given a ministry like the apostle Paul or receive an abundance of revelation as he did. We may never be given the same buffeting messenger of Satan God sent to Paul, but we are called to suffer for His sake! God is still perfecting His saints in the same manner:

**HE ALLOWS THINGS IN OUR LIVES DESIGNED TO PRODUCE WEAKNESS
SO THAT HIS STRENGTH MAY BE PERFECTED
THROUGH HIS ENABLING GRACE.**

**“I PLEADED WITH THE LORD... AND HE SAID...
MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU,
FOR MY STRENGTH IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS.”**

2 Cor. 12:8-9

Again, we can look to Paul as proof that God was using the process of suffering to perfect him:

“FOR WE DO NOT WANT YOU TO BE IGNORANT, BRETHREN, OF OUR TROUBLE WHICH CAME TO US IN ASIA: THAT WE WERE BURDENED BEYOND MEASURE, ABOVE STRENGTH, SO THAT WE DESPAIRED EVEN OF LIFE. YES, WE HAD THE SENTENCE OF DEATH IN OURSELVES THAT WE SHOULD NOT TRUST IN OURSELVES BUT IN GOD...”

2 Cor. 1:8-9



Actually, God is not interested in what we can accomplish by ourselves, but rather what God can do through His working in us. That is why Paul said:

“I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHO STRENGTHENS ME.”

Phil. 4:13



In like manner, Jesus Himself proclaimed:

“HE WHO ABIDES IN ME, AND I IN HIM, BEARS MUCH FRUIT; FOR WITHOUT ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING.”

John 15:5

Let me give you a key verse which reveals what it is that trials and tribulations are designed to produce:

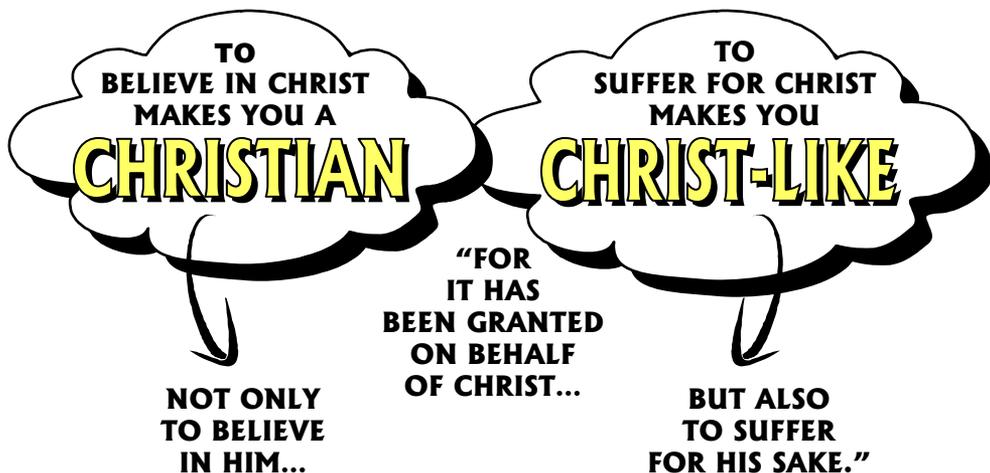
“WE ALSO GLORY IN TRIBULATIONS KNOWING THAT TRIBULATION PRODUCES PERSEVERANCE, AND PERSEVERANCE CHARACTER, AND CHARACTER HOPE.”

Rom. 5:3-4

“MOREOVER, LET US ALSO BE FULL OF JOY NOW! LET US EXULT AND TRIUMPH IN OUR TROUBLES AND REJOICE IN OUR SUFFERINGS, KNOWING THAT PRESSURE AND AFFLICTION AND HARDSHIP PRODUCE PATIENT AND UNSWERVING ENDURANCE. AND ENDURANCE DEVELOPS MATURITY OF CHARACTER...”

Amplified

You may remember what I showed you in In Phil. 1:29, God stated a dual mandate that we were not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake. Let me illustrate this graphically that you may better understand the significance of this important passage of scripture:



So many of God’s people seem only to focus upon the first step of this two-step mandate. “Just believe in Him”, is the banner carried, but what of Peter’s challenge to grow in grace (2 Pet. 3:18), or Paul saying, “grow up into Him in all things” ? (Eph. 4:15)

Below is a verse that everyone quotes quite freely, but then tend to divorce it from its companion verse which contains God’s intention for saying what He did initially:

VS. 28 → **“AND WE KNOW THAT ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THOSE THAT LOVE GOD, TO THOSE WHO ARE THE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE.**

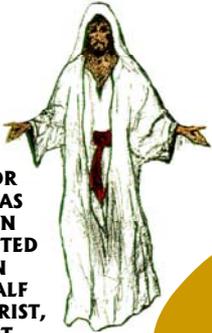
VS. 29 → **FOR WHOM HE FOREKNEW, HE ALSO PREDESTINED TO BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON, THAT HE MIGHT BE THE FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN.”**

Rom. 8:28, 29

What works for good to those who love God are the things that produce unswerving endurance and maturity of character, namely, troubles, sufferings, pressure, affliction and hardship (see Rom. 5:3-4 Amp).

**"FOR IT WAS FITTING FOR HIM...
IN BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY,
TO MAKE THE AUTHOR OF THEIR SALVATION PERFECT
THROUGH SUFFERINGS... THOUGH HE WAS A SON,
YET HE LEARNED OBEDIENCE
BY THE THINGS HE SUFFERED..."**

Heb. 2:10 & 5:8



**"FOR
IT HAS
BEEN
GRANTED
ON
BEHALF
OF CHRIST,
NOT
ONLY TO
BELIEVE
IN HIM,**

**BUT
ALSO
TO
SUFFER
FOR
HIS
SAKE."**
Phil. 1:29

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

1 Pet. 2:21

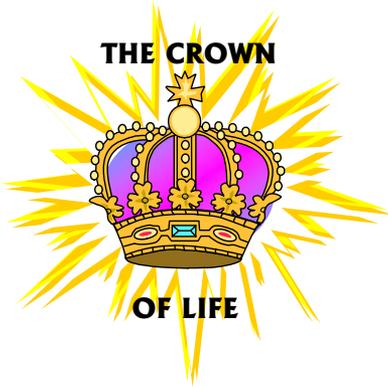


THE ROAD TO

GLORY

IS PAVED WITH

SUFFERING



**“BLESSED IS THE MAN
WHO ENDURES TEMPTATION;
FOR WHEN HE HAS BEEN PROVEN,
HE WILL RECEIVE THE CROWN OF LIFE
WHICH THE LORD HAS PROMISED TO THOSE
WHO LOVE HIM.”**

Jas. 1:12

**“BLESSED, HAPPY, TO BE ENVIED
IS THE MAN WHO IS PATENT UNDER TRIAL
AND STANDS UP UNDER TEMPTATION
FOR WHEN HE HAS STOOD THE TEST
AND BEEN APPROVED,
HE WILL RECEIVE
THE VICTOR’S CROWN OF LIFE...”**

Amplified

The crown is not for being tempted, but for enduring temptation. We all suffer from being tempted, but not all choose to endure resisting temptation, standing up under the test and being proven in order to receive a victor’s crown on Judgment Day! Temptation is the first area in which God tests us. It was so for Adam and Eve in Paradise and it was the first area that Jesus Himself faced which God His Father pre-arranged and allowed:

**“THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL
PLEASED...THEN JESUS WAS LED UP BY THE SPIRIT INTO
THE WILDERNESS TO BE TEMPTED BY THE DEVIL.”**

Matt. 3:17 & 4:1

- 1.GOD IS WELL PLEASED WITH HIS SON...**
- 2.THE SPIRIT LED HIM TO BE TEMPTED...**
- 3.THE DEVIL DOES THE TEMPTING...**

The Book of Hebrews records for us these two truths concerning Jesus’ temptation:

**“FOR IN THAT HE HIMSELF
SUFFERED BEING TEMPTED,
HE IS ABLE TO AID THOSE
WHO ARE TEMPTED.”**

Heb. 2:18

**“LET US HOLD FAST OUR
CONFESSION. FOR WE DO
NOT HAVE A HIGH PRIEST
WHO CANNOT SYMPATHIZE
WITH OUR WEAKNESSES,
BUT WAS IN ALL POINTS
TEMPTED AS WE ARE,
YET WITHOUT SIN.”**

Heb. 4:14-15



Many Christians rationalize their weakness before God by saying, "God knows I'm weak". Yes, He does know you are weak, thus He offers aid to those who are being tempted. Let me add another verse for your consideration dealing with the level of God's involvement in our temptation:

"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 (HE) WILL ALSO MAKE A WAY OF ESCAPE, THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO BEAR IT."

1 Cor. 10:13

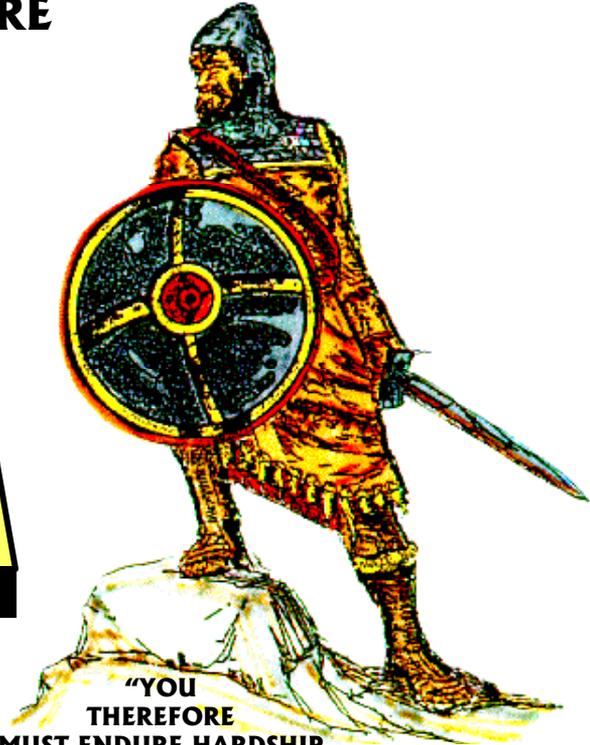
How much will God allow you to be tempted? No more than you are able to bear! Dear one, you cannot escape the suffering that is involved during temptation. You must pay the price of resistance and it is a battle! Let us take time to define the words "suffering" and "temptation". Here is the meaning of "suffer":

SUFFER-ENDURE

(same Greek word:
"HUPOMENO")

It is
translated either as
SUFFER or **ENDURE**)

**"TO STAY UNDER,
TO UNDERGO,
BEAR PATIENTLY,
TO ENDURE TRIAL,
HARDSHIP, TROUBLE
OR AFFLICTION"**



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

2 Tim. 2:3

Now let us consider the meaning of the word translated as “temptation”:

TEMPTATION

(Greek “perirasmos”)



TO TEST...
TO SCRUTINIZE...
TO EXAMINE...
TO PROVE...
TO ENTICE...
TO LURE...
TO BAIT...

**“BLESSED IS THE MAN
WHO ENDURES
TEMPTATION;
FOR WHEN HE HAS BEEN
PROVED,
HE WILL RECEIVE
THE CROWN OF LIFE...
LET NO ONE SAY WHEN HE
IS TEMPTED,
'I AM TEMPTED BY GOD';
FOR GOD CANNOT BE
TEMPTED BY EVIL,
NOR DOES HE TEMPT
ANY MAN.
BUT EACH ONE IS
TEMPTED WHEN HE IS
DRAWN AWAY BY
HIS OWN DESIRES
AND ENTICED.
THEN, WHEN DESIRE HAS
CONCEIVED,
IT GIVES BIRTH TO SIN;
AND SIN, WHEN IT IS
FULL-GROWN,
BRINGS FORTH DEATH.
DO NOT BE DECEIVED, MY
BELOVED BRETHREN.”**

Jas. 1:12-16

- 1. GOD ALLOWS US TO BE TEMPTED, BUT NOT BEYOND WHAT WE ARE ABLE TO ENDURE.**

(Matt. 4:1 & 1 Cor. 10:13)

- 2. TEMPTATION IS A TEST, WITH A CROWN AWAITING THOSE WHOSE LIFESTYLE HAS MORE WINS THAN LOSSES IN THE AREA OF ENDURING TEMPTATION.**

(Jas. 1:12)

- 3. GOD DOES NOT TEMPT US PERSONALLY WITH EVIL, BUT HE DOES ALLOW THE DEVIL TO DO SO.**

(Matt. 4:1 & James 1:13)

- 4. TEMPTATION ITSELF IS NOT SIN. SIN OCCURS WHEN YOU ARE ENTICED BY YOUR OWN DESIRES.**

(Jas. 1:14)

- 5. SIN IS PRODUCED WHEN IT IS CONCEIVED IN YOUR HEART, AND IT GIVES BIRTH TO SIN.**

(Jas. 1:14-15)

Let us now examine the threefold source of all temptation:

**“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.”**

1 John 2:15-16

THE PRIDE OF LIFE

OBSESSION IN THE AREA OF EGO-TRIPS,
SELF-ESTEEM, SELF-IMPORTANCE,
SEEKING POSITIONS OF STATUS
TO IMPRESS OTHERS.

**“ALL
THAT IS
IN THE WORLD”**

THE LUST OF THE FLESH

OVER-INDULGENCE AND
INORDINATE PASSION
IN THE AREA OF SEX OR FOOD.

THE LUST OF THE EYES

OBSESSION WITH
THE DESIRE FOR MATERIAL
POSSESSIONS AND RICHES.

THE TEMPTER

**“I SENT TO KNOW YOUR FAITH,
LEST BY SOME MEANS,
THE TEMPTER HAS TEMPTED YOU...”**
1 Thess. 3:5

THE MEANS BY WHICH THE TEMPTER “TEMPTS”

**THE LUST
OF
THE FLESH**

**“SATAN... TEMPTS
YOU FOR YOUR LACK
OF SELF-CONTROL.”**
1 Cor. 7:5

**THE LUST
OF
THE EYES**

**“THOSE WHO DESIRE
TO BE RICH FALL INTO
TEMPTATION...”**
1 Tim. 6:9

**THE PRIDE
OF
LIFE**

**“PUFFED WITH PRIDE,
FALL INTO THE SAME
CONDEMNATION AS
THE DEVIL.”**
1 Tim. 3:6

“GIVE NO PLACE TO THE DEVIL.” Eph. 4:27

**“LEST SATAN SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF US,
FOR WE ARE NOT IGNORANT OF HIS DEVICES.”** 2 Cor. 2:11

The question that must be asked is, are we ignorant of his devices?
If we are, he will surely take advantage of us!



These are the very same three tactics Satan has used from the very beginning. Consider the temptation of Eve, and that of Jesus as well:

THE LUST OF THE FLESH:

“THE WOMAN SAW THAT THE TREE WAS GOOD FOR FOOD...”

THE LUST OF THE EYES:

“...IT WAS PLEASANT TO THE EYES...”

THE PRIDE OF LIFE:

“AND A TREE DESIRABLE TO MAKE ONE WISE...”

Gen. 3:6-7



THE LUST OF THE FLESH:

“IF YOU BE THE SON OF GOD, COMMAND THESE STONES BECOME BREAD”

THE LUST OF THE EYES:

“...SHOWED HIM ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD... ALL THESE THINGS I WILL GIVE YOU...”

THE PRIDE OF LIFE:

“IF YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD, THROW YOURSELF DOWN... HE WILL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE OVER YOU...”

Matt. 4:3-11

Considering the historical pattern above, we should not be surprised that the apostle John says, “All that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (see 1 Jn. 2:15-16). We must remember that temptation is common to man (1 Cor. 10:13). It is common because Satan uses the same bait, lure, and enticement as an appeal to the old man (sin nature). Listen to what Paul said about the old man:



“THAT YOU PUT OFF... THE OLD MAN WHICH GROWS CORRUPT ACCORDING TO THE DECEITFUL LUSTS... AND THAT YOU PUT ON THE NEW MAN WHICH WAS CREATED ACCORDING TO GOD, IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TRUE HOLINESS.”

Eph. 4:23-24

The key to enduring temptation and resisting the tempter lies in which man you send out to meet the tempter. The old man is corrupt according to deceitful lusts and is subject to readily yield to temptation, but the new man is submitted to doing God’s will having been created in righteousness and true holiness.



THE OLD MAN

"...GROWS CORRUPT
ACCORDING TO
THE DECEITFUL LUSTS..."
Eph. 4:22

THE NEW MAN

"...CREATED ACCORDING TO
GOD IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND
TRUE HOLINESS."
Eph. 4:24

Only when we understand that God requires man to choose between two opposites, can we grasp the purpose of temptation. Even Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden were presented with choices. God set before them two trees in the garden: one, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and the other, the Tree of Life. One was forbidden as a source of nourishment, and the other allowed. Man must choose. The reward of the Crown of Life is given to those who demonstrate, by their choice, to love their God more than anything Satan offers of this present world under his influence:



"HE WHO HAS MY COMMANDMENTS AND KEEPS THEM, IT IS HE WHO LOVES ME... IF ANYONE LOVES ME, HE WILL KEEP MY WORD..."
John 14:21-24

THE CROWN OF LIFE



"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."
Jas. 1:12

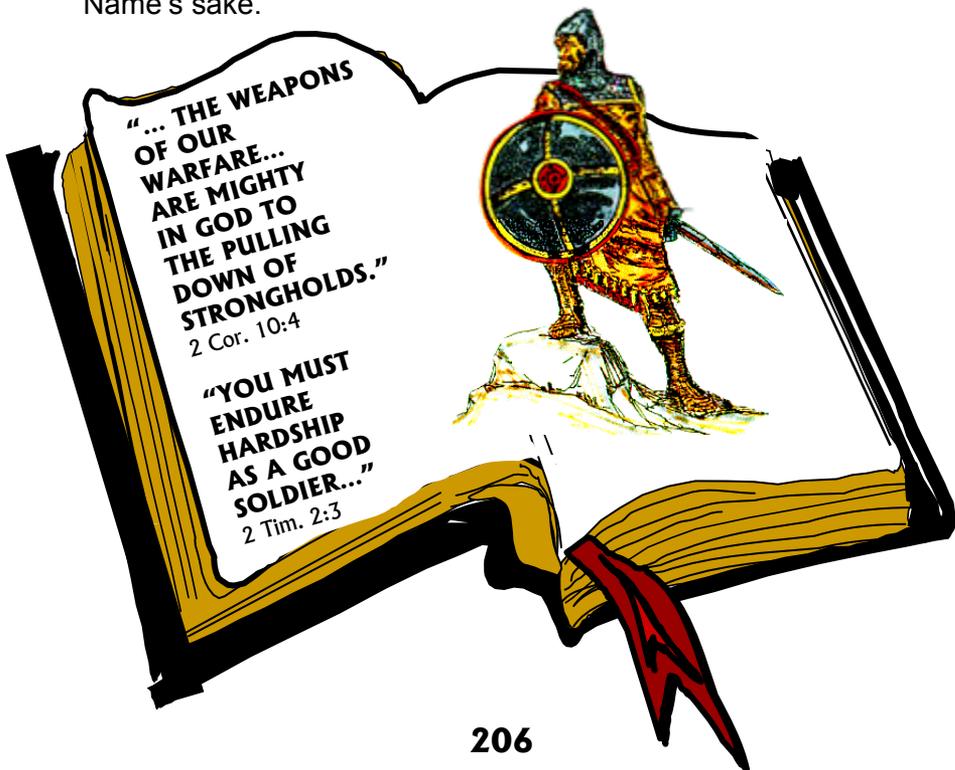
We come to the end of our brief look at the subject of suffering (enduring) temptation. It is a must for every believer to set his face like a flint and endure hardship as a good soldier. We must learn to embrace God's test of temptation designed to prove us just as He did with the children of Israel in the wilderness:

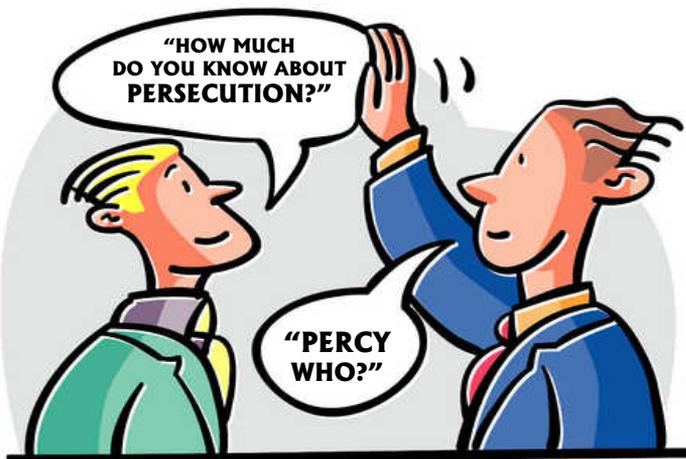
"YOU SHALL REMEMBER THAT THE LORD YOUR GOD LED YOU ALL THE WAY THESE FORTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS:

- 1) **"TO HUMBLE YOU AND TEST YOU..."**
- 2) **"TO KNOW WHAT IS IN YOUR HEART..."**
- 3) **"TO KNOW WHETHER YOU WILL KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS..."**
- 4) **"TO TEACH YOU THAT MAN DOES NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE, BUT BY EVERY WORD WHICH PROCEEDS FROM THE MOUTH OF THE LORD..."**

(see Deut. 8:2-3)

If we do not see this as still God's purpose which He desires to accomplish in His people, we shall never progress further in the upward call of God in Christ Jesus toward the prize of the Bride of Christ. Temptation is but grade one, and when you learn all that is contained therein, you will qualify to graduate to a higher level of suffering namely, to be persecuted for His Name's sake.





THE CALL TO SUFFER PERSECUTION

There are two types of persecution revealed in God's Word:

1. **INDIVIDUAL PERSECUTION**
2. **CORPORATE PERSECUTION**

INDIVIDUAL PERSECUTION is the result of being found Christ-like:

**"YES, AND ALL WHO DESIRE TO LIVE GODLY
IN CHRIST JESUS SHALL SUFFER
PERSECUTION."**

2 Tim. 3:12

CORPORATE PERSECUTION can occur by just publically naming the Name of Christ: (You don't even have to be living godly):

**"AT THAT TIME A GREAT PERSECUTION
AROSE AGAINST THE CHURCH..."**

Acts 8:1-3

INDIVIDUAL persecution

be Christ-like
(desire to live godly
in Christ Jesus)

CORPORATE persecution

be a Christian
(persecution against the
Church of Christ Jesus)

If you are embracing the pattern of Titus 2:12 as your standard of conduct, then you know what individual persecution is all about: →

Personal persecution is the result of personal holiness:



**“FOR THE GRACE OF GOD
THAT BRINGS SALVATION
HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN,
TEACHING US THAT,
DENYING UNGODLINESS
AND WORLDLY LUSTS,
WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY,
RIGHTEOUSLY,
AND GODLY IN THIS PRESENT AGE.”**

Titus 2:11-12

First of all, note that Paul above gives a much different definition for the purpose of the grace of God than we hear today. Paul taught that the grace of God was to guide God’s people into a life of personal holiness. It was not meant to be a guarantee to become “once saved, always saved.” Personal holiness will bring you personal persecution, and usually from within the camp.

I want to center upon personal persecution because corporate persecution is virtually unknown here in America, the home of the free and the brave steeped in personal “inalienable rights.” Perhaps I should say “so far” persecution is unknown here in America. Let me show you two principles that determine the course of every nation:

**“BLESSED IS
THE NATION
WHOSE GOD
IS THE LORD.”**

Psm. 33:12

**“RIGHTEOUSNESS
EXALTS
A NATION.”**

Prov. 14:34



**“THE
WICKED
SHALL BE
TURNED
INTO HELL,
AND
ALL NATIONS
THAT
FORGET GOD.”**

Ps. 9:7

Get a world map and take a look at the nations who are cursed with hunger, drought, riots, revolts, poverty, and the like, then, you will have a list of nations who do not have the Lord as their God! Now, take a look at England, Australia, Israel and America. Although they are rapidly departing from their godly heritage, they are still blessed above all nations on the face of the earth!

However, we must note that America is following close on the heels of England, who has all but abandoned the God of her fathers. A land from which so many spiritual giants came forth, now finds her empty churches being rapidly converted into Moslem temples!

You have heard it said that history repeats itself. Solomon agrees with that principle of repetition:

**“THAT WHICH HAS BEEN
IS WHAT WILL BE,
THAT WHICH IS DONE
IS WHAT WILL BE DONE,
AND THERE IS NOTHING NEW
UNDER THE SUN.
IS THERE ANYTHING OF WHICH IT
MAY BE SAID, SEE, THIS IS NEW?
IT HAS ALREADY BEEN
IN ANCIENT TIMES BEFORE US...”**

Ecclesiastes 1:9-10



**THE ROMAN
EMPIRE**

**“CAESAR
THE EMPEROR...”
“PILATE,
GOVERNOR OF
JUDEA...”
“HEROD,
TETRARCH OF
GALILEE...”
“AGRIPPA
THE KING...”**

**THE JEWISH
EMPIRE**

**“FELIX,
THE GOVERNOR...”
“FESTUS
THE GOVERNOR...”
“ANANIAS
THE HIGH PRIEST...”
“GAMALIEL
OF THE PHARISEES...
SCRIBES, SADDUCEES,
PHARISEES...”**

(ALL OF THESE MEN WERE IN VARIOUS POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY AND WERE THE SOURCE FROM WHICH THE TREMENDOUS PERSECUTION CAME UPON THE CHURCH.)

What we have patterned here is:

**1. THE WORLD
SYSTEM**

**CIVIL AUTHORITY
(ROMAN EMPIRE)**

**2. THE RELIGIOUS
SYSTEM**

**RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY
(JEWISH EMPIRE)**

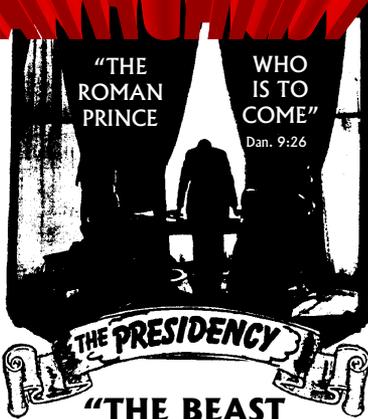
The point is simply that what has been is what will be. Therefore, the two-fold source of persecution on the early church will be the two-fold source which will persecute the Church in the last days! Another principle worth pondering is:

**“WHEN THE RIGHTEOUS ARE IN AUTHORITY,
THE PEOPLE REJOICE; BUT WHEN THE WICKED MAN RULES,
THE PEOPLE GROAN.”**

Prov. 29:2

Prophetically speaking, the world (including America) is headed for total wicked leadership! The Bible pictures a time coming when there will arise two end-time sources of power, one in the political realm, and the other stemming from the religious realm. Revelation vividly pictures them for us with this imagery:

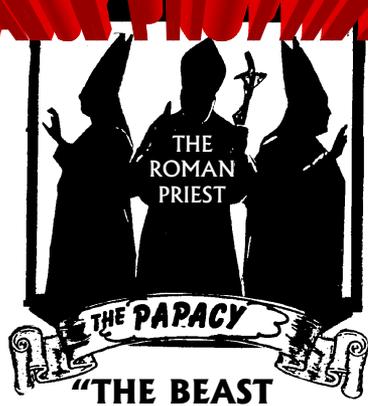
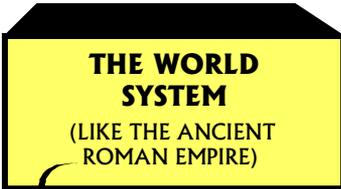
ANTICHRIST FALSE PROPHET



**"THE BEAST
OUT OF THE SEA"**

Rev. 13:1-10

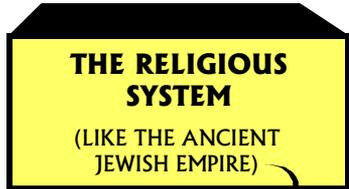
**THE ANTI-CHRIST
LEADER OF
THE ONE-WORLD
GOVERNMENT
(CIVIL AUTHORITY)**



**"THE BEAST
OUT OF THE EARTH"**

Rev. 13:11-15

**THE FALSE PROPHET
LEADER OF
THE ONE-WORLD
CHURCH
(RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY)**



and when they get in power...



It is only the names of those in power that change, the system repeats itself again and again. Do you know why it repeats itself? Because it has its roots in the fall in Genesis, in the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Let me show you what I mean by that statement: →

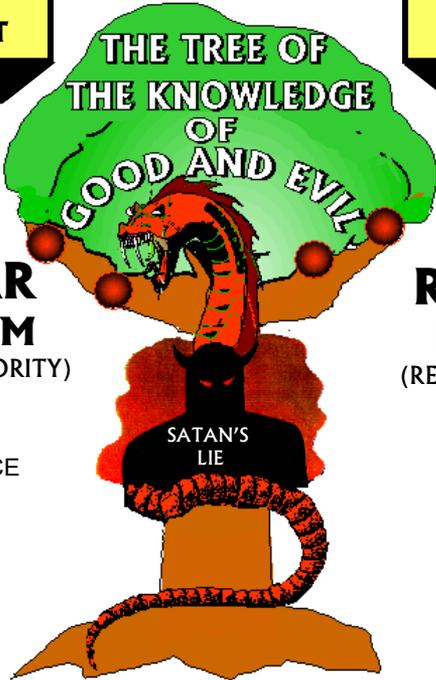
Genesis contains a prophetic depiction of Satan's master plan to deceive mankind with "The Lie."

It is a twofold deception that will become the basis for the final



ONE-WORLD GOVERNMENT

ONE-WORLD RELIGION



WILL HAVE AS ITS FOUNDATION:

WILL HAVE AS ITS FOUNDATION:

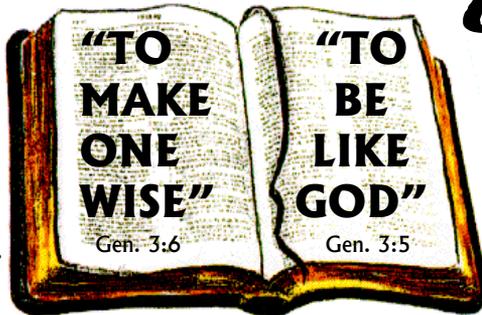
SECULAR HUMANISM
(RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY)

RELIGIOUS HUMANISM
(RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY)

REFUSES TO ADMIT THE EXISTENCE OF GOD, AND THEREBY EXALTS MAN AS GOD...

ADMITS TO THE EXISTENCE OF GOD, BUT USURPS GOD'S AUTHORITY TO RULE...

**THE ROOT:
THE EXALTATION OF MAN**



"PROFESSING TO BE WISE, THEY BECAME FOOLS AND CHANGED THE GLORY OF GOD INTO AN IMAGE MADE LIKE MAN... WHO WORSHIP AND SERVE THE CREATION RATHER THAN THE CREATOR..."
Rom. 1:22-28

"HAVING A FORM OF GODLINESS (piety-religiosity) BUT (they) DENY IT'S POWER. AND FROM SUCH PEOPLE TURN AWAY..."
2 Tim. 3:5

such as:

such as:

**EVOLUTION...
ATHEISM...
HOMOSEXUALITY...
FEMINISM...**

**INFALLIBLE POPY...
FALSE PROPHETS...
CULTIC CONTROL...
FANATICISM...**

If you have thoughtfully examined the chart on the previous page, you can now see why it is that all those who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus are going to be the primary targets of both secular and religious humanism.

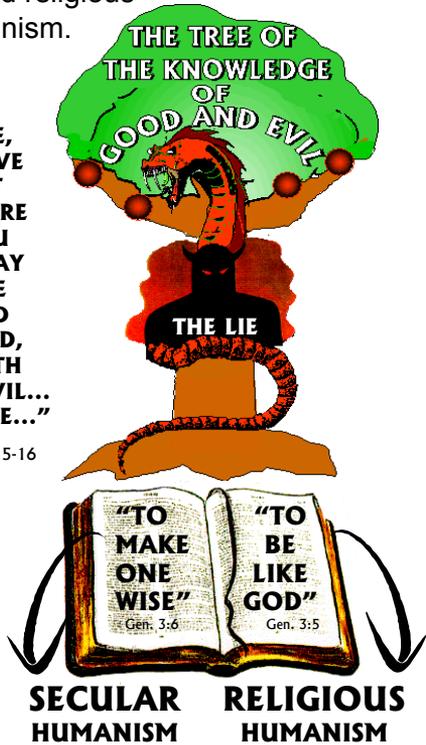


"THE EXALTATION OF GOD"

- 1. GOD RULING OVER MAN THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD AS THE FINAL AUTHORITY...**
- 2. MAN HAVING INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITY TO GOD FOR HIS DEEDS AND ACTIONS...**

"SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU TODAY LIFE AND GOOD, DEATH AND EVIL... CHOOSE..."

Deut. 30:15-16



"THE EXALTATION OF MAN"

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MAN RULING MAN. SITUATIONAL ETHICS AS THE FINAL AUTHORITY... 2. MAN ACCOUNTABLE ONLY TO MAN. ONLY OBEYING MAN-MADE LAWS... | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MAN RULING MAN. "IN GOD'S NAME", BUT MAN HAVING FINAL AUTHORITY... 2. MAN ACCOUNTABLE TO SOME "SPIRITUAL" COVERING THAT REPRESENTS GOD'S AUTHORITY ... (SUCH AS POPYRY RULE AND POPYRY LAW) |
|--|---|

Let me give you some closing thoughts on persecution. Know that persecution can be administered in a little way or in a big way. The definition of the word “persecution” reveals this to be so:

PERSECUTION

“TO HARASS AND ANNOY OR INFLICT PUNISHMENT FOR ADHERENCE TO A CREED OR SET OF BELIEFS.” Webster

Just like it was with temptation, the purpose of God is simply to prove our love and commitment to Him regardless of the cost. There is a second benefit Paul reveals that shows persecution also stimulates the growth of our faith:



“WE ARE BOUND TO THANK GOD ALWAYS FOR YOU, BRETHREN, AS IT IS FITTING, BECAUSE YOUR FAITH GROWS EXCEEDINGLY.... SO THAT WE BOAST OF YOU AMONG THE CHURCHES OF GOD FOR YOUR PATIENCE AND FAITH IN ALL YOUR PERSECUTIONS AND TRIBULATIONS THAT YOU ENDURE (SUFFER) WHICH IS MANIFEST EVIDENCE OF THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF GOD. THAT YOU MAY BE COUNTED WORTHY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD, FOR WHICH YOU ALSO SUFFER.”

2 Thess. 1:3-5

So we see that persecution causes growth! It is used by God to both prove and improve us! Note the end result is that we may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God! Let us close this section by seeing what Jesus said about persecution. He mentions three areas which will bring persecution. Remember, “three” is God’s number of Divine completeness. It is this trio of appointed persecution that will complete and perfect God’s people!



1. FOR HIS NAME’S SAKE

John 15:20-21

3



2. FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS SAKE

Matt. 5:10

3. FOR THE WORD’S SAKE

Mark 4:17

“REJOICE AND BE EXCEEDINGLY GLAD, FOR GREAT IS YOUR REWARD IN HEAVEN, FOR SO THEY PERSECUTED THE PROPHETS WHO WERE BEFORE YOU.”

Matt. 5:12

**“MANY ARE
THE AFFLICTIONS
OF THE RIGHTEOUS,
BUT THE LORD DELIVERS
HIM OUT OF THEM ALL.”**

Psalm 34:19



**“WE MUST
THROUGH MANY
TRIBULATIONS
ENTER THE KINGDOM
OF GOD.”**

Acts 14:22

Because we generally use the English word “affliction” to describe sickness and infirmity, we can read these two passages of scripture and subconsciously classify them as two different topics. However, the Greek word used is the same for both (“thlebo”). We should therefore be able to freely exchange the word “affliction” for “tribulation”. Let me reprint these two scriptures with that reverse substitution and you will see them harmonizing in your thinking.

That is exactly what I want you to do:

**“MANY ARE
THE TRIBULATIONS
OF THE RIGHTEOUS,
BUT THE LORD DELIVERS
HIM OUT OF THEM ALL.”**

Think
“tribulation”
when you read
“affliction”,
for they are one
and the same..

**“WE MUST
THROUGH MANY
AFFLICTIONS
ENTER THE KINGDOM
OF GOD.”**

You can also have the same problem dealing with the words “suffering and endurance”, and yet, they too are the same Greek word, “hupomeno”. It takes mental discipline to freely interchange these words in your thinking and avoid making a distinction where the scripture does not do so. Let us move on and look at God’s purpose in bringing us into a state of many afflictions (tribulations). Meditate on this illuminating passage in which the psalmist states God’s purpose for allowing affliction (tribulation) into our lives:

**“FOR YOU, O GOD, HAVE PROVED US;
YOU HAVE REFINED US AS SILVER IS REFINED.
YOU BROUGHT US INTO THE NET;
YOU LAID AFFLICTION ON OUR BACKS.
YOU HAVE CAUSED MEN TO RIDE OVER OUR HEADS;
WE WENT THROUGH THE FIRE AND THROUGH WATER;
BUT YOU BROUGHT US OUT TO RICH FULFILLMENT.”**

Psalm 66:10-12

**“FOR YOU, O GOD, HAVE PROVED US;
 YOU HAVE REFINED US AS SILVER IS REFINED.
 YOU BROUGHT US INTO THE NET;
 YOU LAID AFFLICTION ON OUR BACKS.
 YOU HAVE CAUSED MEN TO RIDE OVER OUR HEADS;
 WE WENT THROUGH THE FIRE AND THROUGH WATER;
 BUT YOU BROUGHT US OUT TO RICH FULFILLMENT.”**

Psalm 66:10-12

THE FRUIT PRODUCED BY AFFLICTION:

**GOD PROVED THEM...
 REFINED THEM...
 BROUGHT THEM OUT
 TO RICH FULFILLMENT...**

**BY AFFLICTION/TRIBULATION...
 MEN REIGNED OVER THEM...
 TRIALS BY “NET... BY FIRE...
 BY WATER...” AS STATED ABOVE.**

The root objective of all the types of suffering we have examined so far is:

**TO
 PROVE
 us...**

**“BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO
 ENDURES TEMPTATION; FOR
 WHEN HE HAS BEEN PROVED...”**
 Jas. 1:12

**TO
 IMPROVE
 us...**

**“YOUR FAITH GROWS EXCEEDINGLY...
 WE BOAST OF YOU ...FOR YOUR
 PATIENCE AND FAITH IN ALL YOUR
 PERSECUTIONS THAT YOU ENDURE...”**
 2 Thess. 1:3-5

Let us consider what Paul tells us that tribulation (affliction) will accomplish in us:



**“LET US ALSO BE FULL OF JOY NOW!
 LET US EXULT AND TRIUMPH IN OUR TROUBLES
 AND REJOICE IN OUR SUFFERINGS, KNOWING
 THAT PRESSURE AND AFFLICTION AND
 HARDSHIP PRODUCE PATIENT ENDURANCE.
 AND ENDURANCE DEVELOPS
 MATURITY OF CHARACTER-THAT IS,
 APPROVED FAITH AND TRIED INTEGRITY...”**

Rom. 5:3-4 Amplified

We must ask ourselves whether this outlook of the apostle Paul is also our view of sufferings, pressure, afflictions, troubles and hardships. Do we see the good in the midst of the bad? Do we accept that this is God’s perfect plan, to work in us the fruit of “patient endurance and maturity of character”?

We hear a lot of teaching from First Corinthians pertaining to the gifts of the Spirit, but little from Second Corinthians which depicts the importance of the fruit of the Spirit. May I encourage you to read at least the first four chapters of this epistle and note the same pattern revealed: that God brought affliction (tribulation) in order to:

TO
PROVE
THEM...

TO
IMPROVE
THEM...

“OUR TROUBLE...
BURDENED
BEYOND MEASURE...
ABOVE STRENGTH...” }


**“SO THAT WE SHOULD NOT
TRUST IN OURSELVES
BUT IN GOD...”** 2 Cor. 1:8-9

“HARD PRESSED...
PERPLEXED...
PERSECUTED...
STRUCK DOWN...” }


**“THAT THE LIFE OF JESUS
ALSO MAY BE MANIFESTED
IN OUR BODY.”**
2 Cor. 4:8-10

“THE FATHER OF
MERCIES AND GOD
OF ALL COMFORT,
WHO COMFORTS
US IN ALL OUR
TRIBULATION...” }


**“THAT WE MAY BE ABLE TO
COMFORT THOSE WHO ARE
IN ANY TROUBLE WITH
THE SAME COMFORT WE
RECEIVED.”** 2 Cor. 1:3-7

You will remember that we looked at these two scriptures earlier:

**“MANY ARE THE
AFFLICTIONS
OF THE RIGHTEOUS,
BUT THE LORD DELIVERS
HIM OUT OF THEM ALL.”**

Psalm 34:19

**“WE MUST
THROUGH MANY
TRIBULATIONS
ENTER THE KINGDOM
OF GOD.”**

Acts 14:22

I would like to close this section of study
on suffering with considering
the significance of:

1. **“THE LORD DELIVERS HIM”**
(how does this take place?)

2. **“WE ENTER THE KINGDOM”**
(what on earth does that mean?)

There are many manifestations and aspects of the kingdom of God. For instance, In the Book of Colossians, our entrance into the kingdom is presented in a past tense:

**PAST
TENSE** } **“HE HAS DELIVERED US FROM
THE POWER OF DARKNESS AND
TRANSLATED US INTO THE
KINGDOM OF THE SON...”**

Col. 1:13

However, we also have Paul telling us about a present entry into the kingdom;

**PRESENT
TENSE** } **“STRENGTHENING THE SOULS
OF THE DISCIPLES, EXHORTING THEM
TO CONTINUE IN THE FAITH,
AND SAYING, ‘WE MUST THROUGH
MANY TRIBULATIONS ENTER
THE KINGDOM OF GOD.’”**

Acts 14:22

Then Peter tells us there is a future aspect to entering the kingdom:

**FUTURE
TENSE** } **“FOR SO AN ENTRANCE WILL BE
SUPPLIED TO YOU ABUNDANTLY
INTO THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM
OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR
JESUS CHRIST.”**

2 Pet. 1:11

We can see that the scriptures present three distinct aspects to entering the kingdom: one is past, entered by the new birth; one is yet future and will be entered some day; but the third area is for the nasty here and now, the present. This kingdom entry is to be through many tribulations (afflictions).

Let me show you what Paul presents as a more detailed manifestation of the kingdom as it presently exists on earth. It has three (“ # of divine completeness”) criteria by which it is identified:

**“FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD
IS NOT FOOD AND DRINK,
BUT (1) RIGHTEOUSNESS
AND (2) PEACE
AND (3) JOY
IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.”**

Rom. 14:17



Are you beginning to get the picture? We enter into a state of righteousness, peace, and joy, the present manifestation of the kingdom of God, and it is entered through many tribulations-afflictions-troubles-burdens-anguish. (“Thlipsis”)

It is imperative that you see that Paul is picturing for us an entrance into a place of spiritual rest in the midst of tribulation (affliction) and trouble. It does not mean that God delivers us out of that trouble, but rather, He becomes our source in the midst of it. Paul simply says that while experiencing various tribulations and afflictions as Christians, by the power of the Holy Spirit at work in us, we can enter into a manifestation of righteousness, peace, and joy! We find that the Old Testament saints were also aware of this place of rest in God:



Jeremiah

**“O LORD,
MY STRENGTH
AND
MY FORTRESS,
MY REFUGE
IN THE DAY OF
AFFLICTIONS.”**

Jer. 16:19

**“FOR IN
THE TIME
OF TROUBLE
HE SHALL
HIDE ME
IN HIS
PAVILION...”**

Psm. 27:5



David

God promises to deliver us out of all our afflictions:

**“MANY ARE THE AFFLICTIONS OF THE RIGHTEOUS,
BUT THE LORD DELIVERS HIM OUT OF THEM ALL.”**

Psm. 34:19

God uses tribulations to cause us to enter the present manifestation of the kingdom of God:

**“WE MUST THROUGH MANY TRIBULATIONS
ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD.”**

Acts 14:22

Paul defines what is that manifestation of the kingdom of God:

**“THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS... RIGHTEOUSNESS,
AND PEACE, AND JOY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.”**

Rom. 14:17

Let us now take a look at what it means to enter into righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Spirit, while in the midst of tribulation (affliction).



“THAT YOU MAY APPROVE THE THINGS THAT ARE EXCELLENT, THAT YOU MAY BE SINCERE AND WITHOUT OFFENSE... BEING FILLED WITH THE FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH ARE BY JESUS CHRIST, TO THE GLORY AND PRAISE OF GOD.”

Phil. 1:10-11

“MAY HE... INCREASE THE FRUITS OF YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

2 Cor. 9:10



“BUT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS... PEACE...”

Gal. 5:22

“PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU, MY PEACE I GIVE TO YOU; NOT AS THE WORLD GIVES DO I GIVE TO YOU...”

Jn. 14:27

“THESE THINGS I HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU, THAT IN ME YOU MAY HAVE PEACE. IN THE WORLD YOU WILL HAVE TRIBULATION...”

Jn. 16:33



“IT IS A JOY FOR THE JUST TO DO JUSTICE.”

Prov. 21:15

“...DO NOT SORROW, FOR THE JOY OF THE LORD IS YOUR STRENGTH.”

Neh. 8:10

“I WILL JOY IN THE GOD OF MY SALVATION.”

Hab. 3:18

“BUT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS... JOY...”

Gal. 5:22

Notice carefully that the emphasis is on fruits: “filled with fruits of righteousness... increase your fruits of righteousness... the fruit of the Spirit is peace...the fruit of the Spirit is joy...” Remember, Paul said that it is tribulation that produces maturity of character (Rom. 5:3-4 Amp).

RIGHTEOUSNESS

→ is doing the right thing. It is this fruit of righteousness that God desires.

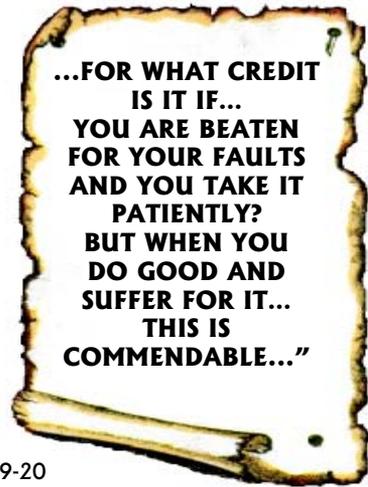
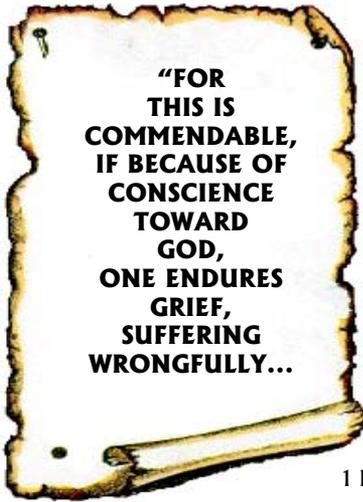
PEACE

→ is not the absence of tribulation, but an inner peace which passes all understanding (Phil. 4:7) It will keep (guard) our heart and mind.

JOY

→ The world confuses happiness with joy. Happiness is a state of being which is governed by people, circumstances, events taking place in your life. Happiness is dependent upon what is happening to you. Joy is determined by your relationship and fellowship with God Himself. The joy of the Lord is to be our strength!

SUFFERING WRONGFULLY



1 Peter 2:19-20

We are now realizing the intent of what God is seeking to do in our lives through the various types of suffering. We have represented His intent with two words:

PROVE  **AND** **IMPROVE**

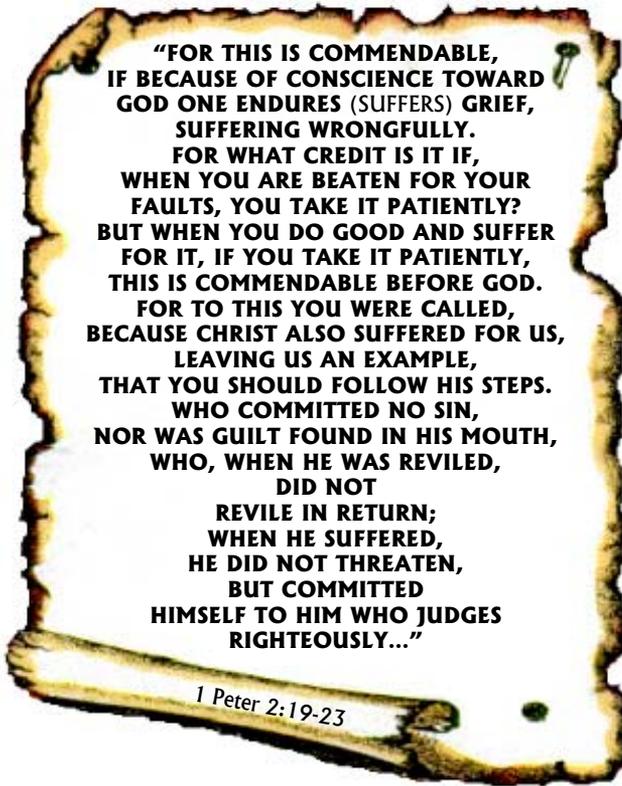
**"TO TEST
OR MAKE TRIAL OF,
TO DETERMINE
THE QUALITY
OR WORTH
OF
WHAT IS
BEING TESTED -"**
Webster

**"TO BRING TO A
MORE DESIRABLE OR
EXCELLENT
CONDITION, TO
MAKE SOMETHING
BETTER THAN IT
WAS PREVIOUSLY-"**
Webster

In the text at the top of the page, Peter expresses an area of our lives which I have come to call "God's ego buster". It becomes a matter of choice as to whether we shall seek to receive our commendations from God or from man.

This area of suffering strikes a death-blow at the pride of life. Every one of us has an inward desire to be well-liked and appreciated. God simply seeks for us to find that satisfaction in Him. Jesus said that the world hated Him, but the Father twice said of His Son, "This is my beloved Son in who I am well pleased". We have a pattern set before us in Jesus.

Even our main text picks up this thought of being well-pleasing to God in the midst of trouble:



This is not an area sufficient just to be taught, but rather must be experienced. The pattern is before us in Jesus as to how we should respond when we do what is right, but then perceived as wrong, or when we do not receive sufficient recognition that we think we deserve.

God simply desires to see us become greater fruit-bearers. One of those fruits is longsuffering. This means we must take it patiently and, like Jesus, commit ourselves to Him who judges righteously. If God is pleased with our actions and motives, who cares what man thinks! Amen?

**“AND WHATEVER YOU DO, DO IT HEARTILY,
AS TO THE LORD AND NOT TO MEN,
KNOWING THAT FROM THE LORD YOU WILL
RECEIVE THE REWARD OF THE INHERITANCE,
FOR YOU SERVE THE LORD CHRIST.”**

Col. 3:23-24

SUFFERING REPROACH

**“BELOVED,
DO NOT THINK IT STRANGE
CONCERNING THE FIERY TRIAL
WHICH IS TO TRY YOU,
AS THOUGH SOME STRANGE THING
HAPPENED TO YOU; BUT REJOICE TO THE
EXTENT THAT YOU PARTAKE OF CHRIST’S
SUFFERINGS, THAT WHEN HIS GLORY IS
REVEALED, YOU MAY... BE GLAD WITH
EXCEEDING JOY. IF YOU ARE REPROACHED FOR
THE NAME OF CHRIST, BLESSED ARE YOU,
FOR THE SPIRIT OF GLORY AND OF GOD RESTS
UPON YOU... IF ANYONE SUFFERS AS A
CHRISTIAN, LET HIM NOT BE ASHAMED,
BUT LET HIM GLORIFY GOD IN THIS MATTER.”**

1 Pet. 4:12-16

Suffering reproach for the name of Christ
is one manifestation of persecution.

Again, our ego is involved here, for we all desire that our values and opinions be accepted when expressed. To receive ridicule for believing the message of the cross is to be expected:

**“THOSE WHO ARE PERISHING...
IT PLEASSED GOD THROUGH THE
FOOLISHNESS OF THE MESSAGE PREACHED
TO SAVE THOSE WHO BELIEVE.”** 1 Cor. 1:18-21

**“BUT THE NATURAL MAN DOES NOT RECEIVE
THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD,
FOR THEY ARE FOOLISHNESS TO HIM;
NOR CAN THEY KNOW THEM,
BECAUSE THEY ARE SPIRITUALLY DISCERNED.”** 1 Cor. 2:14

Unsaved man felt the cross was a foolish message. It often is not well received because it is considered an insult to the intelligence of man. To the early church, “the message of the cross is foolishness”, certainly required a firm grasp on the reality of being able to suffer reproach for the message with exceeding joy:

**“...AND WHEN THEY HAD CALLED FOR THE APOSTLES AND BEATEN
THEM, THEY COMMANDED THAT THEY SHOULD NOT SPEAK
IN THE NAME OF JESUS, AND LET THEM GO. SO THEY DEPARTED
FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE COUNCIL,
REJOICING THAT THEY WERE COUNTED WORTHY
TO SUFFER SHAME FOR HIS NAME.
AND ...THEY DID NOT CEASE TEACHING AND PREACHING JESUS...”**

Acts 5:40-42

Also, we should consider the side of the “heroes of faith” of Hebrews 11 who suffered for their beliefs, of whom God said the world was not worthy:

“STILL OTHERS HAD TRIAL OF MOCKINGS AND SCOURGINGS, YES, AND OF CHAINS AND IMPRISONMENT. THEY WERE STONED, THEY WERE SAWN IN TWO, WERE TEMPTED, WERE SLAIN WITH THE SWORD. THEY WANDERED ABOUT IN SHEEPSKINS AND GOATSKINS, BEING DESTITUTE, AFFLICTED, TORMENTED— OF WHOM THE WORLD WAS NOT WORTHY...”

Heb. 11:36-38

**To
MOCK**



“TO IMITATE OR MIMIC IN CONTEMPT AND RIDICULE, TO TREAT WITH SCORN.”

Webster

There have been mockers before, and they will be among us again. I am sure Noah was mocked as he built the Ark, and Jesus said it will be like the days of Noah when He returns.

America knows little of public mockery because of the freedom of religion it has. Beware and be on guard, for as the secular humanists gain control of the government, those protective laws will soon disappear! Will you be able to suffer reproach for His name if it comes? You will be able if you have the same vision the early church had, and that was rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name (see Acts 5:40-42). Jesus gives this added incentive to consider:



“BLESSED ARE YOU WHEN THEY REVILE AND PERSECUTE YOU, AND SAY ALL KINDS OF EVIL AGAINST YOU FALSELY FOR MY SAKE. REJOICE AND BE EXCEEDINGLY GLAD, FOR GREAT IS YOUR REWARD IN HEAVEN...”

Matt. 5:11-12

We shall now move on to the third and final area of preparation of the Bride, and that is in the area of overcoming.

**"EYE HAS NOT SEEN,
NOR EAR HEARD,
NOR HAS ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN
THE THINGS WHICH GOD HAS
PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.**

**BUT GOD HAS REVEALED THEM
TO US THROUGH HIS SPIRIT."**

1 Cor.2:9-10

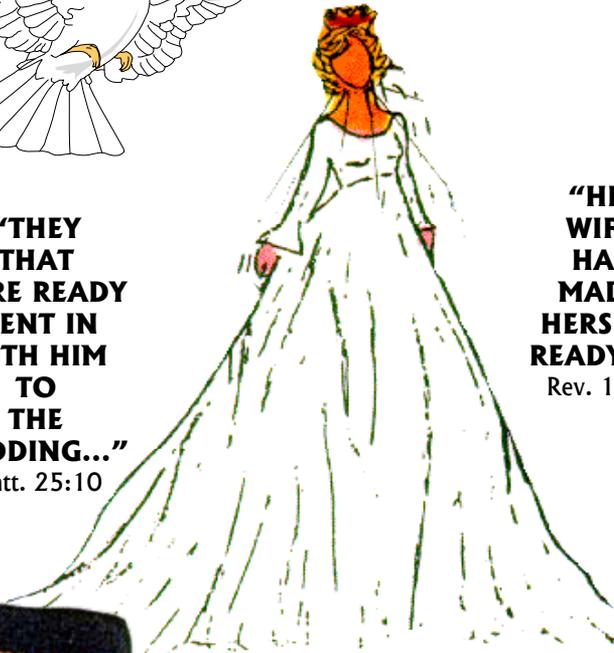


**"THEY
THAT
WERE READY
WENT IN
WITH HIM
TO
THE
WEDDING..."**

Matt. 25:10

**"HIS
WIFE
HAS
MADE
HERSELF
READY..."**

Rev. 19:7



THE BRIDE OF CHRIST



PART SIX

THE NECESSITY TO **OVERCOME**

**"DO NOT BE
OVERCOME BY
EVIL, BUT
OVERCOME EVIL
WITH GOOD."**
Rom. 12:21

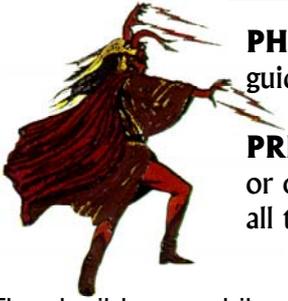
**"...YOU HAVE
OVERCOME
THE WICKED ONE."**
1 Jn. 2:14

**"...WHATEVER IS
BORN OF GOD
OVERCOMES
THE WORLD."**
1 Jn. 5:4

**"TO HIM
WHO
OVERCOMES,
I WILL GRANT
TO SIT WITH ME
ON MY THRONE,
AS I OVERCAME
AND SAT DOWN
WITH MY FATHER
ON HIS THRONE."**
Rev. 3:21

**"HE WHO
OVERCOMES
SHALL INHERIT
ALL THINGS..."**
Rev. 21:7

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE DEVIL



PHILOSOPHY – “A system of principles for guidance in practical affairs.”

PRINCIPLE – “A law or basis for action or conduct; the primary source from which all things proceed”
Webster

The devil has a philosophy upon which he operates. Strange as it may sound, it is the unchanging principles of God’s Word that the devil operates. Satan knows that God’s actions are governed by the fact that He is the Righteous Judge. His Word dictates what His actions will be, and Satan knows that very well. Far too many of God’s people ignore those principles. Here is an example:

“...FOR BY WHOM A PERSON IS OVERCOME, BY HIM ALSO HE IS BROUGHT INTO BONDAGE. 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.” 2 Pet.2:19-20

The above is a principle contained in God’s Word written to give ample warning to His people. Note this verse is not written to unsaved people, but rather to God’s people who have escaped bondage by means of their personal knowledge and acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ. This principle is twofold:



1. **A MAN IS BROUGHT INTO BONDAGE BY WHOEVER IS ABLE TO OVERCOME HIM (CONQUER, PREVAIL OVER, SUBDUE.)**

2. **THE LATTER END IS WORSE FOR THE ONE WHO PREVIOUSLY ESCAPED, BUT HAS NOW BECOME ENTANGLED AGAIN AND OVERCOME.**

Many of God’s people reject such stated principles as not being applicable to them due to being under a “grace” covenant. However, Satan knows well that God’s covenant contains both grace and law as plainly stated in Hebrews Chapter 8. When God’s people do not (choose) to believe this principle, the devil actively uses it as his governing philosophy in his war against the saints!

THE DEVIL'S PHILOSOPHY



**TO DECEIVE
THOSE WHO ONCE WERE
THE SONS OF DISOBEDIENCE,
WHO HAVE BECOME
THE SONS OF GOD,
TO RETURN TO WALKING AS
THE SONS OF DISOBEDIENCE,
THAT THEY MAY INHERIT
THE WRATH OF GOD**

Every believer seems to be aware of Paul's promise: "For God did not appoint us to wrath.." (1 Thess. 5:9). However, does anyone ever point out the conditions to not inheriting the wrath of God that are attached in the verses right above that promise?



**THE
CONDITIONS
TO NOT
INHERITING
THE WRATH
OF GOD**



- 1 DO NOT SLEEP, AS OTHERS..."** (vs. 6)
- 2 "WATCH..."** (vs. 6)
- 3 "BE SOBER..."** (vs. 6)
- 4 "PUTTING ON THE BREASTPLATE OF FAITH AND LOVE, AND AS A HELMET THE HOPE OF SALVATION."** (vs. 8)

If there is no danger of inheriting God's wrath, why then is Paul writing these warnings to believers? Can we "sleep" (spiritually) as others do, or choose not to "watch or be sober" or not bother to "put on faith, hope and love" and **STILL** escape the wrath to come? Must Christianity be costless, crossless, and even Christ-less, in our daily life? Do not these vivid, sober warnings of Paul apply to us? :

THE SONS OF DISOBEDIENCE



**TO DECEIVE
THOSE WHO
WERE ONCE
THE SONS OF
DISOBEDIENCE,
WHO HAVE BECOME
THE SONS OF GOD,
TO RETURN
TO WALKING AS
THE SONS OF
DISOBEDIENCE,
THAT
THEY MAY INHERIT
THE WRATH OF GOD**

“...YOU ONCE WALKED
ACCORDING TO THE COURSE OF THIS WORLD
ACCORDING TO THE PRINCE OF THE POWER OF
THE AIR, THE SPIRIT WHO NOW WORKS IN
THE SONS OF DISOBEDIENCE,
AMONG WHOM ALSO WE ALL ONCE
CONDUCTED OURSELVES
IN THE LUSTS OF OUR FLESH,
FULFILLING THE DESIRES OF THE FLESH AND OF
THE MIND, AND WERE BY NATURE
CHILDREN OF WRATH, JUST AS THE OTHERS.”

Eph. 2:2-3

“THEREFORE
PUT TO DEATH...
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. 3:5-6

“FOR THIS YOU KNOW,
THAT NO FORNICATOR,
UNCLEAN PERSON,
NOR COVETOUS MAN,
WHO IS AN IDOLATER,
HAS ANY INHERITANCE
IN THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST AND 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 intent of what I have said to you is this: what we should come to grips with is the absolute necessity to overcome. Satan is playing for keeps, and he knows how to take what is written in God's Word and use it against the saints! If, by deception, he can cause the sons of God to return to walking like the sons of disobedience, he fully knows that God will be forced to judge them along with the un-regenerated sons of disobedience. Paul warns the believer not to be partakers of the wrath of God with them (see Eph. 5:7).

Overcoming is serious business. It is, in reality, a choice of either overcoming or being overcome. Satan is serious about overcoming believers that he may once again bring them into bondage so that their latter end may become worse than the beginning.

Before we progress, may you first take time to meditate upon these unchanging principles of God's Word pertaining to overcoming vs. being overcome:

**"DO NOT BE
OVERCOME BY EVIL,
BUT OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD."**

Rom. 12:21

**"...FOR BY WHOM
A PERSON IS OVERCOME,
BY HIM ALSO
HE IS BROUGHT INTO BONDAGE."**

2 Pet. 2:19

**"STAND FAST
THEREFORE
IN THE LIBERTY
BY WHICH CHRIST
HAS MADE US FREE,
AND DO NOT BE
ENTANGLED AGAIN
WITH A YOKE OF BONDAGE."**

Gal. 5:1



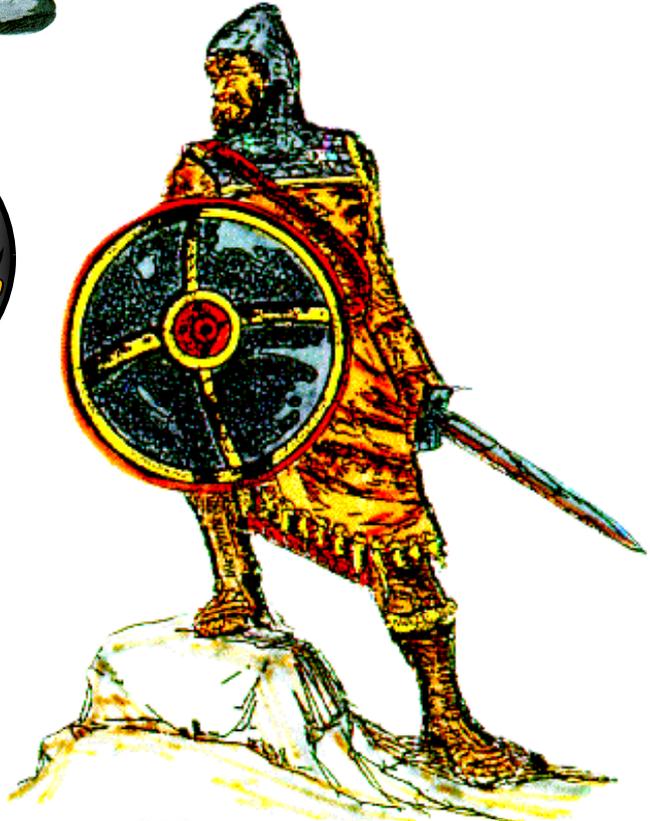
WARFARE ON THREE FRONTS

In World War II, America faced its greatest test in that it was forced to fight a war on two fronts simultaneously. Japan and Germany were two very different cultures, warring through very different tactics. They did not have the same goals, nor did they think alike, although they were allied together against America.

The Christian is also engaged in a warfare of great magnitude with a three-fold enemy which, although they be allied together against us, they also do not warfare alike.



The point of this illustration is simply to show that spiritual warfare, if it is to be truly effective, must be waged according to each of these three enemies we are dealing with, for they do not warfare in the same manner.



OVERCOME

THE ENEMY

1.



THE ENEMY IN WHICH WE LIVE...

"FOR WHATEVER IS BORN OF GOD OVERCOMES THE WORLD. AND THIS IS THE VICTORY THAT HAS OVERCOME THE WORLD—OUR FAITH."

1 John 5:4

2.



THE ENEMY WHICH LIVES IN US...

"DO NOT BE OVERCOME BY EVIL, BUT OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD... MAKE NO PROVISION FOR THE FLESH, TO FULFILL ITS LUSTS!"

Rom. 12:21 & 13:14

3.



THE ENEMY WHICH LIVES AMONG US...

"...YOUNG MEN, BECAUSE YOU ARE STRONG, AND THE WORD OF GOD ABIDES IN YOU, AND YOU HAVE OVERCOME THE WICKET ONE."

1 Jn. 2:14

We are talking about the necessity of fighting a spiritual warfare on three fronts simultaneously, and the weapons of our warfare are different for each enemy we face:



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

Gal. 6:14



THE CROSS



"I SAY THEN: WALK IN THE SPIRIT AND YOU SHALL NOT FULFILL THE LUST OF THE FLESH."

Gal. 5:16



THE SPIRIT



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

1 Jn. 2:14



THE WORD

In America's Civil War, it was the incredible industrial power of the North that eventually defeated the South. Likewise, in World War II, it was again the mighty industrial power of America which eventually defeated the great military machine of Germany. In the end, it is always a question of available power that determines the outcome of conflict.

Without question, the world, the flesh, and the devil have power, but it is limited power opposing unlimited power. When God calls us to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, He becomes our supply line, giving us of His endless power to overcome.

To say, "I can't" is simply unbelief; to say, "I won't" is rebellion; but to say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13) - that is faith: Faith in the power of the Cross to be crucified to the world, faith in the Spirit of God to enable us not to fulfill the lusts of the flesh, and faith in what is written in the Word of God to overcome the wicked one.

It should be of significance that the word "faith" appears only twice in the Old Covenant; one denotes the absence of faith, and the other is a call to live by faith:

**"AND HE SAID:
I WILL HIDE MY FACE FROM THEM,
I WILL SEE WHAT
THEIR END WILL BE,
FOR THEY ARE A PERVERSE
GENERATION,
CHILDREN IN WHOM
IS NO FAITH."**

Deut. 32:20

**"BUT
THE JUST
SHALL LIVE
BY
HIS FAITH."**

Hab. 2:4

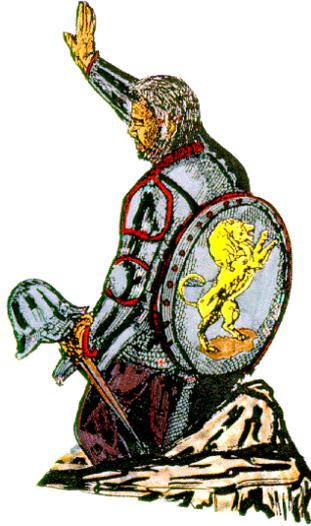


The Bible tells us that "without faith it is impossible to please God" (see Heb. 11:6). The magnitude of what we must overcome is designed by God to press us into a life of faith. No amount of willpower is sufficient to overcome this great threefold warfare set before us. We must live by faith!

Remember Paul's instruction to us concerning the weapons of our warfare:

“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...”

2 Cor. 10:3-4



What I am seeking to emphasize to you is that God simply requires of us to make a choice. May we understand that the initiative to choose lies with us, while the enablement to perform lies with God. When God calls us to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, He is simply asking of us to choose between:



"TO HIM WHO OVERCOMES"

"INHERIT ALL THINGS"
Rev..21:7
SIT ON CHRIST'S
THRONE WITH CHRIST!
Rev. 3:21

PILLAR IN GOD'S
TEMPLE...
THE NAME OF GOD,
THE NAME OF THE
CITY OF GOD...
AND (JESUS')
NEW NAME
Rev. 3:12



"...THE
BRIDEGROOM
CAME,
AND THOSE
WHO WERE
READY
WENT IN
WITH HIM
TO THE
WEDDING..."
Matt. 25:10

"THE
KINGDOMS OF
THIS WORLD."
Matt. 4:8

**TWO
KINGDOMS**

"EVERLASTING
KINGDOM
OF CHRIST."
2 Pet. 1:11

"THE
OLD MAN."
Eph. 4:22

**TWO
NATURES**

"THE
NEW MAN."
Eph. 4:24

"THE
GOD OF
THIS WORLD."
2 Cor. 4:4

**TWO
GODS**

"GOD
AND FATHER
OF
OUR LORD JESUS
CHRIST."
Eph. 1:3

BUT

"DO NOT BE
OVERCOME
BY EVIL...

OVERCOME
EVIL WITH GOOD...

Rom. 12:21

Is it not an insult to the scriptures to hold the concept that Jesus Christ will rapture, marry, and allow to reign those who have chosen the kingdoms of this world, to remain in the sin-bondage of the old man with its deceitful lusts, and to allow the god of this world to overcome them? May God help the sleeping segment of the Body of Christ to awaken to what the scriptures reveal are necessary requirements to be raptured by, married to, and reign with the Lord Jesus Christ!

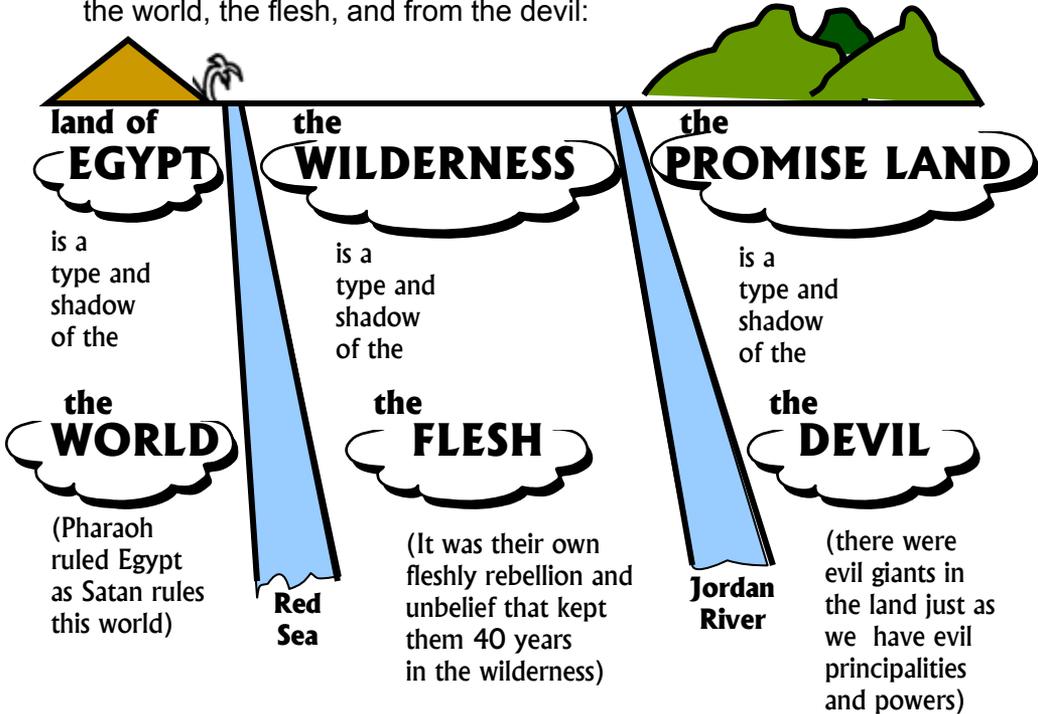
"CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE IT WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT IT TO HIMSELF A GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE OR ANY SUCH THING, BUT THAT IT SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH."

Eph. 5:25-27

There are many type and shadows given as examples for us from the adventures of the children of Israel in their exodus from Egypt. Let me simply condense them down to this terse statement:

WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM IN THE PHYSICAL REALM, HAPPENS TO US IN THE SPIRITUAL REALM.

What took place in Egypt, the Wilderness, and in the Promise Land, became type and shadows of the opposition that we face today from the world, the flesh, and from the devil:



A careful reading of Ezekiel 20 will show that the crux of the problem was their cherished idols:

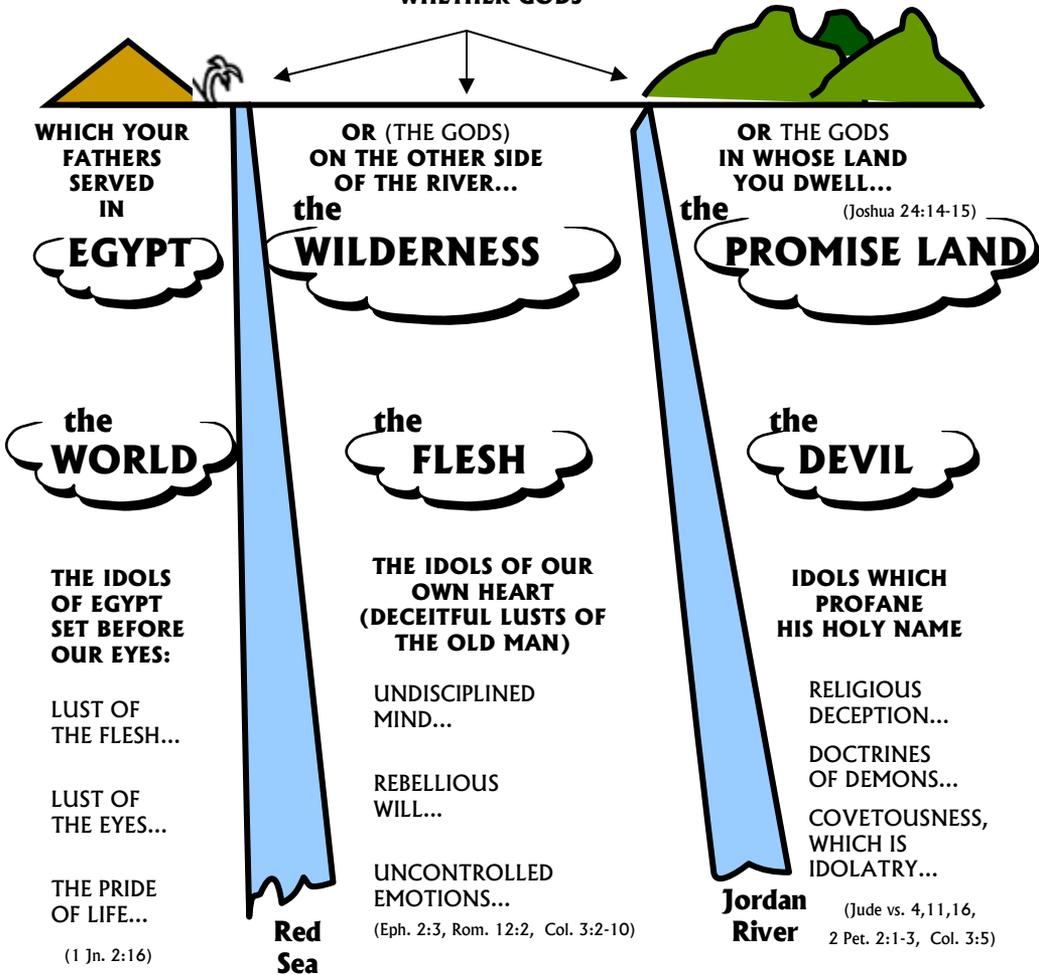
"THEY DID NOT CAST AWAY THE ABOMINATIONS THAT WERE BEFORE THEIR EYES, NOR DID THEY FORSAKE THE IDOLS OF EGYPT."
(see Ezk. 20:6-8)

"THEY REBELLED AGAINST ME IN THE WILDERNESS... FOR THEIR HEARTS WENT AFTER THEIR IDOLS..."
(see Ezk. 20:10-21)

"I BROUGHT THEM INTO THE LAND... THEY COMMITTED HARLOTRY... THEY PROFANED MY NAME WITH THEIR IDOLS."
(see Ezk. 20:27-39)

I encourage you to take the time to meditate in the entire 24th Chapter of Joshua. Here is the stated moral to the story:

“SERVE HIM IN SINCERITY AND IN TRUTH ...AND IF IT SEEMS EVIL TO SERVE THE LORD, CHOOSE FOR YOURSELVES THIS DAY WHOM YOU WILL SERVE, WHETHER GODS



Paul gave us a clear warning that such idolatrous practices of the children of Israel should be a pattern for us to avoid repeating:

“AND DO NOT BECOME IDOLATERS AS WERE SOME OF THEM. AS IT IS WRITTEN: ‘THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND ROSE UP TO PLAY...NOW THESE THINGS BECAME OUR EXAMPLES, TO THE INTENT THAT WE SHOULD NOT LUST AFTER EVIL THINGS AS THEY ALSO LUSTED.” 1 Cor. 10:6-7

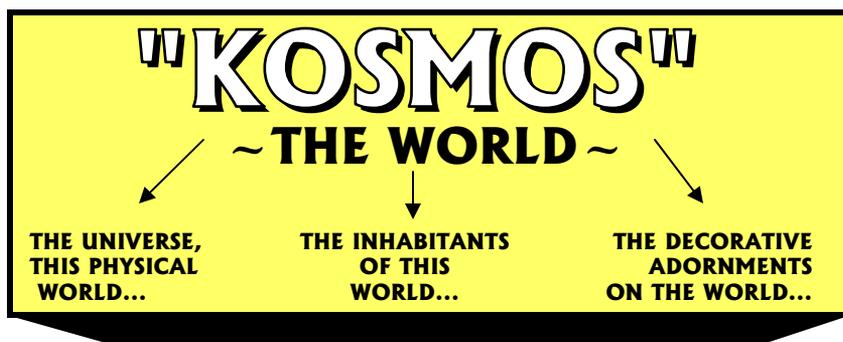
“BUT AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE, WE WILL SERVE THE LORD.”

Joshua 24:14

We move on in our study to the first of the three areas in which we are called to overcome: the world.

THE WORLD DEFINED

As Paul was given the divine revelation of the Church, the apostle John was given the illumination and emphasis in his writings of what constitutes the world. John uses the Greek word “kosmos” (world) over one-hundred times in his brief gospel, epistles, and book of Revelation! There are three different meanings attached to the Greek word “kosmos” (world), and we need to see which of these three it is that we are instructed to (1) overcome as Christians (1 Jn. 5:4) and (2) not to love as Christians (1 Jn. 2:15).



To which of the above three definitions do you think the following scriptures apply?

"DO NOT LOVE THE WORLD OR THE THINGS IN THE WORLD.

IF ANYONE LOVES THE WORLD,

THE LOVE OF THE FATHER IS NOT IN HIM.

FOR ALL THAT IS IN THE WORLD-THE LUST OF THE FLESH,

THE LUST OF THE EYES, AND THE PRIDE OF LIFE-

IS NOT OF THE FATHER, BUT IS OF THE WORLD..."

1 Jn. 2:15-16

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

James 4:4

"AND DO NOT BE CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD..."

Rom. 12:2

"FOR WHATEVER IS BORN OF GOD OVERCOMES THE WORLD..."

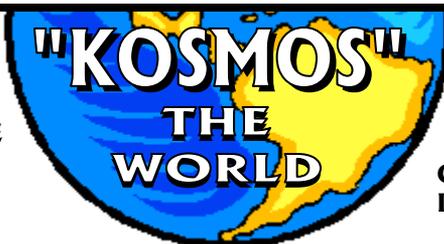
1 Jn. 5:4

"...THE WORLD HAS BEEN CRUCIFIED TO ME, AND I TO THE WORLD."

Gal. 6:14

**DON'T
LOVE IT...**

**DON'T LOVE
THE THINGS
IN IT...**



**BE CRUCIFIED
TO IT...**

**OVERCOME
IT...**

**DON'T BE
CONFORMED TO IT...**

**DON'T BE
A FRIEND OF IT...**

1. THE PHYSICAL WORLD? – NO, HE MADE THAT:

*“HE WAS IN THE WORLD, AND THE WORLD WAS MADE THROUGH HIM...”
John 1:10*

2. THE INHABITANTS OF THE WORLD? NO:

*“GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD (INHABITANTS) THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY
BEGOTTEN SON... THAT THE WORLD THROUGH HIM MIGHT BE SAVED.”*

John 3:16-17

3. THE ADORNMENTS-DECORATIVE DEVICES ADDED TO ENHANCE AND HEIGHTEN ATTRACTIVENESS AND STIMULATION? YES!

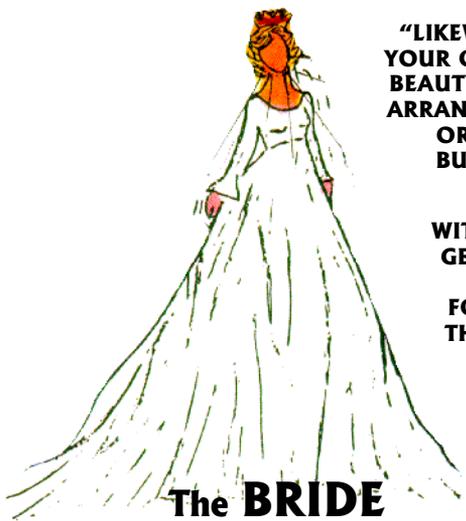
*“FOR ALL THAT IS IN THE WORLD-THE LUST OF THE FLESH,
THE LUST OF THE EYES, AND THE PRIDE OF LIFE
ARE NOT OF THE FATHER BUT IS OF THE WORLD.”*

1 John 2:16

Obviously, God is not condemning either His physical creation or the inhabitants He created. He will make all things new in His physical creation (Rev. 21:5). And likewise, He is giving the inhabitants which He created the choice to be made new (2 Cor. 5:17) rather than being condemned (John 3:18).

Clearly we can see that it is this third definition of the world with its adornments of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, that God commands His people not to love, nor be a friend of, nor be conformed to, but rather be crucified to, and overcome its polluting influence!

“Kosmos” is translated one place in the Word as “adornment”, and its use is quite illuminating when compared to the Bride of Christ. Let us look at it: 



The **BRIDE** of **CHRIST**

“LIKEWISE YOU WIVES, BE SUBMISSIVE TO YOUR OWN HUSBANDS... DO NOT LET YOUR BEAUTY BE THAT OUTWARD ADORNING OF ARRANGING THE HAIR, OF WEARING GOLD, OR OF PUTTING ON FINE APPAREL; BUT LET IT BE THE HIDDEN PERSON OF THE HEART,

WITH THE INCORRUPTIBLE ORNAMENT OF A GENTLE AND QUIET SPIRIT, WHICH IS VERY PRECIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD. FOR IN THIS MANNER, IN FORMER TIMES, THE HOLY WOMEN WHO TRUSTED IN GOD ALSO ADORNED (“KOSMOS”) THEMSELVES...”

1 Pet.. 3:1-5

In these verses we have a positive use of “kosmos” (adorning). God is simply saying that our efforts to beautify ourselves should center upon the inward adorning of the hidden person of the heart rather than the outward adorning of apparel, gold, etc.

Since Paul said that the relationship of a husband and wife is like that of the great mystery of Christ and His Bride (see Eph. 5:24-32), we can take this picture that Peter presents to have a deeper meaning than merely instruction to wives in the natural sense. It is also applicable to the wife-to-be of Jesus Christ! Her adornment, or “kosmos-world”, is not the outward adornment as seen in this sensual, physical world, but rather the inward adornment of the heart. Let me try to illustrate this further:



**KINGDOM
OF THIS WORLD**

Characterized by
**OUTWARD
ADORNMENT**



**THE KINGDOM
OF GOD**

Characterized by
**INWARD
ADORNMENT**

TWO OPPOSING KINGDOMS



KINGDOM OF THIS WORLD

Characterized by
**OUTWARD
ADORNMENT**

“ALL THAT IS IN THE WORLD”

1. **LUST
OF THE FLESH**

2. **LUST
OF THE EYES**

3. **THE
PRIDE OF LIFE**

GOVERNED BY AN



**UNHOLY
SPIRIT**

“THE IDOLS OF EGYPT
SET BEFORE OUR EYES.”

Ezk.20:8



THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Characterized by
**INWARD
ADORNMENT**

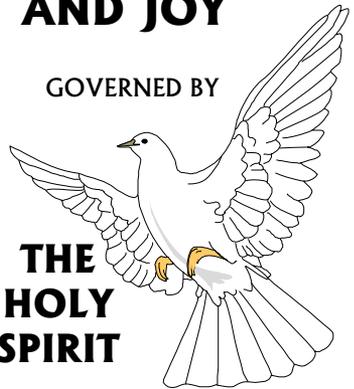
“THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS”

1. **RIGHTEOUSNESS**

2. **AND PEACE**

3. **AND JOY**

GOVERNED BY



**THE
HOLY
SPIRIT**

“HE WHO SERVES CHRIST
IN THESE THINGS
IS ACCEPTABLE TO GOD.”

Rom.14:18

Do you begin to see why God instructs His people not to love the adornment (“kosmos”) of this world? Because its decorative devices are those of outward adornments from the god of this world consisting of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. That is all that is in the world, and it is not of the Father! If you love it, then being a lover of the Father is not in you! (1 Jn. 2:15) If you are a friend of it, then you make yourself the enemy of God! (James 4:4)

God’s people belong to a different kingdom, having different priorities, values, and adornments. It consists of the development of an inward beauty in the hidden man of the heart, and is characterized by righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. This is the priority of the Bride of Christ!



1. She will be of one mind (like-minded) with her husband-to-be, and her confession will be like that of Jesus concerning this world:

“... I AM NOT OF THIS WORLD.” Jn. 8:23

“... MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD...”

Jn. 18:36

2. The Bride of Christ will also pray like Jesus:

**“YOUR KINGDOM COME... ON EARTH...
FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER
AND THE GLORY FOREVER.”** Matt. 6:10, 13



3. The Bride of Christ will have the same priorities as Jesus:

**“SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD
AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS...”**

Matt. 6:33

4. The Bride of Christ will even preach like Jesus:

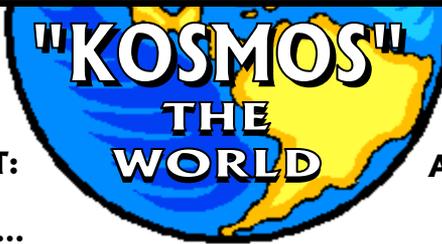
**“FROM THAT TIME JESUS BEGAN TO
PREACH AND TO SAY REPENT,
FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
IS AT HAND... JESUS WENT ABOUT...
TEACHING... PREACHING
THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM...”**

Matt. 4:17, 13

**THE KINGDOM
OF THIS WORLD**

**OUTWARD
ADORNMENT:**

**IMMORALITY...
FRIVOLITY...
COVETOUSNESS...
VENGEANCE...
FEASTING...
PLAYING...
REBELLION...**



**THE KINGDOM
OF GOD**

**INWARD
ADORNMENT:**

**MORALITY...
SOBRIETY...
CONTENTMENT...
FORGIVENESS...
FASTING...
PRAYING...
SUBMISSION...**



"...MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD"

Absorb this concept! The kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world are 180 degrees opposite of each other! Consider with me this admonition of our examples, the children of Israel:

**"BUT THEY MINGLED WITH THE GENTILES (HEATHEN)
AND LEARNED THEIR WORKS; THEY SERVED THEIR IDOLS,
WHICH BECAME A SNARE TO THEM."**

Psm. 106:35-36

The Church is rapidly learning the works (ways/methods) of the world and incorporating them into the workings of the Church. Today we rationalize that the gospel will only reach our generation if we disguise it with rock music. "Hogwash!", I say. There is no such thing as "Christian Rock" because the kingdom of God does not look like, act like, smell like, or sound like the world or anything in it, and if it does, then we have become ensnared with the idols of the world. The gospel will cost the forsaking of such trash rather than changing the words while retaining the sound. It is sacrilegious to sing of the blood of Jesus or the cross of Jesus, with the devil's hard rock music! Not only in this area has the Church become ensnared, but the Madison Avenue techniques of deceptive, computerized, personal correspondence to deceive the saints are also being used: "I was praying this morning, and sister Sarah, your name came to mind". Actually, it came to the "mind" of the IBM or Apple computer who then sent the same letter to thousands of people but deceptively worded as if it was only sent to you.

The Church has become the prime target of the circus-barker merchants of the earth bent on selling you their deceptive spiritual wares:



“...WITH FEIGNED (INSINCERE) WORDS (THEY WILL) MAKE MERCHANDISE OF YOU...”
2 Pet. 2:3

“BY COVETOUSNESS THEY WILL EXPLOIT YOU WITH DECEPTIVE WORDS...”
2 Pet. 2:3

“THEY HAVE RUN GREEDILY IN THE ERROR OF BALAAM FOR PROFIT...THESE ARE SPOTS IN YOUR LOVE FEASTS... SERVING ONLY THEMSELVES...”
Jude 11-12

The apostle John warns believers not to believe every spirit, for not every spirit is from God-regardless of what they say. The inspiration of such hucksters comes from:

“THAT SERPENT OF OLD, CALLED THE DEVIL AND SATAN, WHO DECEIVES THE WHOLE WORLD...”
Rev. 12:9



“THE WHOLE WORLD LIES UNDER THE SWAY OF THE WICKED ONE.”
1 Jn.5:19

THE MIND BEHIND THE SYSTEM

"WE DO NOT WRESTLE AGAINST FLESH/BLOOD, BUT AGAINST PRINCIPALITIES, POWERS, RULERS OF DARKNESS OF THIS WORLD, AGAINST SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS IN HEAVENLY PLACES."

Eph. 6:12



"THE COURSE OF THIS WORLD (IS) ACCORDING TO THE PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR, THE SPIRIT WHO NOW WORKS IN THE SONS OF DISOBEDIENCE."

Eph. 2:2

THE KINGDOM OF THIS WORLD

("all that is in the world")

LUST OF THE FLESH

LUST OF THE EYES

THE PRIDE OF LIFE

It is imperative that we understand that this world is on a course that is taking a certain direction and that is being navigated and steered by the god of this world. There is a mind behind the course, direction, and the system of this world.

The world functions on three major foundations:

COMMERCE



POLITICS

RELIGION

These are power structures, to say the least. Everyone is impacted almost daily by these forces at work. They are not necessarily evil, but, being necessary, they can become powerful tools in the hands of evil. Lucifer, the fallen archangel who became Satan, operated in these three realms prior to his fall and is well aware of their power.

LUCIFER'S FALL

Ezk. 28:12-18

"YOU WERE THE SEAL OF PERFECTION,
FULL OF WISDOM AND PERFECT IN BEAUTY.
YOU WERE IN EDEN, THE GARDEN OF GOD;
EVERY PRECIOUS STONE WAS
YOUR COVERING:
THE SARDIUS, TOPAZ, AND DIAMOND,
BERYL, ONYX, AND JASPER,
SAPPHIRE, TURQUOISE, AND EMERALD
WITH GOLD.
THE WORKMANSHIP OF YOUR TIMBRELS
AND PIPES
WAS PREPARED FOR YOU ON THE DAY
YOU WERE CREATED.

YOU WERE THE ANOINTED CHERUB
WHO COVERS;
I ESTABLISHED YOU;
YOU WERE ON THE HOLY MOUNTAIN
OF GOD;
YOU WALKED BACK AND FORTH IN
THE MIDST OF FIERY STONES.
YOU WERE PERFECT IN YOUR WAYS
FROM THE DAY YOU WERE CREATED,
TILL INIQUITY WAS FOUND IN YOU.

BY THE ABUNDANCE OF YOUR TRADING
YOU BECAME FILLED WITH VIOLENCE WITHIN,
AND YOU SINNED;
THEREFORE I CAST YOU AS A PROFANE THING
OUT OF THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD;
AND I DESTROYED YOU, O COVERING CHERUB,
FROM THE MIDST OF THE FIERY STONES.

YOUR HEART WAS LIFTED UP BECAUSE OF
YOUR BEAUTY;
YOU CORRUPTED YOUR WISDOM FOR THE
SAKE OF YOUR SPLENDOR;
I CAST YOU TO THE GROUND,
I LAID YOU BEFORE KINGS,
THAT THEY MIGHT GAZE AT YOU.

YOU DEFILED YOUR SANCTUARIES
BY THE MULTITUDE OF YOUR INIQUITIES,
BY THE INIQUITY OF YOUR TRADING;
THEREFORE I BROUGHT FIRE FROM YOUR
MIDST; IT DEVoured YOU,
AND I TURNED YOU TO ASHES UPON
THE EARTH IN THE SIGHT OF ALL WHO
SAW YOU."

COMMERCE

"BY THE ABUNDANCE OF YOUR
TRADING YOU BECAME FILLED WITH
VIOLENCE... BY THE INIQUITY OF
YOUR TRADING..."

VS. 16, 18



POLITICS

"YOU WERE ON THE HOLY
MOUNTAIN OF GOD;
YOU WALKED BACK AND
FORTH IN THE MIDST OF
THE FIERY STONES...
O COVERING CHERUB..."

VS. 14, 16

RELIGION

"YOU WERE THE ANOINTED
CHERUB WHO COVERS...
YOU DEFILED YOUR
SANCTUARIES...
THE WORKMANSHIP OF
YOUR
TIMBRELS AND PIPES..."

VS. 13-15

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(the reference to "mountain" in scriptures always depicts authority/rule.
Satan covered the throne of God with his God-given authority.)

If Satan felt these three areas were resourceful enough to bring about such revolt in heaven, how much more do you think he believes they are sufficient to accomplish his purposes upon earth?

We saw earlier that the course of this world is under his direction (Eph. 2:2). Let me take you now into the future so that you might see the ultimate manifestation of what Satan is currently building in the world:

"AFTER THESE THINGS I SAW ANOTHER ANGEL COMING DOWN FROM HEAVEN, HAVING GREAT AUTHORITY, AND THE EARTH WAS ILLUMINATED WITH HIS GLORY. AND HE CRIED MIGHTILY WITH A LOUD VOICE, SAYING, "BABYLON THE GREAT IS FALLEN, IS FALLEN, AND HAS BECOME A DWELLING PLACE OF DEMONS, A PRISON FOR EVERY FOUL SPIRIT, AND A CAGE FOR EVERY UNCLEAN AND HATED BIRD! FOR ALL THE NATIONS HAVE DRUNK OF THE WINE OF THE WRATH OF HER FORNICATION, THE KINGS OF THE EARTH HAVE COMMITTED FORNICATION WITH HER, AND THE MERCHANTS OF THE EARTH HAVE BECOME RICH THROUGH THE ABUNDANCE OF HER LUXURY."

AND I HEARD ANOTHER VOICE FROM HEAVEN SAYING, "COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE, LEST YOU SHARE IN HER SINS, AND LEST YOU RECEIVE OF HER PLAGUES. FOR HER SINS HAVE REACHED TO HEAVEN, AND GOD HAS REMEMBERED HER INIQUITIES. RENDER TO HER JUST AS SHE RENDERED TO YOU, AND REPAY HER DOUBLE ACCORDING TO HER WORKS; IN THE CUP WHICH SHE HAS MIXED, MIX DOUBLE FOR HER. IN THE MEASURE THAT SHE GLORIFIED HERSELF AND LIVED LUXURIOUSLY, IN THE SAME MEASURE GIVE HER TORMENT AND SORROW; FOR SHE SAYS IN HER HEART, 'I SIT AS QUEEN, AND AM NO WIDOW, AND WILL NOT SEE SORROW.' THEREFORE HER PLAGUES WILL COME IN ONE DAY -- DEATH AND MOURNING AND FAMINE. AND SHE WILL BE UTTERLY BURNED WITH FIRE, FOR STRONG IS THE LORD GOD WHO JUDGES HER.

"THE KINGS OF THE EARTH WHO COMMITTED FORNICATION AND LIVED LUXURIOUSLY WITH HER WILL WEEP AND LAMENT FOR HER, WHEN THEY SEE THE SMOKE OF HER BURNING, STANDING AT A DISTANCE FOR FEAR OF HER TORMENT, SAYING, 'ALAS, ALAS, THAT GREAT CITY BABYLON, THAT MIGHTY CITY! FOR IN ONE HOUR YOUR JUDGMENT HAS COME.' "AND THE MERCHANTS OF THE EARTH WILL WEEP AND MOURN OVER HER, FOR NO ONE BUYS THEIR MERCHANDISE ANYMORE: MERCHANDISE OF GOLD AND SILVER, PRECIOUS STONES AND PEARLS, FINE LINEN AND PURPLE, SILK AND SCARLET, EVERY KIND OF CITRON WOOD,

EVERY KIND OF OBJECT OF IVORY, EVERY KIND OF OBJECT OF MOST PRECIOUS WOOD, BRONZE, IRON, AND MARBLE; AND CINNAMON AND INCENSE, FRAGRANT OIL AND FRANKINCENSE, WINE AND OIL, FINE FLOUR AND WHEAT, CATTLE AND SHEEP, HORSES AND CHARIOTS, AND BODIES AND SOULS OF MEN. THE FRUIT THAT YOUR SOUL LONGED FOR HAS GONE FROM YOU, AND ALL THE THINGS WHICH ARE RICH AND SPLENDID HAVE GONE FROM YOU, AND YOU SHALL FIND THEM NO MORE AT ALL. THE MERCHANTS OF THESE THINGS,

WHO BECAME RICH BY HER, WILL STAND AT A DISTANCE FOR FEAR OF HER TORMENT, WEeping AND WAILING, AND SAYING, 'ALAS, ALAS, THAT GREAT CITY THAT WAS CLOTHED IN FINE LINEN, PURPLE, AND SCARLET, AND ADORNED WITH GOLD AND PRECIOUS STONES AND PEARLS! FOR IN ONE HOUR SUCH GREAT RICHES CAME TO NOTHING.' EVERY SHIPMASTER, ALL WHO TRAVEL BY SHIP, SAILORS, AND AS MANY AS TRADE ON THE SEA, STOOD AT A DISTANCE AND CRIED OUT WHEN THEY SAW THE SMOKE OF HER BURNING, SAYING, 'WHAT IS LIKE THIS GREAT CITY?' "THEY THREW DUST ON THEIR HEADS AND CRIED OUT, WEeping AND WAILING, AND SAYING, 'ALAS, ALAS, THAT GREAT CITY, IN WHICH ALL WHO HAD SHIPS ON THE SEA BECAME RICH BY HER WEALTH! FOR IN ONE HOUR SHE IS MADE DESOLATE.' "REJOICE OVER HER, O HEAVEN, AND YOU HOLY APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, FOR GOD HAS AVENGED YOU ON HER!" THEN A MIGHTY ANGEL TOOK UP A STONE LIKE A GREAT MILLSTONE AND THREW IT INTO THE SEA, SAYING, "THUS WITH VIOLENCE THE GREAT CITY BABYLON SHALL BE THROWN DOWN, AND SHALL NOT BE FOUND ANYMORE. THE SOUND OF HARPISTS, MUSICIANS, FLUTISTS, AND TRUMPETERS SHALL NOT BE HEARD IN YOU ANYMORE. NO CRAFTSMAN OF ANY CRAFT SHALL BE FOUND IN YOU ANYMORE, AND THE SOUND OF A MILLSTONE SHALL NOT BE HEARD IN YOU ANYMORE. THE LIGHT OF A LAMP SHALL NOT SHINE IN YOU ANYMORE, AND THE VOICE OF BRIDEGROOM AND BRIDE SHALL NOT BE HEARD IN YOU ANYMORE. FOR YOUR MERCHANTS WERE THE GREAT MEN OF THE EARTH, FOR BY YOUR SORCERY ALL THE NATIONS WERE DECEIVED. AND IN HER WAS FOUND THE BLOOD OF PROPHETS AND SAINTS, AND OF ALL WHO WERE SLAIN ON THE EARTH."

THE SYSTEM SATAN USED IN HIS REVOLT AGAINST HEAVEN:

COMMERCE

"BY THE ABUNDANCE OF YOUR TRADING YOU BECAME FILLED WITH VIOLENCE... BY THE INIQUITY OF YOUR TRADING..."
 VS. 16, 18



POLITICS

"YOU WERE ON THE HOLY MOUNTAIN OF GOD; YOU WALKED BACK AND FORTH IN THE MIDST OF THE FIERY STONES... O COVERING CHERUB..."
 VS. 14, 16

RELIGION

"YOU WERE THE ANOINTED CHERUB WHO COVERS... YOU DEFILED YOUR SANCTUARIES... THE WORKMANSHIP OF YOUR TIMBRELS AND PIPES..."
 VS. 13-15

IS THE SAME SYSTEM HE PRESENTLY IS DEVELOPING ON EARTH:

"...YOUR MERCHANTS WERE THE GREAT MEN OF THE EARTH FOR BY YOUR SORCERY (DRUGS) ALL THE NATIONS WERE DECEIVED."

Rev. 18:23



"...THE MERCHANTS OF THE EARTH HAVE BECOME RICH

COMMERCE

THROUGH THE ABUNDANCE OF HER LUXURY."
 Rev. 18:3



POLITICS

RELIGION



"... THE KINGS OF THE EARTH HAVE COMMITTED FORNICATION WITH HER... AND HAVE LIVED LUXURIOUSLY WITH HER."
 Rev. 18:3,9

"...MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."
 Rev. 17:5

It is vital for us to see that there is a course this world is following and that the god of this world is deceiving the whole world into bringing it into fruition. Satan's desire is to bring forth "Babylon, the great city." A careful reading of Revelation 16-18 will show you that Babylon is the vehicle by which Satan gains dominance over the entire earth:

THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH:

"...THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH WERE MADE DRUNK WITH THE WINE OF HER (THE HARLOT) FORNICATION..."

Rev. 17:2

THE KINGS OF THE EARTH:

"...WITH WHOM (THE HARLOT) THE KINGS OF THE EARTH COMMITTED FORNICATION..."

Rev. 17:2

"...LIVED LUXURIOUSLY WITH HER (THE HARLOT)... WEEP AND LAMENT FOR HER..."

Rev. 18:9

THE MERCHANTS OF THE EARTH:

"AND THE MERCHANTS OF THE EARTH WILL WEEP AND MOURN OVER HER, FOR NO ONE BUYS THEIR MERCHANDISE ANYMORE..."

Rev. 18:11

"...THE MERCHANTS OF THESE THINGS, WHO BECAME RICH BY HER (THE HARLOT), WILL STAND... WEeping AND WAILING..."

Rev. 18:15

What should be the position of the saints of God towards Babylon the Great? Let the Word state it clearly for us from God Himself to His people:

THE SAINTS OF GOD ON THE EARTH:

"COME OUT (FROM AMONG) HER, MY PEOPLE,
LEST YOU SHARE IN HER SINS,
AND LEST YOU RECEIVE OF HER PLAGUES...
' COME OUT (FROM AMONG) HER, MY PEOPLE,
LEST YOU SHARE IN HER SINS,
AND LEST YOU RECEIVE OF HER PLAGUES...' "

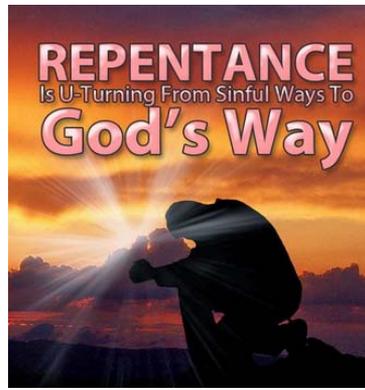
Rev. 18:4, 20

Notice, it is possible for God's people to share in Babylon's sins and receive her plagues. In the midst of weeping and wailing by those in bondage to the harlot, God's people are to rejoice at her destruction! (Rev.18:20) How we need to see that we are not on this earth to make it a better place to live, but rather to be in the world, but not of the world!

We need a restoration of the message preached both by John the Baptist and Jesus Himself. They both preached:

**“REPENT!
FOR
THE KINGDOM
OF HEAVEN
IS AT HAND.”**

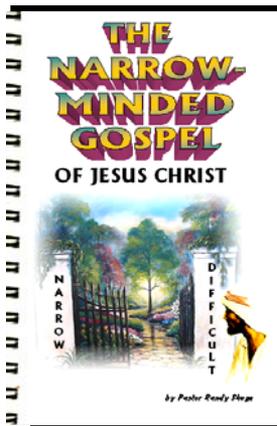
Matt. 3:1-2, Matt. 4:17



Christians today are involved in everything but the gospel of the kingdom! We go forth to protest and attempt to legislate the laws of morality on immorality. You cannot find one example in the life of Jesus or Paul where they campaigned for either a political or social issue! It is the gospel that is to be preached that the hearts of man may be changed to enable them to receive and embrace the laws of God: “I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts” (Heb. 8:10).

Might I suggest to you a book I wrote in 2004 about the gospel? There is no greater need in Christianity than a return to the narrow gospel preached by Jesus that was portrayed as being “narrow and difficult” (Matt. 7:13-14). Jesus warned that this message would be replaced by a broad and easy message.

**“ENTER BY
THE NARROW
GATE;
FOR WIDE IS
THE GATE,
AND BROAD IS
THE WAY
THAT LEADS TO
DESTRUCTION,
AND THERE
ARE MANY
WHO GO
IN BY IT.**



**BECAUSE
NARROW
IS THE GATE
AND
DIFFICULT
IS THE WAY
WHICH LEADS
TO LIFE,
AND THERE ARE
FEW
WHO FIND IT.”**

Matt. 7:13-14

Unless we lay the axe to the root of the tree (see Luke 3:9), we waste our efforts and alienate unbelievers to the true gospel message by attempting to force the laws of God on their lawless heart!

How we need to hear (and believe) what the scriptures vividly describe as to what the last days will be like:

**“BUT KNOW THIS,
THAT IN THE LAST DAYS
PERILOUS TIMES WILL
COME:
FOR MEN WILL BE
LOVERS OF THEMSELVES,
LOVERS OF MONEY,
BOASTERS, PROUD,
BLASPHEMERS,
DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS,
UNTHANKFUL, UNHOLY,
UNLOVING,
UNFORGIVING,
SLANDERERS, WITHOUT
SELF-CONTROL, BRUTAL,
DESPISERS OF GOOD,
TRAITORS, HEADSTRONG,
HAUGHTY,
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 REMEMBER,
BELOVED, THE PREDICTIONS
WHICH WERE MADE BY
THE APOSTLES
(THE SPECIAL MESSENGERS)
OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,
THE MESSIAH,
THE ANOINTED ONE.
THEY TOLD YOU BEFOREHAND,
IN THE LAST DAYS
(IN THE END TIME)
THERE WILL BE SCOFFERS --
WHO SEEK TO GRATIFY THEIR
OWN UNHOLY DESIRES --
FOLLOWING AFTER THEIR
OWN UNGODLY PASSIONS.
IT IS THESE WHO ARE
(AGITATORS) SETTING UP
DISTINCTIONS AND CAUSING
DIVISIONS;
MERELY SENSUAL (CREATURES) --
CARNAL, WORLDLY-MINDED
PEOPLE -- DEVOID OF THE
(HOLY) SPIRIT AND DESTITUTE OF
ANY HIGHER SPIRITUAL LIFE.”**

Jude 17-19 Amplified

To this group of demented characters we are going to command “Don’t kill babies”, or “Don’t read pornography”, or “Allow children to pray in school”? They need Jesus in their hearts, not the laws of Jesus forced upon them! We cannot preach ideology (“a systems of ideas either political or social, a philosophy which is opposed to reality”-*Webster*). Rather, we must focus upon preaching theology (the knowledge of God). We all know that Jesus said, “... I have overcome the world” (see Jn. 16:33), Have you ever considered how He overcame the world?

**“...THE PRINCE (EVIL GENIUS, RULER) OF THE WORLD
IS COMING. AND HE HAS NO CLAIM ON ME –
HE HAS NOTHING IN COMMON WITH ME,
THERE IS NOTHING IN ME THAT BELONGS TO HIM,
HE HAS NO POWER OVER ME...”**

Jn. 14:30 Amp.



Jesus did not seek to change the world. He simply refused to allow the world to change Him!

“...THE PRINCE (EVIL GENIUS, RULER) OF THE WORLD IS COMING. AND HE HAS NO CLAIM ON ME – HE HAS NOTHING IN COMMON WITH ME, THERE IS NOTHING IN ME THAT BELONGS TO HIM, HE HAS NO POWER OVER ME...”

Jn. 14:30 Amp.

“...I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD.”

Jn. 16:33

1. ITS SPIRIT...

1 Cor. 2:12

2. ITS WISDOM...

1 Cor. 3:19

3. ITS FASHION...

1 Cor. 7:31

4. ITS PRINCIPLES...

Col. 2:8

5. ITS COURSE...

Eph. 2:2

6. ITS POLLUTION...

2 Pet. 2:20

7. ITS CORRUPTION...

2 Pet. 1:4



Overcoming the world simply means that we come to the place, like Jesus, that we are not interested in its spirit, its wisdom, its fashion, its principles, its course, its pollution, or its corruption! We come to the point where we also can say, Satan has no claim on me, he has nothing in common with me, there is nothing in me that belongs to him, he has no power over me – I have overcome the world! This confession comes only when we have become people of vision! We must be like Abraham who looked for a city whose builder and maker was God (see Heb. 11:10) and, because of that confession, God said of Abraham:

**“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.”**

Heb. 11:16

Yes, God has prepared a city for those who are choosing to wait for it!

Satan is offering his perverted version of the great city.

Which do you want? Let us now make a comparison between
“two cities” and “two women”:



**“ON HER FOREHEAD A NAME
WAS WRITTEN:
MYSTERY, BABYLON
THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF
HARLOTS AND OF THE
ABOMINATIONS
OF THE EARTH.”**

Rev. 17:5

**“THE WOMAN WAS ARRAYED
IN PURPLE AND SCARLET,
AND ADORNED WITH GOLD AND
PRECIOUS STONES AND PEARLS...
FULL OF ABOMINATIONS AND
THE FILTHINESS OF HER
FORNICATIONS.”**

Rev. 17:4

**“AND SHE SHALL BE UTTERLY
BURNED WITH FIRE,
FOR STRONG IS THE LORD GOD
WHO JUDGES HER .”**

Rev. 18:8

**“BABYLON...
HAS BECOME
A HABITATION OF DEMONS,
A PRISON FOR EVERY
FOUL SPIRIT...”**

Rev. 18:2

**“ALL THE THINGS WHICH ARE
RICH AND SPLENDID HAVE
GONE FROM YOU, AND YOU
SHALL FIND THEM NO MORE...
FOR IN ONE HOUR SUCH GREAT
RICHES CAME TO NOTHING...
WHAT IS LIKE
UNTO THIS GREAT CITY?”**

Rev. 18:14-18



**“HE WHO OVERCOMES,...
I WILL WRITE ON HIM THE...
NAME OF THE CITY OF MY GOD,
THE NEW JERUSALEM...
AND I WILL WRITE ON HIM
MY NEW NAME.”**

Rev. 3:12

**“AND TO HER IT WAS GRANTED TO
BE ARRAYED IN FINE LINEN,
CLEAN AND BRIGHT,
FOR THE FINE LINEN IS
THE RIGHTEOUS ACTS
OF THE SAINTS.”**

Rev. 19:8

**“LET US BE GLAD AND REJOICE...
FOR THE MARRIAGE
OF THE LAMB HAS COME,
AND HIS WIFE HAS
MADE HERSELF READY.”**

Rev. 19:7

**“THERE SHALL BY NO MEANS ENTER
INTO IT ANYTHING THAT DEFILES,
OR CAUSES AN ABOMINATION...”**

Rev. 21:27

**“...AND SHOWED ME THE GREAT
CITY, THE HOLY JERUSALEM...
HAVING THE GLORY OF GOD. AND
HER LIGHT WAS LIKE A PRECIOUS
STONE... AND THE CONSTRUCTION
OF ITS WALL WAS OF JASPER, AND
THE CITY WAS PURE GOLD, LIKE
CLEAR GLASS... ADORNED WITH
ALL KINDS OF PRECIOUS STONES...
EACH GATE WAS ONE PEARL...
STREET WAS PURE GOLD...”**

Rev. 21:10-21

Let me bring you back down to earth and begin to examine what it is going to require to overcome the world that we may become partakes of the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem. The Bride of Christ will overcome all that is in the world: certainly the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, but she will also overcome the seven things the Word reveals that comprise the world system:

**"HE THAT
OVERCOMES
I WILL WRITE ON HIM**

**THE
NAME
OF
THE CITY
OF
MY GOD,
THE
NEW
JERUSALEM,**

**AND
MY
NEW
NAME."
Rev. 3:12**



1. **THE SPIRIT**
2. **THE WISDOM**
3. **THE FASHION**
4. **THE PRINCIPLES**
5. **THE COURSE**
6. **THE POLLUTION**
7. **THE CORRUPTION**

We have considered that in the spiritual realm there are three things that abide forever that comprise God's Kingdom on earth: faith, hope and love (1 Cor. 13:13). However, there are also three things that temporally abide in this world that were created by Satan as the god of this world: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Let us expand our understanding of this concept:

THE KINGDOM OF THIS WORLD

(THE MIND BEHIND THE SYSTEM)

**"...THE PRINCE
(EVIL GENIUS,
RULER)
OF THE WORLD..."**

Jn. 14:30 Amp.



**"...THE PRINCE AND THE POWER
OF THE AIR,
THE SPIRIT WHO NOW WORKS
IN THE SONS OF
DISOBEDIENCE."**

Eph. 2:2

**LUST OF
THE FLESH**

**LUST OF
THE EYES**

**THE PRIDE
OF LIFE**



**THE
GREAT
HARLOT OF
THE EARTH**

THE SPIRIT
OF

HARLOTRY

INDULGENT...
UNDISCIPLINED..
UNRESTRAINED
IN MIND/BODY...
SENSUAL...
LUSTFUL...

**POLLUTIONS
OF THE WORLD**



**THE
MERCHANTS
OF THE
EARTH**

THE SPIRIT
OF

IDOLATRY

INFATUATION...
EXTREME
DEVOTION...
EXCESSIVE
ATTACHMENT...
LOVE TO EXCESS...

**CORRUPTION
OF THE WORLD**



**THE
KINGS
OF THE
EARTH**

THE SPIRIT
OF

IDEOLOGY

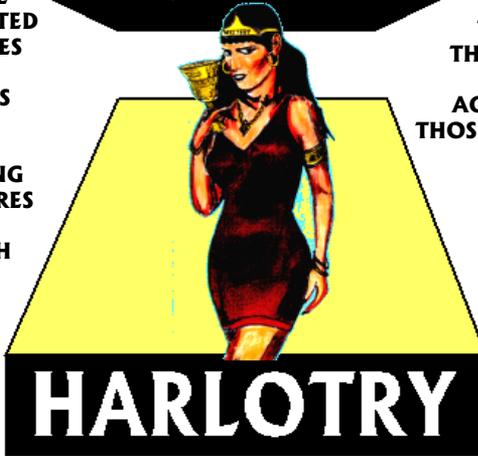
SYSTEM OF IDEAS
EITHER POLITICAL
OR SOCIAL...
A PHILOSOPHY
OPPOSED TO
REALITY...

**WISDOM
OF THE WORLD**

“...WE ALL ONCE CONDUCTED OURSELVES IN THE LUSTS OF OUR FLESH, FULFILLING THE DESIRES OF THE FLESH AND OF THE MIND.”

Eph.. 2:3

LUST OF THE FLESH



“...HAVING EYES FULL OF ADULTERY AND THAT CANNOT CEASE FROM SIN, BEGUILING SOULS... THEY ALLURE THROUGH THE LUSTS OF THE FLESH... THE ONES WHO HAVE ACTUALLY ESCAPED FROM THOSE WHO LIVE IN ERROR... IF, AFTER THEY HAVE ESCAPED THE POLLUTION OF THE WORLD THROUGH THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, THEY ARE AGAIN ENTANGLED... AND OVERCOME, THE LATTER END IS WORSE FOR THEM THAN THE BEGINNING.”

2 Pet. 2:14-20

The spirit of harlotry is Satan's bait for those who have escaped the pollution of his world through Jesus Christ. Note, his intention is to entangle them again in bondage and overcome them so that their latter end is worse than the beginning. How does he do it? He allures them through the lust of the flesh. He uses the harlot of Babylon, the sensual, lustful, suggestive, smutty spirit that permeates our present society, especially here in America!

Please grasp that I am talking about an outside influence and not our flesh nature, that is another topic altogether. These are the abominations of Egypt set before our eyes (Ezk. 20:6-8). It is the spirit of harlotry, whoredom, and wantonness. Let us define these terms:

HARLOTRY –

Greek -

“PORNEIA”

(PORNOGRAPHIC) – “TO BE HIGHLY FED, AND THEREFORE WANTON, INDULGENT, UNDISCIPLINED IN MIND OR BODY, LUSTFUL, SENSUAL IN THOUGHT OR DEED.”

WHOREDOM –

Hebrew-

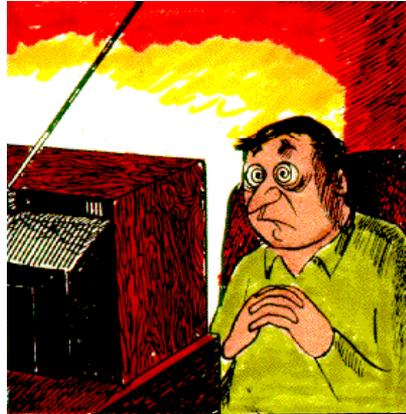
“ZANAH” –

“GIVEN TO IDOLS, UNFAITHFULNESS...”

To me, it is of great significance to see that in order to become wanton and to fall prey to harlotry, one must be highly fed: fed a steady diet of “porneia” consisting of sensuality, lustfulness, and self-indulgence.

The merchants of the earth sell everything from toothpaste to hardware with “S-O-F-T-W-A-R-E” or more bluntly, “S-E-X”!

A steady diet of this, fed through television, advertisement, etc. opens our spirits to wantonness and harlotry.



It is true that a perverted mind can lust over the smallest thing. I would like to have some of the mail-order catalogs from twenty years ago that I might compare them to today’s versions and I think you would see a stark contrast in the sensuality of “ladies wear” compared to the older versions. I once counseled with a man who used a well-known mail order catalog to satisfy his sexual lusts as many use Playboy-type magazines for lustful fantasies. Is he perverted or simply enticed with the lusts of the flesh by the spirit of harlotry which is in the world and governed by the god of this world, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience?

In the Old Testament we find that harlotry and whoredom are both the Hebrew word “zanah”, which means “given to idols and unfaithful to God.” We would not consider either of these things to be harlotry or whoredom in our thinking today. To think of harlotry or whoredom we think of prostitution, being given to many lovers and usually for money. Let us look at how God describes Israel in the Old Testament:

Ezk. 16:30,32

“HOW DEGENERATE IS YOUR HEART! SAYS THE LORD GOD, SEEING YOU DO... THE DEEDS OF A BRAZEN HARLOT... YOU ARE AN ADULTEROUS WIFE, WHO TAKES STRANGERS INSTEAD OF HER HUSBAND...”

A careful reading of Ezekiel 16 will show you that God was speaking of their idols and not a physical act of fornication. Why does God speak in this manner to His people? It is simply because they were espoused (engaged) to Jehovah God. He was considered to be their husband!

“FOR YOUR MAKER IS YOUR HUSBAND.”

Isa. 54:5

**“...MY COVENANTS WHICH THEY BROKE,
THOUGH I WAS A HUSBAND TO THEM,
SAYS THE LORD.”**

Jer. 31:32

**“SURELY, AS A WIFE TREACHEROUSLY DEPARTS
FROM HER HUSBAND, SO HAVE YOU DEALT
WITH ME... SAYS THE LORD”**

Jer. 3:20

**“... HAVE YOU SEEN WHAT BACKSLIDING ISRAEL
HAS DONE? SHE HAS... PLAYED THE HARLOT.
AND I SAID, AFTER SHE HAD DONE THESE THINGS,
RETURN TO ME. BUT SHE DID NOT RETURN...
FOR ALL THE CAUSES FOR WHICH BACKSLIDING
ISRAEL HAD COMMITTED ADULTERY.
I HAD PUT HER AWAY AND GIVEN HER
A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE.
RETURN, BACKSLIDING ISRAEL...
FOR I AM MERCIFUL... ONLY ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR
INIQUITY, THAT YOU HAVE TRANSGRESSED
AGAINST THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND HAVE
SCATTERED YOUR CHARMS TO ALIEN DEITIES...
AND YOU HAVE NOT OBEYED MY VOICE.
RETURN, O BACKSLIDING CHILDREN,
SAYS THE LORD:
FOR I AM MARRIED TO YOU...”**

Jer. 3:6-14

**“...YOU HAVE
PLAYED THE HARLOT WITH MANY LOVERS;
YET RETURN TO ME, SAYS THE LORD.”**

Jer. 3:1

Through the spirit of harlotry, Satan successfully enticed God's people from being faithful to Him as a wife. The result was that God gave them a bill of divorcement for their harlotry. He was willing to take them back if they acknowledged their iniquity and returned to the Lord. We are taught today that under the new covenant of grace, God would never divorce His people, because we are now “once saved, always saved.” May I remind you: →

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

Mal. 3:6

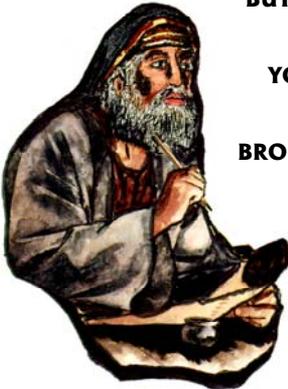
**GOD WILL NOT DO FOR THE CHURCH
WHAT HE WOULD NOT DO FOR ISRAEL!**

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

Heb. 13:8

Let me say it again, God will not do for you what He would not do for Israel! He cut them off for harlotry! Paul feared Satan would deceive the saints from being presented to God as chaste virgins. If Satan can get God's people today to commit harlotry being espoused to God, then the righteous judge must divorce His people, lest the nation of Israel stand in judgment day and accuse God of unrighteous judgment!

The rapture will only take those who are ready and have not committed harlotry/whoredom before God. That is what will separate the wise from the foolish! Why do we ignore the clear warning Paul writes to the Church in Romans 11:



**"DO NOT BOAST AGAINST THE BRANCHES.
BUT IF YOU DO BOAST, REMEMBER THAT YOU DO
NOT SUPPORT THE ROOT, BUT THE ROOT
SUPPORTS YOU.**

**YOU WILL SAY THEN, 'BRANCHES WERE BROKEN
OFF THAT I MIGHT BE GRAFTED IN.'**

**WELL SAID. BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF THEY WERE
BROKEN OFF, AND YOU STAND BY FAITH. DO NOT
BE HAUGHTY, BUT FEAR.**

**FOR IF GOD DID NOT SPARE THE NATURAL
BRANCHES, HE MAY NOT SPARE YOU
EITHER. THEREFORE CONSIDER THE
GOODNESS AND SEVERITY OF GOD: ON
THOSE WHO FELL, SEVERITY;
BUT TOWARD YOU, GOODNESS,
IF YOU CONTINUE IN HIS GOODNESS.
OTHERWISE YOU ALSO WILL BE CUT OFF.**

**AND THEY ALSO, IF THEY DO NOT CONTINUE IN UNBELIEF,
WILL BE GRAFTED IN, FOR GOD IS ABLE TO GRAFT THEM
IN AGAIN.**

**FOR IF YOU WERE CUT OUT OF THE OLIVE TREE WHICH IS WILD BY
NATURE, AND WERE GRAFTED CONTRARY TO NATURE INTO A GOOD
OLIVE TREE, HOW MUCH MORE WILL THESE, WHO ARE THE
NATURAL BRANCHES, BE GRAFTED INTO THEIR OWN OLIVE TREE?"**

Let me show you yet another of God's principles which Satan uses against the saints who believe God does change:

**"FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD, YOUR SANCTIFICATION:
THAT YOU SHOULD ABSTAIN FROM SEXUAL IMMORALITY;
THAT EACH OF YOU SHOULD KNOW HOW TO POSSESS HIS OWN
VESSEL IN SANCTIFICATION AND HONOR, NOT IN PASSION OF LUST...
FOR GOD DID NOT CALL US TO UNCLEANNES, BUT IN HOLINESS."**

1 Thess. 4:3-7

**"NOW MAY THE GOD OF PEACE HIMSELF SANCTIFY YOU COMPLETELY;
AND MAY YOUR WHOLE SPIRIT, SOUL, AND BODY BE PRESERVED
BLAMELESS AT THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."**

1 Thess. 5:23

Satan knows it is God's will for you to be sanctified completely in your spirit, soul, and body, that you should be found blameless at the return of Jesus Christ. So then, his philosophy is simply to get you to commit harlotry in your spirit, soul, or body so that you would not be found blameless at His return. The blameless are the wise/chaste virgins who were not deceived from wholehearted devotion to Christ. The foolish listen to the smooth preachers who say you are already completely sanctified. The truth is we are completely justified, but are in the ongoing process of being completely sanctified, and it is the sanctified that shall be raptured:

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

Luke 21:34-36

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

Rev. 3:8-11

**"...NOW FIVE (VIRGINS) WERE WISE AND FIVE (VIRGINS)
WERE FOOLISH... THE BRIDEGROOM CAME,
AND THOSE WHO WERE READY WENT IN WITH HIM TO THE WEDDING,
AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT. AFTERWARD THE OTHER VIRGINS CAME
ALSO, SAYING, LORD, LORD, OPEN TO US!... I DO NOT KNOW YOU.
WATCH THEREFORE, FOR YOU KNOW NEITHER THE DAY
NOR THE HOUR IN WHICH THE SON OF MAN IS COMING."**

Matt. 25:1-13

Recently I taught this truth that the rapture is selective and earned, rather than unconditional and everybody goes who professes to be born again. Shortly after our radio broadcast, another preacher came on the radio and called our broadcast a pack of lies. Who is he calling a liar, me or Jesus? Jesus said it first, I was only teaching what He said are the conditions for being raptured as wise virgins. It was Jesus who said that the foolish virgins would be left behind. What scriptural evidence is there to support the “unconditional-everybody goes” theory? Does not the scripture say, “By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word is established?” (see 2 Cor. 13:1) When this book is circulated, there may well be those that also say, “that’s a pack of lies”. But dear heart, as Paul would say, “what do the scriptures say?” (see Rom. 4:3). Back to our subject of harlotry. Satan will seek to cause you to live a lifestyle of harlotry in spirit, soul, and body because he knows God has said:

**OF YOUR
SPIRIT:**

**“...LET US
CLEANSE
OURSELVES
FROM ALL
FILTHINESS OF
THE FLESH AND
SPIRIT,
PERFECTING
HOLINESS...”**

2 Cor. 7:1

**“...GLORIFY GOD
IN YOUR BODY
AND IN YOUR
SPIRIT...”**

1 Cor. 6:20

**“... MAY BE
HOLY BOTH
IN BODY
AND
IN SPIRIT....”**

1 Cor. 7:34

**“...MAY YOUR
WHOLE SPIRIT,
SOUL, AND BODY
BE PRESERVED
BLAMELESS...”**

1 Thess. 5:23

**OF YOUR
SOUL:**

**“...WE ALL ONCE
CONDUCTED
OURSELVES IN THE
LUSTS OF OUR FLESH,
FULFILLING THE DESIRES
OF THE FLESH AND OF
THE MIND...”**

Eph. 2:3

**“YOU HAVE HEARD IT SAID
TO THOSE OF OLD,
‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT
ADULTERY.’ BUT I SAY
UNTO YOU THAT
WHOEVER LOOKS AT A
WOMAN TO LUST FOR HER
HAS ALREADY COMMITTED
ADULTERY WITH HER
IN HIS HEART.”**

Matt. 5:27-28

**“...WE ALL ONCE
CONDUCTED
OURSELVES IN THE
LUSTS OF OUR FLESH,
FULFILLING THE
DESIRES OF THE FLESH
AND OF THE MIND.”**

Eph. 4:23

**OF YOUR
BODY:**

**“NOW THE BODY
IS NOT FOR SEXUAL
IMMORALITY BUT FOR
THE LORD... DO YOU
NOT KNOW THAT YOUR
BODIES ARE MEMBERS
OF CHRIST?**

**SHALL I THEN TAKE THE
MEMBERS OF CHRIST
AND MAKE THEM
MEMBERS OF A
HARLOT? CERTAINLY
NOT! OR DO YOU NOT
KNOW THAT HE WHO IS
JOINED TO A HARLOT IS
ONE BODY WITH HER?
FOR THE TWO SHALL
BECOME ONE FLESH.”
BUT HE WHO IS JOINED
TO THE LORD IS ONE
SPIRIT WITH HIM.**

**FLEE SEXUAL
IMMORALITY.
EVERY SIN THAT A MAN
DOES IS OUTSIDE THE
BODY, BUT HE WHO
COMMITS SEXUAL
IMMORALITY SINS
AGAINST HIS OWN
BODY. ...GLORIFY GOD
IN YOUR BODY...”**

1 Cor. 6:13-20

THE LUST OF THE FLESH



**THE POLLUTIONS
OF
THE WORLD"**

2 Pet. 2:20



HARLOTRY

**"MY PEOPLE ASK COUNSEL
FROM THEIR WOODEN
IDOLS... FOR THE SPIRIT OF
HARLOTRY HAS CAUSED
THEM TO STRAY, AND THEY
HAVE PLAYED THE HARLOT
AGAINST THEIR GOD...
THEIR DRINK IS REBELLION,
THEY COMMIT HARLOTRY
CONTINUALLY...
AND THEY SHALL BE
ASHAMED BECAUSE OF
THEIR SACRIFICES."**

Hosea 4:12, 18-19

**"...ISRAEL IS DEFILED.
THEY DO NOT DIRECT THEIR
DEEDS TOWARD
TURNING TO THEIR GOD,
FOR
THE SPIRIT OF HARLOTRY
IS IN THEIR MIDST,
AND THEY DO NOT
KNOW THE LORD."**

Hosea 5:3-4

Consider well our examples above of the children of Israel, learn from them, and do not do as they did (see 1 Cor. 10:1-11). To believe that the unchanging God will overlook the sin of harlotry in the church simply because of grace is to insult the Spirit of Grace. I suggest a careful reading of Hebrews 10:26-30, and especially in the Amplified Bible. The spirit of harlotry is still in our midst, in fact, I would say it has become intensified because of this being the last days. Mystery Babylon is emerging.

So we see then that harlotry can be the physical act which is sinning against our body that has been set apart to the Lord. The body of the believer as the temple of the Lord is not for sexual immorality (1 Cor. 6:18).

We have also established that harlotry can be a sin of the mind through lust apart from the physical act (Matt. 5:28). Harlotry can be sin spoken of as spiritual harlotry, like Israel who played the harlot by going after alien deities (Jer. 3:6-14).

Remember, it was the apostle James who called believers "adulterers" and "adulteresses" simply for being "a friend of the world", serving the god of pleasure (see James 4:3-4).

THE LUST OF THE FLESH



**THE POLLUTIONS
OF
THE WORLD”**

2 Pet. 2:20

HARLOTRY



**“MY PEOPLE ASK COUNSEL
FROM THEIR WOODEN IDOLS...
FOR THE SPIRIT OF HARLOTRY
HAS CAUSED THEM TO STRAY,
AND THEY HAVE PLAYED THE
HARLOT AGAINST THEIR GOD...
THEIR DRINK IS REBELLION,
THEY COMMIT HARLOTRY
CONTINUALLY... AND THEY
SHALL BE ASHAMED BECAUSE
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Hosea 4:12,18-19

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FOR THE SPIRIT OF HARLOTRY
IS IN THEIR MIDST, AND THEY
DO NOT KNOW THE LORD.”**

Hosea 5:3-4

The Christian life is full of choices (see Deut. 30:15-19). Here are two choices. You must choose between the two, for God is not an advocate of “the best of both worlds” philosophy. If you are to be dressed in fine linen, then choose righteous acts (Rev. 19:7-8), and choose the Spirit of God rather than the spirit of harlotry.

THE BRIDE



**“I SAY THEN:
WALK IN THE SPIRIT,
AND YOU WILL NOT FULFILL
THE LUST OF THE FLESH...
THOSE WHO ARE CHRIST’S
HAVE CRUCIFIED THE FLESH
WITH ITS PASSIONS AND
DESIRES.”**

Gal. 5:16,24

“THE SPIRIT OF HOLINESS”

Rom. 1:4

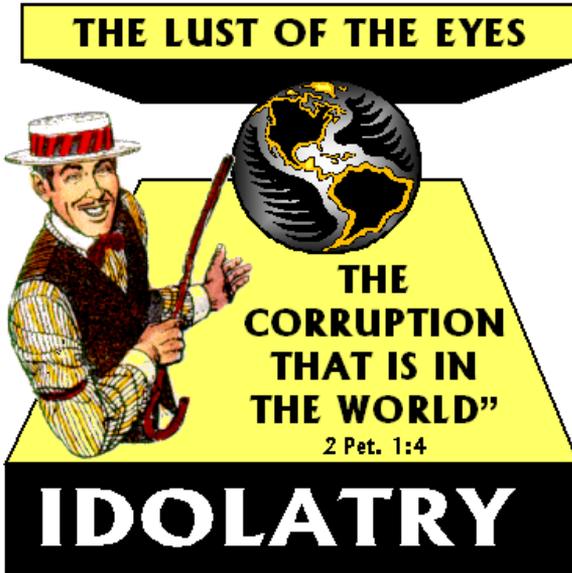
**“THE SPIRIT OF
SANCTIFICATION”**

1 Pet. 1:2

“THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH”

Jn. 16:13

We move now to the second area in which we are called to overcome. John said that all that is in the world (is) the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 Jn. 2:16).



“...THERE WILL BE ALSO FALSE PROPHETS AMONG YOU... WHO WILL SECRETLY ING IN DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES... AND MANY WILL FOLLOW THEIR DESTRUCTIVE WAYS, AUSE OF WHOM THE Y OF TRUTH WILL BE BLASPHEMED. BY COVETOUSNESS THEY WILL EXPLOIT YOU WITH DECEPTIVE WORDS...”

2 Pet. 2:1-3

“BUT GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT IS GREAT GAIN. FOR WE BROUGHT NOTHING INTO THIS WORLD, AND IT IS CERTAIN WE CAN CARRY NOTHING OUT. AND HAVING FOOD AND CLOTHING, WITH THESE WE SHALL BE CONTENT. 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 AND PURSUE RIGHTEOUSNESS, GODLINESS, FAITH, LOVE, PATIENCE, GENTLENESS. FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH... “

1 Tim. 6:6-12

“THEREFORE PUT TO DEATH... COVETOUSNESS WHICH IS IDOLATRY.”

Col. 3:5

Like the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes deals with the idols of Egypt which are before our eyes (see Ezk. 20:6-8). In other words, it consists of an outside influence. Just as we saw the lust of the flesh to be the spirit of harlotry which is in the world, likewise the lust of the eyes is also a spirit, the spirit of idolatry.

Do not forget we are dealing with the rulers of darkness of this world. There is a demonic force behind the emphasis placed upon materialism, covetousness, and a more modern term, “hedonism” (the pursuit of pleasure/ease).

It is easy to see that the satanic strongman that is binding America is the spirit of idolatry. Idolatry onl works whe there is great abundance to be seen and covete by both the haves and the have nots. The warnings God gave Israel are applicable Christians America:

**“IN THE LAST DAYS... MEN WILL BE:
LOVERS OF THEMSELVES... LOVERS OF MONEY,
LOVERS OF PLEASURE
MORE THAN LOVERS OF GOD.”**

2 Tim. 3:1-4



“AND GOD SPOKE ALL THESE WORDS SAYING:

I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD, WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE. YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME... YOU SHALL NOT BOW DOWN TO THEM NOR SERVE THEM. FOR I, THE LORD YOUR GOD, AM A JEALOUS GOD...”

Exodus 20:1-5

“NOW THESE THINGS BECAME OUR EXAMPLES, TO THE INTENT THAT WE SHOULD NOT LUST AFTER EVIL THINGS AS THEY ALSO LUSTED.

AND DO NOT BECOME IDOLATERS AS WERE SOME OF THEM.

AS IT IS WRITTEN, THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND ROSE UP TO PLAY...THEREFORE, MY BELOVED, FLEE FROM IDOLATRY.”

1 Cor. 10:6-7,14

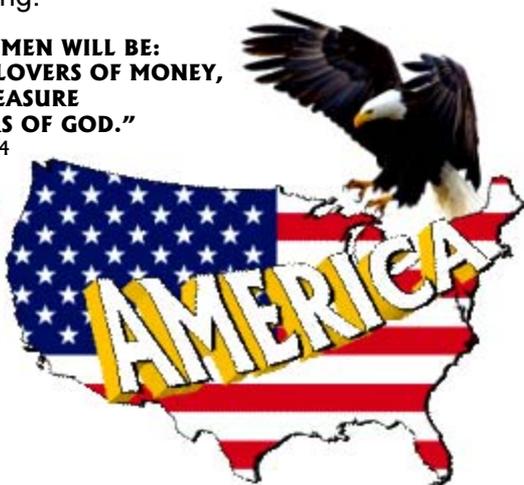
“FOR THIS YOU KNOW, THAT NO FORNICATOR, UNCLEAN PERSON NOR COVETOUS MAN WHO IS AN IDOLATER, HAS ANY INHERITANCE IN THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST AND GOD. LET NO ONE DECEIVE YOU WITH EMPTY WORDS...”

Eph. 5:5-6

Again, may we remember that the devil's philosophy is based on the unchanging principles like those just listed. His wiles and strategies will be centered upon deceiving God's people into becoming idolaters! Satan knows it is written that no covetous man who is an idolater has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God (Eph. 5:6), Although Paul warns the saints to let no one deceive you with empty words, many of God's people are being deceived! Paul prays that the Church may have their understanding enlightened to know what is the hope of His calling and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints (Eph. 1:18), Paul warns the saints against becoming an idolater and losing their inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God! That inheritance is the Bride of Christ! Jesus will not marry an idolater! It is important to see that Paul defines idolatry as including eating, drinking and playing (1 Cor. 10:7). We must all eat and drink, and some play is therapeutic and needful, but dear heart, America is consumed with over-indulgence in these areas, especially in the area of playing:

**"IN THE LAST DAYS... MEN WILL BE:
LOVERS OF THEMSELVES... LOVERS OF MONEY,
LOVERS OF PLEASURE
MORE THAN LOVERS OF GOD."**

2 Tim. 3:1-4



Paul does say that all things are lawful for him, but he goes on to clarify that all things are not helpful (profitable) for him. However, he is determined not to be brought under the power/bondage of any thing (see 1 Cor. 6:12). Eating and drinking are necessities of life, but over-indulgence is gluttony and that is bondage. Playing is fun and in itself is wholesome, but again we must ask ourselves “how much play is ok”, without being an idolater? Paul gave us:

THE KEYS TO DEFINING WHEN ACTIVITIES HAVE BECOME IDOLATROUS:



1.
WHEN ALL THINGS ARE NOT HELPFUL BUT HARMFUL...

1 Cor. 6:12

2.
WHEN WE ARE BROUGHT UNDER THE POWER OF SOME THING...

1 Cor. 6:12

3.
WHEN WE LOVE IT RATHER, OR MORE THAN WE LOVE GOD...

2 Tim. 3:2-4

KEY ONE:

WHEN ALL THINGS ARE NOT HELPFUL BUT HARMFUL...

**WHAT PROFIT WILL IT BRING TO ME?
WILL IT IMPROVE MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY FAMILY,
WIFE, BRETHREN? WILL IT HINDER MY RELATIONSHIP
WITH GOD? WILL IT BE A GOOD WITNESS BEFORE MEN?**

KEY TWO:

WHEN WE ARE BROUGHT UNDER THE
POWER OF SOME THING..

**DO I CONTROL IT, OR DOES IT CONTROL ME? – TEST:
HOW DO I RESPOND WHEN THIS ACTIVITY IS DENIED ME
DUE TO EMERGENCIES? TEST: CAN I VOLUNTARILY
CHOOSE TO FORGO IT WITHOUT A NEGATIVE REACTION?**

KEY THREE:

WHEN WE LOVE IT RATHER,
OR MORE THAN WE LOVE GOD...

**WHAT PORTION OF MY AVAILABLE “FREE TIME” DOES
IT CONSUME? DOES IT CONSUMER MORE TIME THAN I
GIVE TO GOD AND THE THINGS OF GOD (BIBLE STUDY,
PRAYER, ATTENDANCE, FELLOWSHIP, ETC.)? IF YOU JOG
AN HOUR A DAY, DO YOU PRAY/STUDY ETC. AN HOUR
A DAY? IF YOU WATCH HOURS OF SPORTS A WEEK,
DO YOU LIKewise SEEK TO SPEND HOURS WITH GOD?**

Here is reality. We give our time to the things we love. What you do with your free time will tell you where your love really lies. To be a lover of God requires time to be spent with Him and in His priorities. When He instructs us to redeem the time because the days are evil (Eph. 5:16), and we do not, then we cannot say we are lovers of God more than lovers of whatever consumers our time.

The Bride of Christ is consumed with Jesus Christ! Take time to read the Song of Solomon which depicts the Bride's attitude toward her true love! May we remember that we are not discussing nominal Christianity but rather the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14). In that verse you will note it is a prize and a goal that consumes Paul and its centers upon Jesus: _____→



**“THAT I MAY KNOW HIM
AND THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION,
AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS,
BEING CONFORMED TO HIS DEATH...
I PRESS TOWARD THE GOAL FOR THE PRIZE OF
THE UPWARD CALL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.
THEREFORE, LET US, AS MANY AS ARE MATURE,
HAVE THIS MIND...”**

Phi. 3:10-15

Now that we understand how to define when we are idolatrous, let us consider in what forms idolatry appears. Paul said there were three types of lovers that men would be in the last days (see 2 Tim. 3:1-4)

LOVERS of THEMSELVES...

2. LOVERS of MONEY...

Let us begin
by examining what is
meant by being:

LOVERS of THEMSELVES

3. LOVERS of PLEASURE...

**“BUT
UNDERSTAND
THIS,
THAT IN THE
LAST DAYS...
MEN WILL BE
LOVERS OF
SELF AND
UTTERLY
SELF
CENTERED...”**

2 Tim. 3:1-2
Amplified





The picture on the previous page of the young man standing in front of a mirror “admiring” (possibly worshipping) himself, reminds me of that old fairy tale in which there was a witch who was always standing in front of a magic mirror asking of its powers, “Mirror, Mirror on the wall, Who is the fairest of them all?”

Idolatry must have an object upon which worship can be placed. In this first category of idolatry, we see the object of worship is self. We will have more to say on the self-life when we get to overcoming the flesh. What Satan is presenting here is an appeal to self-love, to vanity.

VANITY-

EXCESSIVE OR OVERWEENING PRIDE IN ONE’S PERSONAL IMAGE, TO DISPLAY EXCESSIVE ADMIRATION FOR ONE’S OWN PERSONAL APPEARANCE” – Webster

At the risk of being redundant, let me say again that the devil’s philosophy is always based on principles of God’s Word. Let us consider what the Word of God says about vanity and you will see why Satan, through the course (direction) of this world, is exalting and emphasizing “the body beautiful” through the current craze of health spas and exercise, or physical fitness:

**“...EXERCISE YOURSELF RATHER TO GODLINESS.
FOR BODILY EXERCISE PROFITS A LITTLE,
BUT GODLINESS IS PROFITABLE FOR ALL THINGS,
HAVING PROMISE OF THE LIFE THAT NOW IS
AND OF THAT WHICH IS TO COME.”**

1 Tim. 4:7-8

First, we see that Paul does not condemn exercise, but rather he makes a comparison to exercising unto godliness. It is spiritual exercise which will profit the believer the most, both in this life and in the life to come. Paul must have been reflecting upon the Roman and Greek obsessive craze for making the body beautiful to gaze upon.



Perhaps Paul was grieved to see the tremendous amount of dedication, sacrifice, discipline, effort and time put into the perfection of the physical body while the soul and spirit remained destitute and ignored. May we ourselves learn from Paul's admonition to give priority to exercising unto godliness. How many hours do God's people spend in jogging and aerobics and in health spas compared to developing and maturing the inner man?

Peter also speaks of the need for holding a proper priority between the physical and the spiritual:

“DO NOT LET YOUR ADORNMENT BE THAT OUTWARD ADORNING OF THE ARRANGING THE HAIR, OF WEARING GOLD, OR OF PUTTING ON FINE APPAREL... BUT LET IT BE THE HIDDEN PERSON OF THE HEART, WITH THE INCORRUPTIBLE BEAUTY OF A GENTLE AND QUIET SPIRIT, WHICH IS VERY PRECIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.”

1 Pet. 3:3-4

“LET NOT YOURS BE MERELY EXTERNAL ADORNING WITH ELABORATE INTERWEAVING AND KNOTTING OF THE HAIR, (OR THE ELABORATE) WEARING OF JEWELRY, OR (THE ELABORATE) CHANGES OF CLOTHES...”

1 Pet. 3:3 Amplified



Peter is no more saying that you can't wear jewelry or gold than Paul was saying, "Don't exercise." Both of the apostles are simply speaking of the importance of giving priority to the inward man and its true beauty before God rather than spending what little time is available to us all in efforts to perfect one's outward appearance. Time is the prize which Satan seeks to steal from us, for it takes lots of time to perfect the beauty of the hidden man of the heart and if he can cause you to waste that time with wrong priorities, then you lose!

“ALL THINGS ARE LAWFUL FOR ME BUT ALL THINGS ARE NOT HELPFUL... I WILL NOT BE BROUGHT UNDER THE POWER OF ANY.”

1 Cor. 6:12

Please don't develop the idea that our appearance is unimportant, but rather that it is not just as important. I think it is wrong for a believer to be overweight when the source of the problem is diet, and it is wrong for a child of the King to look like a slob, for we represent a very majestic Lord and King!! Therefore our appearance should be that of being well kept and clean at all times. As far as I am concerned, it is repugnant to see a woman in a public place in hair curlers, jeans, and tennis shoes with a T-shirt saying "Jesus is Lord!" If you are going to look like the world, then don't advertise for Jesus!

God made man and woman as different from one another as day is from night. My theory is that God intended that they stay that way, but the trend of this world is towards women looking like men. I believe that God still intends for the man to "wear the pants". Selah! (Think on that!)

Let us move on in our study to the second area in which idolatrous practices may be found, when men become:

\$ LOVERS OF MONEY \$



\$ LOVERS OF MONEY \$



“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 THOUGH WITH MANY SORROWS...”

The current wave of teaching in the body of Christ, commonly coined as the “Faith for Prosperity” message is actually a theme of covetousness and idolatry.

**“BUT GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT IS GREAT GAIN. FOR WE BROUGHT NOTHING INTO THIS WORLD AND IT IS CERTAIN WE CAN CARRY NOTHING OUT. AND HAVING FOOD AND CLOTHING, WITH THESE WE SHALL BE CONTENT...
COMMAND THOSE THAT 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...”**
(all scripture is from 1 Tim. 6)

God’s instruction to His people is to be content. Any doctrine that stirs up a desire to be rich is one which aligns itself with the emphasis of the world! God’s kingdom, you will remember, is 180° opposite of the world and its emphasis.

Those passages from First Timothy on the previous page also tell us what it is that we are to be content with and that is the basic needs like food and clothing. Jesus, in His teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, gave the same emphasis when it is read in context.



**“...DO NOT WORRY, SAYING
‘WHAT SHALL WE EAT...
OR WHAT SHALL WE WEAR?
FOR AFTER ALL THESE THINGS
THE GENTILES SEEK.
FOR YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER KNOWS
THAT YOU NEED THESE THINGS.
BUT SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD
AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS,
AND ALL THESE THINGS
SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU.”**

Matt. 6:31-33

I have been appalled at how gullible the saints of God have been in allowing the merchants of the earth to take the words of Jesus and convey that “all these things” speak of material wealth. The scripture is plain in that Jesus speaks of food and clothing, as did Paul. Throughout the scripture we are warned about the pursuit of riches. Consider Solomon’s advice:

**“A GOOD NAME IS TO BE CHOSEN
RATHER THAN GREAT RICHES,
LOVING FAVOR RATHER THAN
SILVER AND GOLD.”** Prov. 22:1

**“WILL YOU SET YOUR EYES ON THAT
WHICH IS NOT? FOR RICHES CERTAINLY
MAKE THEMSELVES WINGS;
THEY FLY AWAY... LIKE AN EAGLE.”**

Prov. 23:5

**“DO NOT OVERWORK
TO BE RICH;
BECAUSE OF YOUR OWN
UNDERSTANDING, CEASE!”**

Prov. 23:4



Even John the Baptist gave counsel on the subject of contentment in saying, “Be content with your wages” (Luke 3:14).

It is also important to note that in Paul’s instruction to Timothy (1 Tim. 6), he does not condemn riches, but rather gives specific instruction to the rich on how to handle their riches, that they may store up for themselves a good foundation for the life to come. It is the love of, the desire to become rich, that Paul condemns.

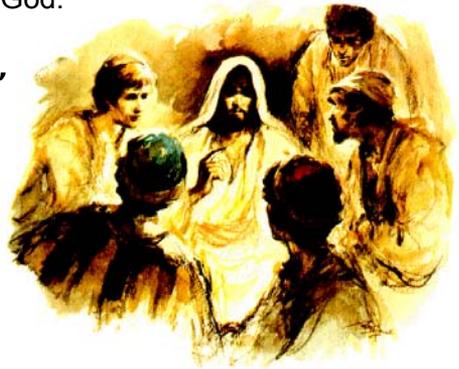
**IT IS NOT POSSESSION OF WEALTH
THAT CONSTITUTES IDOLATRY,
BUT RATHER OBSESSION FOR WEALTH.**

Obsession enters into play when God says “No,” and we seek to skirt around that divine denial. We fall into temptation and a snare, into many foolish and harmful lusts (see 1 Tim.6:9-10). Even more dangerous is Paul’s extended warning that such obsessive greediness leads to a believer straying from the faith, unto utter personal destruction, and even unto perdition (eternal damnation).

Such obsessive love of money has been the downfall of many a person, many a family. When possessions become the answer to defining the good life, as the world would have you to believe under constitutional banners of “Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness”, we depart from the clear warning of such deceptive pursuits as being an expression of the will of God:

**“AND HE SAID UNTO THEM,
‘TAKE HEED AND BEWARE
OF COVETOUSNESS,
FOR ONE’S LIFE
DOES NOT CONSIST
IN THE ABUNDANCE
OF THE THINGS
HE POSSESSES.”**

Luke 12:15



The spiritual merchants of the earth will only quote to you John 10:10 where Jesus said, “I have come to give them life and to give it more abundantly.” When we compare scripture to scripture, as we are instructed to do (1 Cor. 2:13), then we teach the wisdom of God and not man’s wisdom. It is obvious Jesus is not speaking of the abundant life as abundant possessions when you compare Luke 12:15 with John 10:10.

Scripture is full of examples of men whose priority was the kingdom of God and His righteousness, who were also wealthy men by the hand of God. Abraham, Job, and Solomon are among those examples.

Let us look at Solomon for a vivid illustration that God is not anti-prosperity when a man's priorities are in order:

“ON THAT NIGHT GOD APPEARED TO SOLOMON, AND SAID TO HIM, ‘ASK! WHAT SHALL I GIVE YOU?’ AND SOLOMON SAID TO GOD: ‘YOU HAVE SHOWN GREAT MERCY TO DAVID MY FATHER, AND HAVE MADE ME KING IN HIS PLACE. NOW, O LORD GOD, LET YOUR PROMISE TO DAVID MY FATHER BE ESTABLISHED, FOR YOU HAVE MADE ME KING OVER A PEOPLE LIKE THE DUST OF THE EARTH IN MULTITUDE. NOW GIVE ME WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE, THAT I MAY GO OUT AND COME IN BEFORE THIS PEOPLE; FOR WHO CAN JUDGE THIS GREAT PEOPLE OF YOURS?’

AND GOD SAID TO SOLOMON: ‘BECAUSE THIS WAS IN YOUR HEART, AND YOU HAVE NOT ASKED RICHES OR WEALTH OR HONOR OR THE LIFE OF YOUR ENEMIES, NOR HAVE YOU ASKED LONG LIFE— BUT HAVE ASKED WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE FOR YOURSELF, THAT YOU MAY JUDGE MY PEOPLE OVER WHOM I HAVE MADE YOU KING— WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE ARE GRANTED TO YOU; AND I WILL GIVE YOU RICHES AND WEALTH AND HONOR, SUCH AS NONE OF THE KINGS HAVE HAD WHO HAVE BEEN BEFORE YOU, NOR SHALL ANY AFTER YOU HAVE THE LIKE.’ ”

2 Chron. 1:7-12

What would be the reply of today's saints if God appeared to them as he did to Solomon saying, “Ask! What shall I give you?” They might reply, “But God, didn't you get my list?”

Let this sink in:



**WHAT
THE WORLD
IS
SELLING
AND
EMPHASIZING,
GOD IS NOT!**

Covetousness is idolatry! (Col. 3:5) America is inundated and deluged with the spirit of idolatry, especially in the area of materialism. Its media, philosophy, and advertisement exists and survives on breeding a spirit of discontentment. God's kingdom thrives on contentment. Let me close this section with the admonition:

**“IF RICHES
INCREASE,
DO NOT
SET
YOUR HEART
ON THEM.”**

Psm. 62:10



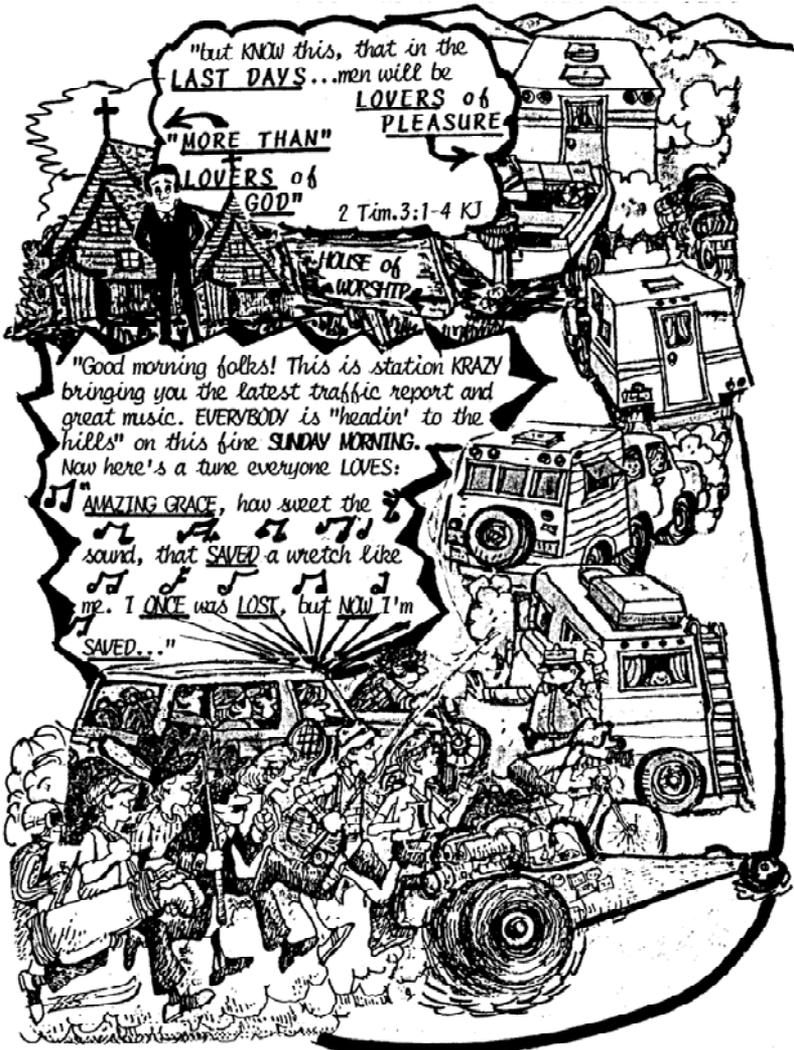
**“...FOR
WHERE
YOUR
TREASURE IS,
THERE YOUR HEART
WILL BE ALSO.”**

Matt. 6:21

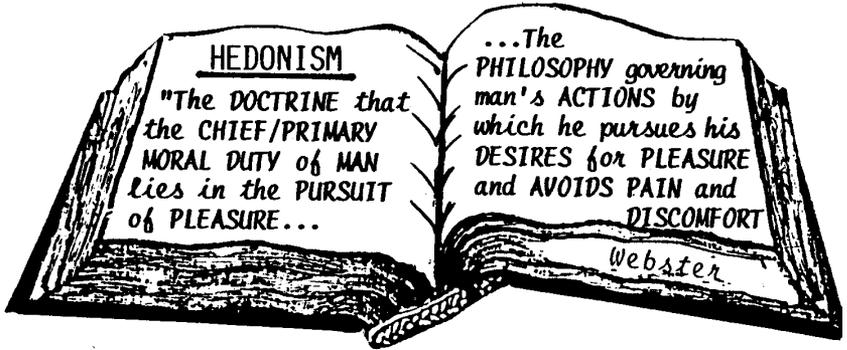
May we move on now to the last of the three types of idolatrous practices which fall under the lust of the eyes. We are examining the theme that in the last days men will be:

1. **LOVERS OF THEMSELVES** – "VANITY, EXCESSIVE ADMIRATION, DISPLAY IN THE AREA OF PERSONAL APPEARANCE. SELF-LOVE."
2. **LOVERS OF MONEY** – "COVETOUSNESS, THE OBSSIVE DESIRE FOR WEALTH/MATERIALISM."
3. **LOVERS OF PLEASURE** – "HEDONISM, THE PURSUIT OF PLEASURE AND AVOIDANCE OF PAIN OR DISCOMFORT."

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Let us establish that neither Paul nor myself are condemning recreation or “fun in the sun”. The text of 2 Tim. 3:4 states that men will love pleasure more than they love God and this is an idolatrous practice. Webster’s dictionary contains a very descriptive word which conveys it all:



Who do you suppose is the author of such a doctrine? Notice Webster calls it a philosophy. Remember Paul’s warning about philosophy:



“BEWARE LEST ANYONE CHEAT YOU THROUGH PHILOSOPHY AND EMPTY DECEIT, ACCORDING TO THE TRADITION OF MEN, ACCORDING TO THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE WORLD, AND NOT ACCORDING TO CHRIST.”

Col. 2:8

“SEE TO IT THAT NO ONE CARRIES YOU OFF AS SPOIL OR MAKES YOU YOURSELVES CAPTIVE BY HIS SO-CALLED PHILOSOPHY... FOLLOWING HUMAN TRADITION-MEN’S IDEAS OF THE MATERIAL (RATHER THAN THE SPIRITUAL) WORLD.... DISREGARDING THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST.”

Col. 2:8 Amplified

Hedonism is a vital part of the devil’s philosophy to counteract the call to discipleship. When Christ calls a man to follow after Him, He calls him to suffering, pain, and death to self, and not to the principles of this world such as America’s philosophy that man’s chief purpose is life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Paul warns us to watch out for any philosophy which disregards the teachings of Christ!

Let me inject some of more the difficult things Christ requires of whoever would choose to receive Him as Savior and Lord:

"AND GREAT MULTITUDES WENT WITH HIM. AND HE TURNED AND SAID TO THEM, "IF ANYONE COMES TO ME AND DOES NOT HATE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, WIFE AND CHILDREN, BROTHERS AND SISTERS, YES, AND HIS OWN LIFE ALSO, HE CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE. AND WHOEVER DOES NOT BEAR HIS CROSS AND COME AFTER ME CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE... WHOEVER OF YOU DOES NOT FORSAKE ALL THAT HE HAS CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE."

Luke 14:25-33

"THEN HE SAID TO THEM ALL, "IF ANYONE DESIRES TO COME AFTER ME, LET HIM DENY HIMSELF, AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS DAILY, AND FOLLOW ME."

Luke 9:23

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

Luke 13:23-30

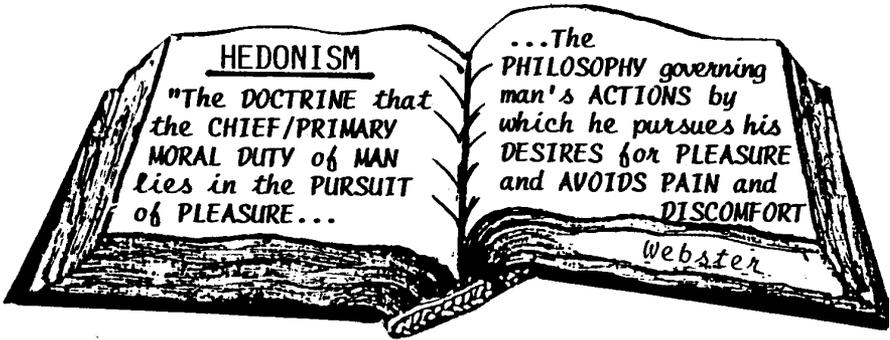
"NOT EVERYONE WHO SAYS TO ME, LORD, LORD, SHALL ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, BUT HE WHO DOES THE WILL OF MY FATHER IN HEAVEN. MANY WILL SAY TO ME IN THAT DAY, LORD, LORD, HAVE WE NOT PROPHESIED IN YOUR NAME, CAST OUT DEMONS IN YOUR NAME, AND DONE MANY WONDERS IN YOUR NAME? AND THEN I WILL DECLARE TO THEM, I NEVER KNEW YOU; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS!"

Matt. 7:21-23

"ENTER BY THE NARROW GATE; FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE WAY THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND THERE ARE MANY WHO GO IN BY IT. BECAUSE NARROW IS THE GATE AND DIFFICULT IS THE WAY WHICH LEADS TO LIFE, AND THERE ARE FEW WHO FIND IT."

Matt. 7:13-14

When we meditate in the teachings of Christ and compare them with the teachings of today's modern gospel, we find that people are being presented a broad gate to salvation instead of the narrow gate Jesus declared. The reason is "hedonistic:"



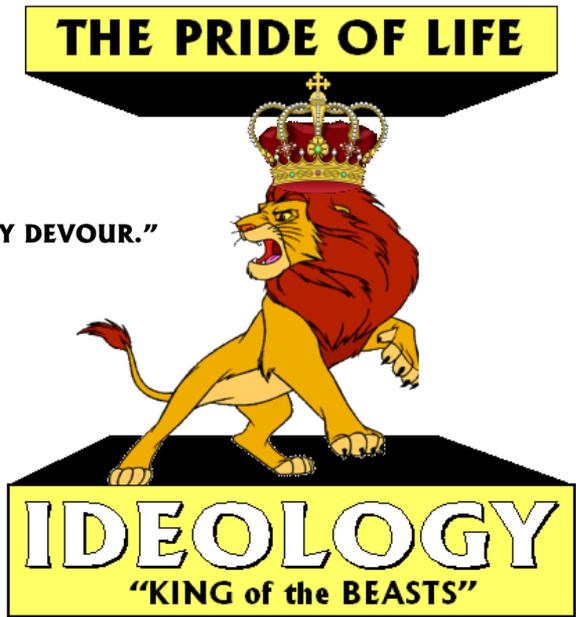
I draw your attention to the phrase, "...he pursues his desires for pleasure and avoids pain and discomfort." That hardly qualifies as being in harmony with Jesus' call to "take up your cross daily, deny self, and follow after Me" (Luke 9:23) The gospel has been widened so that it can be embraced as costless, painless, and cross-less. You don't hear the message Jesus and John the Baptist preached saying, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17), but rather you hear, "give Jesus a chance", or "try God." (Why not "try repentance"?) The good news of the gospel has become a sugar-daddy concept that God desires to be your "shield and butler" and is the way to the pursuit of happiness and the abundant life. The world is consumed by hedonism and it has infiltrated the Church! As a pastor who teaches discipleship, I have been grieved to the core by the saints who only want a gospel of grace from God and love from God, but revolt when any emphasis is placed upon our response and obligation to God's grace and love.

I would challenge you to take the book of Romans or Ephesians, which are non-charismatic in emphasis, and while you read them through, take a piece of paper with two columns headed, "God's obligation to me" and "My obligation to God" and keep score. You will find that the emphasis is not on God's obligation to you, but rather on your obligation to Him. If this be so, why then do God's people cry out against teaching which emphasizes what the Bible emphasizes? The reason is "hedonistic philosophy." Don't tell me about pain, suffering, denial, cross-bearing, discomfort or change, say smooth things about God, His love, and His grace so that I cannot be convicted of bondage to the god of hedonism!

**“BE SOBER,
BE VIGILANT;
BECAUSE
YOUR ADVERSARY
THE DEVIL
WALKS ABOUT
LIKE A ROARING LION,
SEEKING WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR.”**

1 Pet. 5:8

We have examined
the lust of the flesh
(the spirit of harlotry),
and the lust of the eyes
(the spirit of idolatry),
and now we shall look
into our third area,
the pride of life
(the spirit of ideology).



In the animal kingdom, the lion holds the title of “king of the beasts.” This is because he carries himself with great pride and possesses impressive strength. He is self-confident and totally independent. He has an air about him when he struts his stuff.

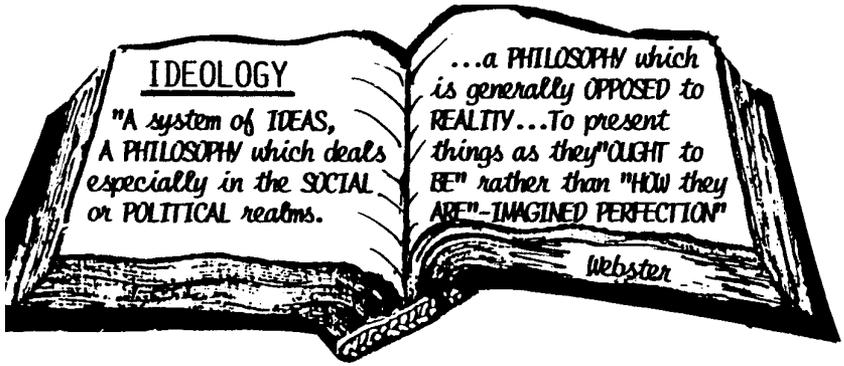
The pride of life cost Lucifer his place in God’s kingdom, and now God warns us that he is like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. May I again remind you that we are looking at outside influences which affect and seek to influence us to do their bidding out of fear. There are forms of pride which stem from our own flesh nature, but the pride of life we are discussing here is the devil’s philosophy which is in the world to seduce through intimidation. Note our opening text above states that Satan goes about “like a roaring lion.” It does not say he is one.

We are pursuing this threefold theme:

THE LUST OF THE FLESH is HARLOTRY...

THE LUST OF THE EYES is IDOLATRY...

THE PRIDE OF LIFE is IDEOLOGY...



Ideology is the philosophy of the world, the wisdom of the world. Paul makes a contrast between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of this world:



"AND I, BRETHREN, WHEN I CAME TO YOU, DID NOT COME WITH EXCELLENCE OF SPEECH OR OF WISDOM DECLARING TO YOU THE TESTIMONY OF GOD. FOR I DETERMINED NOT TO KNOW ANYTHING AMONG YOU EXCEPT JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED... MY SPEECH AND MY PREACHING WERE NOT WITH PERSUASIVE WORDS OF HUMAN WISDOM, BUT IN DEMONSTRATION OF THE SPIRIT AND OF POWER, THAT YOUR FAITH SHOULD NOT BE IN THE WISDOM OF MEN BUT IN THE POWER OF GOD. HOWEVER WE SPEAK WISDOM AMONG THOSE WHO ARE MATURE, YET NOT THE WISDOM OF THIS AGE, NOR OF THE RULERS OF THIS AGE, WHO ARE COMING TO NOTHING."

1 Cor. 2:1-6

Paul does not condemn all wisdom, but rather singles out the wisdom of men, the human wisdom, the wisdom of this age, the wisdom of the rulers of this age. To all this he compares the superiority of the wisdom of God. Although Paul does not call it "ideology", this is what he addresses--the philosophy, both social and political, which are opposed to reality.

Atheism is an ideology which is opposed to reality. Its foundation is built upon the concept, there is no God. This is the foolish wisdom of men. A fool says in his heart there is no God (Psm. 53:1)

Humanism is also an ideology which is based on concepts opposed to reality. Its underlying doctrine is evolution, which is a false philosophy. It puffs up man's ego as being the highest form of life and therefore draws the prideful conclusion "man is God."

What does all this have to do with Christianity? It is imperative that the followers of God do not become followers of vain ideologies. Where we can scoff at atheism and humanism and would never be deceived with such false concepts, many of God's people have become followers of more subtle forms of ideology. I mentioned some of those forms of ideology previously when we looked at how Jesus overcame the world. I would suggest going back and re-reading that section again!

Even the brethren are being swept into social and political arenas with ideologies opposed to reality! For instance, we cannot place the laws of God upon the lawless heart of man. God's Word says, I will write My laws on their hearts and in their minds (see Heb. 8:10). This is done through the act of the new birth and not through acts of Congress.

Ponder well that Satan seeks to tie us up in idealistic pursuits with two unfavorable results:



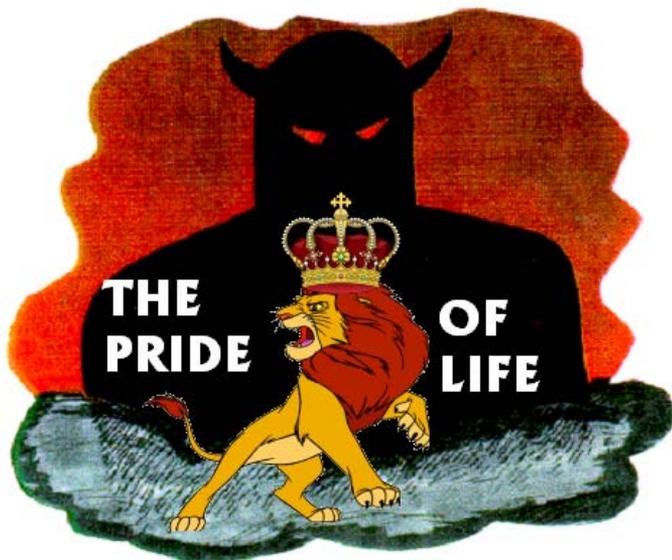
1. YOU WILL EXPEND MUCH ENERGY, TIME, AND MONEY PURSUING INSTITUTING IDEOLOGIES THAT ARE NOT BASED ON FACTUAL REALITY. SUCH PRIORITIES ARE OPPOSED TO THE EXPRESSED WILL OF GOD AS STATED IN HIS WORD. THESE ARE MAN'S PRIORITIES FOR HIS FELLOW-MAN.

2. YOU WILL FURTHER ALIENATE UNBELIEVERS FROM GOD BY ATTEMPTING TO FORCE THE LAWS OF GOD UPON THEM. THE REALITY IS THAT GOD REQUIRES MAN TO REJECT EARTHLY KINGDOMS IN FAVOR OF HIS KINGDOM.

We must carefully use the Word of God as the sole basis for whatever we do. The principles of God's Word are opposed to the principles of this world. It is vital that we have a right understanding of what God's Word says is going to happen in this world. For instance, we cannot commit to feed the hungry world if it is the result of God placing a curse upon the nations that forget God (see Psm. 9:17 and 33:12).

God is not asking of us to change the world, but to overcome the world. To agree with the peace movement when Jesus Himself told us what it would be like right before His return is to be a follower of ideology (see Matt. 24). The concept of the nations disarming and living in peaceful coexistence is ideology. The United Nations is an organization founded on ideology-peace on earth apart from Jesus Christ as the Prince of Peace. You will not see that event occur until the millennium (1000 year reign of Christ on earth).

The pride of life says, "We can do it," but, before you become so active in seeking to achieve it, you better find out if God is in it. We must become a people of God's Word and learn to be sober and vigilant because our adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8). Listen again to the warnings of Paul concerning the danger of following humanistic philosophy:



**“BEWARE LEST ANYONE CHEAT YOU THROUGH
PHILOSOPHY AND EMPTY DECEIT,
ACCORDING TO THE TRADITION OF MEN,
ACCORDING TO THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THIS WORLD,
AND NOT ACCORDING TO CHRIST.”** Col. 2:8

**“SEE TO IT THAT NO ONE CARRIES YOU OFF AS SPOIL OR
MAKES YOU YOURSELVES CAPTIVE BY HIS SO-CALLED
PHILOSOPHY... FOLLOWING HUMAN TRADITION-
-MEN'S IDEAS OF THE MATERIAL WORLD...
DISREGARDING THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST.”**

By now your head may be swimming from the sheer volume of information you have just read pertaining to the complexity of the world system which we are to overcome. Remember, we are dealing with the wiles of the devil (Eph. 6:11). The Amplified of that verse says, "That you may be able successfully to stand up against all the strategies and the deceits of the devil." If it were simple, everyone would easily see it, but the scripture says of Satan, "he deceives the whole world" (Rev. 12:9), and "... if possible, even the very elect would be deceived" (Mk. 13:22).

I said in the beginning of this section that the magnitude of the warfare is such that we will be pressed to a life of faith and constantly drawing upon the power which comes from God to enable us to overcome.

Think back to the overall purpose of God being that the Bride of Christ will be clothed in righteous acts of faith, hope, and love. It is here, through the need to overcome, that we are pressed to a life of faith, for a supernatural enemy requires supernatural opposing power, and that is exactly what God has given us:

**THE
CROSS**



**"...THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS...
...IS THE POWER OF GOD."**

1 Cor. 1:18

**THE
SPIRIT**



**"NOT BY MIGHT NOR BY POWER,
BUT BY MY SPIRIT ' SAYS THE LORD."**

Zech. 4:6

**THE
WORD**



**"FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS
QUICK AND POWERFUL..."**

Heb. 4:12

These are the three supernatural sources of unlimited power to enable you to overcome the limited power of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, the devil's philosophy of harlotry, idolatry, and ideology. Refresh your mind with this chart that you may know well his strategies. —————>

THE KINGDOM OF THIS WORLD

(THE MIND BEHIND THE SYSTEM)

**"...THE PRINCE
(EVIL GENIUS,
RULER)
OF THE
WORLD..."**

Jn. 14:30 Amp.



**"...THE PRINCE AND
THE POWER OF THE AIR,
THE SPIRIT WHO NOW
WORKS IN
THE SONS OF
DISOBEDIENCE."**

Eph. 2:2

**LUST OF
THE FLESH**



**THE GREAT
HARLOT OF THE
EARTH**

**LUST OF
THE EYES**



**THE
MERCHANTS
OF THE EARTH**

**THE PRIDE
OF LIFE**



**THE
KINGS
OF THE EARTH**

THE SPIRIT
OF

HARLOTRY

INDULGENT...
UNDISCIPLINED...
UNRESTRAINED
IN MIND/BODY...
SENSUAL...
LUSTFUL...

**POLLUTIONS
OF THE WORLD**

THE SPIRIT
OF

IDOLATRY

INFATUATION...
EXTREME
DEVOTION...
EXCESSIVE
ATTACHMENT...
LOVE TO EXCESS...

**CORRUPTION
OF THE WORLD**

THE SPIRIT
OF

IDEOLOGY

SYSTEM OF IDEAS
EITHER POLITICAL
OR SOCIAL...
A PHILOSOPHY
OPPOSED TO
REALITY...

**WISDOM
OF THE WORLD**

Perhaps this additional flow chart will be helpful to you in seeing the overall picture:

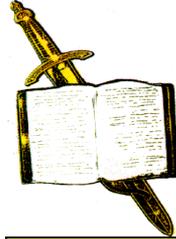
OVERCOME THE WORLD



BY
THE
SPIRIT



BY
THE
CROSS



BY
THE
WORD

**THE
POLLUTION
OF THE WORLD**

**THE
LUST
OF THE FLESH**

**THE
SPIRIT OF
HARLOTRY**

**IN
OUR
SPIRIT**

**IN
OUR
SOUL**

**IN
OUR
BODY**

**THE
CORRUPTION
OF THE WORLD**

**THE
LUST
OF THE EYES**

**THE
SPIRIT OF
IDOLATRY**

**LOVERS
OF
THEMSELVES**

**LOVERS
OF
MONEY**

**LOVERS
OF
PLEASURE**

**THE
WISDOM
OF THE WORLD**

**THE
PRIDE
OF LIFE**

**THE
SPIRIT OF
IDEOLOGY**

**WISDOM
OF THIS
WORLD**

**PRINCIPLES
OF THIS
WORLD**

**PHILOSOPHY
OF THIS
WORLD**

"TO HIM WHO OVERCOMES"

"INHERIT ALL THINGS"

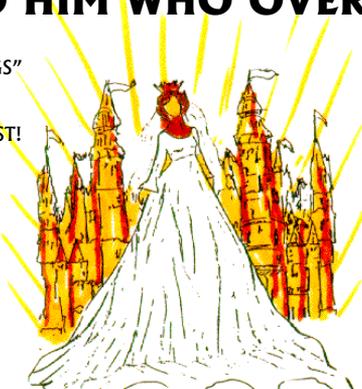
Rev. 21:7

SIT ON CHRIST'S
THRONE WITH CHRIST!

Rev. 3:21

PILLAR IN GOD'S
TEMPLE...
THE NAME OF GOD,
THE NAME OF THE
CITY OF GOD...
AND (JESUS')
NEW NAME...

Rev. 3:12



"...THE
BRIDEGROOM
CAME,
AND THOSE
WHO WERE
READY
WENT IN
WITH HIM
TO THE
WEDDING..."

Matt. 25:10

"THE
KINGDOMS OF
THIS WORLD."
Matt. 4:8

**TWO
KINGDOMS**

"EVERLASTING
KINGDOM
OF CHRIST."
2 Pet. 1:11

"THE
OLD MAN."
Eph. 4:22

**TWO
NATURES**

"THE
NEW MAN."
Eph. 4:24

"THE
GOD OF
THIS WORLD."
2 Cor. 4:4

**TWO
GODS**

"GOD AND FATHER
OF OUR LORD
JESUS CHRIST."
Eph. 1:3

BUT

"DO NOT BE
OVERCOME
BY EVIL..."

OVERCOME
EVIL WITH GOOD...

Rom. 12:21

To overcome, there must be something to overcome. We have examined the two kingdoms set before us and now we progress on to look into the two natures that every born-again believer has. I emphasize "born again" because both natures are products of birth, one physical and one spiritual. The unregenerate man has only the one nature which is the flesh, and it is totally corrupt because it is by birth a sin nature. Consider how the scriptures speak of this sin nature:

**"WE ALSO ONCE
CONDUCTED
OURSELVES IN THE
LUSTS OF OUR FLESH,
FULFILLING THE DESIRES
OF THE FLESH AND OF
THE MIND, AND WERE
BY NATURE CHILDREN
OF WRATH."**

Eph. 2:3

**"...PUT OFF,
CONCERNING YOUR
FORMER CONDUCT,
THE OLD MAN
WHICH GROWS
CORRUPT
ACCORDING TO THE
DECEITFUL LUSTS..."**

Eph. 4:22

**"NOW THE WORKS OF
THE FLESH ARE EVIDENT:
ADULTERY,
FORNICATION,
UNCLEANNESS,
LICENTIOUSNESS,
IDOLATRY, SORCERY,
HATRED,...
AND THE LIKE..."**

Gal. 5:19

THE FLESH – A DEADLY ENEMY

We will spend more time in the verses below, but for now, notice four distinct points that Paul brings out concerning the flesh, our “old man”:



1. THE FLESH HAS DESIRES AND LUSTS BY NATURE:

“...THE LUSTS OF OUR FLESH... DESIRES OF THE FLESH...
...WERE BY NATURE CHILDREN OF WRATH.”

Eph. 2:2



2. THE “OLD MAN” (FLESH NATURE), GROWS CORRUPT BY ITS LUSTS, AND THOSE LUSTS ARE EXTREMELY DECEITFUL.

“...THE OLD MAN WHICH GROWS CORRUPT
ACCORDING TO THE DECEITFUL LUSTS.”

Eph. 4:22



3. THE FLESH PRODUCES EVIL WORKS:

“NOW THE WORKS OF THE FLESH ARE EVIDENT WHICH ARE:
ADULTERY, FORNICATION, UNCLEANNESS, LICENTIOUSNESS,
IDOLATRY, SORCERY, HATRED, CONTENTIONS, JEALOUSIES,
OUTBURSTS OF WRATH, SELFISH AMBITION, DISSENSIONS,
HERESIES, ENVY, MURDERS, DRUNKENNESS, REVELRIES,
AND THE LIKE...”

Gal. 5:19-21



4. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE “OLD MAN”, THE “FLESH AND ITS WORKS”, BE PUT OFF:

“THAT YOU PUT OFF, CONCERNING YOUR FORMER
CONDUCT THE OLD MAN WHICH GROWS CORRUPT
ACCORDING TO THE DECEITFUL LUSTS...”

Eph. 4:22



“I TELL YOU BEFOREHAND, JUST AS I ALSO TOLD YOU IN
TIME PAST, THAT THOSE WHO PRACTICE SUCH
THINGS WILL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD.”

Gal. 5:21

I know all the unconditional eternal security advocates are going to get mad at me for saying this, but it is the apostle Paul that tells us that the flesh is a very deadly enemy if it is not dealt with in the specified manner. If allowed to practice its carnal works, the flesh nature can cause the believer to be disinherited from the Kingdom of God. Look at how Paul sums up the twenty-one works of the flesh:

**“AND THOSE THAT ARE CHRIST’S HAVE CRUCIFIED THE FLESH
WITH ITS PASSIONS AND DESIRES. IF WE LIVE IN THE SPIRIT,
LET US ALSO WALK IN THE SPIRIT.”**

Gal. 5:24-25



The devil fabricates false doctrines, as Paul told Timothy (1 Tim. 4:1). They are designed to create a laissez-faire attitude among the saints that neither the world, the flesh, nor the devil can pose any real threat to their unconditional eternal security. Scriptures like Romans 8:38-39 are lifted out of context to support the concept of unconditional eternal security, regardless of how we approach the world, the flesh, or the devil. Let us look at Romans 8:38-39, and then I will show you what they leave out:

“FOR I AM PERSUADED THAT NEITHER DEATH NOR LIFE, NOR ANGELS NOR PRINCIPALITIES NOR POWERS, NOR THINGS PRESENT NOR THINGS TO COME, NOR HEIGHT NOR DEPTH, NOR ANY CREATED THING, SHALL BE ABLE TO SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.” Rom. 8:38-39

If you read those verses carefully and in their context, you will see they do not apply to the worldly, carnal believer as a guarantee of eternal security, but to those who are for Your sake “we are killed all day long” and counted as “sheep for the slaughter” (vs. 36). Saints who are in tribulation and persecution for the causes of Christ! (vs. 35).

The Bible gives sober warning that the world, the flesh, and the devil can be deadly enemies to those who do not respect the potential destruction they can bring to those that are ensnared by them. God will protect the fighter and the resister, not the one who joins himself to them. Consider these sober warnings written to God’s blood-washed people:

“COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE, LEST YOU SHARE IN HER SINS, AND LEST YOU RECEIVE OF HER PLAGUES.”
Rev. 18:4

“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 WALLOWING IN THE MIRE.’”

THE DANGER OF THE FLESH TO FLESHLY SAINTS:



**"NOW THE WORKS OF THE FLESH ARE EVIDENT...
I TELL YOU BEFOREHAND, JUST AS I TOLD YOU
IN TIME PAST, THAT THOSE WHO PRACTICE SUCH THINGS
WILL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD"**

Gal. 5:19-21

**"DO NOT WALK ACCORDING TO THE FLESH...
TO BE CARNALLY MINDED IS DEATH...
FOR THE CARNAL MIND IS ENMITY AGAINST GOD...
IF YOU LIVE ACCORDING TO THE FLESH,
YOU WILL DIE..."**

Rom. 8:4-13

THE DANGER OF THE DEVIL TO CARELESS SAINTS:



**"...PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD,
THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO STAND AGAINST
THE WILES OF THE DEVIL..."** Eph. 6:11

"NOR GIVE PLACE TO THE DEVIL..." Eph. 4:27
**I SENT TO KNOW YOUR FAITH,
LEST BY SOME MEANS THE TEMPTER HAD
TEMPTED YOU AND OUR LABOR
MIGHT BE IN VAIN."** 1 Thess. 3:5

**BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT;
BECAUSE YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL GOES
ABOUT LIKE A ROARING LION,
SEEKING WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR..."**

1 Pet. 5:8

I hope you are getting the point that eternal security belongs to the eternally minded. God will protect all who strive to enter in at the narrow gate and fight the good fight of faith in seeking to overcome. It is false security when the promises of God are given to those who choose worldliness and carnality. What perversion it is of God's Word to take John 10:28 as a promise of "once saved, always saved". Look at this promise in context:

**"MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE, AND I KNOW THEM,
AND THEY FOLLOW ME. AND I GIVE THEM ETERNAL LIFE,
AND THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH; NEITHER SHALL ANYONE
SNATCH THEM OUT OF MY HAND."**

John 10:27-28

Unconditional promise? Hardly, it is given to (1) those who hear His voice and (2) those who follow Him. It is the wayward and rebellious sheep that get picked off by the wolves!



**“MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE,
 AND I KNOW THEM,
 AND THEY FOLLOW ME.
 AND I GIVE THEM ETERNAL LIFE,
 AND THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH;
 NEITHER SHALL ANYONE SNATCH THEM OUT OF MY HAND.
 AND NO ONE IS ABLE TO SNATCH THEM OUT OF MY FATHER’S HAND.”**

John 10:27-28

Shame on the careless Christian that selects only three of the five “and” statements above to be lifted out of its obvious contextual setting as a “proof text” for unconditional eternal security! The two other “ands” contain the conditions to the promise: “My sheep hear My voice” “and I know them”, “and they follow me”. It is to these that the promise of eternal security is given by the remaining “and” statements. You see, I believe the bible does teach eternal security. It does not teach UNCONDITIONAL eternal security:

**ETERNAL SECURITY IS FOR THE ETERNALLY MINDED
 -NOT FOR THE CARNALLY-MINDED**

The point of sharing all this is that we see that the promises of eternal security, first of all, are not unconditional promises, and secondly, they do not negate the warnings given about the deadly nature of returning to the world, living by a carnal (flesh-controlled) mind, or of the danger of being careless about your adversary the devil. He must be resisted by you!

The Bible tells us that Satan, the god of this age, uses blinding tactics to accomplish his purposes (see 2 Cor. 4:4). To the unbeliever, he blinds their mind toward the simplicity of salvation, but he is also working to blind the minds of those who already believe. Here are the two areas in which he blinds believers:

Blinded to the warnings
 the Word gives to believers
 about
**ETERNAL
 CONSEQUENCES:**

“ONCE SAVED,
 ALWAYS SAVED”

Blinded to the warnings
 the Word gives to believers
 about
**ETERNAL
 REWARDS:**

“I GOT IT ALL WHEN
 I GOT SAVED”



To give to the rebellious and the disobedient the guarantee of “once saved, always saved” causes spiritual blindness toward the sober warnings in God’s Word. It is spiritually dangerous to pick out a few favorable verses here and there and ignore the conditions attached, or to ignore the sober warnings to Christians of being able to lose it all, including eternal life!. All interpretation of scripture must harmonize together to be the truth. Read the context of those favorite verses for they often spell out conditions to obtaining them or negating them.

Likewise, the presumptuous doctrine of “I got it all when I got saved”, removes all motivation and initiative from continuing on in the cost of discipleship. If God is going to give it all to us as a gift of His grace, then who needs to run a race for a prize? Unless we see that there is a difference between the gift of eternal life and the earning of eternal rewards, there will remain a spiritual blindness and dullness upon the believer due to this false doctrine. I have said all this as an introduction to seeing the dire need of overcoming this enemy of the flesh (sin nature). This is a powerful enemy because it lives within us at all times. We have given a large part of our lives in serving its lusts, as Paul told us in Eph. 2:2. Let us look at that verse again and add to it Peter’s admonition for our life as a believer:

OUR PAST LIFE

**“...WE ALL ONCE
CONDUCTED OURSELVES
IN THE LUSTS OF
OUR FLESH,
FULFILLING THE DESIRES
OF THE FLESH
AND OF THE MIND,
AND WERE BY NATURE
CHILDREN OF WRATH,
JUST AS THE OTHERS.”**

Eph. 2:3

**“NOW THE WORKS OF THE FLESH
ARE EVIDENT WHICH ARE: ADULTERY,
FORNICATION, UNCLEANNESS,
LICENTIOUSNESS,
IDOLATRY,...DRUNKENNESS,
REVELRIES... AND THE LIKE...**

**I TELL YOU BEFOREHAND, JUST AS
I ALSO TOLD YOU IN TIME PAST,
THAT THOSE WHO PRACTICE
SUCH THINGS WILL NOT
INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD.”**

Gal. 5:19-21

OUR FUTURE LIFE

**“...THAT HE NO LONGER SHOULD LIVE THE REST OF HIS TIME
IN THE FLESH FOR THE LUSTS OF MEN,
BUT FOR THE WILL OF GOD.
FOR WE HAVE SPENT ENOUGH OF OUR PAST LIFETIME
IN DOING THE WILL OF THE GENTILES
WHEN WE WALKED IN LICENTIOUSNESS, LUSTS,
DRUNKENNESS, REVELRIES, DRINKING PARTIES,
AND ABOMINABLE IDOLATRIES...”**

1 Pet. 2:3-4

A LIST OF THINGS TO DO

**“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,
NOT IN REVELRY AND DRUNKENNESS,
NOT IN LICENTIOUSNESS AND LEWDNESS, NOT IN STRIFE AND ENVY.
BUT PUT ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,
AND MAKE NO PROVISION FOR THE FLESH, TO FULFILL ITS LUSTS.”**

Rom. 13:11-14

Paul gives the believer a list of things to do. They are worth condensing down and committing to memory:



THE TO DO LIST:

- 1. LET US AWAKE OUT OF SLEEP...**
- 2. LET US CAST OFF WORKS OF DARKNESS...**
- 3. LET US PUT ON THE ARMOR OF LIGHT...**
- 4. LET US WALK PROPERLY...**
- 5. LET US PUT ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST...**
- 6. LET US MAKE NO PROVISION FOR THE FLESH TO FULFILL ITS LUSTS...**

How do you measure up to this list of things to do as a believer who knows what time it is? Are these your priorities as a believer, or do we consider them options instead of commandments? Do you understand how to do these things?

For instance, what does Paul mean by, “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” (remember he is addressing believers who have received Christ as Savior).



What does Paul mean by, “Make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts”? Do we know how to do that? Do we know how to “cast off” the works of darkness? Do we know how to “put on” the armor of light? Do we know what is the “armor of light”?

**“EXAMINE AND TEST AND EVALUATE YOUR OWN SELVES
TO SEE WHETHER YOU ARE HOLDING TO YOUR FAITH
AND SHOWING THE PROPER FRUITS OF IT.
TEST AND PROVE YOURSELVES.”**

PUTTING OFF AND PUTTING ON

"DO NOT BE
OVERCOME
BY EVIL...

BUT
OVERCOME
EVIL WITH GOOD...

Rom. 12:21

DECEITFUL LUSTS:

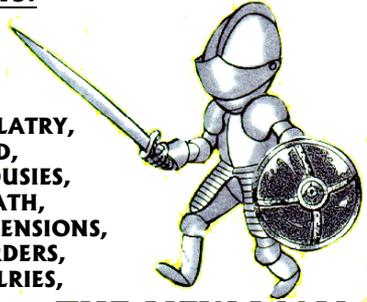


THE OLD MAN

"...GROWS CORRUPT
ACCORDING TO
THE DECEITFUL LUSTS..."
Eph. 4:22

**ADULTERY,
FORNICATION,
UNCLEANNES,
LICENTIOUSNESS, IDOLATRY,
SORCERY, HATRED,
CONTENTIONS, JEALOUSIES,
OUTBURSTS OF WRATH,
SELFISH AMBITIONS, DISSENSIONS,
HERESIES, ENVY, MURDERS,
DRUNKENNESS, REVELRIES,
AND THE LIKE."**

Gal. 5:19-21



THE NEW MAN

"...CREATED ACCORDING TO
GOD IN RIGHTEOUSNESS
AND TRUE HOLINESS."
Eph. 4:24

THE TWO NATURES

"IF INDEED YOU HAVE HEARD HIM AND HAVE BEEN TAUGHT BY HIM, AS THE TRUTH IS IN JESUS: THAT YOU PUT OFF, CONCERNING YOUR FORMER CONDUCT, THE OLD MAN WHICH GROWS CORRUPT ACCORDING TO THE DECEITFUL LUSTS.

AND BE RENEWED IN THE SPIRIT OF YOUR MIND, AND THAT YOU PUT ON THE NEW MAN WHICH WAS CREATED ACCORDING TO GOD, IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TRUE HOLINESS."

Eph. 4:21-24

If you have heard Jesus, and have been taught by Jesus, then we must obey His instructions.



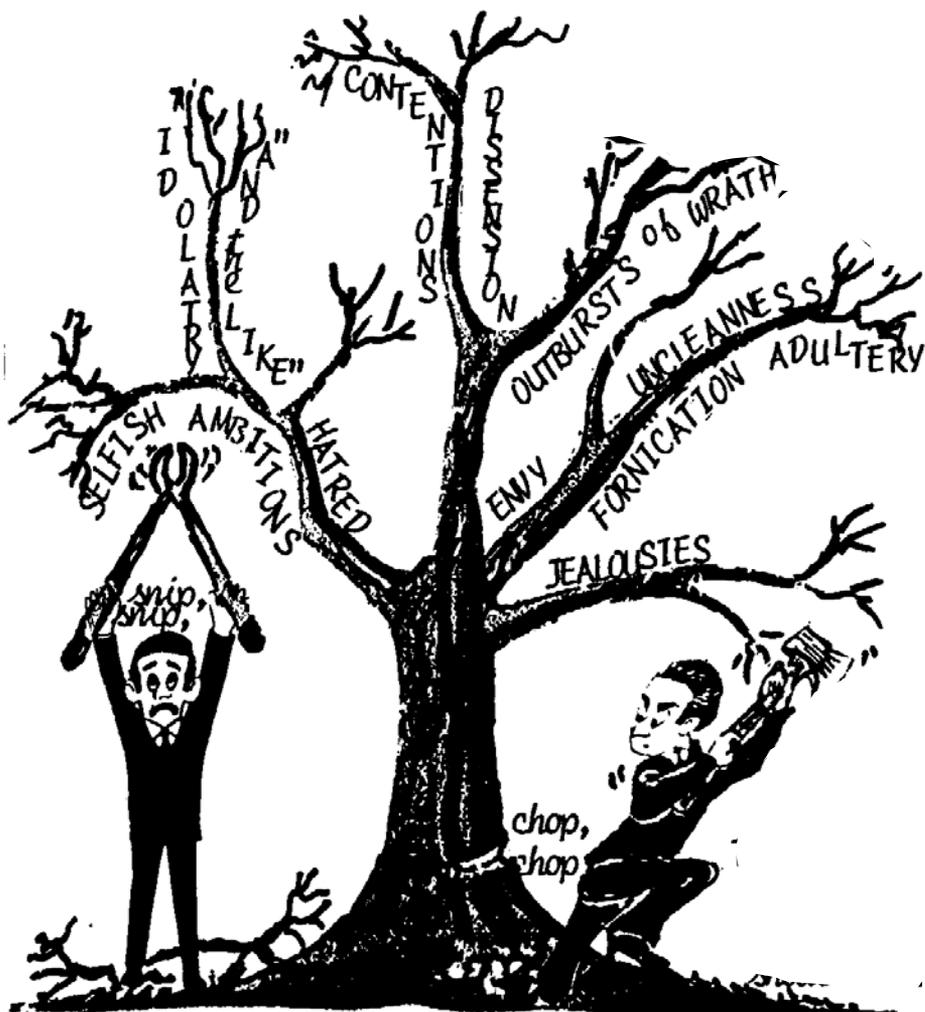
Ephesians 4:21-24 reveals specifically what it is that God expects from every born-again believer who has received Jesus Christ:

PUT OFF

**THE OLD MAN
THAT GROWS CORRUPT
ACCORDING TO ITS
DECEITFUL LUSTS.**

PUT ON

**THE NEW MAN
WHICH IS
CREATED IN RIGHTEOUSNESS
AND TRUE HOLINESS.**



Study the diagram above carefully and ask yourself, which of these two men depicts how I have been warring against the flesh? Am I forever busy snipping off the bad branches which depict the outward evidence of the 21 works of the flesh listed in Galatians 5:19-21, or am I rather busy laying the ax to the root of the tree which is "the root cause" of the bad fruit evidenced on the tree?

"AND EVEN NOW
THE AX IS LAID
TO THE ROOT
OF THE TREES.

...EVERY
TREE WHICH
DOES NOT BEAR
GOOD FRUIT
IS CUT
DOWN..."

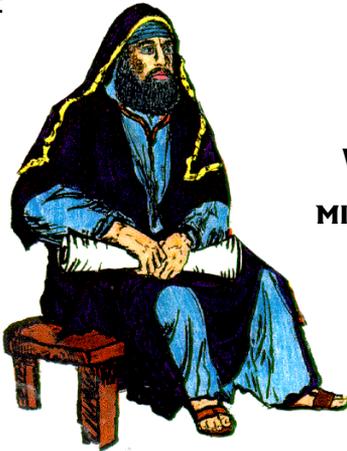
Luke 3:9

Don't we see this same philosophy also in the medical field? "Take this pain killer three times a day until whatever is bothering you goes away". Too often we treat the symptoms rather than finding the root cause of the pain. Get the root and you get the cause of pain rather than simply killing the pain.

Satan would have you snipping branches till the Lord returns! The result is that we experience frustration, discouragement, and despair in trying to get a tree that is only capable of producing bad fruit to bring forth good fruit. The flesh nature is corrupt with deceitful lusts and must be "put off" and not fixed up.

Dear heart, it is a matter of warring against sin rather than sins. Sin comes from the root of the tree, the flesh nature, while sins are merely the manifestation or evidence of the sin nature at work: sins are the works of the flesh (nature).

Listen to Paul's counsel again and you will see the point I am trying to make:



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

Rom. 6:6

Rather than chasing after the manifestations (sins) produced by the flesh nature, we should obey the scripture and put off the old man (Eph. 4:22) because the old man has been crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:6). This is vital: What are you supposed to do with things that are dead?



If it is dead, then you must

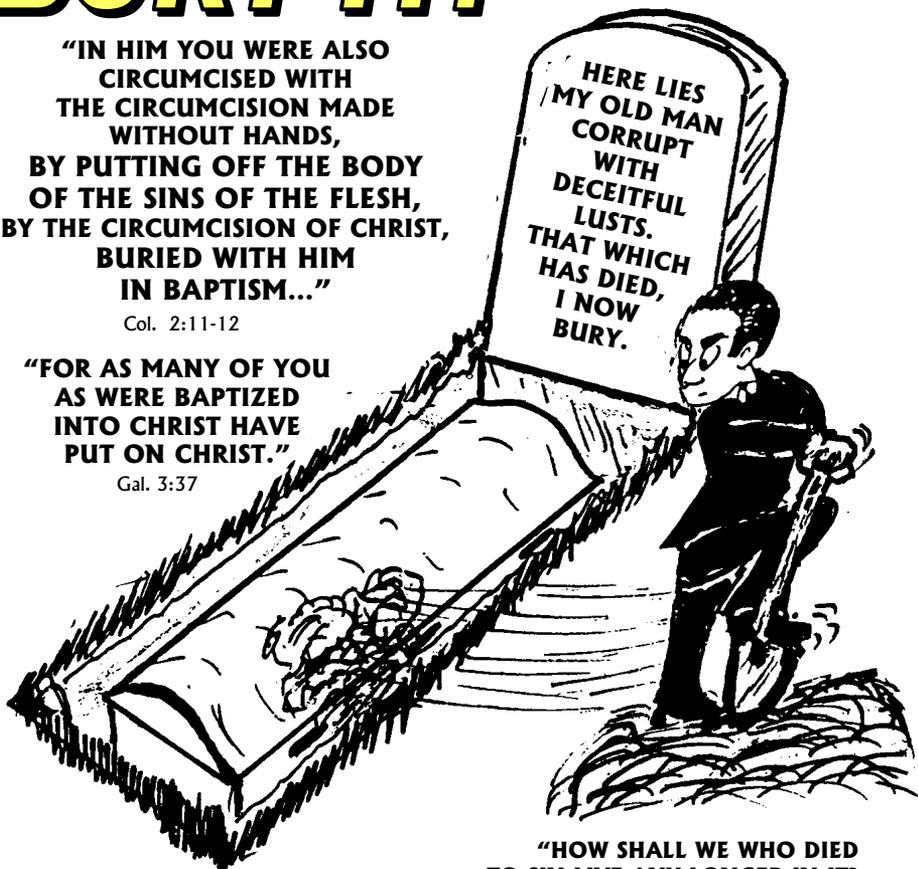
BURY IT!

**"IN HIM YOU WERE ALSO
CIRCUMCISED WITH
THE CIRCUMCISION MADE
WITHOUT HANDS,
BY PUTTING OFF THE BODY
OF THE SINS OF THE FLESH,
BY THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST,
BURIED WITH HIM
IN BAPTISM..."**

Col. 2:11-12

**"FOR AS MANY OF YOU
AS WERE BAPTIZED
INTO CHRIST HAVE
PUT ON CHRIST."**

Gal. 3:37



**"HOW SHALL WE WHO DIED
TO SIN LIVE ANY LONGER IN IT?
OR DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT AS MANY OF US AS WERE BAPTIZED INTO
CHRIST JESUS WERE BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH? THEREFORE WE ARE BURIED
WITH HIM THROUGH BAPTISM INTO DEATH... KNOWING THIS, THAT OUR
OLD MAN WAS CRUCIFIED WITH HIM, THAT THE BODY OF SIN MIGHT BE
DONE AWAY WITH THAT WE SHOULD NO LONGER BE SLAVES OF SIN. FOR HE
WHO HAS DIED HAS BEEN FREED FROM SIN... LIKewise YOU ALSO, RECKON
YOURSELVES TO BE DEAD INDEED TO SIN, BUT ALIVE TO GOD IN CHRIST
JESUS OUR LORD. THEREFORE DO NOT LET SIN REIGN IN YOUR MORTAL
BODY, THAT YOU SHOULD OBEY IT IN ITS LUSTS... FOR SIN SHALL NOT HAVE
DOMINION OVER YOU... BUT NOW HAVING BEEN SET FREE FROM SIN, AND
HAVING BECOME SLAVES OF GOD, YOU HAVE YOUR FRUIT TO HOLINESS..."**

Rom. 6 excerpts

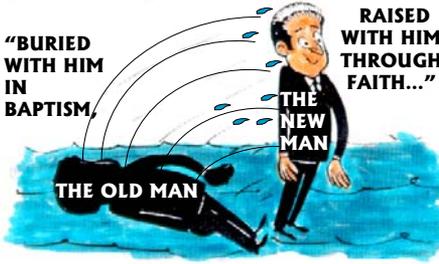
The question is, have you been water baptized since you believed? This is not a ritual by which you join a church, but rather water baptism is one of the weapons of our warfare which are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds (see 2 Cor. 10:4).

"RECKON YOURSELVES



ROMANS 6:1-11

"THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST



Col. 2:11-12

"THE INHERITANCE OF THE SAINTS



Col. 1:12-13

" YOU ARE ALL SONS OF GOD THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.



Gal. 3:26-26

WATER BAPTISM

There is so much controversy about water baptism and its relationship to being saved.

This controversy exists only because we fail to see salvation as being more than eternal life . Water baptism is part of salvation in the area of being delivered from bondage. Paul said,

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil 2:12).

His message was to those already possessing eternal life.

The Word of God places great emphasis upon water baptism in the Book of Acts. Paul reveals that water baptism is the putting off of the body of sin so that sin ceases to have dominion over us (Rom. 6:6).

Water baptism gives us legal access to the name of Jesus (“as many as were baptized have put on Christ”-Gal. 3:27), We begin to see why Satan has watered down the importance of being baptized having reduced it into a meaningless act of sprinkling instead of immersion!

He is after your weapon of warfare to (1) strip away the day of reckoning, (2) the day of the putting off of the body of sin so that sin will no longer have dominion over you, (3) to prevent you from putting on Christ, (4) to prevent you from fulfilling the mandate of making no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts!

WARRING AGAINST THE FLESH



**“THERE IS THEREFORE
NOW NO CONDEMNATION
TO THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST JESUS,
WHO DO NOT WALK
ACCORDING TO THE FLESH,
BUT ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT.”**

Rom. 8:1

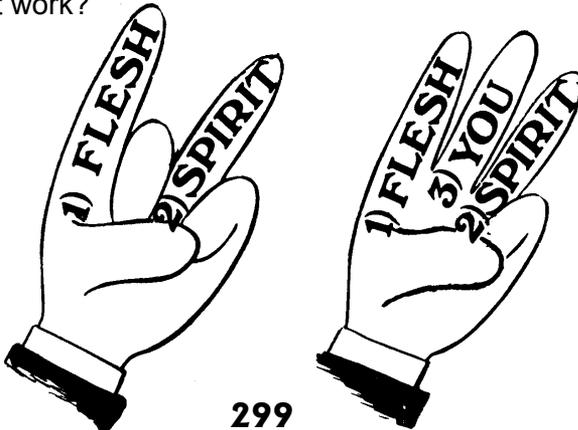
**“I SAY THEN: WALK IN THE SPIRIT,
AND YOU SHALL NOT FULFILL THE
LUST OF THE FLESH. FOR THE FLESH
LUSTS AGAINST THE SPIRIT, AND
THE SPIRIT AGAINST THE FLESH;
AND THESE ARE CONTRARY TO ONE
ANOTHER, SO THAT YOU DO NOT
DO THE THINGS THAT YOU WISH.”**

Gal. 5:16-17

**“FOR WHAT I AM DOING, I DO NOT UNDERSTAND.
FOR WHAT I WILL TO DO, THAT I DO NOT PRACTICE;
BUT WHAT I HATE, THAT I DO. IF, THEN, I DO WHAT I WILL NOT TO DO,
I AGREE WITH THE LAW THAT IT IS GOOD. BUT NOW, IT IS NO LONGER I
WHO DO IT, BUT SIN THAT DWELLS IN ME. FOR I KNOW THAT IN ME (THAT
IS, IN MY FLESH) NOTHING GOOD DWELLS; FOR TO WILL IS PRESENT WITH
ME, BUT HOW TO PERFORM WHAT IS GOOD I DO NOT FIND.
FOR THE GOOD THAT I WILL TO DO, I DO NOT DO; BUT THE EVIL I WILL
NOT TO DO, THAT I PRACTICE. NOW IF I DO WHAT I WILL NOT TO DO,
IT IS NO LONGER I WHO DO IT, BUT SIN THAT DWELLS IN ME. I FIND THEN
A LAW, THAT EVIL IS PRESENT WITH ME, THE ONE WHO WILLS TO DO
GOOD. FOR I DELIGHT IN THE LAW OF GOD ACCORDING TO THE INWARD
MAN. BUT I SEE ANOTHER LAW IN MY MEMBERS, WARRING AGAINST THE
LAW OF MY MIND, AND BRINGING ME INTO CAPTIVITY TO
THE LAW OF SIN WHICH IS IN MY MEMBERS.”**

Rom. 7:15-23

If you read carefully Paul's presentation above concerning the warring against the flesh, you will see that he speaks of three separate identities rather than just two (flesh and spirit). What is the third identity at work?





Sometimes the most simple truth becomes the most liberating to us. Paul says that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, and who walk after the Spirit rather than the flesh (see Rom. 8:1). Satan is in the condemnation business and he is doing well. In our warfare against the flesh, we must see that the flesh is not us, it is a separate identity that dwells in us. Paul said that when he sins, "... it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me." (Rom. 7:20).

Jesus came to die for you and me in order that we might be freed from the evil, flesh nature that controlled us. Condemnation comes to the believer that desires to walk with God but fails to do so. The source of that condemnation comes because we identify ourselves as the flesh. Read again Gal. 5:17:

"THE OLD MAN"



OLD FLESH
NATURE
("PUT OFF")



YOU
THE SOUL
(DECISION MAKER)

"THE NEW MAN"



NEW SPIRIT
NATURE
("PUT ON")

"I SAY THEN: WALK IN THE SPIRIT, AND YOU SHALL NOT FULFILL THE LUST OF THE FLESH. FOR THE FLESH LUSTS AGAINST THE SPIRIT, AND THE SPIRIT AGAINST THE FLESH; AND THESE ARE CONTRARY TO ONE ANOTHER, SO THAT YOU DO NOT DO THE THINGS THAT YOU WISH."

Gal.5:17

How much of our time and effort is spent in an attempt to get the flesh to obey God when the Word of God tells us rather to reckon it dead (Rom. 6:11), crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:6), buried with Christ in baptism (Rom. 6:3)? The point is simply that we must recognize that this sin nature is to be kept crucified and buried by faith in our union with Christ Jesus through the new birth and through water baptism. And so, in our warring against the flesh, we use the weapons of our warfare against the flesh.

"THE OLD MAN"



OLD FLESH
NATURE
("PUT OFF")



YOU
THE SOUL
(DECISION MAKER)

"THE NEW MAN"



NEW SPIRIT
NATURE
("PUT ON")

The flesh nature is totally committed to evil. It is a nature that can do nothing but evil. Likewise, the spirit nature is totally committed to what it was birthed to be, for it was created by God in true righteousness and holiness. It can be nothing else. As clearly stated in Galatians, the flesh will lust against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh for these two are contrary to one another. Only the central ingredient, namely "you", are able to decide which supernatural force is going to empower you. However, you must make a firm choice between the two. Be indecisive, double-minded, uncommitted, and you will not be able to do the things you might wish you could do. Let me share with you a tale I've told time and time again to drill home the moral to the story, that it is all about the power of choice:

THERE WAS AN OLD INDIAN CHIEF WHO WAS LED TO THE LORD BY A MISSIONARY. HAVING EXPLAINED THE NEED TO WARFARE AGAINST THE CHIEF'S WEAKNESS TOWARD DRUNKENNESS, THE MISSIONARY WENT HIS WAY. MONTHS LATER HE RETURNED TO THE RESERVATION TO VISIT HIS NEW CONVERT TO SEE HOW HE WAS DOING WITH HIS BATTLE.

THE INDIAN CHIEF TOLD THE MISSIONARY,
"IT'S LIKE HAVING BAD BLACK HORSE TIED TO ONE HAND,
AND GOOD WHITE HORSE TIED TO OTHER HAND.

BAD BLACK HORSE PULLS ME THIS WAY,
GOOD WHITE HORSE PULLS ME OTHER WAY."

SO THE MISSIONARY ASKED THE CHIEF,
"WHO IS WINNING THE WAR?"

THE OLD CHIEF THOUGHT FOR A WHILE

AND REPLIED,
"DEPENDS WHICH HORSE I FEED!"

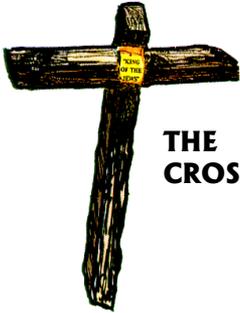
(origin of story unknown)



It is not difficult to see the point. You are the old Indian Chief, a convert to the Lord. You have a bad black horse whose name is flesh. You also have a good white horse whose name is spirit. These two horses don't like each other for they are contrary to one another. Each horse wants you to feed it so it can be big and strong. You must decide which horse you want to be big and strong. You can't feed both. You can't serve both. You need to make up your mind which horse you like best. Choose the spirit and feed him well!

WARRING EFFECTIVELY

Meditate in the passages of scripture below for they speak of the power of God to overcome the flesh! No amount of desire or willpower will give you the victory, but only the supernatural power of God. Remember that the weapons of our warfare are “mighty in God”, but you must use them! Overcoming the flesh is done by faith in what Christ has done! The weapons of our warfare become the same three we used in overcoming the world:



**THE
CROSS**

**“KNOWING THAT OUR OLD MAN
WAS CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST
THAT THE BODY OF SIN MIGHT BE DONE AWAY
WITH THAT WE SHOULD NO LONGER BE
SLAVES OF SIN.”**

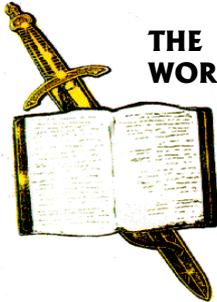
Rom. 6:6

**“...LET HIM DENY SELF,
AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS DAILY,
AND FOLLOW ME.”**

Luke 9:23

**“...AND THOSE THAT ARE CHRIST'S
HAVE CRUCIFIED THE FLESH WITH ITS PASSIONS AND DESIRES.”**

Gal. 5:24



**THE
WORD**

**“I HAVE INSTRUCTED YOU TODAY, EVEN YOU.
HAVE I NOT WRITTEN TO YOU EXCELLENT THINGS OF
COUNSELS AND KNOWLEDGE, THAT I MAY MAKE YOU
KNOW THE CERTAINTY OF THE WORDS OF TRUTH,
THAT YOU MAY ANSWER WORDS OF TRUTH TO THOSE
WHO (ARE) SENT TO YOU?”**

Prov. 22:19-21

“FOR WHAT DOES THE SCRIPTURE SAY?”

Rom. 4:3



**THE
SPIRIT**

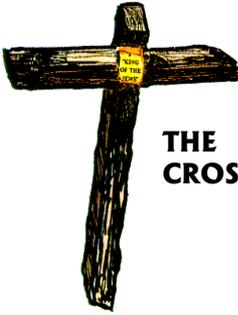
**“I SAY THEN: WALK IN THE SPIRIT,
AND YOU SHALL NOT FULFILL THE LUST OF THE FLESH.
FOR THE FLESH LUSTS AGAINST THE SPIRIT,
AND THE SPIRIT AGAINST THE FLESH;
AND THESE ARE CONTRARY TO ONE ANOTHER,
SO THAT YOU DO NOT DO THE THINGS
THAT YOU WISH.”**

Gal. 5:16-17

**“THERE IS THEREFORE NOW NO CONDEMNATION
TO THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST JESUS,
WHO DO NOT WALK ACCORDING TO THE FLESH,
BUT ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT.”**

Rom. 8:1

The cross speaks of death, pain, and suffering. There is no victory unless we are willing to suffer the cost of the cross. Bondages can only be broken if we are willing to pay the price to endure the pain:

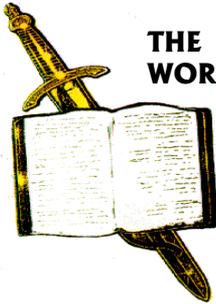


THE CROSS

**“...LOOKING TO JESUS
...ENDURED THE CROSS...
CONSIDER HIM WHO ENDURED...
LEST YOU BECOME
WEARY AND DISCOURAGED...
YOU HAVE NOT YET RESISTED TO BLOODSHED,
STRIVING AGAINST SIN.”**

Heb. 12:2-4

The basis of how we warfare must be according to the Word. In combating the flesh, we are to apply what the scripture tells us about the condition of the flesh in Christ:



THE WORD

**“LIKEWISE YOU ALSO,
RECKON YOURSELVES
TO BE DEAD UNTO SIN...
THEREFORE DO NOT LET SIN REIGN IN
YOUR MORTAL BODY THAT YOU SHOULD
OBEY IT IN ITS LUSTS...
FOR SIN SHALL NOT HAVE DOMINION
OVER YOU...”**

Rom. 6:11-14

The Spirit of God has everything you need to combat the flesh. For every work of the flesh, there is a fruit of the Spirit to quench the flesh. For hatred, He has love. For outbursts of wrath, He provides the fruit of longsuffering. For the sexual works of adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, He provides the fruit of self-control.



THE SPIRIT

**“WALK IN THE SPIRIT AND YOU SHALL NOT
FULFILL THE LUST OF THE FLESH...”**

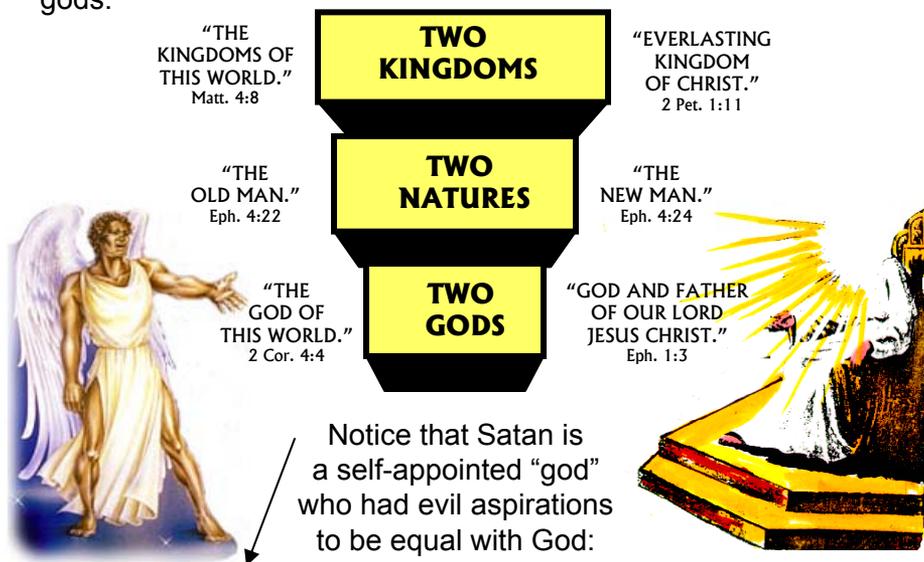
Gal. 5:16

**“...DO NOT WALK ACCORDING TO THE FLESH BUT
ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT... THOSE WHO LIVE ACCORDING
TO THE SPIRIT THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT.”**

Rom. 8:4-5

OVERCOMING THE DEVIL

We have examined the choices set before us of two kingdoms and two natures, and now we come to a choice between two gods:



"HOW YOU ARE FALLEN FROM HEAVEN, O LUCIFER, SON OF THE MORNING! YOU ARE CUT DOWN TO THE GROUND, YOU WHO WEAKENED THE NATIONS! FOR YOU HAVE SAID IN YOUR HEART: 'I WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN, I WILL EXALT MY THRONE ABOVE THE STARS OF GOD; I WILL ALSO SIT ON THE MOUNT OF THE CONGREGATION. I WILL ASCEND ABOVE THE HEIGHTS OF THE CLOUDS, I WILL BE LIKE THE MOST HIGH.' YET YOU SHALL BE BROUGHT DOWN TO SHEOL, TO THE LOWEST DEPTHS OF THE PIT....WHO SHOOK KINGDOMS, WHO MADE THE EARTH A WILDERNESS AND DESTROYED ITS CITIES, WHO DID NOT OPEN THE HOUSE OF HIS PRISONERS..."
Isa. 14:12-17

"THE LORD REIGNS;... RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE ARE THE FOUNDATION OF HIS THRONE.... FOR YOU, LORD, ARE MOST HIGH ABOVE ALL THE EARTH; YOU ARE EXALTED FAR ABOVE ALL GODS. ...HE DELIVERS THEM OUT OF THE HAND OF THE WICKED. LIGHT IS SOWN FOR THE RIGHTEOUS... REJOICE IN THE LORD, YOU RIGHTEOUS, AND GIVE THANKS AT THE REMEMBRANCE OF HIS HOLY NAME."
Psm. 97:1-12

"BLESSING AND HONOR AND GLORY AND POWER BE TO HIM WHO SITS ON THE THRONE..."
Rev. 5:13

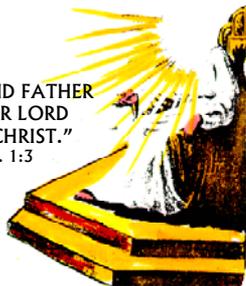
"YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER... YOU HAVE LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED LAWLESSNESS..."
Heb. 1:8-9



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

**TWO
GODS**

**"GOD AND FATHER
OF OUR LORD
JESUS CHRIST."**
Eph. 1:3



For his self-exaltation, Lucifer was cast down to the ground and sentenced to the lowest depths of the pit. What he tried to seize unlawfully, God is now offering to the overcoming saint who is submitted to His rule and reign. God offers the saints to become joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17), to sit on Christ's throne with Him (Rev. 3:21), to reign with Christ over the nations (Rev.3:26-27). Herein lies the reason that Satan so hates the saints of God!

Hear me, dear one: What Satan knows he shall never possess again, he seeks to now prevent the saints from receiving! He knows that the promises God makes to the overcomer are conditional and not free gifts bestowed by grace.

If Satan can get the saints to set aside the conditions attached to the promises, he knows that they will miss out on God's best. Only "he that overcomes" shall inherit all things (Rev. 21:7), it is only by becoming "joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17), and it is only he that overcomes that will sit on Christ's throne (Rev. 3:21). Multitudes of saved people will make it to heaven, and then be faced with suffering loss of rewards apart from overcoming (1 Cor. 3:15). Overcoming the devil must have as its main objective:

TO OVERCOME SATANIC **DECEPTION**

**"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."**

Rev.12:9



**"SATAN HIMSELF
TRANSFORMS
HIMSELF INTO
AN ANGEL OF LIGHT.
THEREFORE IT IS
NO GREAT THING
IF HIS MINISTERS
ALSO TRANSFORM
THEMSELVES
INTO
MINISTERS OF
RIGHTEOUSNESS..."**

2 Cor. 11:14-15

"THE ACT BY WHICH ONE IS CAUGHT OR ENSNARED THROUGH DECEIT. TO TAKE, TO TRICK..."



TO CAUSE TO BELIEVE WHAT IS ACTUALLY FALSE TO BE CORRECT, OR TO DISBELIEVE WHAT IS REALLY TRUE."

Webster

DECEPTION

SATAN'S MASTER WEAPON

Have you ever given any thought to how frequently Paul warned the saints about deception? Here is a sample:



"BE NOT DECEIVED..." 1 Cor. 6:9

"BE NOT DECEIVED..." 1 Cor. 15:33

"BE NOT DECEIVED..." Gal. 6:7

"LET NO ONE DECEIVE HIMSELF..." 1 Cor. 3:18

"LET NO ONE DECEIVE YOU WITH VAIN WORDS..." Eph. 5:6

"LET NO ONE DECEIVE YOU BY ANY MEANS..." 2 Thess. 2:3

"BUT EVIL MEN AND IMPOSTORS WILL GROW WORSE AND WORSE, DECEIVING AND BEING DECEIVED." 2 Tim. 3:13

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

"...THE WORKING OF SATAN, WITH ALL POWER, SIGNS, LYING WONDERS... AND WITH ALL UNRIGHTEOUS DECEPTION."

2 Thess. 1:9-10

Many times I have been astounded by Webster's definitions as they are applied to spiritual truths. Satan works exactly as Webster defines it:

TO BELIEVE WHAT IS FALSE...



TO DISBELIEVE WHAT IS TRUE...

**TO
BELIEVE
WHAT
IS FALSE...**



**TO
DISBELIEVE
WHAT
IS TRUE...**

F THE BIBLE TEACHES UNCONDITIONAL ETERNAL SECURITY...

A THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT APOSTLES/ PROPHETS CEASED TO EXIST WHEN THE LAST OF THE 12 DIED...

L THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT ARE NOT FOR TODAY...

S THE BIBLE TEACHES THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS NOT FOR TODAY...

E THE BIBLE TEACHES SPEAKING IN TONGUES IS OF THE DEVIL.

D THE BIBLE TEACHES THE OLD TESTAMENT IS ALL LAW AND THE NEW TESTAMENT IS ALL GRACE...

O THE BIBLE TEACHES THE BOOK OF HEBREWS IS WRITTEN TO UNBELIEVING JEWS-NOT TO CHRISTIANS...

T THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT THE WHOLE CHURCH IS GOING TO BE RAPTURED...

R THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT THE WHOLE CHURCH IS GOING TO BE THE BRIDE OF CHRIST AND WILL REIGN WITH CHRIST BY GRACE AND NOT BY WORKS...

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S GOD IS AN UNCHANGING GOD WHO WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE EXACTLY AS HE JUDGED THEM BEFORE IF THEY COMMIT THE SAME SINS OF HARLOTRY AND IDOLATRY THAT THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL COMMITTED. HE DIVORCED ISRAEL AND HE WILL DO THE SAME TO NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVERS ACCORDING TO ROM. 11.

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D WORKS ARE IMPORTANT TO EVERY BELIEVER AS THEY ARE THE BASIS FOR RECEIVING ETERNAL REWARDS RATHER THAN GRACE. GRACE BRINGS ETERNAL LIFE BUT WORKS BRING ETERNAL REWARDS. YOU CAN "MAKE IT TO HEAVEN" AND THEN "SUFFER LOSS OF REWARDS" FOR A LACK OF GOOD WORKS. (1 Cor. 3:11-15)

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R THE BRIDE OF CHRIST WILL COME OUT OF THE BODY OF CHRIST JUST AS EVE CAME OUT OF ADAM'S BODY. (JESUS IS THE LAST ADAM (1 COR. 15:45)

I THE BASIS OF BEING IN THE BRIDE IS OVERCOMING AND SUFFERING AND NOT A GIFT OF GRACE.

N IT IS A PRIZE TO BE EARNED FOR RUNNING THE RACE.

E

A great part of walking in the Spirit is listening to what the Spirit is saying unto the churches (Rev. 3:22). May we remember that the Spirit authored the Word of God and it is not of private interpretation (2 Pet. 2:20). Jesus said, "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is Truth" (Jn. 17:17). The Father sent the Spirit of Truth into our lives to guide us into all Truth (Jn. 16:13).

The Spirit-filled believer is one who is filled with truth from the Spirit of Truth and will not be deceived! I can say to you that the Bride of Christ is consumed by truth and such truth will reign over tradition! "What do the scriptures say?" (Rom. 4:3) governs her every belief!



Using the list on the previous page for a litmus test of where your convictions lie, can you, using the Word of Truth, give, by the mouth of two or three witnesses evidence that supports your belief? Will your scriptures stand the test of reading in context and considering the conditions attached and will they stand the test of comparing scripture to scripture (1 Cor. 2:13) so that there is no contradiction of scripture against scripture?

You see, you cannot just take a verse here and there and ignore all the rest. The Word of God is without contradiction! All the pieces must fit together if you really have the Truth which is imparted by the Spirit of Truth, or else you just might be following the spirit of deception! Paul warned the saints:



"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..."

2 Cor. 11:2-3

If there is nothing to fear, why does Paul fear for the saints? It is by means of deception that Paul fears Satan will get to the saints.



**“IN THE BEGINNING
WAS THE WORD,
AND THE WORD
WAS WITH GOD,
AND THE WORD
WAS GOD.
HE WAS IN THE BEGINNING
WITH GOD....
AND THE WORD
BECAME FLESH
AND DWELT AMONG US,
AND WE BEHELD HIS GLORY...”**



John 1:1-2,14

Can you imagine the Word of God, which is Jesus Christ Himself, marrying a bride who does not know much about the Word of God? When Paul expressed, “That I might know Him” (Phil. 3:10), can we grasp that we know the Word of God (Jesus) by means of studying and meditating in the book called the Word of God? As any sensible bride would do, she seeks to get to know her prospective husband lest she find her marriage full of surprises.

How important is the Word of God to you? The scriptures were given to prepare us for good works. Does that shock you? Is that something from the Word of God of which you were not aware? Which of these two passages depict you as a follower of Christ?

**“ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY
INSPIRATION OF GOD,
AND IS PROFITABLE FOR
DOCTRINE, FOR REPROOF,
FOR CORRECTION,
FOR INSTRUCTION IN
RIGHTEOUSNESS,
THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY
BE COMPLETE,
THOROUGHLY EQUIPPED
FOR EVERY GOOD WORK.”**

2 Tim. 3:16-17



**TO THE PURE ALL THINGS ARE
PURE, BUT TO THOSE WHO
ARE DEFILED AND
UNBELIEVING NOTHING IS
PURE; BUT EVEN THEIR MIND
AND CONSCIENCE ARE
DEFILED. THEY PROFESS TO
KNOW GOD, BUT IN WORKS
THEY DENY HIM, BEING
ABOMINABLE, DISOBEDIENT,
AND DISQUALIFIED
FOR EVERY GOOD WORK.”**

Titus 1:15-16

Where do you stand, dear reader, in your relationship and communion with the Word of God? If you are going to overcome the devil then you must follow the pattern:

**“I HAVE WRITTEN TO YOU, YOUNG MEN,
BECAUSE YOU ARE STRONG,
AND THE WORD OF GOD ABIDES IN YOU,
AND YOU HAVE OVERCOME THE WICKED ONE.”**

1 John 2:14

**“EYE HAS NOT SEEN,
NOR EAR HEARD,
NOR HAS ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN
THE THINGS WHICH GOD HAS
PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.**

**BUT GOD HAS REVEALED THEM
TO US THROUGH HIS SPIRIT.”**

1 Cor.2:9-10

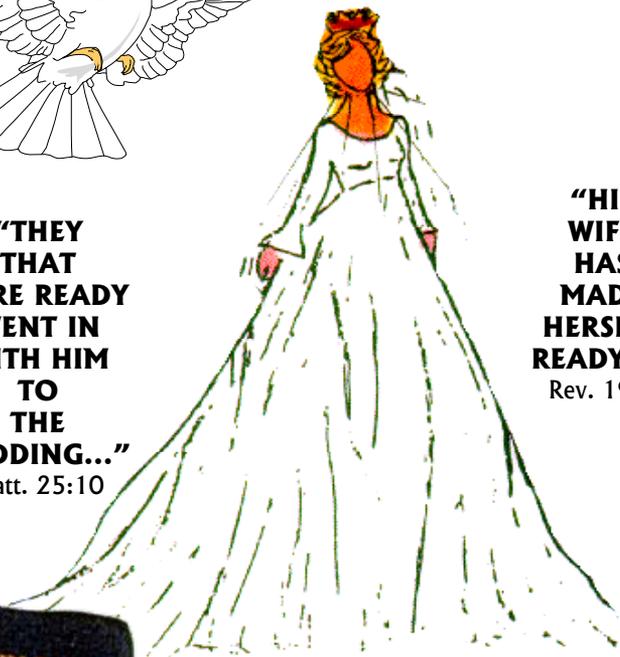


**“THEY
THAT
WERE READY
WENT IN
WITH HIM
TO
THE
WEDDING...”**

Matt. 25:10

**“HIS
WIFE
HAS
MADE
HERSELF
READY...”**

Rev. 19:7



THE BRIDE OF CHRIST



PART SEVEN

THE GLORY OF THE INHERITANCE IN CHRIST

“...AFTER I HEARD OF YOUR FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS... I... MAKE MENTION OF YOU IN MY PRAYERS: THAT THE GOD OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE FATHER OF GLORY MAY GIVE TO YOU THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND REVELATION IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIM, THE EYES OF YOUR UNDERSTANDING BEING ENLIGHTENED;

THAT YOU MAY KNOW WHAT IS THE HOPE OF HIS CALLING, WHAT ARE THE RICHES OF THE GLORY OF HIS INHERITANCE IN THE SAINTS.”
Eph. 1:15-18

GROWING UP IN CHRIST

“AS NEW-BORN BABES, DESIRE THE PURE MILK OF THE WORD THAT YOU MAY GROW THEREBY.”

“THAT WE SHOULD NO LONGER BE CHILDREN,

TOSSED TO AND FRO BY EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE BY THE TRICKERY OF MEN...

BUT SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE, MAY GROW UP IN ALL THINGS...

INTO HIM WHO IS THE HEAD-CHRIST...”



“I WRITE TO YOU, LITTLE CHILDREN, BECAUSE YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN YOU FOR HIS NAME’S SAKE. I WRITE TO YOU, FATHERS, BECAUSE YOU HAVE KNOWN HIM WHO IS FROM THE BEGINNING. I WRITE TO YOU, YOUNG MEN, BECAUSE YOU HAVE OVERCOME THE WICKED ONE. I WRITE TO YOU, LITTLE CHILDREN, BECAUSE YOU HAVE KNOWN THE FATHER. I HAVE WRITTEN TO YOU, FATHERS, BECAUSE YOU HAVE KNOWN HIM WHO IS FROM THE BEGINNING. I HAVE WRITTEN TO YOU, YOUNG MEN, BECAUSE YOU ARE STRONG, AND THE WORD OF GOD ABIDES IN YOU, AND YOU HAVE OVERCOME THE WICKED ONE.”
1 Jn. 2:12-14

From the day we are born again, God calls us to a life-style of preparation for the future. New-born babes in Christ are called to desire the milk of the Word that they may grow by it (1 Pet. 2:2). Able to grow into strong young men in whom the Word of God abides to overcome the Wicked One (1 Jn. 2:14); We are to grow up that we may serve God who has called us as soldiers of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2:3-4). Shall the Bride of Christ be any different? Is she not required to make herself ready? (see Rev. 19:7)

The Holy Spirit is in the process of preparing a bride for the Lord Jesus Christ! (Rev. 19:17). The scripture states that she will become a glorious bride, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but rather she shall be holy and without blemish, because she has become cleansed and sanctified by a life of washing in the water of the Word of God! (see Eph. 5:25-27).

WHAT WILL THE BRIDE BE LIKE?

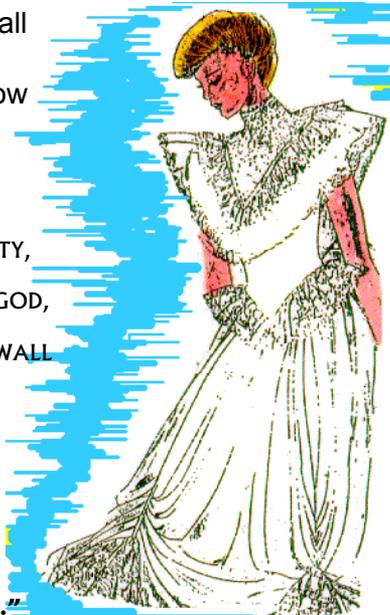
Certainly we can look to the New Testament pattern of the overcoming church in answering that question. However, the Bride of Christ is not the exclusive property of the church.

The Bride of Christ will be comprised of all overcomers from both covenants!

We see that portrayed in type and shadow of the heavenly New Jerusalem found in Revelation:

"COME,
I WILL SHOW YOU THE BRIDE,
THE LAMB'S WIFE."
..AND HE SHOWED ME THE GREAT CITY,
THE HOLY JERUSALEM,
DESCENDING OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD,
HAVING THE GLORY OF GOD.
...ALSO SHE HAD A GREAT AND HIGH WALL
WITH TWELVE GATES...
AND NAMES WRITTEN ON THEM,
WHICH ARE **THE NAMES OF
THE TWELVE TRIBES
OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL...**
NOW THE WALL OF THE CITY
HAD TWELVE FOUNDATIONS,
AND ON THEM WERE
**THE NAMES OF THE
TWELVE APOSTLES OF THE LAMB."**

Rev. 21:9-14



"Twelve" is God's number of governmental order. There were twelve tribes comprising Israel in the Old Covenant. There were twelve apostles appointed by Jesus in the New Covenant. These two groups represent the two governing forces in the New Jerusalem, the city depicted as comprising the Bride of Christ. The Bride is not the exclusive property of the church as members of the New Covenant! It is folly to think that the great heroes of faith found in Hebrews chapter 11 are not going to be part of the Bride of Christ. They are set before us as examples to emulate and therefore must be qualified as partakers of the Bride of Christ. Consider how Paul set them before the church as examples of those who also had run a race for a prize:

"THEREFORE WE ALSO, SINCE WE ARE SURROUNDED BY SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES, LET US LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT AND THE SIN WHICH SO EASILY ENSNARES US, AND LET US RUN WITH ENDURANCE THE RACE THAT IS SET BEFORE US..."

Heb. 12:1

"...DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT THOSE WHO RUN IN A RACE ALL RUN, BUT ONE RECEIVES THE PRIZE? RUN IN SUCH A WAY THAT YOU MAY OBTAIN IT. AND EVERYONE WHO COMPETES FOR THE PRIZE IS TEMPERATE IN ALL THINGS. NOW THEY DO IT TO OBTAIN A PERISHABLE CROWN, BUT WE DO IT FOR AN IMPERISHABLE CROWN."

Many Old Covenant saints depict the character and deeds required of the Bride of Christ. They are marked with traits that are type and shadows for us as members of the church called to bridehood. Let us consider a few mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11 as among the “heroes of faith”:

1. THE BRIDE WILL BE LIKE ENOCH:

“AND ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD THREE HUNDRED YEARS...
ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD; AND HE WAS NOT,
BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM.” Gen. 5:22, 24

“BY FAITH ENOCH WAS TRANSLATED SO THAT HE DID NOT SEE DEATH, AND
WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD HAD TRANSLATED HIM, FOR BEFORE HIS
TRANSLATION HE HAD THIS TESTIMONY, THAT HE PLEASSED GOD.” Heb. 11:5

Are you like Enoch? Are you walking with God according to God’s Word? Are you pleasing God with your life as did Enoch? This is a picture of the conditions to being taken in the rapture! God will translate those who walk with Him and those who please Him!

2. THE BRIDE WILL BE LIKE MOSES:

“BY FAITH MOSES... (CHOSE) RATHER TO SUFFER AFFLICTION WITH THE
PEOPLE OF GOD THAN TO ENJOY THE PASSING PLEASURES OF SIN,
ESTEEMING THE REPROACH OF CHRIST GREATER RICHES THAN THE
TREASURES IN EGYPT FOR HE LOOKED TO THE REWARD...
HE FORSOOK EGYPT... HE ENDURED (BY) SEEING HIM WHO IS INVISIBLE.”

Heb. 11:24-27

Moses not qualified to be the Bride of Christ? The one who forsook Egypt, a type of the world with all its treasures? Moses, who chose rather to suffer with Christ than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season? Moses, who endured all that hardship by means of a faith life focused on seeing Him who is invisible? He won’t be in the Bride because he was born under the wrong covenant? Hardly!, I say.

3. THE BRIDE WILL BE LIKE ABRAHAM:

“BY FAITH ABRAHAM DWELLED IN TENTS... FOR HE WAITED
FOR THE CITY... WHOSE BUILDER AND MAKER IS GOD...
CONFESSED THAT THEY WERE STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON
EARTH...THEY DESIRED 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.”

Heb. 11:9, 10,16

That “better city” God has prepared for Abraham and his followers is described in Revelation Chapter 21 as the Lamb’s wife, the Bride, the heavenly New Jerusalem! Paul rebuked the church for their high-minded replacement theology (see Rom. 11). Likewise we need to cast down silly theology that reserves the Bride of Christ as exclusive property of the church because of being members of the New Covenant.

“AND WHAT MORE SHALL I SAY?
 FOR THE TIME WOULD FAIL ME TO TELL OF GIDEON
 AND BARAK AND SAMSON AND JEPHTHAH, ALSO OF
 DAVID AND SAMUEL AND THE PROPHETS: WHO
 THROUGH FAITH SUBDUED KINGDOMS, WORKED
 RIGHTEOUSNESS, OBTAINED PROMISES, STOPPED THE
 MOUTHS OF LIONS, QUENCHED THE VIOLENCE OF
 FIRE, ESCAPED THE EDGE OF THE SWORD, OUT OF
 WEAKNESS WERE MADE STRONG, BECAME VALIANT
 IN BATTLE, TURNED TO FLIGHT THE ARMIES OF THE
 ALIENS. WOMEN RECEIVED THEIR DEAD RAISED TO
 LIFE AGAIN. OTHERS WERE TORTURED, NOT
 ACCEPTING DELIVERANCE, THAT THEY MIGHT
 OBTAIN A BETTER RESURRECTION. STILL OTHERS
 HAD TRIAL OF MOCKINGS AND SCOURGINGS,
 YES, AND OF CHAINS AND IMPRISONMENT.
 THEY WERE STONED, THEY WERE SAWN IN TWO,
 WERE TEMPTED, WERE SLAIN WITH THE SWORD.
 THEY WANDERED ABOUT IN SHEEPSKINS AND
 GOATSKINS, BEING DESTITUTE, AFFLICTED,
 TORMENTED --
 OF WHOM THE WORLD WAS NOT WORTHY.
 THEY WANDERED IN DESERTS AND MOUNTAINS,
 IN DENS AND CAVES OF THE EARTH.
 AND ALL THESE, HAVING OBTAINED A GOOD
 TESTIMONY THROUGH FAITH, DID NOT RECEIVE
 THE PROMISE, GOD HAVING PROVIDED
 SOMETHING BETTER FOR US, THAT THEY SHOULD
 NOT BE MADE PERFECT APART FROM US.”

Heb 11:32-12:1

THE OLD TESTAMENT MEMBERS OF THE BRIDE OF CHRIST



THE NEW TESTAMENT MEMBERS OF THE BRIDE OF CHRIST



“WORK OF FAITH,
 LABOR OF LOVE,
 PATIENCE OF HOPE IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST...”

1 Thess.. 1:3

“...SANCTIFIED COMPLETELY...
 SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY PRESERVED BLAMELESS
 AT THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST...”

1 Thess. 5:23

“...DENYING UNGODLINESS AND
 WORLDLY LUSTS... LIVING SOBERLY,
 RIGHTEOUSLY AND GODLY IN THIS PRESENT
 AGE, LOOKING FOR THE BLESSED HOPE AND
 GLORIOUS APPEARING OF (HER) GOD AND
 SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST...HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE
 ZEALOUS FOR GOOD WORKS... Titus 2:12-13

“WITHOUT FAULT IN THE MIDST OF A
 CROOKED AND PERVERSE GENERATION...
 HOLDING FAST THE WORD OF LIFE...”

Phil. 2:16

“...APPROVE THE THINGS THAT ARE
 EXCELLENT... SINCERE AND WITHOUT OFFENSE
 TILL THE DAY OF CHRIST... BEING FILLED WITH
 THE FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH ARE BY
 JESUS CHRIST, TO THE GLORY AND PRAISE OF
 GOD...”

Phil. 1:10-11

Two central themes have been presented throughout this book:

1. **TO IDENTIFY AND CLARIFY THE RACE SET BEFORE US.**
2. **TO IDENTIFY AND CLARIFY THE PRIZE SET BEFORE US.**

As you now have completed the reading of this book, your eyes of understanding should be fully enlightened to the nature of both the race to be run, and the prize to be won:

**“TO HIM WHO OVERCOMES,
I WILL GRANT TO SIT WITH ME ON MY THRONE,
AS I OVERCAME AND SAT DOWN WITH MY FATHER ON HIS THRONE.
HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS
UNTO THE CHURCHES.”**

Rev. 3:21-22



“HE THAT OVERCOMES SHALL INHERIT ALL THINGS”

JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST

As Paul said, What more shall I say? I pray that, now, you would allow the Word of God to bring forth much fruit, and that you would guard your heart lest all that has been sown into it would be snatched away.

Pastor Randy Shupe

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



“THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE TABERNACLE”
was founded in Pastor Shupe’s home in 1980 after serving as a
lay teacher in the Assemblies of God for several years.
The church now resides in this building at
5690 Yukon Street,
in “Olde Town Arvada”, Colorado, 80002.

Deeply impressed by the
illustrated teachings of the
late Clarence Larkin, and
convinced that “a picture is
worth a thousand words”,
Pastor Shupe has combined
his artistic talents with his
God-given gift of revelational
teaching.
The illustrations in his books
and videos represent some
of the visual aids he
prepares for the
feeding of his flock.



You may reach him by phone at 303-423-1325, or write to the address
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THE GLORY OF HIS INHERITANCE



**"...I PRESS ON,
THAT I MAY LAY HOLD OF
THAT FOR WHICH CHRIST
JESUS HAS ALSO LAID HOLD
OF ME...
I PRESS TOWARD THE GOAL
FOR THE PRIZE OF THE
UPWARD CALL OF GOD
IN CHRIST JESUS...
AS MANY AS ARE MATURE,
HAVE THIS MIND...**

**BRETHREN,
JOIN IN FOLLOWING MY EXAMPLE...
YOU HAVE US FOR A PATTERN."**

Phil. 3:12-17

In spite of the apostle Paul's admonition to all believers to "join in following my example" and "you have us for a pattern", we do not see his example and pattern being presented to the saints in today's modern-day theology.

If indeed Paul is to be our example and pattern, why then are we not being taught the meaning of the goal and prize of which he speaks? This book sets before the believer the "great mystery" of the Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:25-32) as being the goal and prize of "the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

the **WAY,** *the* **TRUTH,** *the* **LIFE**
TABERNACLE



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