

# THE PROPHETIC WORD

**NEWSLETTER  
ARCHIVE  
2006**



*Pastor Randy Shupe*



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~ JANUARY 2006 ~

# "YOUR WORD"

AS REVEALED IN PSALM 119



"HOW CAN A YOUNG MAN CLEANSE HIS WAY? BY TAKING HEED ACCORDING TO **YOUR WORD.**" Psm. 119:9

"...**YOUR WORD** HAS GIVEN ME LIFE." Psm. 119:50

"**YOUR WORD** IS A LAMP TO MY FEET AND A LIGHT TO MY PATH." Psm. 119:105

"I REJOICE AT **YOUR WORD** AS ONE WHO FINDS GREAT TREASURE." Psm. 119:162

"...MY HEART STANDS IN AWE OF **YOUR WORD...**" Psm. 119:161

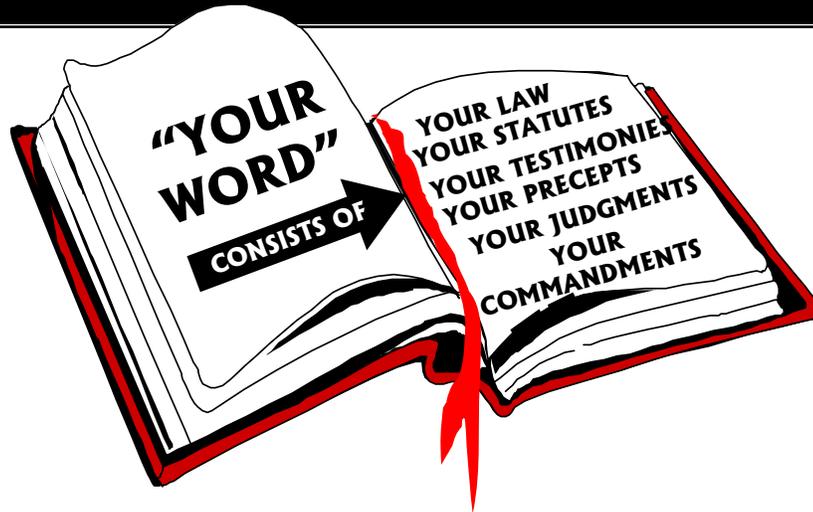
"THE ENTRANCE OF **YOUR WORD** GIVES LIGHT; IT GIVES UNDERSTANDING TO THE SIMPLE." Psm. 119:130

"**YOUR WORD** IS VERY PURE; THEREFORE YOUR SERVANT LOVES IT." Psm. 119:140

Listed above are 8 of the 34 repetitious uses of the phrase "YOUR WORD" found in Psalm 119. Obviously, it is the overall major theme of the 176 verses recorded in this psalm. There are 6 other repetitious themes in this psalm as well. These 6 sub-topics each appear twenty-plus times within the 176 verses of this psalm. It is my conviction that these 6 sub-topics constitute what is the full content of the phrase "YOUR WORD" in Psalm 119. Simply put, "YOUR WORD" consists of these 6 topics.

This newsletter is dedicated to introducing these six themes to you as yet another perspective by which we may "rightly divide the Word of truth" as 2 Timothy 2:15 exhorts the believer to become astute in doing. I believe that Psalm 119, as well as Psalm 19, are presenting these six themes as the means by which we may systematically take into our soul a balanced diet of the Word of God. Interested?





**"THE LAW OF THE LORD IS PERFECT, CONVERTING THE SOUL; THE TESTIMONY OF THE LORD IS SURE, MAKING WISE THE SIMPLE; THE STATUTES OF THE LORD ARE RIGHT, REJOICING THE HEART; THE COMMANDMENT OF THE LORD IS PURE, ENLIGHTENING THE EYES; ...THE JUDGMENTS OF THE LORD ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS ALTOGETHER. MORE TO BE DESIRED ARE THEY THAN GOLD, YEA, THAN MUCH FINE GOLD; SWEETER ALSO THAN HONEY AND THE HONEYCOMB. MOREOVER BY THEM YOUR SERVANT IS WARNED, AND IN KEEPING THEM THERE IS GREAT REWARD."**

Psalm 19:7-11

Not only does Psalm 119 give emphasis to these six subjects, but another of the psalms singles out five of the six as well. Psalm 19 tells us:

1. What these things accomplish
2. Why they are important in this life
3. What impact they will have on eternal rewards



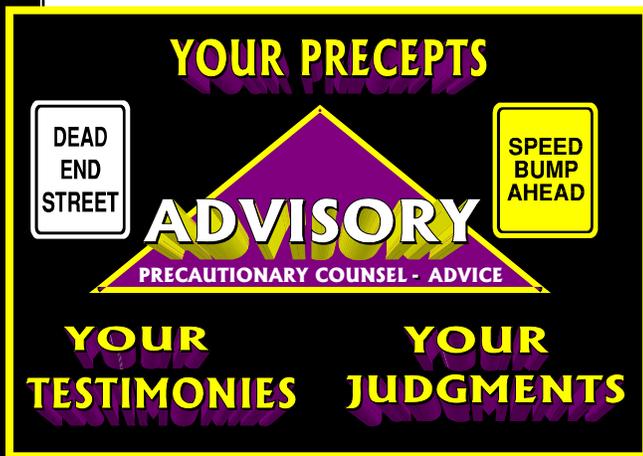
Notice that Psalm 19 gives two great benefits derived from giving heed to these areas, (1) "Moreover by them your servant is warned" and (2) "in keeping them there is great reward."

Consider now a random selection of the stated benefits that the psalmist attributes to these six things in Psalm 119:

1. **YOUR TESTIMONIES-** "I HAVE MORE UNDERSTANDING THAN ALL MY TEACHERS, FOR YOUR TESTIMONIES ARE MY MEDITATION" (Psalm 119:99)
2. **YOUR PRECEPTS-** "I UNDERSTAND MORE THAN THE ANCIENTS BECAUSE I HAVE KEPT YOUR PRECEPTS" (Psalm 119:100)
3. **YOUR LAW-** "GREAT PEACE HAVE THOSE WHO LOVE YOUR LAW, AND NOTHING CAUSES THEM TO STUMBLE" (Psalm 119:165)
4. **YOUR JUDGMENTS-** "GREAT ARE YOUR TENDER MERCIES, O LORD; REVIVE ME ACCORDING TO YOUR JUDGMENTS" (Psalm 119:156)
5. **YOUR STATUTES-** "...I SHALL OBSERVE YOUR STATUTES CONTINUALLY. YOU REJECT ALL THOSE WHO STRAY FROM YOUR STATUTES" (Psalm 119:117-118)
6. **YOUR COMMANDMENTS-** "YOU, THROUGH YOUR COMMANDMENTS, MAKE ME WISER THAN MY ENEMIES" (Psalm 119:98)

To gain additional revelation about these six subjects, we need only to sub-divide them into two specific groups containing three each. Those two distinct categories I have labeled as "ADVISORY" and "ABSOLUTES." Notice the illustration of two different kinds of "street signs" that we encounter every day as best typifying what these categories represent. In our daily driving adventures we can choose to ignore "advisory" signs such as "dead end street" or "speed bump ahead." However, to do so will cause us to travel the same paths over again as we obliviously head up dead end streets, and we will surely experience a "bumpy ride" if we don't pay attention to those speed bump warnings.

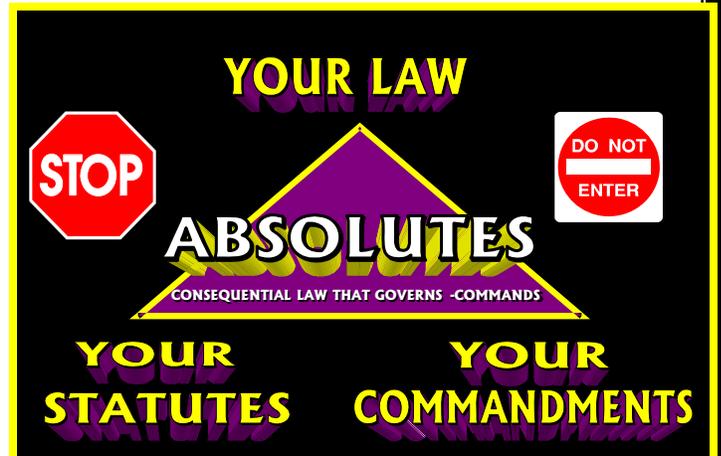
It is not difficult to see the parallels. If we choose to ignore the more serious warning signs that are "absolutes" such as "stop" and "do not enter," we will find that our choices can have costly ramifications and unpleasant encounters with the civil authorities. Such natural illustrations are applicable to our spiritual walk with God as well.



**ADVISORY** "PRECAUTIONARY INSTRUCTIONS, DIRECTIONS, SUGGESTIONS, USEFUL HELPS, WARNINGS, ADVICE, COUNSEL,"

### THE ADVISORY ASPECT OF GOD'S WORD

God's Word tells us, "There are many plans in a man's heart, nevertheless the Lord's counsel – that will stand" (Prov. 19:21). Much of God's Word comes in the form of counsel and advice that is free for the taking (or rejecting). God warns us, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes..." (Prov. 3:5-6). We can have God direct us in our spiritual path just as much as we rely on the "advisory road signs" to help us reach our physical destinations safely and quickly. When we are lost, it takes humility to stop and ask someone for directions. The same is true for our spiritual walk. We do not always have all the necessary insight. God's Word is filled with "helpful hints" to guide us. The present ministry of the Holy Spirit, the author of the Word, is that of being "the Helper" (Jn. 14:26).



**ABSOLUTE-** "CONTROL, DOMINION, RULE WITHOUT EXCEPTION, DEFINITELY BLACK AND WHITE- NO GRAY AREAS"

### THE ABSOLUTE ASPECT OF GOD'S WORD

The Ten Commandments were not given with the intent to be God's "ten suggestions" to His people. Eight out of the ten use the specific command, "do not." Neither are the 1,500 commandments found in the New Testament meant to be merely a suggested lifestyle for the believer. The phrase "do not" appears 430 times in the New Testament, many of which are specific, forbidden practices for every born-again, blood-washed believer:

**"BUT FORNICATION AND ALL UNCLEANNESS OR COVETOUSNESS, LET IT NOT EVEN BE NAMED AMONG YOU, AS IF FITTING FOR SAINTS."** Eph. 5:3

Paul goes on in these verses to warn of the serious ramifications believers can expect if they ignore the "absolutes" of God's Word:

**"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. 5:6-7

# THE TESTIMONIES OF THE LORD

"THE TESTIMONY OF THE LORD IS SURE,  
MAKING WISE THE SIMPLE."  
Psalm 19:7

Look carefully at these two passages of Scripture. →  
One carries a very positive promise while the other carries a very negative warning. You may remember from Psalm 19 that the two benefits stated about these subjects were, (1) "By them your servant is warned," and (2) "In keeping them there is great reward." These two concepts can easily be overlaid upon these passages as conveying "the moral to the story."

Notice both passages carry a similar statement (1) they were "written for our learning" and (2) "they were written for our admonition" (strong warning).

**POSITIVE TESTIMONIES**

"FOR WHATEVER THINGS WERE WRITTEN BEFORE WERE WRITTEN FOR OUR LEARNING, THAT WE THROUGH THE PATIENCE AND COMFORT OF THE SCRIPTURES MIGHT HAVE HOPE... NOW MAY THE GOD OF HOPE FILL YOU WITH ALL JOY AND PEACE IN BELIEVING, THAT YOU MAY ABOUND IN HOPE BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT."  
Rom. 15:4,13

**NEGATIVE TESTIMONIES**

"NOW ALL THESE THINGS BECAME OUR EXAMPLES, TO THE INTENT THAT WE SHOULD NOT LUST AFTER EVIL THINGS AS THEY ALSO LUSTED... NOW ALL THESE THINGS HAPPENED TO THEM AS EXAMPLES, AND THEY WERE WRITTEN FOR OUR ADMONITION, ON WHOM THE ENDS OF THE AGES HAVE COME. THEREFORE LET HIM WHO THINKS HE STANDS TAKE HEED LEST HE FALL."  
1 Cor. 10: 5,11

**POSITIVE TESTIMONIES**

ABEL  
ENOCH  
NOAH  
ABRAHAM  
ISAAC  
JACOB  
MOSES  
JOSHUA  
JOB  
DANIEL  
DAVID  
JONATHAN  
THE PROPHETS  
THE APOSTLES

**NEGATIVE TESTIMONIES**

LUCIFER  
CAIN  
LOT- LOT'S WIFE  
SAMSON-DELILAH  
KING AHAB-JEZEBEL  
KING SOLOMON  
KING SAUL  
CHILDREN OF ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS  
HEROD THE KING  
JUDAS  
ANANIAS-SAPPHIRA

"...IN KEEPING THEM THERE IS GREAT REWARD"  
Psm 19:11

"BY THEM YOUR SERVANT IS WARNED"  
Psm 19:11

The "Testimonies of the Lord" are the positive and negative accounts of all the various people recorded in the Bible who either (1) lived their lives FOR God or (2) Lived their lives AGAINST God. Here is a sample listing of men and women in the Bible than had either "positive" testimonies in harmony with God and His Word, or they had "negative" testimonies of lives lived in defiance of God and His Word. What happened to them, the "moral to their stories" become "our examples" either to emulate or to avoid.

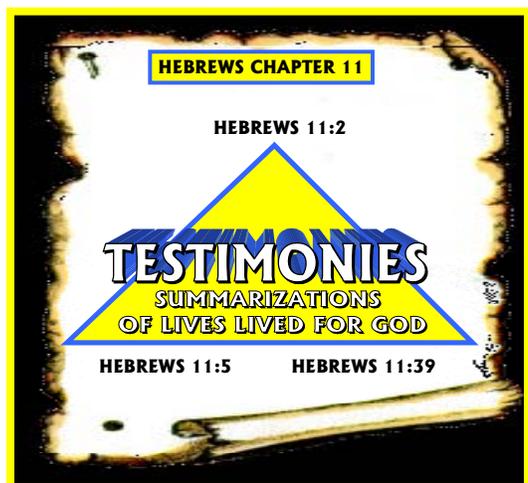
"...FOR BY IT (FAITH) THE ELDERS OBTAINED A GOOD TESTIMONY." Heb. 11:2

"...BEFORE HIS TRANSLATION HE (ENOCH) HAD THIS TESTIMONY, THAT HE PLEASSED GOD" Heb. 11:5

"...AND ALL THESE HAVING OBTAINED A GOOD TESTIMONY THROUGH FAITH, DID NOT RECEIVE THE PROMISE" Heb. 11:39

The above passages convey that it is the recorded "TESTIMONY" of the various saints that Hebrews 11, the chapter of the heroes of faith, is emphasizing. These are summarizations of lives lived for God. Even Revelation begins by stating that it is the record of "the TESTIMONY of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:2).

The Greek word translated as "TESTIMONY" is also translated as "WITNESS." God has appointed the church to "...be witnesses to Me..." (Acts 1:8). We all have a "testimony" (a witness) before God and before the world. We are to learn from what is recorded as "the testimonies of the Lord." We are to emulate the positive "testimonies/witness" and avoid following the example of the negative.



# THE JUDGMENTS OF THE LORD

**"THE JUDGMENTS OF THE LORD ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS ALTOGETHER."**

Psalm 19:9

One of the distinguishing differences the Bible makes between "children of light" (born-again believers) and "children of darkness" (unbelievers) is their distinctly different perspectives of judgment

All mankind, believer and unbeliever alike, have an appointment with death which is followed by judgment:

**"...IT IS APPOINTED FOR MEN TO DIE ONCE, BUT AFTER THIS THE JUDGMENT"** Heb. 9:27

It is up to the believer to keep God's judgments before him as a motivating force. Psalm 119 says:

THE JUDGMENTS OF THE LORD	
THE RIGHTEOUS REACTION	THE WICKED REACTION
<p><b>"I HAVE KEPT THE WAYS OF THE LORD AND HAVE NOT WICKEDLY DEPARTED FROM MY GOD. FOR ALL HIS JUDGMENTS WERE BEFORE ME."</b></p> <p>Psalm 18:21-22</p>	<p><b>"THE WICKED... DOES NOT SEEK GOD; GOD IS IN NONE OF HIS THOUGHTS. YOUR JUDGMENTS ARE FAR ABOVE, OUT OF HIS SIGHT."</b></p> <p>Psalm 10:4-5</p>

What helps believers to "choose the way of truth?" It is by keeping God's judgments before their eyes as did the apostle Paul:

"WE WALK BY FAITH AND NOT BY SIGHT... THEREFORE WE MAKE IT OUR AIM WHETHER PRESENT OR ABSENT, TO BE WELL-PLEASING TO HIM."

**"FOR WE MUST ALL APPEAR BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST,**

THAT EACH ONE MAY RECEIVE THE THINGS DONE IN THE BODY, ACCORDING TO WHAT HE HAS DONE, WHETHER GOOD OR BAD."

2 Cor. 5:7-10

"AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL CONFESS TO GOD."

**"FOR WE SHALL ALL STAND BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST,**

SO THEN EACH ONE OF US SHALL GIVE ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF TO GOD."

Romans 14:10-12

**"I HAVE CHOSEN THE WAY OF TRUTH"**

1. REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS...
2. FAITH TOWARD GOD...
3. DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS...
4. THE LAYING ON OF HANDS...
5. RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD...
6. AND OF **ETERNAL JUDGMENT...**

**YOUR JUDGMENTS "I HAVE LAID BEFORE ME."**

Heb. 6:1-2

Psalm. 119:30

In these passages from Hebrews Chapter Six we find the six basic foundational truths of Christianity laid out before the believer. These six foundational truths progress from (1) repentance (6) eternal judgment. Therefore, as believers, we must not only "choose the way of truth" but also "keep God's judgments laid before us" knowing that "We shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ" to give account of ourselves as subjects of the Kingdom of God. In other words, we shall be judged for what kind of Christianity we have lived before Christ as His witnesses. We must ever be mindful of our "testimony" because we have a date in court! Again, Paul states it well, "Therefore we make it our aim...to be well pleasing to Him, for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ..." (2 Cor. 5:9-10).

**"I HAVE CHOSEN THE WAY OF TRUTH"**

**VISION**

**"THE LORD IS OUR JUDGE, THE LORD IS OUR LAWGIVER, THE LORD IS OUR KING, HE WILL SAVE US."**

Isa. 33:22

**YOUR JUDGMENTS "I HAVE LAID BEFORE ME."**

Psalm. 119:30

This prophetic depiction from Isaiah of the full ministry of Jesus Christ is greatly lacking in Christendom. Multitudes of Christians only know Jesus as "He will save us." This is the lowest revelation of Christ according to Isaiah. When Jesus (1) saves us, He (2) becomes "our King." This king is (3) "our Lawgiver" as king over His kingdom. Lastly, in eternity, He will be (4) "our judge." The highest revelation a believer can hold of Jesus Christ is that of our Lord being "The Righteous Judge."

**"FINALLY, 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

# THE PRECEPTS OF THE LORD

"I UNDERSTAND MORE THAN THE ANCIENTS BECAUSE I KEEP YOUR PRECEPTS."  
Psalm 119:100

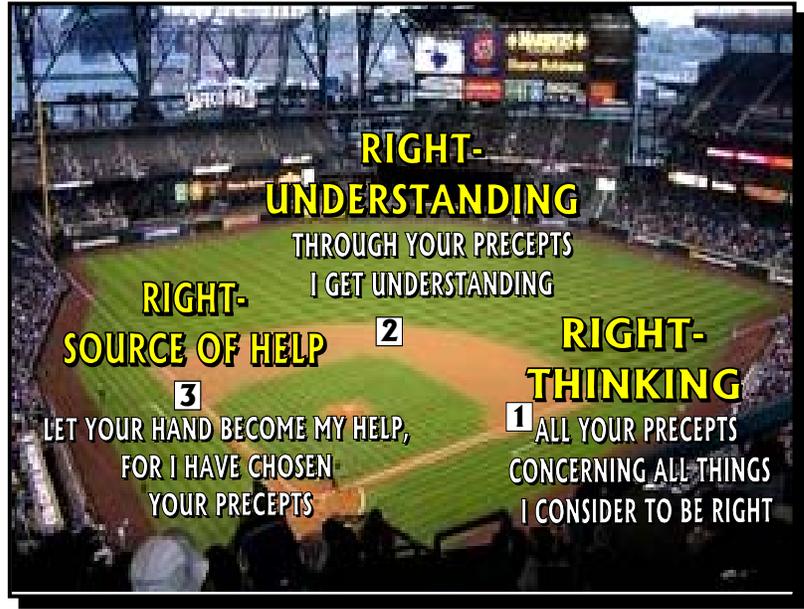
"ALL YOUR PRECEPTS CONCERNING ALL THINGS I CONSIDER TO BE RIGHT..."  
Psm. 119:128

"THROUGH YOUR PRECEPTS I GET UNDERSTANDING; THEREFORE I HATE EVERY FALSE WAY."  
Psm. 119:104

"LET YOUR HAND BECOME MY HELP, FOR I HAVE CHOSEN YOUR PRECEPTS."  
Psm. 119:173

The believer, in his/her walk with God, cannot even get to first base apart from confessing that God's precepts are right in all things. We are warned about the danger of walking in our own understanding:

"...LEAN NOT TO YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING; IN ALL YOUR WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM, AND HE SHALL DIRECT YOUR PATHS. DO NOT BE WISE IN YOUR OWN EYES (OPINION)."  
Prov. 3:5-7



**PRECEPTS --"A WAY OF THINKING, CODE OF ETHICS A CONCEPT, (THEORY, IDEA, PLAN OF ACTION,) A PRINCIPLE (A BELIEF THAT GOVERNS CONDUCT)**

There are two sources of precepts. One comes from the world and the other originates in the Word. This chart depicts an example of the conflicting contrast of these two sources of precepts. They will usually be 180 degrees opposite of each other due to the fact that one originates from "the god of the world" (Satan) while the other is an expression of the mind of the Lord. God's precepts are expressions of His advice and counsel to His people.

The Jewish toast of "L'CHAIM" (to life!) is much deeper in meaning than the world's shallow toast of "Cheers!" or "Bottoms up!"

The Jewish perspective of "life" is one of seeking to become all that God created "His own special people" to be. God's precepts are His Divine instruction to achieve quality spiritual life.

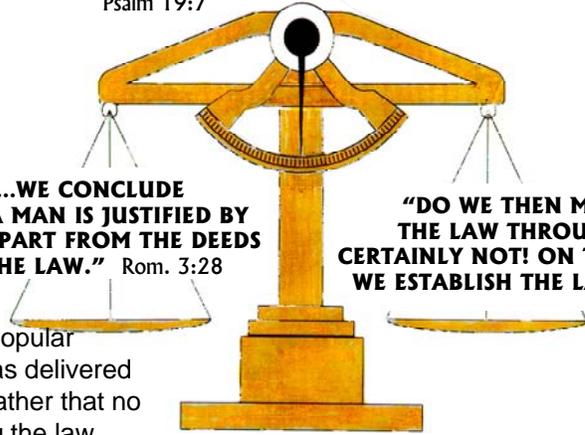
The greatest single expression of God's precepts in the Word of God is the Book of Proverbs. I call it "The book of one-liners." This is a book crammed full of terse, pungent expressions of principles for life. Perhaps it is not coincidental that there are 31 Proverbs which provide a daily dose for a month's worth of thoughtful meditation.

# THE LAW OF THE LORD

**"THE LAW OF THE LORD IS PERFECT, CONVERTING THE SOUL."**  
Psalm 19:7



**"...WE CONCLUDE THAT A MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH APART FROM THE DEEDS OF THE LAW."** Rom. 3:28



**"DO WE THEN MAKE VOID THE LAW THROUGH FAITH? CERTAINLY NOT! ON THE CONTRARY, WE ESTABLISH THE LAW."** Rom. 3:31

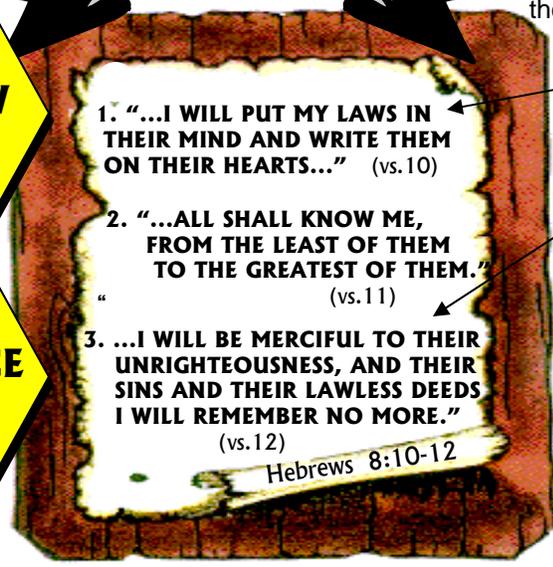
Paul would not be an advocate of the popular modern-day theory that God's grace has delivered the believer from the law. His point is rather that no one can be saved by means of keeping the law.

**"THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE..."**

The New Covenant that Jesus mediates (Heb.8:6) contains not only the grace of God, but also the law of God.

**THE LAW OF GOD**

**THE GRACE OF GOD**

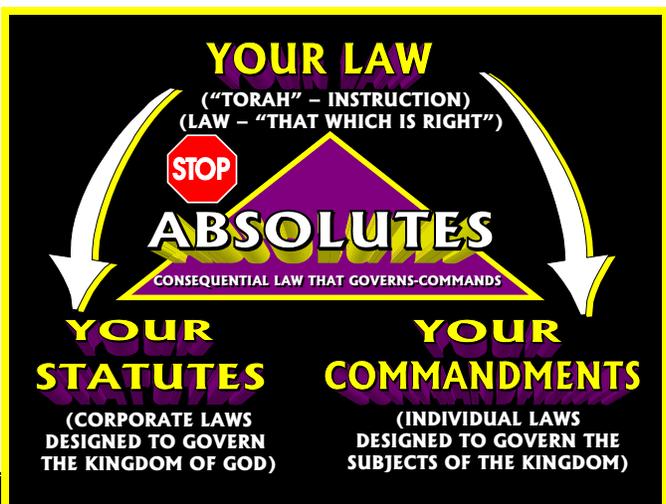


1. **"...I WILL PUT MY LAWS IN THEIR MIND AND WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS..."** (vs.10)
  2. **"...ALL SHALL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST OF THEM TO THE GREATEST OF THEM."** (vs.11)
  3. **...I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE."** (vs.12)
- Hebrews 8:10-12

How can one espouse the cherished saying, "I have been delivered from the law" When law simply means, "That which is right." Can the believer be delivered from obedience to that which is right? Paul's answer was "Certainly not!" Old Testament Mosaic Law, Yes! New Testament law, Never!

On the next two pages we shall briefly consider two types of "law" that still exist for New Testament believers. They are God's laws that are "statutes" and His laws that are "commandments." Both have to do with King Jesus, "our lawgiver" who is king of the present manifestation of the Kingdom of God, the one that abides in the heart of every born-again believer.

As stated earlier, these are not God's suggestions. These are absolutes. Believers who ignore God's law as a lifestyle risk being removed from the Kingdom of God at the end of the age (Mat. 13:41-43, Mat. 7:21-23).



# THE STATUTES OF THE LORD

**"THE STATUTES OF THE LORD ARE RIGHT, REJOICING THE HEART."**

Psalm 19:7

**"SURELY I HAVE TAUGHT YOU STATUTES...JUST AS THE LORD MY GOD COMMANDED ME, THAT YOU SHOULD ACT ACCORDING TO THEM IN THE LAND WHICH YOU GO TO POSSESS. THEREFORE BE CAREFUL TO OBSERVE THEM; FOR THIS IS YOUR WISDOM AND YOUR UNDERSTANDING IN THE SIGHT OF THE PEOPLES WHO WILL HEAR ALL THESE STATUTES, AND SAY, 'SURELY THIS GREAT NATION IS A WISE AND UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE.' FOR WHAT GREAT NATION IS THERE THAT HAS GOD SO NEAR TO IT, AS THE LORD GOD IS TO US, FOR WHATEVER REASON WE MAY CALL UPON HIM. AND WHAT GREAT NATION IS THERE THAT HAS SUCH STATUTES... AS ARE IN ALL THIS LAW WHICH I SET BEFORE YOU THIS DAY?"**

Deut. 4:5-8

**"STATUTES" OR "BYLAWS" OF THIS EARTHLY "KINGDOM" (NATION)**

The above verses reveal that God's statutes were given to the nation of Israel in order to have a great influence upon the nations that surrounded it. Statutes contain constitutional law or bylaws such as we find governing America, another earthly physical kingdom. Contained within the statutes are (1) The reason for being (a nation) and (2) Laws necessary to achieve those objectives.

**"STATUTES" OR "BYLAWS" OF THIS EARTHLY "KINGDOM" (NATION)**

America's reason for being (a nation) is stated as "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." The bylaws (statutes) are created to achieve those objectives.

**WHAT ARE THE "STATUTES" OR "BYLAWS" OF THIS HEAVENLY SPIRITUAL "KINGDOM" (NATION)**

The word "kingdom" in Scripture literally means "government." What I am going to state is important – greatly important! The statutes that govern the present manifestation of the Kingdom of God are NOT the statutes given to ancient Israel! Neither are the statutes (bylaws) of America those of the Kingdom of God! Only Israel was commissioned by God to be His physical, geographical kingdom!

**"KINGDOM STATUTES"**

...A HOLY NATION, HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE, THAT YOU MAY PROCLAIM THE PRAISES OF HIM WHO CALLED YOU OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELOUS LIGHT.

...AS SOJOURNERS (STRANGERS) AND PILGRIMS...HAVING YOUR CONDUCT HONORABLE AMONG THE GENTILES...THAT THEY MAY, BY YOUR GOOD WORKS WHICH THEY OBSERVE, GLORIFY GOD..."

1 Pet. 2:9-12

American Christianity greatly errs by seeking to adapt either Israel's statutes or America's statutes as those of the Kingdom of God! The politically-based, Religious Right movement in this country is founded upon the Puritan doctrinal heresy that they were chosen to be God's "New Israel" on the face of the earth (see pertinent newsletters on my website for elaboration). The popular cause of defending the Christian heritage of America as being "One Nation Under God" stems from adopting the erroneous Puritan theology that America is presently God's nation on the earth, having replaced Israel's role. It is ideology to attempt to capture America and legislate God's statutes that were given to Israel upon America. The Kingdom of God is NOT a physical nation at this time!

Below are some of the Kingdom statutes that Jesus and Paul placed upon the church. Study them carefully for the Kingdom of God is not, and cannot be at this time, a physical, geographical nation on earth. Rather, the Kingdom of God functions in all places throughout the world where born-again believers live. Jesus said 2,000 years ago, "My kingdom is not of this world", and He has not changed His mind!

**"KINGDOM STATUTES"**

"WE MUST THROUGH MANY TRIBULATIONS ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD."  
Acts 14:21-22

"...THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS ... RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE AND JOY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT. HE WHO SERVES CHRIST IN THESE THINGS IS ACCEPTABLE TO GOD..."  
Rom. 14:17-18

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

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU, IN YOUR HEART..."  
Luke 17:20-21 Amplified

...UNLESS ONE IS BORN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT, HE CANNOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD... YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN."  
John 3:3-7

**"KINGDOM STATUTES"**

"...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...' I WILL DECLARE TO THEM, 'I NEVER KNEW YOU; DEPART FROM ME YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS!'"  
Mat. 7:21-23

"...THE SON OF MAN WILL... GATHER OUT OF HIS KINGDOM ALL THINGS THAT OFFEND, AND THOSE WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS, AND WILL CAST THEM INTO THE FURNACE OF FIRE, THERE WILL BE WAILING AND GNASING OF TEETH. THEN THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN IN THE KINGDOM OF THEIR FATHER. HE WHO HAS EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR!"  
Mat. 13:41-43

"...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 COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD

**"THE COMMANDMENT OF THE LORD IS PURE, ENLIGHTENING THE EYES."**  
Psalm 19:8

Earlier I gave to you this prophetic visionary verse from Isaiah in which a full revelation of Jesus Christ is given. Working from the bottom up, we find that after the Lord "saves us," He becomes "our King" and consequentially, "Our Lawgiver." Jesus, as King over the Kingdom of God that abides in the heart of the believer, has laws (commandments) designed to govern the conduct of His subjects.

God's commandments, whether they be the ten that governed the Old Covenant (Deut. 4:13), or the 1,500 found in the New Testament, were never meant by God to be considered by His people as "optional" or "suggestions." Commandments are absolutes. Let us consider how important obedience to His commandments are in this life:

**"WHOEVER THEREFORE, BREAKS ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE COMMANDMENTS, AND TEACHES MEN SO, SHALL BE CALLED LEAST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN; BUT WHOEVER DOES AND TEACHES THEM, HE SHALL BE CALLED GREAT IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."** Mat. 5:19

**"AND WHATEVER WE ASK WE RECEIVE FROM HIM, BECAUSE WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS AND DO THOSE THINGS THAT ARE PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT."**  
1 Jn. 3:22



**"HE WHO HAS MY COMMANDMENTS, AND KEEPS THEM, IT IS HE WHO LOVES ME... HE WHO DOES NOT LOVE ME DOES NOT KEEP MY WORDS..."**  
Jn. 14:21,23

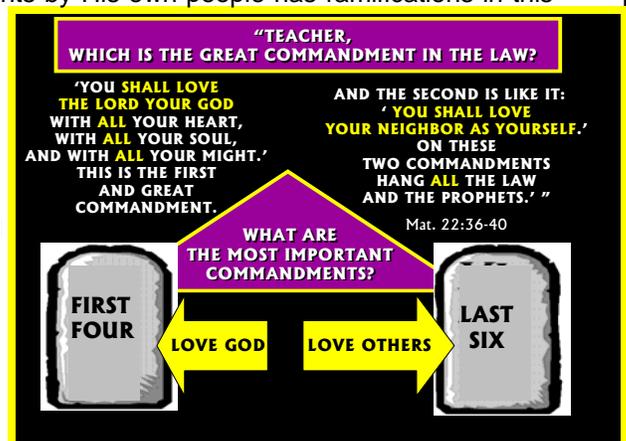
**"FOR THIS IS THE LOVE OF GOD, THAT WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS."**  
1 Jn. 5:3

Obviously, the keeping or breaking of God's commandments by His own people has ramifications in this life as well as in the one to come.

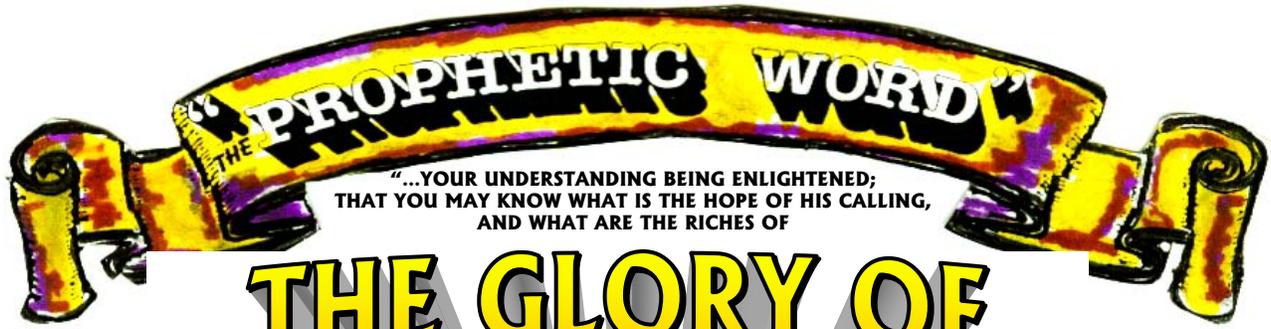
Which of God's commandments are most important? Jesus was asked that very question, and this was His answer:

Using the original Ten Commandments, the first four describe what is the VERTICAL relationship the believer has with His God. If we love Him, we obey His commandments. The second group containing the last six commandments depict the believer's HORIZONTAL relationship with others. We cannot love God only. Jesus issued this new commandment:

Luke 9:23



**"A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE TO YOU, THAT YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER, AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, THAT YOU ALSO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. BY THIS ALL WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES, IF YOU HAVE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER."** Jn. 13:34-35



"...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



"...COME,  
I WILL SHOW YOU  
THE BRIDE, THE LAMB'S WIFE.'  
AND HE CARRIED ME AWAY  
IN THE SPIRIT...  
AND SHOWED ME  
THE GREAT CITY,  
THE HOLY JERUSALEM,  
DESCENDING OUT OF  
HEAVEN FROM GOD,  
HAVING THE  
GLORY OF GOD..."

Rev. 21:9-11

"... 'LET US BE GLAD AND REJOICE  
AND GIVE HIM GLORY, FOR THE  
MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB HAS  
COME, AND HIS WIFE HAS MADE  
HERSELF READY.' 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. 19:7-8

the **BRIDE**  
of CHRIST

Some day, perhaps soon, all of heaven will be singing, "Here comes the Bride!" However, all who are in heaven will not inherit the Bride of Christ! Look carefully at the context of Revelation 19:7-8 for it is "the great multitude" of the redeemed in heaven (Rev. 19:6) that are proclaiming "Let us be glad and rejoice...for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

This newsletter is dedicated to making a biblical distinction between those who are presently overcoming saints and those who are being overcome, a distinction between the wise and the foolish virgins.

The first point I would like to establish is that the church has been betrothed to be married to Jesus Christ. It is stated clearly in verse 2:

**"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.**

(2 Cor. 11:2)

However, betrothal is not the only point Paul establishes. He continues his thoughts with a contrasting concern expressed by the word "But" in verse 3:

**BUT I FEAR, LEST SOMEHOW, AS THE SERPENT DECEIVED EVE BY HIS CRAFTINESS, SO YOUR MINDS MAY BE CORRUPTED FROM THE SIMPLICITY (PURITY) THAT IS IN CHRIST.**

(2 Cor. 11:3)

Paul then prophetically reveals that the potential exists for satanic deception in the church. It will take place by means of preaching.

This satanically inspired preaching will present to God's people what Paul calls "another Jesus, a different spirit, and a different gospel" as stated in verse 4:

**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 WHICH YOU HAVE NOT ACCEPTED, (I FEAR) YOU MAY WELL PUT UP WITH IT."**

(2 Cor. 11:4)

The above passages not only proclaim the wonderful revelation that the church has been betrothed to be presented to Jesus Christ as His Bride, but also contains a fearful concern for some that this event may not become a reality. Paul expresses the potential corruption of that espoused Bride. If it were theologically impossible for some betrothed believers to fall short of the Bride of Christ (as many teach), then Paul would have been in error for saying what he did in these verses. Paul is not in error, but rather is doing what he always does – preach the whole counsel of God:



**"THEREFORE I TESTIFY TO YOU THIS DAY THAT I AM INNOCENT OF THE BLOOD OF ALL MEN. FOR I HAVE NOT SHUNNED TO DECLARE TO YOU THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD...FOR I KNOW THIS, THAT AFTER MY DEPARTURE SAVAGE WOLVES WILL COME IN AMONG YOU, NOT SPARING THE FLOCK. ALSO FROM AMONG YOURSELVES MEN WILL RISE UP, SPEAKING PERVERSE THINGS, TO DRAW AWAY THE DISCIPLES AFTER THEMSELVES. THEREFORE WATCH, AND REMEMBER THAT FOR THREE YEARS I DID NOT CEASE TO WARN EVERYONE NIGHT AND DAY WITH TEARS."** Acts 20:26-31

**"...TO PRESENT YOU HOLY, AND BLAMELESS, AND IRREPROACHABLE IN HIS SIGHT –IF INDEED YOU CONTINUE IN THE FAITH, GROUNDED AND STEADFAST, AND ARE NOT MOVED AWAY FROM THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL WHICH YOU HAVE HEARD, WHICH WAS PREACHED TO EVERY CREATURE UNDER HEAVEN, OF WHICH I, PAUL, BECAME A MINISTER...**

**...HIM WE PREACH, WARNING EVERY MAN AND TEACHING EVERY MAN IN ALL WISDOM, THAT WE MAY PRESENT EVERY MAN PERFECT IN CHRIST JESUS. TO THIS END I ALSO LABOR..."**

Col. 1:22-29 excerpts

It is insufficient to present only the positive message of the church being betrothed to Christ. This is half of the message that Paul preached. The negative side of "your minds being corrupted" by means of "another Jesus, a different spirit, or a different gospel," and of "warning every man...that we may present every man perfect in Christ" is greatly lacking in the teaching of the Bride of Christ today. There is rather an elitism attached to being a member of the church by means of the new birth. The Old Testament saints are not considered equal with the New Testament saints and are relegated to only being "friends of the Bridegroom" rather than part of the Bride itself. Such elitism has propagated high-minded doctrines such as "once saved, always saved," and the notion that the born-again Christian "got it all when I got saved." Romans Chapter 11 will deal a death blow to such high-mindedness.

Look once more at the three different passages on this page alone (2 Cor. 11:2-4, Acts 20:26-31, Col 1:22-29) and decide for yourself if Paul preached such nonsense. No, dear saint, he did not, and would not endorse such concepts as are being presented today. Rather what we have is the prophetic fulfillment of "...men among you...speaking perverse things to draw away disciples unto themselves." What we have is "another Jesus whom we have not preached...a different spirit which you have not received...a different gospel which you have not accepted." Paul's expressed fear has become a reality in our day.

**"...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 WHICH YOU HAVE NOT ACCEPTED, (I FEAR) YOU MAY WELL PUT UP WITH IT."  
2 Cor. 11:2-4**

## 1. THE PREACHING OF ANOTHER JESUS WHOM WE HAVE NOT PREACHED:

Are you putting up with the preaching of a Jesus other than the one Paul preached? This is the question that we must all consider. We are told by the apostle John, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God..." (1 Jn. 4:1). Paul likewise told believers that they should "...receive the Word with all readiness, and search the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things are so" (Acts 17:11). Simply put, we must compare the image of Jesus that is being presented to us today with the image of Him found in the Scriptures, not just considering carefully selected passages presented to us by men, but rather "...as the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:13).

What I am saying to you is that we must not endorse only half of the image of Jesus that is found in the Scriptures. If we allow such a limited picture to be presented to us as the whole, then we may end up embracing "another Jesus" that leads to the corruption of God's people by Satan from a life of "...wholehearted and pure devotion to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3 Amplified). Remember, these are satanic corruptive deceptions that come by means of preaching!

Let us consider a few examples of how "another Jesus" can be presented to God's people. The word "Savior" appears 41 times in all of Scripture, but the Name "Lord" appears 5,000 times. Which do we hear preached as the image of Jesus, Savior or Lord? Are we to confess Jesus as Savior or as Lord? (Rom. 10:9). It is a fact that Jesus saves. However, it is also factual that it is THE LORD Jesus who saves us.

I keep this balanced perspective of Jesus pasted on the wall outside our bookstore as a constant reminder of who The Lord is. This passage from Isaiah 33 states clearly that it is The Lord who saves us, but note well that The Lord who saves us is also "OUR JUDGE, OUR LAWGIVER and OUR KING." Do you hear much modern-day preaching about our Savior also being our Judge, our Lawgiver and our King? Minimize the higher revelations of who The Lord is and we end up in danger of not obeying our Judge, Lawgiver and King! Far too many of God's people only know Jesus as Savior. It is all they are being taught. His Lordship has been greatly diminished in spite of the fact that we are to confess Him as Lord in order to be saved (Rom. 10:9).



The word "Lord" means "Master, controller, ruler." You can call Jesus Lord and yet not allow Him to be the Master, controller, and ruler of your life. In fact Jesus said, "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" (Mat. 7:21). In another place, Jesus challenges His followers with the words, "But why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). It is quite possible to belong to Jesus and yet be as ignorant as pagan Pharaoh who said to Moses, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?...I do not know the Lord..." (Ex. 5:2). We do not lack for a proper emphasis of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures. Rather, we are lacking for a preaching of who Jesus Christ is. He is Lord! (Judge, Lawgiver, King, Savior).

Cling to the favored partial images of God and ignore the rest of what is written, and we can end up with "another Jesus." Paul warned believers to hold a balanced perspective of God:

**"THEREFORE CONSIDER THE GOODNESS AND THE 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."** Rom. 11:22

The Jews were cut off from salvation due to their unbelief (Rom.11:20). Paul says to the church, "...He may not spare you either...you also will be cut off" (Rom. 11:21-22). That is the complete image Paul preached of Jesus, and yet we have these contrary doctrines permeating the church today such as "Once saved, always saved" and "Unconditional eternal security." That is the presentation of "another Jesus" than the one Paul preached. Do not think it is only the Mormons who present the erroneous concept of "another Jesus." It is also being done among Protestant born-again churches as well!

**"...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 WHICH YOU HAVE NOT ACCEPTED, (I FEAR) YOU MAY WELL PUT UP WITH IT."  
2 Cor. 11:2-4**

## **2. PREACHING A DIFFERENT SPIRIT WHICH YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED:**

The second area in which Paul warns believers of potential satanic deception is the presentation of "...a different spirit which you have not received" (2 Cor. 11:4). Again I remind you Paul is speaking of something that is a subtle substitute for what he preached! This time it is "a different spirit" than the Holy Spirit that Paul preached. Just like the preaching of "another Jesus" in which only half the picture is presented such as the goodness of God apart from the severity of God, or Jesus as our savior being given a preeminence over Jesus as our Lord, the same can (and is) being done with what the Scriptures present as the ministry and Person of the Holy Spirit. Just as we saw that a proper emphasis is needful on THE LORD Jesus Christ (His Lordship over our lives), we need to take note that it is the HOLY Spirit who has been sent forth. His title contains His ministry! To be Spirit-filled or Spirit-led is also to respond to the high call to live a life of HOLINESS by means of the one who is called the HOLY Spirit:

**"BUT AS HE WHO CALLED YOU IS HOLY, YOU ALSO BE HOLY IN ALL YOUR CONDUCT,  
BECAUSE IT IS WRITTEN, 'BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.'" 1 Pet. 1:15-16**

**"FOR GOD DID NOT CALL US TO UNCLEANNESS, BUT IN HOLINESS.  
THEREFORE HE WHO REJECTS THIS DOES NOT REJECT MAN, BUT GOD,  
WHO HAS ALSO GIVEN US HIS HOLY SPIRIT." 1 Thess. 4:7-8**

**"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**

**"OR DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO IS IN YOU,  
WHOM YOU HAVE FROM GOD, AND YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN?" 1 Cor. 6:19**

Is the above the emphasis being placed on the ministry of the Holy Spirit today? No it is not. It is more on the fact that the Holy Spirit is "the Comforter" (Jn. 14:16). There is more emphasis placed on the believer having eternal security because of having been "sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise" and is therefore "the guarantee of our inheritance" (Eph. 1:13-14). A great truth, but only half the truth. Consider the whole counsel of God Paul presents in this letter to the Ephesians:

**"...HAVING BELIEVED,  
YOU WERE SEALED WITH  
THE HOLY SPIRIT OF PROMISE,  
WHO IS THE GUARANTEE  
OF OUR INHERITANCE UNTIL  
THE REDEMPTION OF THE  
PURCHASED POSSESSION..."**

(Eph. 1:13-14)



**"AND DO NOT GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT OF  
GOD, BY WHOM YOU WERE SEALED FOR  
THE DAY OF REDEMPTION. LET ALL  
BITTERNESS, WRATH, ANGER, CLAMOR,  
AND EVIL SPEAKING BE PUT AWAY FROM  
YOU, WITH ALL MALICE. AND BE KIND TO  
ONE ANOTHER, TENDERHEARTED,  
FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER, JUST AS GOD  
IN CHRIST ALSO FORGAVE YOU."**

(Eph. 4:30-32)

Can we claim the benefits of the first statement and ignore the ramifications of disobeying the second? Are we still in a state of "guarantee" if we disobey the Holy Spirit's instructions here? If you cling to the first and ignore the second then you are embracing "a different spirit" than the one Paul preached. Listen to Paul's stern warning to New Testament believers who choose to sin willfully:

**"HOW MUCH WORSE (STERNER AND HEAVIER) PUNISHMENT DO YOU SUPPOSE HE WILL BE JUDGED TO  
DESERVE WHO HAS SPURNED AND THUS TRAMPLED UNDERFOOT THE SON OF GOD, AND WHO HAS  
CONSIDERED THE COVENANT BLOOD BY WHICH HE WAS CONSECRATED COMMON AND UNHALLOWED,  
THUS PROFANING IT AND INSULTING AND OUTRAGING THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO IMPARTS GRACE  
(THE UNMERITED FAVOR AND BLESSING OF GOD)" Heb. 10:29 Amplified Bible**

When was the last time you heard a message about God's people "insulting and outraging the Holy Spirit who imparts grace?" We have a lot of "grace" teaching today, but not this negative aspect. Why? Because it is a confronting picture of the Holy Spirit rather than a comforting one. It is "a different spirit."

Seven times Jesus says to His own blood-washed churches, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev. 3:22). Paul in Hebrews twice warns the brethren, "Therefore the Holy Spirit says: 'Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts...'" (Heb. 3:7,15).

**"...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 WHICH YOU HAVE NOT ACCEPTED, (I FEAR) YOU MAY WELL PUT UP WITH IT."  
2 Cor. 11:2-4**



**"I MARVEL THAT YOU ARE TURNING AWAY SO SOON FROM HIM WHO CALLED YOU  
IN THE GRACE OF CHRIST, TO A DIFFERENT GOSPEL, WHICH IS NOT ANOTHER;  
BUT THERE ARE SOME WHO TROUBLE YOU AND WANT TO PERVERT THE GOSPEL  
OF CHRIST...AND AS WE HAVE SAID BEFORE, SO NOW I SAY AGAIN,  
IF ANYONE PREACHES ANY OTHER GOSPEL TO YOU THAN WHAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED,  
LET HIM BE ACCURSED."**

Gal. 1:6-9 excerpts

What Paul expressed as a concern for "another gospel" being preached to the Corinthian church became a reality among the Galatians. Paul is quick to pronounce a binding curse upon those who preached any other gospel than what he had previously presented.

So much for the modern-day theory that there are many ways to present the gospel to reach the lost. Lest we think Paul is prophetically speaking of the likes of the Mormon gospel which was to come, he clarifies that he is speaking of people who would pervert (distort) the true gospel of Christ. Jesus also give a similar prophetic warning of what would happen to the message of the gospel that He presented:

**"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. BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS WHO COME TO  
YOU IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING, BUT INWARDLY THEY ARE RAVENOUS WOLVES."**

Mat. 7:13-15

The perverted (distorted) gospel would be a subtle substitute that would turn what Jesus taught as being a narrow and difficult way of salvation into a path that is broad and easy so that many would readily accept it.



I am going to recommend my latest book to you as an in-depth study of what constitutes "another gospel" that is wide-spread in Christianity today.

Two vital truths have been removed from our modern-day gospel. The prerequisite to salvation that makes it narrow and difficult is the message of repentance that has been removed. Today's message is "believe and receive." The call to repent is missing which paves the way for a broad and easy decision that is costless and crossless. Secondly, the real "good news" (gospel) message of the Kingdom of God has been removed from the gospel of Paul and Jesus. The good news of the gospel has become the forgiveness of sins by means of the new birth.

Jesus did preach the need to be born again.

However, it was a means to an end, not the end itself:

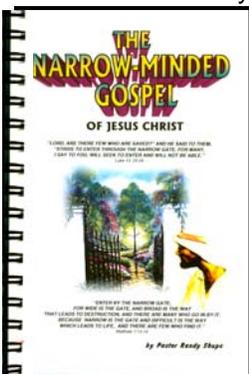
**"MOST ASSUREDLY, I SAY TO YOU, UNLESS ONE IS BORN AGAIN, HE CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF  
GOD...UNLESS ONE IS BORN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT, HE CANNOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF  
GOD...DO NOT MARVEL THAT I SAY UNTO YOU, YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN."**

John 3:3-7 excerpts

A narrow and difficult way becomes a broad and easy way by taking away the emphasis of repentance and the Kingdom of God. The new birth and the forgiveness of sins is PART of the gospel message. Paul tells us what God has in mind for us:

**"HE HAS DELIVERED US FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS AND TRANSLATED US INTO THE KINGDOM  
OF THE SON OF HIS LOVE, IN WHOM WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD,  
THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS."** Col. 1:13-14

The true gospel preaches an exchange of kingdoms. That means we have King Jesus as our Lord ruling and reigning over His subjects in His Kingdom that presently abides in the heart (Luke 17:21). Jesus has not changed His mind that "My Kingdom is not of this world" (Jn. 18:37). Christianity in America erroneously seeks after an earthly kingdom believing it was divinely chosen to become "One Nation Under God." That is Israel's sovereign destiny yet to be fulfilled. God's people pursue earthly kingdoms because the "good news" (gospel) no longer preaches the present manifestation of the Kingdom of God and its priorities!



We have looked at the three ways Paul states that the betrothed Bride of Christ (the church) can have her mind corrupted from “whole-hearted and pure devotion to Christ.” She can be deceived by satanic preaching of “another Jesus, a different spirit, and a different gospel.” The parable of the Sower reveals a fourth area of potential deception:

**“...THE CARES AND ANXIETIES OF THE WORLD AND DISTRACTIONS OF THE AGE, AND THE PLEASURE AND DELIGHT AND FALSE GLAMOUR AND DECEITFULNESS OF RICHES, AND THE CRAVING AND PASSIONATE DESIRE FOR OTHER THINGS CREEP IN AND CHOKE AND SUFFOCATE THE WORD, AND IT BECOMES FRUITLESS.”** Mark 4:19 Amplified Bible

Worldly deception can be just as deadly as spiritual deception. In fact, when Jesus told the parable of the Marriage Supper, it was such worldly deception that sidetracked those that God had invited to the marriage of His Son:

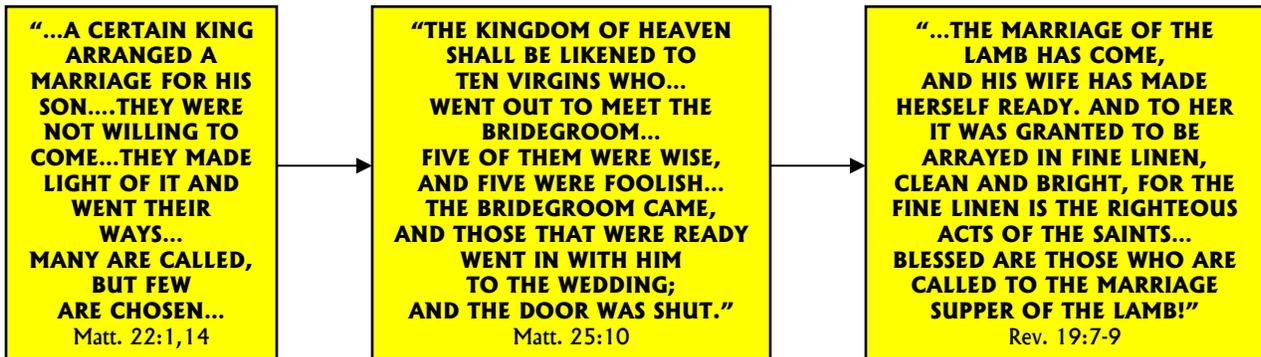
**“THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A CERTAIN KING WHO ARRANGED A MARRIAGE FOR HIS SON AND SENT OUT HIS SERVANTS TO CALL THOSE WHO WERE INVITED TO THE WEDDING; AND THEY WERE NOT WILLING TO COME...THEY MADE LIGHT OF IT AND WENT THEIR OWN WAYS, ONE TO HIS OWN FARM, ANOTHER TO HIS BUSINESS...MANY ARE CALLED, BUT FEW ARE CHOSEN”** Matt. 22:1-14 excerpts

The sister parable found in Luke gives us even more specific reasons why those who were invited chose not to come:

**“BUT THEY ALL WITH ONE ACCORD BEGAN TO MAKE EXCUSES. THE FIRST SAID TO HIM, ‘I HAVE BOUGHT A PIECE OF GROUND, AND I MUST GO AND SEE IT. I ASK YOU TO HAVE ME EXCUSED.’ AND ANOTHER SAID, ‘I HAVE BOUGHT FIVE YOKE OF OXEN, AND I AM GOING TO TEST THEM. I ASK YOU TO HAVE ME EXCUSED.’ STILL ANOTHER SAID, ‘I HAVE MARRIED A WIFE, AND THEREFORE I CANNOT COME...’ ”**  
Luke 14:18-20

Perhaps it would help to vividly see the time line of events that pertain to the Bride of Christ:

**“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 (PURITY) 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 WHICH YOU HAVE NOT ACCEPTED, (I FEAR) YOU MAY WELL PUT UP WITH IT.”** 2 Cor. 11: 1-4



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

**THIS IS A GREAT MYSTERY,  
BUT I SPEAK CONCERNING  
CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.”**

Eph. 5:25-32 excerpts

I am going to recommend the book on the next page as a detailed plan for being found among the wise and chaste virgins that Jesus, the Bridegroom, will rapture off the face of the earth in the near future.

This book was first published in 1986. It was my first, and is still the largest book that the Lord has inspired me to write. It is still among my favorites. After many years of being out of print, I have decided to reprint it in its original format, nothing changed.

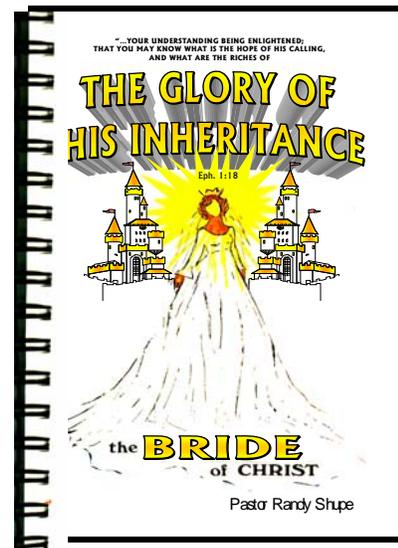
At the time that I wrote this book, I was oblivious to the wonderful world of the PC (personal computer). I used an old fashioned daisy-wheel typewriter for type and hand-drawn illustrations. By today's standards this may be viewed as quite primitive for book publication, but the content of this book is timeless and vital truth for God's people. Therefore, rather than allowing it to no longer be in circulation, I chose merely to reprint it in its original format.

Sadly, I must say, the true message of the Bride of Christ remains a "great mystery" to most of God's people today (Eph. 5:32). With the erroneous "I got it all when I got saved" theology that permeates most of Christianity, the need to pursue after Paul's "goal and prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-15) has been theologically rendered null and void.

The Bride of Christ is viewed as a present possession rather than a goal and a prize set before the Body of Christ. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Bride of Christ will be formed out of a "sleeping" Body of Christ in the same manner that the original Eve, Adam's bride, was formed out of his body while he slept. The church is the latter-day Eve and Jesus Christ is called the "last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45).

Paul, in his second epistle to the church at Corinth, expressed a deep fear that the espoused Bride of Christ (the church) would become deceived by Satan in the same manner that he deceived the original Eve, and therefore she would not be worthy to be presented to Christ as a chaste virgin (2 Cor. 11:1-4). This book presents the criteria that will enable those in the Body of Christ to inherit the eternal reward of the Bride of Christ.

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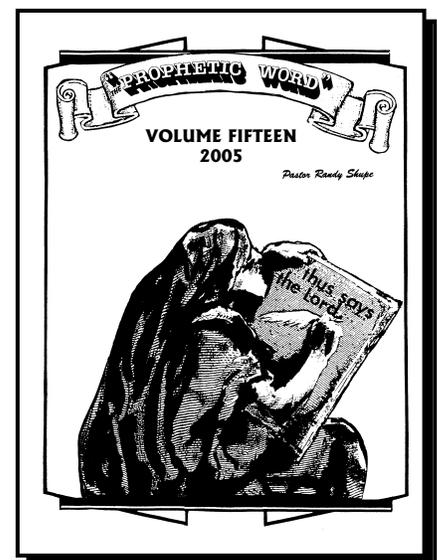


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**CULTIVATING  
A PROPER USE OF GOD'S**

# **TWO-EDGED SWORD**

**"AND TAKE...  
THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT,  
WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD..."**  
Ephesians 6:17

**"FOR THE WORD  
THAT GOD SPEAKS  
IS ALIVE  
AND FULL OF POWER –  
MAKING IT ACTIVE,  
OPERATIVE, ENERGIZING  
AND EFFECTIVE;  
IT IS SHARPER  
THAN ANY  
TWO-EDGED SWORD,  
PENETRATING TO  
THE DIVIDING LINE  
OF THE BREATH OF LIFE  
(SOUL) AND SPIRIT,  
AND OF THE JOINTS  
AND MARROW  
(THAT IS, OF THE DEEPEST  
PARTS OF OUR NATURE)  
EXPOSING AND SIFTING  
AND ANALYZING AND  
JUDGING THE VERY  
THOUGHTS AND PURPOSES  
OF THE HEART."**

Hebrews 4:12 Amplified Bible



**"EVERY SCRIPTURE  
IS GOD-BREATHED –  
GIVEN BY  
HIS INSPIRATION –  
AND PROFITABLE FOR  
INSTRUCTION,  
FOR REPROOF AND  
CONVICTION OF SIN,  
FOR CORRECTION  
OF ERROR AND  
DISCIPLINE IN OBEDIENCE,  
AND FOR TRAINING IN  
RIGHTEOUSNESS (THAT IS,  
IN HOLY LIVING,  
IN CONFORMITY TO  
GOD'S WILL IN THOUGHT,  
PURPOSE AND ACTION)  
SO THAT THE MAN OF  
GOD MAY BE COMPLETE  
AND PROFICIENT,  
WELL-FITTED AND  
THOROUGHLY EQUIPPED  
FOR EVERY GOOD WORK."**

2 Timothy 3:16 Amplified Bible

The above trinity of Scriptures pertaining to the Word of God is worth taking time to ponder. There is a progressive revelation contained within them.

The first revelation is that which is stated in Ephesians 6:17 identifying the Word of God as being a sword – the sword of the Spirit of the living God.

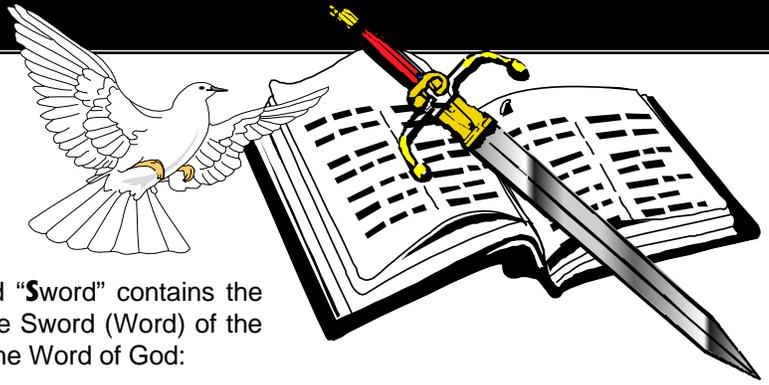
Progressing to Hebrews 4:12, we find a detailed purpose for that sword as being God's instrument for self-examination of the condition of the hearts of His people.

Thirdly, we obtain further revelation by considering the contents of 2 Timothy 3:16 in which we find God's ultimate intention for the Scriptures stated as "thoroughly equipping God's people for every good work" by means of personal "instruction, reproof, conviction and correction" that is obtained from meditating in God's Word..This is a much higher goal for the Word of God than the basic foundational truth that "...the Holy Scriptures...are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15).

This newsletter is dedicated to presenting a proper use of both sides of God's powerful "two-edged sword."

**“AND TAKE...  
THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT,  
WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD...”**

Ephesians 6:17



I find it quite stunning that the English word “**S**word” contains the the word, “**W**ord.” The Word is a sword – the Sword (Word) of the Spirit. We are all quite aware who authored the Word of God:

**“KNOWING THIS FIRST, THAT NO PROPHECY OF SCRIPTURE IS OF ANY PRIVATE INTERPRETATION, FOR PROPHECY NEVER CAME BY THE WILL OF MAN, BUT HOLY MEN OF GOD SPOKE AS THEY WERE MOVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.”** 2 Peter 1:20-21

We also might consider that Jesus validated the fact that what is written in the Word of God was done so by the leading of the Holy Spirit. Consider the words of Jesus in His letter to the Laodiceans as an example:

**“AND TO THE ANGEL  
(MESSENGER) OF THE  
CHURCH OF THE  
LAODICEANS, WRITE,  
‘THESE THINGS SAYS THE  
AMEN, THE FAITHFUL AND  
TRUE WITNESS...  
HE WHO HAS AN EAR,  
LET HIM HEAR WHAT  
THE SPIRIT SAYS  
TO THE CHURCHES.’ ”**

Rev. 3:22

Each of the seven letters, such as this one to Laodicea, begin with Jesus’ words and end with the exhortation to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. This is an important point, for the Holy Spirit will NEVER say anything to God’s people that is contrary to what He has recorded in His Word. The Word of God is the voice of the Holy Spirit. Over my years of ministry I have heard quite a few of God’s people attributing things to the leading of the Holy Spirit that are in opposition to God’s Word. When we hear statements like, “The Lord is leading me” or “The Spirit is impressing me,” we must practice the warning “not to believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God” (1 John 4:1). You can test what you believe you are hearing by what has been written!

**“THEREFORE,  
AS THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYS:  
‘TODAY, IF YOU WILL  
HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT  
HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS  
IN THE REBELLION...  
I WAS ANGRY WITH THAT  
GENERATION, AND SAID,  
‘THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY  
IN THEIR HEART,  
AND THEY HAVE NOT  
KNOWN MY WAYS.’...  
BEWARE, BRETHREN,  
LEST THERE BE  
IN ANY OF YOU  
AN EVIL HEART OF  
UNBELIEF IN DEPARTING  
FROM THE LIVING GOD...  
LEST ANY OF 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 WILL HEAR HIS  
VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN  
YOUR HEARTS AS IN THE  
REBELLION.’ ”**

Hebrews 3:7-15

Likewise, Paul, the author of Hebrews, reveals how imperative it is that we hear what the Spirit says to us as brethren. Take the time to ponder this dissertation from Hebrews Chapter Three in which Paul uses the examples of the Children of Israel as a warning to us as New Testament believers. Notice in these passages the many references to “the heart.” It is by the deceitfulness of sin that they hardened their hearts, went astray in their hearts, and bore forth evil hearts of unbelief. Paul is clearly warning that this same danger exists for us! What is the antidote to this poison of sin in the heart? We read it on the previous page, but let me repeat it here for you once more:

**“FOR THE WORD THAT GOD SPEAKS IS ALIVE AND FULL OF POWER – MAKING IT ACTIVE, OPERATIVE, ENERGIZING AND EFFECTIVE; IT IS SHARPER THAN ANY TWO-EDGED SWORD, PENETRATING TO THE DIVIDING LINE OF THE BREATH OF LIFE (SOUL) AND SPIRIT, AND OF THE JOINTS AND MARROW (THAT IS, OF THE DEEPEST PARTS OF OUR NATURE) EXPOSING AND SIFTING AND ANALYZING AND JUDGING THE VERY THOUGHTS AND PURPOSES OF THE HEART.”**

Hebrews 4:12 Amplified Bible

**“EVERY SCRIPTURE IS GOD-BREATHED – GIVEN BY HIS INSPIRATION –AND PROFITABLE FOR INSTRUCTION, FOR REPROOF AND CONVICTION OF SIN, FOR CORRECTION OF ERROR AND DISCIPLINE IN OBEDIENCE, AND FOR TRAINING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS (THAT IS, IN HOLY LIVING, IN CONFORMITY TO GOD’S WILL IN THOUGHT, PURPOSE AND ACTION) SO THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE COMPLETE AND PROFICIENT, WELL-FITTED AND THOROUGHLY EQUIPPED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK.”**

2 Timothy 3:16 Amplified Bible

# DECEPTION

**"CHEATING, HOODWINKING, MISLEADING OR DELUDING, TO BE FOOLED, TRICKED OR SUFFER FRAUD BY MEANS OF BOGUS FACTS, FIGURES AND STATISTICS. TO TAKE UNAWARE, BE ENSNARED BY CUNNING MISREPRESENTATION..." Webster**

There are two kinds of deception; (1) we can be deceived by others, and (2) we can deceive ourselves. I need not elaborate the fact that the latter scenario is to be deemed much worse than the first.

I would like to suggest that one way in which we can utilize the sword of the Spirit is by seeing each edge as designed to prevent these two kinds of deception:



The Word of God says of itself that it is powerful (Heb.4:12), and it is profitable (2 Tim. 3:16). Satan knows this well. A whole host of passages from the apostles attest to the willful misuse of the Scriptures by those who seek to deceive. Here are a few:

**"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

**"WE ARE NOT, AS SO MANY, PEDDLING ("ADULTERATING FOR GAIN") 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

**"...THERE WILL BE FALSE TEACHERS AMONG YOU, WHO WILL SECRETLY BRING IN DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES...AND MANY WILL FOLLOW THEIR DESTRUCTIVE WAYS, BECAUSE OF WHOM THE WAY OF TRUTH WILL BE BLASPHEMED. BY COVETOUSNESS THEY WILL EXPLOIT YOU WITH DECEPTIVE WORDS..."** 2 Pet. 2:1-3

**"FOR SUCH ARE FALSE APOSTLES, DECEITFUL WORKERS, TRANSFORMING THEMSELVES INTO APOSTLES OF CHRIST. AND NO WONDER! FOR 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, WHOSE END WILL BE ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS."** 2 Cor. 11:13-15

On the next two pages I have divided the sword of the Spirit into two categories that, when properly understood and practiced, will help you not only to escape the deceptive traps of the deceivers, but will also enable you to avoid the pitfall of deceiving your own self. Spend some quality time studying and meditating on these two pages!

**"STUDY AND BE EAGER AND DO YOUR UTMOST TO PRESENT YOURSELF TO GOD APPROVED... A WORKMAN WHO HAS NO CAUSE TO BE ASHAMED, CORRECTLY ANALYZING AND ACCURATELY DIVIDING - RIGHTLY HANDLING AND SKILLFULLY TEACHING -THE WORD OF TRUTH." 2 Tim. 2:15 Amp.**

**"PREACH THE WORD! BE READY IN SEASON AND OUT OF SEASON. CONVINCe, REBUKE, EXHORT, WITH ALL LONGSUFFERING AND TEACHING. FOR THE TIME WILL COME WHEN THEY WILL NOT ENDURE SOUND DOCTRINE...AND THEY WILL TURN THEIR EARS AWAY FROM THE TRUTH, AND BE TURNED ASIDE UNTO FABLES. BUT YOU BE WATCHFUL IN ALL THINGS..." 2 Timothy 4:2-5**

**"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**

# STUDY

**"APPLICATION OF THE MIND TO THE ACQUIREMENT OF KNOWLEDGE..A STATE OF ABSORBED CONCENTRATION...GIVEN TO STUDY, SCRUTINIZE, ANALYZE...DETAILED STUDY OF A SUBJECT WITH THE INTENT TO MASTER, ABLE TO ARTICULATE, MASTERFUL, SKILLFUL" Webster**

The truth is that we all diligently apply ourselves to whatever is important to us. We navigate the internet with acquired skill, but get easily lost in the Scriptures. We master the immense technological lingo of cell phones, I-pod's and computers and at the same time complain about the complexity of the Bible as being "too difficult, too hard, and too deep." Listen to Charles Finney:



*"LET NO ONE DESPAIR IN COMMENCING THIS BOOK, NOR STUMBLE AT THE DEFINITIONS, THINKING HE CAN NEVER UNDERSTAND SO ABSTRUSE A SUBJECT...MY BROTHER, SISTER FRIEND- READ, STUDY, THINK; TO DEVELOP YOUR POWERS BY STUDY. GOD DESIGNED THAT RELIGION SHOULD REQUIRE THOUGHT, INTENSE THOUGHT, AND SHOULD THOROUGHLY DEVELOP OUR POWERS OF THOUGHT. THE BIBLE ITSELF IS WRITTEN IN A STYLE SO CONDENSED AS TO REQUIRE MUCH INTENSE STUDY. MANY KNOW NOTHING OF THE BIBLE OR OF RELIGION, BECAUSE THEY WILL NOT THINK AND STUDY. I DO NOT PRETEND TO SO EXPLAIN THEOLOGY AS TO DISPENSE WITH THE LABOR OF THINKING."*  
 (SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY- PREFACE, PAGE 9- CHARLES FINNEY)

If you name the name of Christ, you are a prime target of the deceivers. Look again at the Scriptural depiction of those who will make you their target: →

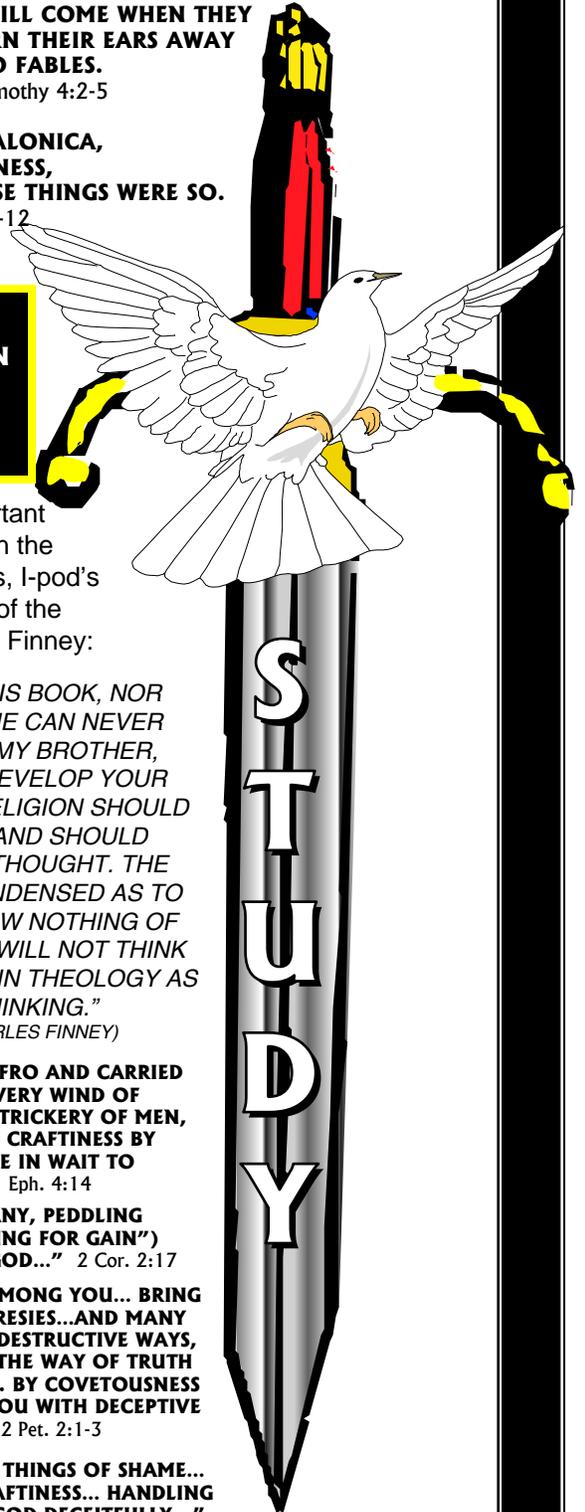
There is only one way to avoid the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive. There is only one way for you not to be exploited by their covetous, deceptive words. You are going to have to diligently apply yourself to become a believer who is "able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition" (2 Tim. 2:24-25). Simply put, you are going to have to become skilled in the Word of God in order that no one deceives you!

**"...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**

**"...AS SO MANY, PEDDLING ("ADULTERATING FOR GAIN") THE WORD OF GOD..." 2 Cor. 2:17**

**"...FALSE TEACHERS AMONG YOU... BRING IN DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES...AND MANY WILL FOLLOW THEIR DESTRUCTIVE WAYS, BECAUSE OF WHOM THE WAY OF TRUTH WILL BE BLASPHEMED. BY COVETOUSNESS THEY WILL EXPLOIT YOU WITH DECEPTIVE WORDS..." 2 Pet. 2:1-3**

**"...THE HIDDEN THINGS OF SHAME... WALKING IN CRAFTINESS... HANDLING THE WORD OF GOD DECEITFULLY..." 2 Cor. 4:4**



**"THIS BOOK OF THE LAW SHALL NOT DEPART FROM YOUR MOUTH BUT YOU SHALL MEDITATE IN IT DAY AND NIGHT, THAT YOU MAY OBSERVE TO DO ACCORDING TO ALL THAT IS WRITTEN IN IT. FOR THEN YOU WILL MAKE YOUR WAY PROSPEROUS, AND THEN YOU WILL HAVE GOOD SUCCESS."** Joshua 1:8

**"I WILL MEDITATE ON YOUR PRECEPTS...I WILL MEDITATE ON YOUR STATUTES... OH, HOW I LOVE YOUR LAW! IT IS MY MEDITATION ALL THE DAY... THAT I MAY MEDITATE ON YOUR WORD"** Psm. 119:15, 48, 97, 148

**"FINALLY BRETHREN, WHATEVER THINGS ARE TRUE...NOBLE...JUST...PURE...LOVELY...OF GOOD REPORT... VIRTUE...PRAISEWORTHY...MEDITATE ON THESE THINGS... AND THE GOD OF PEACE WILL BE WITH YOU."** Phil. 4:8-9

## MEDITATE

**"TO CHEW THE CUD"**

**"A PRIVATE DEVOTION OF SPIRITUAL EXERCISE CONSISTING IN DEEP CONTINUED REFLECTION ON A RELIGIOUS THEME...TO MUSE OVER, PONDER, CONTEMPLATE, REFLECT UPON...INTROSPECTION, SELF-EXAMINATION OF ONE'S LIFE IN LIGHT OF THE PATTERN OF THE SCRIPTURES..."** Webster

I must STUDY God's Word so that no one deceives me, but I must also MEDITATE in the Word in order that I do not deceive myself.

Meditation is for introspection of self. The process of meditation makes this edge of God's two-edged sword to be like a skilled surgeon's knife which often must wound in order to bring forth healing. Paul instructs the believer to be very introspective:

**"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 Bible

Take the time to "meditate" in these passages from James →

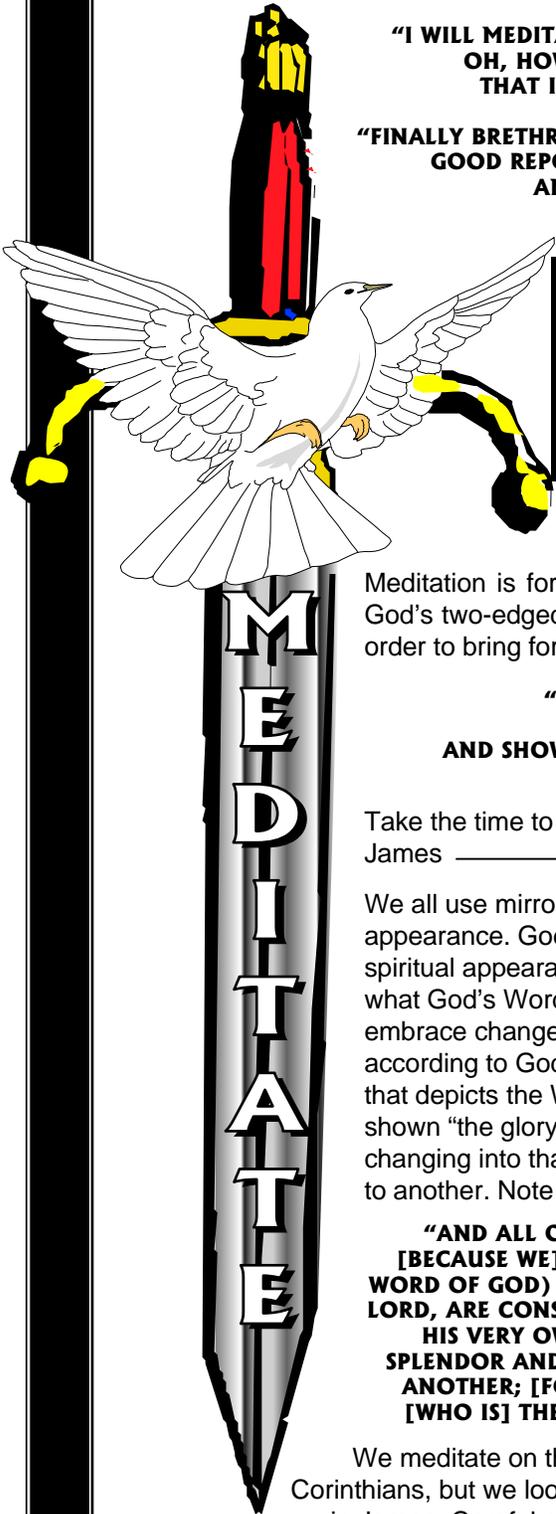
We all use mirrors every day to examine our physical appearance. God's Word is a mirror that examines our spiritual appearance. Meditation looks hard and long at what God's Word reveals about ourselves. We are to embrace change of what we are shown that is not according to God's Word. There is another passage that depicts the Word of God as a mirror. In it we are shown "the glory of God" and are called to be ever-changing into that very image from one degree of glory to another. Note that it is the work of God's Spirit in us:

**"AND ALL OF US, AS WITH UNVEILED FACE, [BECAUSE WE] CONTINUED 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 [WHO IS] THE SPIRIT."** 2 Cor. 3:18 Amplified Bible

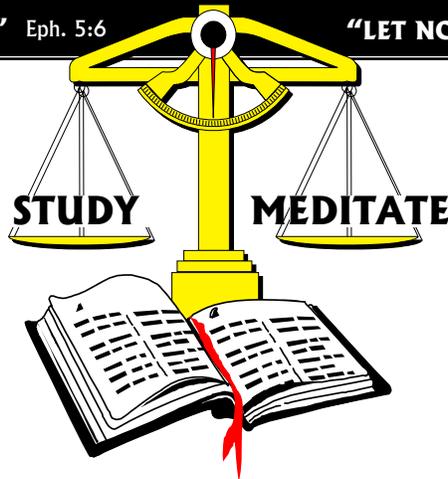
We meditate on the image of Jesus in the mirror in Corinthians, but we look at our own image in the mirror found in James. Careful comparative meditation is the key to narrowing the gap that exists between the two.

**"SO GET RID OF ALL UNCLEANNESS AND THE RAMPANT OUTGROWTH OF WICKEDNESS, AND IN A HUMBLE (GENTLE, MODEST) SPIRIT RECEIVE AND WELCOME THE WORD WHICH IS IMPLANTED AND ROOTED [IN YOUR HEARTS] CONTAINS THE POWER TO SAVE YOUR SOULS. BUT – OBEY THE MESSAGE; BE DOERS OF THE WORD, AND NOT MERELY LISTENERS TO IT BETRAYING YOURSELVES [INTO DECEPTION BY REASONING CONTRARY TO THE TRUTH]. FOR IF ANY ONE ONLY LISTENS TO THE WORD WITHOUT OBEYING IT AND BEING A DOER OF IT, HE IS LIKE A MAN WHO LOOKS CAREFULLY AT HIS (OWN) NATURAL FACE IN A MIRROR; FOR HE THOUGHTFULLY OBSERVES HIMSELF, THEN GOES OFF AND PROMPTLY FORGETS WHAT HE WAS LIKE."**

James 1:21-24  
Amplified Bible



**"APPLICATION OF THE MIND TO THE ACQUIREMENT OF KNOWLEDGE.. A STATE OF ABSORBED CONCENTRATION... GIVEN TO STUDY, SCRUTINIZE, ANALYZE...DETAILED STUDY OF A SUBJECT WITH THE INTENT TO MASTER, ABLE TO ARTICULATE, MASTERFUL, SKILLFUL"**  
Webster



**"CHEW THE CUD- A PRIVATE DEVOTION OF SPIRITUAL EXERCISE CONSISTING IN DEEP CONTINUED REFLECTION ON A RELIGIOUS THEME...TO MUSE OVER, PONDER, CONTEMPLATE, REFLECT UPON...INTROSPECTION, SELF-EXAMINATION OF ONE'S LIFE IN LIGHT OF THE PATTERN OF THE SCRIPTURES..."**  
Webster

### BALANCE

This is the need of the hour for God's people, even when it comes to how we approach the Word of God. The information age in which we live reminds me of the warning Solomon issued to God's people:



**"AND FURTHER, MY SON, BE ADMONISHED BY THESE. OF THE MAKING OF MANY BOOKS THERE IS NO END, AND MUCH STUDY IS WEARISOME TO THE FLESH. LET US HEAR THE CONCLUSION TO THE WHOLE MATTER: FEAR GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, FOR THIS IS THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN. FOR GOD WILL BRING EVERY WORK INTO JUDGMENT, INCLUDING EVERY SECRET THING, WHETHER IT IS GOOD OR WHETHER IT IS EVIL. Ecc. 12:12-14**

Certainly over the years of my ministry I have contributed my share in fulfilling the saying, "of the making of many books, there is no end." I do not apologize for being prolific, a teacher must teach. Solomon is not condemning books or studying. He is merely pointing out that it is possible to overdose in either of these two areas. What is needed is balance. I think of the Pharisees and the Sadducees whom Jesus condemned as being those who were "Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel" (Mat. 23:24). He charged them with having "...neglected the weightier matters of law; justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone" (Mat. 23:23). What was their deficiency? They lacked a proper emphasis and balance pertaining to the Word of God. This danger exists for us as well. Paul warns the last days would be marked by a people, "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 3:7). It is important WHAT we study and HOW we study. It is important as to WHAT we meditate in and HOW we meditate. It is my conviction that the Christian life is SIMPLISTIC. We must avoid the trap of intellectualism by which the Christian life grows more difficult due to following an elaborate system of learning that appeals to the intellect. Hear Solomon well when he stresses what is the simplistic conclusion to the dual dilemma of "many books" and "much study." Just focus your attention on the two objectives that Solomon states simplistically as the whole duty of man:

## 1. FEAR GOD 2. KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS

Direct all your study and all your meditation toward achieving these two objectives.

Keep in mind your day in court with the Righteous Judge in which He will  
"...bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing,  
whether it is good or evil" (Ecc. 12:12-14)



Moses reminds us also of a simplistic response to God and His Word:

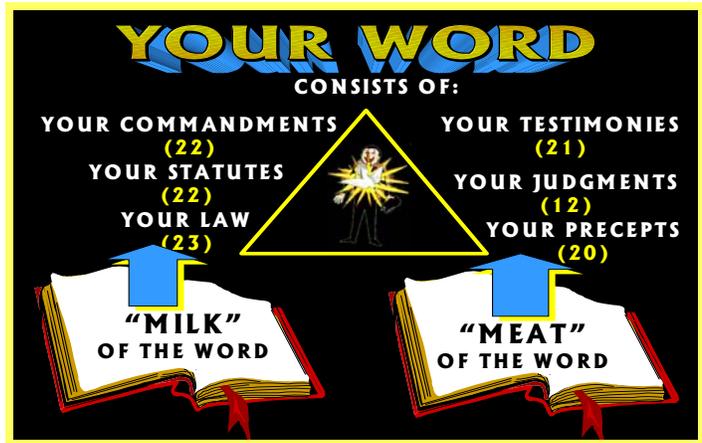
**"FOR THIS COMMANDMENT WHICH I COMMAND YOU TODAY, IT IS NOT TOO MYSTERIOUS FOR YOU, NOR IS IT FAR OFF. IT IS NOT IN HEAVEN, THAT YOU SHOULD SAY, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN FOR US AND BRING IT TO US, THAT WE MAY HEAR IT AND DO IT?'...BUT THE WORD IS VERY NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART, THAT YOU MAY DO IT...I COMMAND YOU TODAY TO LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD, TO WALK IN HIS WAYS, AND TO KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS...THAT YOU MAY LIVE AND MULTIPLY; AND THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL BLESS YOU..." Deut. 30:11-16**

Follow the sanctified "KISS" principle! ( **Keep It Simple Saints** )

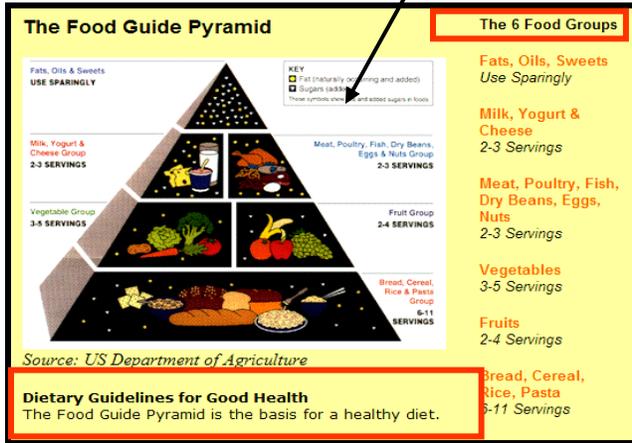
Pastor Randy Shupe

In light of the content of this month's newsletter pertaining to the importance of studying and meditating in the Word of God, I would like to recommend this recent 14 hour series I taught to our congregation based on the contents of Psalm 119.

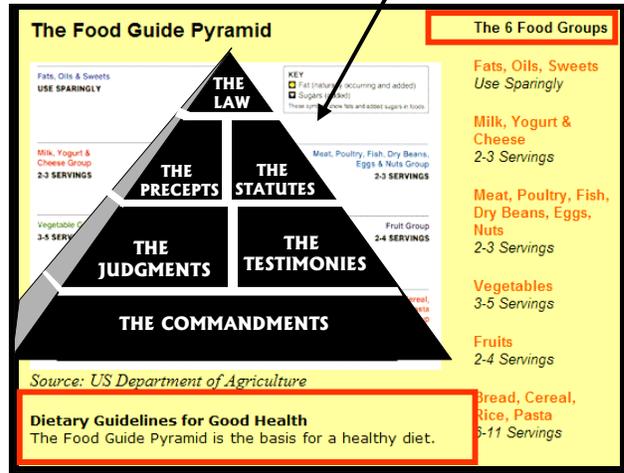
Psalm 119 is the longest of the psalms and its central theme is that of the phrase, "Your Word" (34 times repeated in this psalm). Contained within this psalm is a wonderful pattern for spiritual growth. It is unfolded by considering the significance of these 7 repetitious themes found in Psalm 119:



In this teaching I used the recent "Dietary Guidelines For Good Health" pyramid published by the government as an illustration of the importance of a SPIRITUALLY well-balanced diet patterned after this physical one:



As the physical has "six food groups" that comprise a well-balanced diet, I overlaid the "six spiritual food groups" from Psalm 119 that comprise a healthy balanced intake of God's Word:

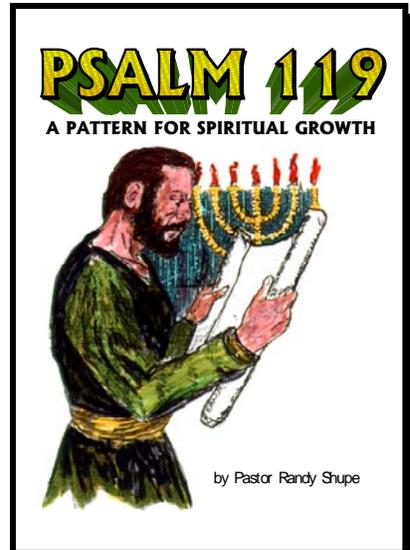


The moral to the story is that we cannot live a healthy life by ingesting "junk food" (physical or spiritual). Nor can we only eat "meat" or limit our diet to just "milk." Psalm 119 holds the key to digesting the Word of God in a healthy manner. This study will challenge your walk with God!

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THE COMING PROPHETIC

# PARADIGM SHIFT



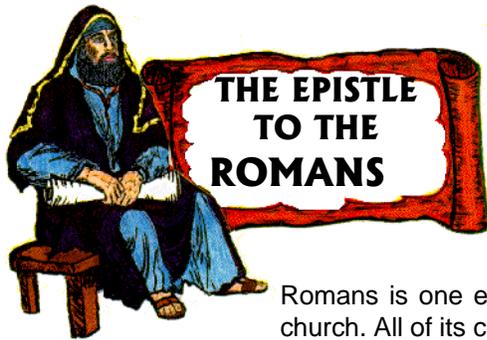
“...UNTIL THE FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES HAS COME IN.”

The word “paradigm” is a buzz word often heard in business meetings and teaching seminars.

Simplistically, it speaks of a role model or an example. A “paradigm shift” then is a transition from one form, model, or example to a different one. I chose this word as best illustrating the fact that there is coming a shift from the role model God chose for the present, prevalent Gentile church back to the original model given to the Jewish people of Israel. Historically there has already been a paradigm shift from God’s Old Covenant relationship with the Jewish people of Israel to the present New Covenant with the Gentile church. It is vital for the church to see that there is prophetically another paradigm shift coming as God changes from the role of the Gentile church back to Israel becoming the light to all nations (Deut. 4:6-8). As an example of a biblical paradigm shift, we might consider the passage concerning John the Baptist and his transitional relationship to the soon-coming Christ. John said, “He (Jesus) must increase, but I must decrease” (Jn.3:30). John the Baptist was the forerunner sent by God to herald in the first coming of Christ. However, as his ministry was coming to a conclusion and the ministry of Jesus Christ was about to begin, he announced that he must decrease in order for Christ to increase. That is a “paradigm shift.”

Here is the point I want you to grasp: As we, the Gentile Church, prophetically sit on the verge of the second coming of Christ, it becomes vitally important to understand that the church’s present role must become identical to the one of John the Baptist. The role of the church must decrease in order that the role of Israel (the Jewish people) may begin to increase. I stress this point due to the present high-minded attitude that we find in the church today that seeks to usurp the prophetic yet-to-be-fulfilled role of Israel in the last days. The church is not God’s “New Israel.” The church will not be God’s final agent of salvation on the earth prior to the second coming of Christ, nor will the church fulfill the prophecy of Joel concerning the outpouring of the “latter day rain.” This is Israel’s future destiny. Failure to rightly divide the (prophetic) word of truth is producing a high-minded church identical to the one Paul saw developing among the Roman saints of his day. Consider Paul’s warning to them and subsequently, to us:

**“DO NOT BOAST AGAINST THE BRANCHES...DO NOT BE HAUGHTY...FOR I DO NOT DESIRE, BRETHREN, THAT YOU SHOULD BE IGNORANT OF THIS MYSTERY, LEST YOU SHOULD BECOME WISE IN YOUR OWN OPINION, THAT HARDENING IN PART HAS HAPPENED TO ISRAEL UNTIL THE FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES HAS COME IN. AND SO ALL ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED, AS IT IS WRITTEN: ‘THE DELIVERER WILL COME OUT OF ZION, AND HE WILL TURN AWAY UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB, FOR THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.’ CONCERNING THE GOSPEL THEY ARE ENEMIES FOR YOUR SAKE, BUT CONCERNING THE ELECTION THEY ARE BELOVED FOR THE SAKE OF THE FATHERS...”** Romans 11:16-28 excerpts



This epistle is given different emphasis by various denominational and doctrinal groups within Christendom. The fundamentalists will give preeminence to "The Roman Road to Salvation" found in this epistle. Today's Calvinists act like the only chapter of worth in this epistle is Chapter Nine which emphasizes "The Sovereignty of God" as depicted by God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart. The charismatic movement wants to live only in the Spirit-filled Chapter Eight of Romans.

Romans is one epistle with 16 Chapters all of which were written to the Gentile church. All of its contents should be important to us as New Covenant believers.

The topical focus of this newsletter centers upon the contents of the 11<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Romans. I encourage you, as a member of the church of Jesus Christ, to take the time to ponder this specific prophetic message that Paul is seeking to impart to Gentile believers like you and me. I print it for your thoughtful meditation as a message from Paul to all members of the church pertaining to the importance of Israel in God's future economy:

## ROMANS CHAPTER 11

I SAY then, <sup>R</sup>has God cast away His people?  
<sup>R</sup>Certainly not! For <sup>R</sup>I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

2 God has not cast away His people whom <sup>R</sup>He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying,

3 <sup>R</sup>"*LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life*"?

4 But what does the divine response say to him? <sup>R</sup>"*I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.*"

5 <sup>R</sup>Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

6 And <sup>R</sup>if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. <sup>R</sup>But if it is of works, it is no longer grace otherwise work is no longer work.

7 What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were <sup>R</sup>hardened.

8 Just as it is written:

<sup>R</sup>"*God has given them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear, To this very day.*"

9 And David says:

<sup>R</sup>"*Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a recompense to them;*

10 *Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back always.*"

11 I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their <sup>R</sup>fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.

12 Now if their fall is riches for the world and their failure <sup>R</sup>riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!

13 For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as <sup>R</sup>I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,

14 if by any means I may provoke to jealousy *those who are my flesh* and <sup>R</sup>save some of them.

15 For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance <sup>R</sup>be <sup>R</sup>but life from the dead?

16 For if <sup>R</sup>the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches.

17 And if <sup>R</sup>some of the branches were broken off, <sup>R</sup>and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and <sup>R</sup>fatness of the olive tree,

18 do not boast against the branches. But if you boast, *remember that* you do not support the root, but the root supports you.

19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in."

20 Well said. Because of <sup>R</sup>unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear.

21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.

22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, <sup>R</sup>goodness, <sup>R</sup>if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise <sup>R</sup>you also will be cut off.

23 And they also, <sup>R</sup>if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.

24 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?

25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be <sup>R</sup>wise in your own <sup>R</sup>opinion, that <sup>R</sup>hardening in part has happened to Israel <sup>R</sup>until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:

<sup>R</sup>"*The Deliverer will come out of Zion,*

*And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;*

27 <sup>R</sup>*For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.*"

28 Concerning the gospel *they are enemies for your sake*, but concerning the election *they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.*

29 For the gifts and the calling of God are <sup>R</sup>irrevocable.

30 For as you <sup>R</sup>were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience,

31 even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy.

32 For God has <sup>R</sup>committed them <sup>R</sup>all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

*Israel's Restoration:  
The Occasion for Glorifying God*

33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

34 *"For who has known the <sup>R</sup>mind of the LORD?*

*Or who has become His counselor?"*

35 *"Or <sup>R</sup>who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him?"*

36 For <sup>R</sup>of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, <sup>R</sup>to whom be glory forever. Amen.



To whom did Paul write these words? They were written as words of admonition to the church, to you and me as blood-washed believers in Jesus Christ.



Read these specific verses and ask yourself whether they fit perfectly into the framework of what you have been taught under the banner of being “saved by grace through faith.” Does this teaching of Paul endorse the popular phrase, “once saved, always saved” or “unconditional eternal security?” Not according to these passages. Israel was “cut off” for their unbelief. Does not Paul state that this “cutting off” can happen to the church as well?

18 do not boast against the branches. But if you boast, *remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.*

19 You will say then, “Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.”

20 *Well said.* Because of <sup>R</sup>unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear.

21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.

22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, <sup>\*</sup>goodness, <sup>R</sup>if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise <sup>R</sup>you also will be cut off.

23 And they also, <sup>R</sup>if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. (Rom. 11:18-23)

What are we, in the church, to do with such severe, negative warnings like “do not boast...do not be haughty, but fear...He may not spare you either...only if you continue in His goodness...otherwise you also will be cut off...behold the goodness and the severity of God?” We must fit such sayings into our system of beliefs!

I am afraid that severity from God has been doctrinally relegated as something that belongs only to the Jews, the Old Covenant God of “Law”, but has been made null and void by the New Covenant God of “grace.” No wonder that we do not find in modern-day Christianity this chapter being listed among the favorite themes of the epistle to the Romans! The contents of this chapter does not fit within the doctrinal confines of what is being fed to the church today, which is a modern-day manifestation of just what Paul was warning about: the emergence, in the church, of a high-minded, haughty, boastful presentation of what God has done for it; things He would not do for Israel.

Today we have doctrines propagating “Replacement Theology” in which the church has replaced Israel as God’s chosen people. Therefore we have prophetic ministries surfacing with titles like “The Joshua Generation” and “The Joel Army” whose self-proclaimed destiny is to fulfill all the yet-future promises that were given to the now-defunct chosen Israel of God. The church becomes a new spiritual Israel; or even worse, it follows the erroneous Puritan theory that America is God’s New Israel—a manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth! The home-school movement has swallowed the theology of Peter Marshall’s “Light and The Glory” as gospel truth, when in essence it is the erroneous Puritan ideology that stands in direct opposition to the Word of God! If America has indeed become God’s New Israel, then Jesus, at his second coming, should set His feet down on perhaps Mt. St. Helens instead of the prophesied Mt. Olivet in Israel! Does it bother anyone in the church that the Mormon doctrines parallel the false teachings of the Puritans pertaining to America being God’s “New Israel?” God does not have (or want) a New Israel! He is not finished with the old one according to Paul’s clear and repetitious statements found in the 11<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Romans:

**“I SAY THEN, HAS GOD CAST AWAY HIS PEOPLE? CERTAINLY NOT!...GOD HAS NOT CAST AWAY HIS PEOPLE WHOM HE FOREKNEW...EVEN SO THEN, AT THIS PRESENT TIME THERE IS A REMNANT ACCORDING TO THE ELECTION OF GRACE...I SAY THEN, HAVE THEY STUMBLERED THAT THEY SHOULD FALL? CERTAINLY NOT! BUT THROUGH THEIR FALL, TO PROVOKE THEM TO JEALOUSY, SALVATION HAS COME TO THE GENTILES... FOR IF THEIR BEING CAST AWAY IS THE RECONCILIATION OF THE WORLD, WHAT WILL THEIR ACCEPTANCE BE BUT LIFE FROM THE DEAD?...AND THEY ALSO, IF THEY DO NOT CONTINUE IN UNBELIEF, WILL BE GRAFTED IN, FOR GOD IS ABLE TO GRAFT THEM IN AGAIN...HOW MUCH MORE WILL THESE, WHO ARE THE NATURAL BRANCHES, BE GRAFTED INTO THEIR OWN OLIVE TREE?**

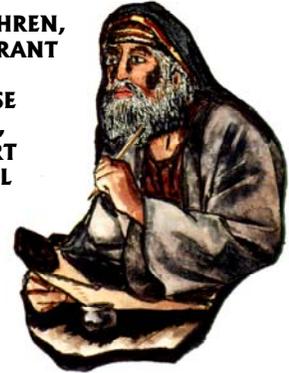
**FOR I DO NOT DESIRE, BRETHREN, THAT YOU SHOULD BE IGNORANT OF THIS MYSTERY, LEST YOU SHOULD BE WISE IN YOUR OWN OPINION, THAT HARDENING IN PART HAS HAPPENED TO ISRAEL UNTIL THE FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES HAS COME IN. AND SO ALL ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED, AS IT IS WRITTEN...”** Romans Chapter 11 excerpts

Let us consider now what Paul states as a "mystery" (hidden truth) of which the church must not remain ignorant lest we be like so many today that are "wise in their own opinion" pertaining to the future destiny of the church: →

When "the fullness of the Gentiles has come in" there will occur a paradigm shift. The salvation emphasis upon the Gentiles will abruptly end, and God will shift gears to bring to pass His promise, "and so all Israel will be saved." The salvation of Israel will no longer be dependent upon a Gentile church witness as it has been so commissioned in this present hour, for soon we will have experienced a manifestation of a sudden and violent

**"FOR I DO NOT DESIRE, BRETHREN, THAT YOU SHOULD BE IGNORANT OF THIS MYSTERY, LEST YOU SHOULD BE WISE IN YOUR OWN OPINION, THAT HARDENING IN PART HAS HAPPENED TO ISRAEL UNTIL THE FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES HAS COME IN. AND SO ALL ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED, AS IT IS WRITTEN..."**

Romans Chapter 11 :25-26



# PARADIGM SHIFT

...UNTIL THE FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES HAS COME IN.

**CHURCH**

the **R A P T U R E**

AND SO ALL ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED, AS IT IS WRITTEN..."

**ISRAEL**

Much of the professing church believes in the rapture. Most embrace a pre-tribulation rapture, (that is what the Scriptures teach). However, little of the professing church readily endorses what the virgin parable relates about this event. Namely, that only the wise virgins, who are considered by God as being ready, are taken by Jesus while the foolish virgins are left behind for the tribulation (Matt. 25: 1-13)



These verses from the apostle Peter emphasize "the time has come." → This is the prophetic predetermined time God has appointed for a paradigm shift. The church age will end abruptly when "the fullness of the Gentiles has come in." Notice it is the time of JUDGMENT, and where does that judgment begin? At the house of God-the church! What happens to those who "do not obey the gospel?" According to Jesus, they are left behind.

**"FOR THE TIME HAS COME FOR JUDGMENT TO BEGIN AT THE HOUSE OF GOD; AND IF IT BEGINS WITH US FIRST, WHAT WILL BE THE END OF THOSE WHO DO NOT OBEY THE GOSPEL OF GOD? NOW 'IF THE RIGHTEOUS ONE IS SCARCELY SAVED, WHERE WILL THE UNGODLY AND THE SINNER APPEAR?' "**

1 Pet. 4:17-18

If you read Jesus' prophetic seven letters to the churches, you will see that it is only Philadelphia that receives the promise of the rapture, and Jesus tells us why it is so:

**"I KNOW YOUR WORKS. SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR, AND NO ONE CAN SHUT IT; FOR YOU HAVE A LITTLE STRENGTH, YOU 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

The rapture is for the faithful. The unfaithful will be left behind. Read the severity of the "repent or else" clauses found in the rest of the letters Jesus wrote to His churches!

# PARADIGM SHIFT

"...UNTIL THE FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES HAS COME IN.

# CHURCH

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# ISRAEL

"I KNOW YOUR WORKS. SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR, AND NO ONE CAN SHUT IT; FOR YOU HAVE A LITTLE STRENGTH, YOU 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



Meet the conditions that Jesus spells out above and you will be ready for the paradigm shift that is coming—perhaps sooner than you think! Take careful notice of what Jesus says about this to-be-raptured church that He is coming for prior to the beginning of the “hour of trial” which is coming upon the whole world as a test. Jesus says to His church at Philadelphia,

**“FOR YOU HAVE A LITTLE STRENGTH...”**

So much for high-minded concepts of “The Joshua Generation” and “Joel’s army” being the latter-day, overcoming church in the tribulation! The book of Acts tells us how the church began with GREAT strength; but when it goes out, it will have but “a little strength.” Like John the Baptist, the church must decrease in order that Israel may increase. This is a refutation of the cherished idea that the church is going to be the recipient of the outpouring of “the latter rain.” God is going to fulfill every word of what is stated in the Book of Joel, but not by means of the church! After the rapture, God is going to pursue His Jewish people, and He clearly states that He intends to use Jews to reach Jews:

**“DO NOT HARM THE EARTH, THE SEA, OR THE TREES TILL WE HAVE SEALED THE SERVANTS OF OUR GOD ON THEIR FOREHEADS. AND I HEARD THE NUMBER OF THOSE WHO WERE SEALED. ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND OF ALL THE TRIBES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WERE SEALED.”** Rev. 7:3-8

The above verses go on to enumerate that 12,000 were sealed from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. Further on in Revelation we are given this amazing testimony of the 144,000 while they were on the earth:

**“THEN I LOOKED, AN BEHOLD, A LAMB STANDING ON MT. ZION, AND WITH HIM 144,000, HAVING HIS FATHER’S NAME...144,000 WHO WERE REDEEMED FROM THE EARTH. THESE ARE THE ONES WHO FOLLOW THE LAMB WHEREVER HE GOES. THESE WERE REDEEMED FROM AMONG MEN, BEING FIRSTFRUITS TO GOD AND TO THE LAMB. AND IN THEIR MOUTH WAS FOUND NO GUILE, FOR THEY ARE WITHOUT FAULT BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD.”** Rev. 14:1-5 excerpts

The 144,000 witnesses are not members of the present cult, Jehovah’s Witnesses (as they claim), neither are they members of an overcoming “Joshua Generation” church in the tribulation. They are “THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL!” as the Scriptures plainly state. Here is the significance: prior to the coming paradigm shift from the church to Israel, we find that God’s witness on earth is indeed the church. Jesus states it plainly “...you shall be witnesses to Me...to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). After the paradigm shift heralded in by the rapture of the faithful Gentile virgins of the church, we are given the above prophetic look at another set of God’s virgins, the 144,000 taken from the 12 tribes of Israel. God has changed from the church being His witnesses to the 144,000 Jews! A paradigm shift has occurred.

Another notable change takes place during the time of the tribulation that supports the concept of a definite paradigm shift having taken place. It deals with the identity of God's "two witnesses":

**"AND I WILL GIVE POWER TO MY TWO WITNESSES, AND ...IF ANYONE WANTS TO HARM THEM, FIRE PROCEEDS FROM THEIR MOUTH...THESE HAVE POWER TO SHUT HEAVEN, SO THAT NO RAIN FALLS IN THE DAYS OF THEIR PROPHECY, AND THEY HAVE POWER OVER WATERS TO TURN THEM INTO BLOOD, AND TO STRIKE THE EARTH WITH ALL PLAGUES, AS OFTEN AS THEY DESIRE."** Rev. 11:4-6

You do not need to be a rocket scientist to be able to figure out that these verses are describing the previous attributes of the prophet Elijah and the law-giver Moses. Luke 9:30 shows that indeed it is Moses and Elijah appearing to Jesus discussing His death. They are His two witnesses. Malachi specifically singles out the return of Elijah at the time of the Day of the Lord (Mal.4:5).

Here is the point: God does not send back to earth the founding church apostles Paul and Peter! Why? Because there has been a paradigm shift. The church is no longer His witness on earth, nor is it the salvation of the Gentiles that God now seeks. The fullness of the Gentiles has come in, and it is now time for "all Israel to be saved." Since it is the salvation of Israel that is now God's objective, He sends back to earth, to His Jewish people whom He seeks to save, the two Jewish leaders who best represent the Law and the prophets, Moses and Elijah. Why? Because it is the Law and the prophets that the Jewish people revere. They will be ready to listen to Moses and Elijah bearing witness of Jesus being the long-awaited Jewish Messiah! The earth will have experienced a great

# PARADIGM SHIFT



The church age will end with Jesus calling five of His seven churches to "repent or else" (Rev. 1-3). Philadelphia is found to have "a little strength" at the coming of Jesus Christ, but due to her faithfulness, will be "kept from the hour of trial that is coming to test all those who dwell on the earth" (Rev. 3:8-10). The rest of the unrepentant churches will inherit the severity of the consequences listed in the "repent or else" clauses. Clearly, it speaks of inheriting the coming tribulation due to their unfaithfulness. Are we heeding the call to "...hear what the Spirit says unto the churches"? (Rev. 3:22).

History will record that the latter-day church has failed miserably to carry on the mandate as did the early church to "provoke the Jew to jealousy" (Rom. 11:11), or to preach the gospel "...to the Jew first..." (Rom. 1:16)

Israel awaits its God-appointed prophetic date with destiny. Hosea quite pin-pointedly proclaims:

**"AFTER TWO DAYS**  
 (2,000 YEARS OF THE CHURCH AGE),  
**HE WILL REVIVE US;**  
**ON THE THIRD DAY**  
 (1,000 YEAR MILLENNIAL REIGN)  
**HE WILL RAISE US UP**  
**THAT WE MAY LIVE IN HIS SIGHT...**  
**HE WILL COME TO US LIKE THE RAIN,**  
**LIKE THE LATTER AND FORMER RAIN TO THE EARTH."**  
 Hos. 6:2-3)

Joel prophesies of Israel:

**"...YOU CHILDREN OF ZION...HE WILL CAUSE THE RAIN TO COME DOWN FOR YOU – THE FORMER RAIN AND THE LATTER RAIN...WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED. FOR IN MT. ZION AND IN JERUSALEM THERE SHALL BE DELIVERANCE...AMONG THE REMNANT WHOM THE LORD CALLS."** Joel 2 excerpts

# PARADIGM SHIFT

“...UNTIL THE FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES HAS COME IN, AND SO ALL ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED, AS IT IS WRITTEN...”

THE END OF THE (2,000 YEAR) CHURCH AGE

THE BEGINNING OF THE (1,000 YEAR) AGE OF ISRAEL

# CHURCH

# ISRAEL

the RAPTURE

“...I MUST DECREASE...”

“...THAT HE MAY INCREASE”

THE PRESENT GENTILE CHURCH AGE

THE FUTURE JEWISH AGE IS BIRTHED

“THE FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES”  
Rom. 11:25

(THE 7 YEAR TRIBULATION)  
“THE TIME OF JACOB’S TROUBLE”  
Jer. 30:7



FEAST OF PENTECOST (BIRTH OF THE CHURCH)

FEAST OF TRUMPETS (RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH)

FEAST OF ATONEMENT (2ND COMING OF CHRIST)

FEAST OF TABERNACLES (1,000 YEAR REIGN OF CHRIST)

One of the ways that I test even my own teaching is to overlay the Feasts of the Lord (Lev.23) upon it. If it aligns with the Feasts, then it is truth. The church was birthed at the Feast of Pentecost when 3,000 souls were added (Acts. 2:1, 2:41). The Gentiles were added about 14 years later to the church (Acts 11:18). Nearly 2,000 years have passed, and we are very near the end of the church age marked by Paul's mystery when "the fullness of the Gentiles has come in" (Rom. 11:25). The next Feast to be fulfilled is the Feast of Trumpets. This is the day of the rapture when Christ Himself will descend with...the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ and those who are alive in Christ will be "caught up to meet Him in the air" (1 Thess. 4:13-18, 1 Cor. 15:51-58). Do not let people tell you "no man knows the day or the hour." We do know the day and the hour according to the Scriptures. It will be on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of Tishri, the specified day of Feast of Trumpets (Lev. 23:24). The hour is revealed as being "the midnight hour" (Mat. 25:6). What we do not know is the year!

After the Rapture on the Feast of Trumpets, the next Feast to be fulfilled is the Day of Atonement. On this specific day, the Lord will appear to Israel bringing salvation to His people (Rev. 1:7, Mat. 24:30, Zech. 12:10-14, 13:1-9). Seven years of tribulation separate Trumpets from the Day of Atonement. God will save one-third of the Jews in this time frame (Zech. 13:8-9). The last Feast is that of Tabernacles which depicts the Millennial reign of Christ as Zechariah Chapter 14 repeats three times. This is "the third day" Hosea spoke of in which God would raise up Israel to reign over all the nations (Hos. 6:1-3, Micah 4:1-8, Amos 9:14-15, Joel 3:12-18, Ezk. 39:21-29, Ezk. 37:25-28.)

There is more that could be said, but as you can see, we lack space to say it. If you are going to rightly divide the Word of truth as we are admonished to do (2 Tim.2:15), then you must make place in your theology for Israel. God is saving two groups of people. Presently the thrust is upon the Gentiles, but a time is coming (perhaps soon) in which there will occur a prophesied "paradigm shift" in which God's thrust of salvation will be the Jewish people. It will not come by means of the church. I pray that I have been able to communicate that fact to you in this newsletter.

THE  
**CHRISTIAN**  
 PERSPECTIVE OF THE PRACTICE OF  
**CREMATION**

The Dec. 5, 1995 issue of USA Today revealed that on the average, 30% of North American funerals were cremations. This same article reports that in 1960 the average was less than 5%. That is a significant increase over a thirty-five year period. By 2004 that average had increased to 47%. Obviously we are witnessing an ever-increasing, trend-setting pace developing in the world in which we live. As a teacher of God's Word, I am ever scrutinizing trends that I see in the world and comparing them to what is recorded in God's Word simply because of the principle that, for the most part, what the world embraces is 180 degrees opposite of what is stated in God's Word. This is borne out to be true because Satan is identified as "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4), the direction or course of this world is guided by Satan (Eph. 2:2), and "the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one" (1 Jn. 5:19). Therefore, it is most likely that increasing trends such as we see in cremation of the body rather than the Scriptural practice of burial, must be deemed as having Satanic influence. What the world tends to endorse is the result of his corruptive and detrimental guidance.

Cremation is a difficult and sensitive subject for me to write about and perhaps for you to read. Considering the high level of cremations that are taking place we, as Christians, are therefore exposed to the dilemma of being personally involved in cremation funerals of loved ones, friends and acquaintances. It is not my purpose to judgmentally criticize what the world accepts as normal behavior. The Scripture plainly states that the people of the world are those "...whose minds the god of this world (age) has blinded..." (2 Cor. 4:4). The world's inhabitants are "having their understanding darkened" (Eph. 4:18), but the believer is called to have "the eyes of [their] understanding enlightened" (Eph. 1:18). Simply put, what the children of darkness choose to do should have no bearing upon the children of light. This newsletter is written to God's people who are instructed to be "not of this world" (Jn. 15:19), to be believers who choose "not to be conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2). Hopefully, we, as the enlightened ones, are those who take their guidance solely from the Scriptures. Consider how Paul states both positive and negative examples of Scripture from which we are to take direction for our lives:

**THE POSITIVE EXAMPLE:**

**"FOR WHATEVER THINGS WERE WRITTEN BEFORE WERE WRITTEN FOR OUR LEARNING, THAT WE THROUGH THE PATIENCE AND HOPE OF THE SCRIPTURES MIGHT HAVE HOPE." Rom. 15:4**

**THE NEGATIVE EXAMPLE:**

**"NOW ALL THESE THINGS HAPPENED TO THEM AS EXAMPLES, AND THEY WERE WRITTEN FOR OUR ADMONITION, ON WHOM THE END OF THE AGES HAVE COME." 1 Cor. 10:11**

Notice that what has been previously written is to be God's counsel for those of us who live in "the end of the ages." God's will in the area of the proper disposal of the body of believers is revealed in His Word. We are going to take a look at what has been recorded in the Scriptures pertaining to the practice of cremation as well as what God's Word has to say about burial.

From the first page you can deduce that I am strongly in favor of the practice of Christian burial rather than the ever increasingly popular preference for cremation. However, I want to stress to all my readers that the act of cremation has no bearing on eternal destiny. Whether one has been cremated or not is not the issue that determines whether one enters heaven or hell. It is only the existence or the absence of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ that makes that determination. Cremation is not a deadly sin unto damnation. However, I do want to convince you that it is a sin against the believer's body. I want to stress however that it is a forgivable sin. Not all sin is the same. Even the Old Testament law made a distinction between sins of ignorance and willful disobedience:

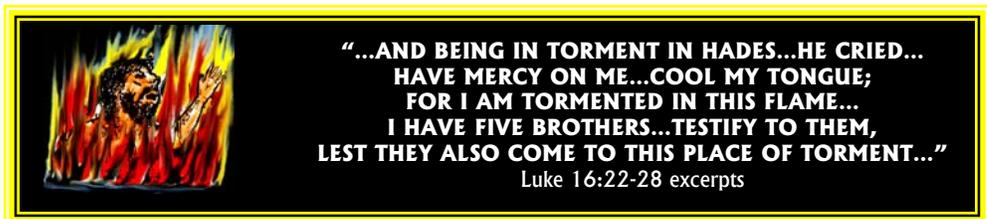
**"YOU SHALL HAVE ONE LAW FOR HIM WHO SINS UNINTENTIONALLY... BUT THE PERSON WHO DOES ANYTHING PRESUMPTUOUSLY (DEFIANTLY)...HE SHALL BE CUT OFF FROM AMONG HIS PEOPLE...BECAUSE HE HAS DESPISED THE WORD OF THE LORD, AND HAS BROKEN HIS COMMANDMENT..."** Numbers 15:29-30

The apostle James obviously has this law in mind as he warns New testament believers:

**"...TO HIM WHO KNOWS TO DO GOOD AND DOES NOT DO IT, TO HIM IT IS SIN."** James 4:17

We cannot change what has been done wrongly in ignorance, but we can, having been illuminated to God's will, do what is right in the future. We can properly choose for ourselves what God desires for us to do with our body at death. This is a personal choice for every believer. The purpose of this newsletter is to seek to convince you to choose burial over cremation. If you are so persuaded by the contents of this newsletter, then I also highly counsel you to share it with all those whom you love so that you, having been illuminated, do not end up in an awkward and most unpleasant situation at their funeral.

As a young minister I remember well the first funeral over which I presided. It was for a man that I did not know personally. However, I was assured by those who asked me to perform the ceremony that he was a "godly man." I quickly realized that I was in deep trouble when I saw a string of men in black across the front row of the church, all wearing white aprons. I had unknowingly committed to take part in a "Christian" burial of a man of high standing in cultic Freemasonry. The gravesite ritual was horrible for me to endure. I watched as a series of mystical ceremonial rituals were performed on the casket just prior to interment. I vowed to God that I would never again be involved in the mixing of pagan rituals with a Christian burial. I share all of this to say that as a minister today, I will not perform a funeral in which there is the cremation of the body. Why so? Because just like "Christian" Freemasonry, the practice of cremation is steeped in ancient paganism. It is a mixing of pagan beliefs and Christian orthodoxy. This is the world in which we live, one of mixture and compromise with pagan beliefs. Often I have attended funerals of unbelievers in which, to my inner agony, I was forced to endure the selective reading of Scriptures of comfort that are solely the property of believers in the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Passages about the wonderful resurrection, and heaven, and the promises of "no more tears, no more crying, no more pain" (Rev. 21:4) being applied to those who were more than likely writhing in pain and agony at that very moment in Hell, just like the man Jesus described in Luke 16:



What a fearful accountability before God such ministers have who haphazardly and carelessly misapply God's words of comfort to those whose destiny is clearly stated as "... anyone not found written in Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire...the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Rev. 20:15, 21:8). Rather, they tritely and selectively apply to any and all the words of Rev. 21:4, "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain..." If possible, the rich man of Luke 16 would tell you that it is untrue for him that there is "no more pain, crying or death"! He is still in Hades awaiting the fearful judgment of the second death of Revelation 20-21 to take place!

If you do any simple research you will find that cremation has its roots firmly entrenched in pagan religions. It is still practiced today by Buddhists and Hindus. It was the religious practice of some early North American Indians. It was practiced by the Hawaiian race prior to it becoming "Christianized" by American missionaries. Europe, prior to Christianity, practiced cremation. It was widespread among the Grecian (800 BCE) and Roman empires (600 BCE). Cremation was never accepted by either Judaism or its offspring, Christianity.

Why the increase in cremation vs. burial?

This is but one of many surveys → posted on the internet that have been taken in an attempt to answer that question. The initial statement recorded in this survey is the primary reason given for preferring cremation over burial, it "saves money."

This is how THE WORLD views cremation, but it is not how THE WORD views it! As followers of Jesus Christ, as those who profess to believe the Word of God to be infallible truth that is applicable for directing the decisions of today's believers, we must be able to list a completely different set of reasons for rejecting cremation and accepting what has been recorded about burial! This survey proves the unregenerate world does not have a clue about the importance of the body in the eyes of God.

	2004 %
Saves money	30
Saves land	13
Simpler	8
Body not in earth	6
Preference	6
No reason to save body	5
Remains/ashes can be strewn	3
Less emotional	3
Remains can be sent to a more meaningful/some other place	3
Don't want bugs eating my body	3
Convenient	2
Claustrophobia	2
Unburdened soul	1
Religion	1
Don't want people to come see me	1
Organ donor	1
Family tradition	1
Other	1
Can hold a memorial at a later date	*
Don't know/Refused	7
Base: Definitely/somewhat likely to choose cremation for myself	(371)

Taken from the 2005 Wirthlin Report.  
\*Indicates less than 0.5%

For the Christian, life's decisions must always be determined from the costly perspective, not from a worldly view such as opting for cremation simply because it "saves money." It is not money that is the issue but rather it is the reverent truth that the body of the believer has been "bought at a price" (1 Cor. 6:19), and I must add, at a costly price! Consider the fullness of what Paul states in this passage:

**"OR DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO IS IN YOU, WHOM YOU HAVE FROM GOD, AND YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN? FOR YOU WERE BOUGHT AT A PRICE: THEREFORE GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY AND IN YOUR SPIRIT, WHICH ARE GOD'S (PROPERTY)."**  
1 Cor. 6:19-20

The body of a Christian is God's property – not our own! Should we then not rely on God's Word to tell us what He wants done with our body after we have finished using it as the temple of the Holy Spirit? Is it now just to be considered some useless thing to be instantly consumed by a destroying fire such as is done with trash? Perhaps I'm being too harsh with my words, but we must think this thing through. Having been the temple of God in life, should the body not be likewise honored in death as long as it is within our power to do so? For a believer, should "saving money" be a deciding factor at all?

**"I BESEECH YOU THEREFORE, BRETHREN, BY THE MERCIES OF GOD, THAT YOU PRESENT YOUR BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE, HOLY, ACCEPTABLE TO GOD, WHICH IS YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE."**  
Rom. 12:1

← Consider also these words of Paul: →

Our life on earth as a follower of Christ is to be one in which our bodies become a living, holy, acceptable sacrifice to God. At the coming of Christ, the believer is to be found sanctified completely, not just in our spirit or in our soul, but also in our body. Most of us will perhaps die before the coming of Christ. Then as an act of faith in the plan of God to resurrect our physical body, should we not bury it with reverence in anticipation of that great event? Is this not the very crux of our faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ? Take the time to read the 15<sup>th</sup> Chapter of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians!

**"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

## THE BIBLICAL ARGUMENT FOR BURIAL OF THE BODY OF A BELIEVER

**"FOR WHATEVER THINGS WERE WRITTEN BEFORE WERE WRITTEN FOR OUR LEARNING, THAT WE THROUGH THE PATIENCE AND HOPE OF THE SCRIPTURES MIGHT HAVE HOPE."**

Rom. 15:4

There are numerous examples in Scripture of the burial of the followers of God, but no record exists of any believer being purposely cremated, although the practice was in existence throughout a heathen world. Here is a list of burial references of the people of God for your consideration:

### EXAMPLES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT:

1. Abraham buried his wife, Sarah ( Gen 23:3-4, 17-20 )
2. Abraham was buried by his sons ( Gen. 25:8-9 )
3. Deborah was buried ( Gen. 35:8 )
4. Rachel was buried by her husband Jacob ( Gen. 35:19-20 )
5. Isaac was buried by his sons ( Gen. 35:29 )
6. Jacob buried his wife Leah in the family tomb ( Gen. 49:31 )
7. Jacob requested to be buried in the same place ( Gen. 47:29-31, 50:2,13 )
8. Moses buried his wife Miriam ( Num. 20:1 )
9. Moses was buried by God Himself! ( Deut. 34:5-6 )
10. Joshua was buried in the land of his inheritance ( Josh. 24:30 )
11. Samuel was honored with a national burial ( 1 Sam. 25:1 )
12. David and his son Solomon were buried in the city of David ( 1 Kin. 2:10, 11:43 )

(There are also numerous references to the burial of the various kings of Judah and Israel)

### EXAMPLES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT:

1. Jesus Christ was buried in another man's tomb ( Mat. 27:57-60, 1 Cor. 15:4 )
2. John the Baptist was buried after he was beheaded ( Mat. 14:12 )
3. Stephen was buried after his martyrdom ( Acts 8:2 )
4. Even Ananias and Sapphira were buried by believers after God slew them for lying ( Acts 5:10 )

From the recorded evidence above, we cannot say that we do not know what is God's will for the body of a believer. How this is borne out in the single fact that God Himself buried the body of Moses! God's people are not fully aware of the significance of the body in God's economy! Have you ever wondered why this scenario took place after the death of Moses?

**"YET MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL, IN CONTENDING WITH THE DEVIL, WHEN HE DISPUTED ABOUT THE BODY OF MOSES...SAID, 'THE LORD REBUKE YOU!'"** Jude 9

God has further need for the body of Moses. He is prophetically to return to earth in his resurrected body as one of God's two witnesses ( see Rev.11). Read this story carefully and note how interesting it is that the world, in retaliation against these two witnesses, "...do not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves" (Rev. 11:9). Is not this an open defiance and mockery against what is known by man to be God's will for the body of His followers? Why do you think that so many martyrs were burned at the stake by the haters of God? It is an open challenge and desire to prevent God's desire for the honor of the burial of a believer in anticipation of the resurrection to come.

As long as it is within the power of the believer to control the destiny of his/her physical body, burial should be that choice. Certainly, recorded history will attest that there has been countless numbers of believers who were burned at the stake for their faith (see Foxe's Book of Martyrs). Others have perished by means of the destructive force of house fires, etc. In such instances, the all-powerful God will not be limited in restructuring the bodies of those believers destroyed in such manner. Adam was created from dust, therefore God can resurrect a destroyed body from burned ash. Even the recent discovery and use of DNA should illustrate that point. It takes very little evidence to establish the DNA of an individual. Do you think God who "numbers the hairs on our head" (Mat. 10:30) does not know the DNA of every person that He created? Cremation cannot, and will not, prevent God from resurrecting the body, even the body of unbelievers (see Rev. 20:12-15).

## THE BIBLICAL ARGUMENT AGAINST CREMATION OF THE BODY OF A BELIEVER

**"NOW ALL THESE THINGS HAPPENED TO THEM AS EXAMPLES, AND THEY WERE WRITTEN FOR OUR ADMONITION, ON WHOM THE END OF THE AGES HAVE COME."**

1 Cor. 10:11

We have seen the positive examples recorded in God's Word supporting burial. What then do we find recorded as negative examples that should convince a believer to shun the practice of cremation? Consider the evidence that God is not only against those who practice cremation, but that He Himself uses fire as a cursive judgment upon the disobedient:

**"THUS SAYS THE LORD: 'FOR THREE TRANSGRESSIONS OF MOAB, AND NOT FOR FOUR; I WILL NOT TURN AWAY ITS PUNISHMENT, BECAUSE HE BURNED THE BONES OF THE KING OF EDMOM TO LIME. BUT I WILL SEND A FIRE UPON MOAB, AND IT SHALL DEVOUR...'"** Amos 2:1-2

**"IF A MAN MARRIES A WOMAN AND HER MOTHER, IT IS WICKEDNESS. THEY SHALL BE BURNED WITH FIRE, BOTH HE AND THEY, THAT THERE MAY BE NO WICKEDNESS AMONG YOU."** Lev. 20:14

**"THE DAUGHTER OF ANY PRIEST, IF SHE PROFANES HERSELF BY PLAYING THE HARLOT, SHE PROFANES HER FATHER. SHE SHALL BE BURNED WITH FIRE."** Lev. 21:9

**"AND IT CAME TO PASS, ABOUT THREE MONTHS AFTER, THAT JUDAH WAS TOLD, SAYING, 'TAMAR YOUR DAUGHTER-IN-LAW HAS PLAYED THE HARLOT; FURTHERMORE SHE IS WITH CHILD BY HARLOTRY.'" SO JUDAH SAID, 'BRING HER OUT AND LET HER BE BURNED!'"** Gen.38:24

**"ISRAEL HAS SINNED...FOR THEY HAVE EVEN TAKEN SOME OF THE ACCURSED THINGS, AND HAVE BOTH STOLEN AND DECEIVED; AND THEY HAVE ALSO PUT IT AMONG THEIR OWN STUFF...THEN IT SHALL BE THAT HE WHO HAS TAKEN WITH THE ACCURSED THING SHALL BE BURNED WITH FIRE, HE AND ALL THAT HE HAS, BECAUSE HE HAS TRANSGRESSED THE COVENANT OF THE LORD, AND BECAUSE HE HAS DONE A DISGRACEFUL THING IN ISRAEL...SO ALL ISRAEL STONED HIM WITH STONES; AND THEY BURNED THEM WITH FIRE AFTER THEY HAD STONED THEM WITH STONES... SO THE LORD TURNED FROM THE FIERCENESS OF HIS ANGER..."** Joshua 7:11,15, 25,26

**"THEN NADAB AND ABIHU, THE SONS OF AARON, EACH TOOK HIS CENSER AND PUT FIRE IN IT, PUT INCENSE ON IT, AND OFFERED PROFANE FIRE BEFORE THE LORD, WHICH HE HAD NOT COMMANDED THEM. SO FIRE WENT OUT FROM THE LORD AND DEVoured THEM, AND THEY DIED BEFORE THE LORD."** Lev. 10:1-2

**"AND A FIRE CAME OUT FROM THE LORD AND CONSUMED THE TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY MEN WHO WERE OFFERING INCENSE..."** Numbers 16:35

**"THEY WENT UP ON THE BREADTH OF THE EARTH AND SURROUNDED THE CAMP OF THE SAINTS AND THE BELOVED CITY. AND FIRE CAME DOWN FROM GOD OUT OF HEAVEN AND DEVoured THEM."** Rev. 20:9

**"AND ANYONE NOT FOUND WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE WAS CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE... THE COWARDLY, UNBELIEVING, ABOMINABLE, MURDERERS, SEXUALLY IMMORAL, SORCERERS, IDOLATERS, AND ALL LIARS SHALL HAVE THEIR PART IN THE LAKE OF FIRE WHICH BURNS WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE, WHICH IS THE SECOND DEATH."** Rev. 20:15, 21:8

Fire is God's judgment upon the unbelieving and the disobedient. The destruction of the physical body by fire was the final act of His wrath upon those who did abominations before His face. Such an eternal fire faces the unbeliever and the disobedient. Considering all the above evidence of how God has used the burning of the bodies of the disobedient and rebellious, why then should a believer in Jesus Christ choose to have his/her body cremated by fire? Do we want to identify with the punishment of the disobedient or with the faithful obedient who reverently bury their body in hope of the resurrection?

Satan "deceives the whole world" (Rev.12:9). If we, as followers of God are not careful to take our direction solely from the Word of God instead of from the misdirection of "the god of this world" (2 Cor.4:4), then we too can be deceived (Mat. 24:24).

**"HOW ARE THE DEAD RAISED UP? AND WITH WHAT BODY DO THEY COME? FOOLISH ONE, WHAT YOU SOW IS NOT MADE ALIVE UNLESS IT DIES. AND WHAT YOU SOW, YOU DO NOT SOW THAT BODY THAT SHALL BE, BUT MERE GRAIN – PERHAPS WHEAT OR SOME OTHER GRAIN. BUT GOD GIVES IT A BODY AS HE PLEASES, AND TO EACH SEED ITS OWN BODY...SO ALSO IS THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD. THE BODY IS SOWN IN CORRUPTION, IT IS RAISED IN INCORRUPTION...IT IS SOWN A NATURAL BODY, IT IS RAISED A SPIRITUAL BODY..."** 1 Cor. 15:35-44 excerpts

It is clear from the language of Paul above, as well as his illustrations pertaining to the resurrection, that he taught (and anticipated) that the body of the believer would be sown into the ground like a seed. It speaks of the natural corruption process that releases the life of the seed ("wheat or mere grain"). The body of the believer is to be planted in the ground, not burnt with fire! The remains are to experience a natural corruption process in the ground. I am grieved when I read the "creative" ways in which the world takes the ashes and disperses them from airplanes and the like. That is fine for the world, but it is not so fine for a believer! Beware of the tradition of men! Jesus reproved the Jews by saying:

**"...LAYING ASIDE THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD, YOU HOLD THE TRADITION OF MEN...ALL TO WELL YOU REJECT THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD THAT YOU MAY KEEP YOUR TRADITION...MAKING THE WORD OF GOD OF NO EFFECT THROUGH YOUR TRADITION WHICH YOU HAVE HANDED DOWN. AND MANY SUCH THINGS YOU DO."** Mark 7:8-13 excerpts



Jesus said these words to the Jewish leaders at His first coming. I wonder if He will utter the same reproof to segments of His church at His second coming? Is not much of the professing church guilty of also replacing the commandments of God with the tradition of men? Things such as "Christmas" and "Easter", things like the compromising marriage of "God and country" in which patriotism to earthly kingdoms replaces the Kingdom of God in the hearts of the political "Christian." The church has openly replaced the Christ-centered and Christ-revealing Holy Feast days of the Lord (Lev. 23) with the more popular but pagan-based commercialized holidays of this world (see Nov. 2005 newsletter on our website.)

Could not the church also be charged by Jesus with these ringing words, "and many such things you do?"

Cremation is becoming a tradition of men readily accepted and practiced in the church of Jesus Christ. The Roman historian Tacitus noted that both the Jews and the Christians "...bury rather than burn their dead" (Hist.5:5). It is somewhat ironic that the Jewish people, steeped in so much tradition, have remained very faithful to this day to the practice of burying their dead, but the church has not. It is the church who has replaced the commandment of God with the tradition of men. In this area of cremation there is no distinction between today's modernized "Roman Empire" and the church of Jesus Christ. We do what they do with their dead.

The secular French historian, Amaury de Reincourt, in his book, *"The Coming Caesars"* made this remarkable and perhaps, prophetic statement:

**"GIVEN SUFFICIENT TIME,  
CHERISHED TRADITIONS BECOME DOGMATIC BELIEFS"**

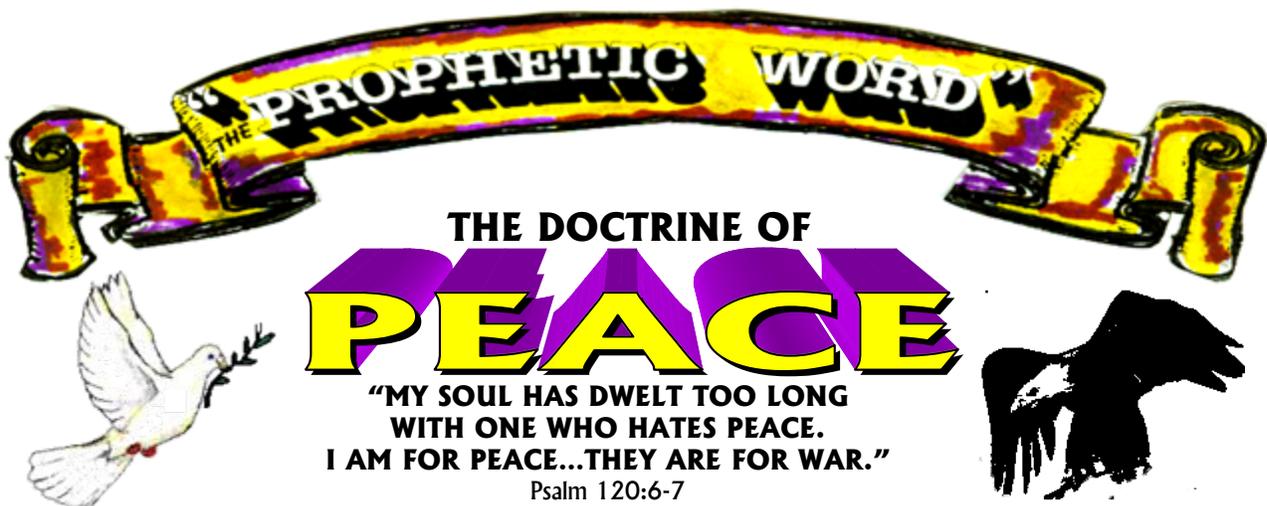


De Reincourt's whole premise in this book is that America is the revived Roman empire and that the presidency will produce the next "world Caesar." (You can order this out-of-print book from our ministry for \$10.95) The early church was a vivid CONTRAST to what the Roman Empire endorsed and practiced. Sadly, this cannot be said of the American church which resides in the midst of the new Roman Empire! The early church was different – dare to be different! Paul exhorts believers with a word that is very applicable to the subject of this newsletter – cremation:

**"DON'T LET THE WORLD AROUND YOU SQUEEZE YOU INTO ITS OWN MOLD, BUT LET GOD RE-MAKE YOU SO THAT YOUR WHOLE ATTITUDE OF MIND IS CHANGED. THUS YOU WILL PROVE IN PRACTICE THAT THE WILL OF GOD IS GOOD, ACCEPTABLE TO HIM AND PERFECT."**

Rom. 12:2 Phillips

May it be said of us as Christians, "...They BURY rather than BURN their dead."



As a teacher of God's Word for over 28 years, I whole-heartedly identify with David's cry of distress as stated above. Over many years, I have observed Christianity in America becoming totally immersed in an on-going and ever-increasing earth-bound war mentality as defining the priorities of modern-day Christendom. Yes, we are called to be soldiers of Jesus Christ who fight the good fight of faith. Paul exhorts the believer to "endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2:3), and "put on the whole armor of God" (Eph. 6:11). That is warfare. However, Paul is most careful to say that our warfare is not fought against flesh and blood, but rather against the wiles of the devil, against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, and against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places (Eph. 6:12). Paul also told Timothy to "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life to which you were called" (1 Tim. 6:12). Spiritual warfare and fighting the good fight of faith has to do with the battle against satanic powers for the souls of men, not for the dominance of earthly kingdoms and governments!

The present thrust of leadership in this country is seeking to take democracy throughout the Muslim world and set the captives free from oppressive regimes. Christendom is solidly behind this objective. A noble cause, but is it a God-given Christian cause? I greatly fear that the message of democracy has subtly replaced the gospel of the Kingdom of God as the "good news", and the emphasis for physical freedom from oppressive regimes has replaced the true spiritual freedom that comes only by means of the gospel. Christians are at war with everything and everybody in this country from the merchants to the physicians, from Congress to the Supreme Court. The present Christian battle is for control of the Supreme Court. The Religious Right recently boasted that there are now five "Christians" on the Supreme Court. However, the Rocky Mountain News just this week made mention that those five seats were all held by Catholics. After centuries of Protestant opposition to Catholicism's anti-biblical doctrines, are we now in agreement and harmony that we can boast of five "Christians" being on the Supreme Court? Is being a Catholic and a Christian now one and the same? Nothing has changed. The real issue is not doctrinal, but rather the anti-abortion cause to reverse the Supreme Court's decision of Roe vs. Wade.

Christianity is known for a host of "anti" agendas. Look at the recent war launched by Christians against the unregenerate merchants that substituted the phrase "Merry Christmas" with "Seasons Greetings." Is this effective witnessing to unbelievers or is it just another religious cause propelled at the expense of the souls of men? Are we not clearly warned by Paul, "...not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers" (2 Tim. 2:14). There is developing in American Christianity an earth-bound militancy that is not in harmony with the Spirit of Christ, and is in total opposition to the teachings of the apostles. There has taken place in this country an exchange of the righteous cause of Christ to "draw all peoples to Myself" (Jn. 12:32), for a multitude of self-centered righteous causes that seek to secure the rights of citizenship in an earthly kingdom. We are fighting for control of America rather than the souls of Americans! Paul was a citizen of Rome by birth but proclaimed, "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil.3:20). Where, dear reader, is your citizenship?

God gives great emphasis in His Word for His people to always maintain a dove mentality of peace among the unregenerate rather than one of open warfare. Peace in the Scriptures is a very diversified subject that is to govern every phase and facet of the Christian life.

The salutation of the Jewish people to one another has always been “Shalom” (peace). Nearly all the New Testament epistles open with variations of the salutation, “Grace to you and peace from God...” We have been well-indoctrinated with the proper importance of grace as New Testament believers, but what about the subject of peace? Let us systematically walk through the biblical emphasis placed on peace. Let us begin with the gospel itself:

## 1. THE GOSPEL IS CALLED “THE GOSPEL OF PEACE”

**“HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF  
THOSE WHO PREACH  
THE GOSPEL OF PEACE,  
WHO BRING GLAD TIDINGS  
OF GOOD THINGS!”**

Rom. 10:15

**“PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF  
GOD THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO  
STAND AGAINST THE WILES OF THE  
DEVIL...AND HAVING SHOD YOUR  
FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF  
THE GOSPEL OF PEACE.”**

Eph. 6:15

Have you ever heard this slant on the gospel? It is to be presented under the banner of “the gospel of peace.” Look at the other passage above in which this phrase, “the gospel of peace” appears. It is listed as part of the armor of God! Our warfare, as stated earlier, is for the souls of men – not the “soil” of men! We are not to be warring over the control of earthly kingdoms, but rather we are fighting Satan and his forces for control and domination of the souls of men. Paul said:

**“BUT EVEN IF OUR GOSPEL IS VEILED, IT 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

The war we are to fight is to promote “the gospel of peace” among the unregenerate. Note it is presented as armor for our feet. Wherever we walk, wherever we go, we are to have our feet shod with “the preparation of the gospel of peace.” Saying to the lost, “Smile, God loves you!” or the now popular cliché, “just believe and receive”, does not convey what is behind God calling it “the gospel of peace.” Let us consider how Paul states the condition of the lost in the sight of God:

**“...HAVING MADE PEACE THROUGH THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS.  
AND YOU, WHO ONCE WERE ALIENATED AND ENEMIES IN YOUR MIND  
BY WICKED WORKS, YET NOW HAS HE RECONCILED.”** Col. 1:20-21

**“THEREFORE, HAVING BEEN JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD  
THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST...FOR IF WHEN WE WERE ENEMIES WE WERE  
RECONCILED TO GOD THROUGH THE DEATH OF HIS SON, HOW MUCH MORE,  
HAVING BEEN RECONCILED, WE SHALL BE SAVED BY HIS LIFE.”** Rom. 5:1,10

**“BUT NOW IN CHRIST JESUS YOU WHO ONCE WERE AFAR OFF  
HAVE NOW BEEN MADE NEAR BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.**

**FOR HE HIMSELF IS OUR PEACE...**

**AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE AFAR OFF...”** Eph. 2:13,14-17

Having our feet shod with “the preparation of the gospel of peace” requires that we let the lost know that they are presently alienated from God and enemies in their mind by wicked works! This is why the gospel always begins with the call to repent ( Mat. 3:2 ,4:17, Mark 1:15, 6:12, Acts 2:38,3:19, 17:30, 26:20,) The lost need to see that they are really lost apart from Jesus Christ restoring “peace with God” (Rom.5:1) The gospel, in essence, is a peace treaty between rebellious, sinful man and a holy, righteous God. The gospel, that is “the gospel of peace,” brings unbelievers into a position of no longer being alienated from God, enemies of God, but rather they enter into a state of “peace with God” (Rom.5:1) solely on the finished work of Jesus Christ.

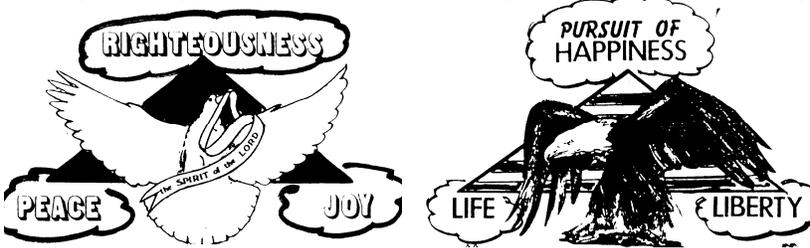
We can see that from the very beginning that Christianity is to be ear-marked as a religion emphasizing peace. It begins that way, and it is to continue to be so in the life of the believer in every relationship, both among believers and unbelievers. Let us consider the Scriptural validity of that position.

We have established that our first encounter with peace is that we become believers by means of embracing "the gospel of peace." Let us now add a second encounter with peace:

## 2. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS GOVERNED BY "PEACE"

**"FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT FOOD OR DRINK, BUT RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE AND JOY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT. FOR HE WHO SERVES CHRIST IN THESE THINGS IS ACCEPTABLE TO GOD AND APPROVED BY MEN. THEREFORE LET US PURSUE THE THINGS WHICH MAKE FOR PEACE AND THE THINGS BY WHICH ONE MAY EDIFY ANOTHER."** Romans 14:17-19

Look carefully at these two illustrations. One states the three governing principles of a spiritual kingdom while the other states the three governing principles of an earthly kingdom:



There is an old English proverb that says, "Birds of a feather, flock together." These are not birds of the same ideology, and yet, they seem to flock together well due to the erroneous mixture of "God and country" (politics and religion) that has permeated American Christianity.

Many Christians steeped in patriotism would feel very comfortable with the contents of this somewhat cynical official Navy poster.

Why so? Because of the adoption of the Constitutional principles of "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness" as being God-inspired, God breathed. This is a big oxymoron!

These kinds of earth-bound values governing physical kingdoms are not in harmony with the stated objectives of the spiritual Kingdom of God, but rather are in direct opposition!



What is acceptable service to God for a Christian is stated above in Romans 14:17-18. It is not "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness", but rather "Righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit!" It is because the Kingdom of God consists of a totally different set of values that Jesus made the statement:

**"MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD. IF MY KINGDOM WERE OF THIS WORLD, MY SERVANTS WOULD FIGHT...FOR THIS CAUSE I HAVE COME INTO THE WORLD, THAT I SHOULD BEAR WITNESS TO THE TRUTH. EVERYONE WHO IS OF THE TRUTH HEARS MY VOICE"** Jn.18:36



As His followers today, are we not also to bear witness to the same truth? Does not Paul call the church "... the pillar and ground of the truth?" (1 Tim. 3:15). Has Jesus changed His mind? Is His kingdom now of this world since the birth of America as "One Nation Under God?" Many Christians live as if it were so. Are we now, as Christians, to be actively part of the pursuit of all who threaten the right to Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness? Happiness is not joy. Happiness is dependent upon what is "happening" to you. Happiness is an earthly, subtle substitute for the joy that comes by means of the Holy Spirit (Hab.3:18)

Righteous wars, bent on taking democracy to the whole world instead of the God-given gospel of peace, are earthly substitutes for true peace that comes through a life-saving, and life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ who "is our peace." Ironically, earthly kingdoms such as America believe that the pathway to peace is through war. Such rationale is not to be part of the principles that govern the subjects (Christians) in the Kingdom of God. God's Kingdom is STILL "not of this world." Therefore, we should not be in harmony with the unregenerate citizens madly pursuing after "life, liberty and happiness." Our focus as believers is a different set of principles, those of "Righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

What have we seen so far about the importance of peace? (1) The gospel itself is to be presented to the lost as "the gospel of peace" in which sinful and rebellious man can obtain "peace with God" rather than remain "alienated and enemies of God." (2) By means of repentance and the new birth one enters the spiritual Kingdom of God which is governed by three unique principles, "righteousness, peace and Joy in the Holy Spirit." Let us now add a third aspect of peace:

### 3. "PEACE" IS A FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AT WORK IN THE BELIEVER



**"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 TWO ARE CONTRARY TO ONE ANOTHER..."**

**THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS LOVE, JOY, PEACE, LONGSUFFERING, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS, SELF-CONTROL...AND THOSE WHO 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. 5:16-25 excerpts

The Kingdom of God is not only governed by peace (along with righteousness and joy) in the Holy Spirit (Rom.14:17-19), but the Christian, as a subject in that Kingdom, is also empowered by the Spirit with nine of His supernatural fruits, among which is the subject of this newsletter "peace." We are going to introduce some of the mandates given to all believers pertaining to the importance of peace. Keep this point in mind that we are talking about a fruit of the Holy Spirit being manifested in the life of the believer who chooses to "walk in the Spirit."

**"BE ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING, BUT IN EVERYTHING BY PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION, WITH THANKSGIVING, LET YOUR REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN TO GOD; AND THE PEACE OF GOD, WHICH SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING, WILL GUARD YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS THROUGH CHRIST JESUS...THE THINGS WHICH YOU LEARNED AND RECEIVED AND HEARD AND SAW IN ME, THESE DO, AND THE GOD OF PEACE WILL BE WITH YOU."**

Phil. 4:6-9

**"...TO BE SPIRITUALLY MINDED IS LIFE AND PEACE."**

Rom. 8:6

**"AND LET THE PEACE OF GOD RULE IN YOUR HEARTS, TO WHICH ALSO YOU WERE CALLED IN ONE BODY..."**

Col. 3:15

**"PURSUE PEACE WITH ALL MEN, AND HOLINESS, WITHOUT WHICH NO ONE WILL SEE THE LORD."**

Heb. 12:14

**"BECOME COMPLETE... BE OF ONE MIND; LIVE IN PEACE; AND THE GOD OF LOVE AND PEACE WILL BE WITH YOU."**

2 Cor. 13:11

**"...HAVE A WALK WORTHY OF THE CALLING WITH WHICH YOU WERE CALLED...ENDEAVORING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE."**

Eph. 4:1-3

**"GOD HAS CALLED US TO PEACE."**

1 Cor. 7:15

**"BE DILIGENT TO BE FOUND BY HIM IN PEACE, WITHOUT SPOT AND BLAMELESS..."**

2 Pet. 3:14

**"BE AT PEACE AMONG YOURSELVES."**

1 Thess. 5:13

**"NOW THE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS SOWN IN PEACE BY THOSE WHO MAKE PEACE."**

James 3:18

**"...YOU WERE CALLED TO THIS, THAT YOU MAY INHERIT A BLESSING...LET HIM SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT."**

1 Pet. 3:9-11

**"BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS, FOR THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF GOD."**

Mat. 5:9



I remember a man of God once saying, "The Christian life is not difficult, it is impossible!" God has so designed the Christian life to require a complete dependence upon the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. Many of the above verses could be elaborated upon, but I would suggest rather a quiet contemplation and meditation on what God requires of His people in this area of "peace." Christianity is to be a religion of peace that governs every facet of our interaction with either believers or unbelievers. As Christians, we are to be ear-marked with the doctrine of peace!

Jesus Himself had a few things to say about the kind of peace that is produced in the life of a believer:



**“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; BUT BE OF GOOD  
CHEER, I HAVE OVERCOME  
THE WORLD.”**  
Jn. 16:33

**“...JESUS CAME AND STOOD IN THE MIDST, AND SAID TO THEM,  
‘PEACE BE WITH YOU’...THEN JESUS SAID TO THEM AGAIN, ‘PEACE TO YOU!  
AS THE FATHER HAS SENT ME, I ALSO SEND YOU.’ AND WHEN HE HAD SAID  
THIS, HE BREATHED ON THEM, AND SAID TO THEM, ‘RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT.’  
...AND AFTER EIGHT DAYS HIS DISCIPLES WERE AGAIN INSIDE...JESUS  
CAME...AND STOOD IN THE MIDST AND SAID, ‘PEACE TO YOU!’”** Jn. 20:19-26

One cannot help but marvel at the consistency of the Scriptures. Jesus, like the apostles He commissioned, always began His sayings with salutations of peace. It was constantly on the lips of Jesus because He was sent from the Father who is called throughout the New Testament Scriptures, “The God of peace” (Heb. 13:20, 1 Thess. 5:23, Phil. 4:9, Rom. 15:33, 16:20)

We can deduce from the above that Jesus imparted this unique, supernatural peace upon His followers through the giving of the Holy Spirit. Remember, that one of His supernatural fruits is “peace.” We must notice too that Jesus distinguishes His kind of peace from the kind that the world strives for which is peace without tribulation. Jesus promises that as long as His followers are in the world, they will have tribulation. However, in the midst of that tribulation, they will be sustained by God’s supernatural peace which is the result of embracing the gospel of peace, a peace that is imparted by the fruit of the Holy Spirit to the believer, a peace that along with righteousness and joy, governs the Kingdom of God while it exists in the midst of the turbulent kingdoms of this world that presently belong to Satan ( Luke 4:5-6). Consider these beautiful promises of peace upon the believer from the Old Testament:

**“YOU WILL KEEP HIM IN PERFECT PEACE, WHOSE MIND IS STAYED ON YOU,  
BECAUSE HE TRUSTS IN YOU...LORD, YOU WILL ESTABLISH PEACE FOR US,  
FOR YOU HAVE ALSO DONE OUR WORKS IN US.”** Isa. 26:3,12

**“THE WORK OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WILL BE PEACE,  
AND THE EFFECT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, QUIETNESS AND ASSURANCE FOREVER. MY PEOPLE  
WILL DWELL IN A PEACEFUL HABITATION, IN SECURE DWELLINGS, AND IN QUIET  
RESTING PLACES, THOUGH HAIL COMES DOWN ON THE FOREST, AND THE CITY IS  
BROUGHT LOW IN HUMILIATION.”** Isa. 32:17-19

Contrast what God promises above to His people with what He “promises” to the wicked:

**“THEIR THOUGHTS ARE THOUGHTS OF INIQUITY; WASTING AND DESTRUCTION ARE IN  
THEIR PATHS. THE WAY OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN, AND THERE IS  
NO JUSTICE IN THEIR WAYS; THEY HAVE MADE FOR THEMSELVES CROOKED PATHS;  
WHOEVER TAKES THAT WAY SHALL NOT KNOW PEACE.”**  
Isa. 59:7-8

**“ ‘THERE IS NO PEACE,’ SAYS THE LORD, ‘FOR THE WICKED.’”**  
Isa. 48:22

Often I have seen on car bumpers this clever play of words on the subject of peace:

**“KNOW JESUS, KNOW PEACE! – NO JESUS, NO PEACE!”**

**"THEIR THOUGHTS ARE THOUGHTS OF INIQUITY; WASTING AND DESTRUCTION ARE IN THEIR PATHS. THE WAY OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN, AND THERE IS NO JUSTICE IN THEIR WAYS; THEY HAVE MADE FOR THEMSELVES CROOKED PATHS; WHOEVER TAKES THAT WAY SHALL NOT KNOW PEACE."** Isa. 59:7-8  
**" 'THERE IS NO PEACE,' SAYS THE LORD, 'FOR THE WICKED.'"** Isa. 48:22



I find the above "promises" God makes to the wicked most enlightening when they are contrasted to the single prophetic mark that Paul states will take place on the earth just prior to the rapture and the beginning of the seven year tribulation:

**"BUT CONCERNING THE TIMES AND THE SEASONS, BRETHREN, YOU HAVE NO NEED THAT I SHOULD WRITE TO YOU. FOR YOU YOURSELVES KNOW PERFECTLY THAT THE DAY OF THE LORD SO COMES AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT. FOR WHEN THEY SAY, 'PEACE AND SAFETY!' THEN SUDDEN DESTRUCTION COMES UPON THEM, AS LABOR PAINS UPON A PREGNANT WOMAN. AND THEY SHALL NOT ESCAPE. BUT YOU, BRETHREN, ARE NOT IN DARKNESS, SO THAT THIS DAY SHOULD OVERTAKE YOU AS A THIEF."**

1 Thess. 5:1-4

There are two ways that this phrase could be interpreted, (1) The world could be crying out FOR "peace and safety," but this would not be a new thing for the world has always cried out for peace in times of war. The other more likely interpretation is (2) the world cries out WHEN "peace and safety" is achieved. I have to see that this would indeed be a notable prophetic sign in line with Paul's overall theme in these passages. The world will have on their lips the words "peace and safety!", but instead, God will see to it that this euphoria will suddenly turn into a time of destruction. Why so? Because God has said, "The way of peace they have not known", and "Whoever takes that way shall not know peace", and "There is no peace for the wicked."

Is the world presently saying, "Peace and safety!" ? No, they are not. Is the world in pursuit of peace and safety? Yes, they are. \_\_\_\_\_→

The events of 9/11 have forever changed America. We are becoming an aggressive, pre-emptive, strike-first nation, the policeman of the whole world. The war on terror, do you think it will be won by America? In light of Paul's prophetic sign of "peace and safety," I am beginning to think that it will. Who stands in the way of the world's "peace and safety"? A radical religion that ironically says it is a "religion of peace."



Hitler rose to power on intense patriotism and the hatred of the Jews. America is feeding on patriotism and the seeds of hating the Muslims are beginning to surface because of what impact they are having on the American dream of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." It is not just happening in America, but in England, Spain, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, France and wherever else the radicals choose to invoke their "religion of peace" through suicide bombers blowing up innocent civilians.

The tribulation will be dominated by "Mystery Babylon" and its leader that Scripture calls "the beast." Here is one interesting prophetic mark which singles out America's role in the world today:

**"SO THEY WORSHIPPED THE DRAGON WHO GAVE AUTHORITY TO THE BEAST, SAYING, 'WHO IS LIKE THE BEAST? WHO IS ABLE TO MAKE WAR WITH HIM.'"** Rev. 13:4

One thing the Muslim nations and their radicals learned very quickly is that you can't wage conventional warfare with America. There is none like her on the earth when it comes to the potential of its military machine. Afghanistan and the evil regime of the Taliban, Iraq and its evil dictator Saddam Hussein, have experienced the wrath and fury of America's military might. Iran and Syria seem to be doing all they can to get in line to be the next to taste its devastating power. If America prevails in its war on terror there may indeed come a brief period in which all the world will lift up a toast and say, "peace and safety!" If and when it happens, the enlightened Christian will know what is just around the corner!

**"BUT YOU, BRETHREN, ARE NOT IN DARKNESS, SO THAT THIS DAY SHOULD OVERTAKE YOU AS A THIEF... FOR WHEN THEY SAY, 'PEACE AND SAFETY!' THEN SUDDEN DESTRUCTION COMES UPON THEM...AND THEY SHALL NOT ESCAPE... BUT YOU, BRETHREN, ARE NOT IN DARKNESS, SO THAT THIS DAY SHOULD OVERTAKE YOU AS A THIEF...FOR GOD DID NOT APPOINT US TO WRATH, BUT TO OBTAIN SALVATION THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST..."** 1 Thess. 5:4,9

One final concept I want to give you concerning the doctrine of peace. It has to do the this mandate given to us as God's people today to

**"PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM:**

**MAY THEY PROSPER WHO LOVE YOU. PEACE BE WITHIN YOUR WALLS,  
PROSPERITY WITHIN YOUR PALACES. FOR THE SAKE OF MY BRETHREN AND  
COMPANIONS, I WILL NOW SAY, 'PEACE BE WITHIN YOU.'  
BECAUSE OF THE HOUSE OF THE LORD OUR GOD, I WILL SEEK YOUR GOOD."**

Psalm 122:6-9



We are not being asked to pray for "peace as the world gives." Jesus has already told us that in the world God's people would have tribulation. Israel is heading for even greater tribulation than she has experienced so far. Zechariah prophesies that two-thirds of the Jewish people will be cut off at the Lord's second coming (Zech. 13:8). That is twice as many as they lost in the Holocaust. How then are we to pray for its peace?

The answer to that question is found in the definition of what constitutes God's peace. In the 16th Chapter of Jeremiah we find God bringing judgment upon the house of Israel for her sins. In this verse lies the definition of peace, and how we can "pray for the peace of Jerusalem.":

**"FOR THUS SAYS THE LORD: 'DO NOT ENTER THE HOUSE OF MOURNING,  
NOR GO TO LAMENT OR BEMOAN THEM;  
FOR I HAVE TAKEN AWAY MY PEACE FROM THIS PEOPLE,'  
SAYS THE LORD, 'LOVINGKINDNESS AND MERCIES.'"**

Jer. 16:5

God defines what His peace is that He is taking away from Israel. It is His "lovingkindness and mercies." How then should we "pray for the peace of Jerusalem?" We should beseech God that He would not take away His lovingkindness or His mercies from His people.

Peace marks the gospel, the Kingdom of God, the Holy Spirit of God, and peace is to mark the people of God, the church. What is the essence of that peace? It is to manifest God's lovingkindness and His mercies to all of mankind, even the Muslims! We are the people who have the real religion of peace!

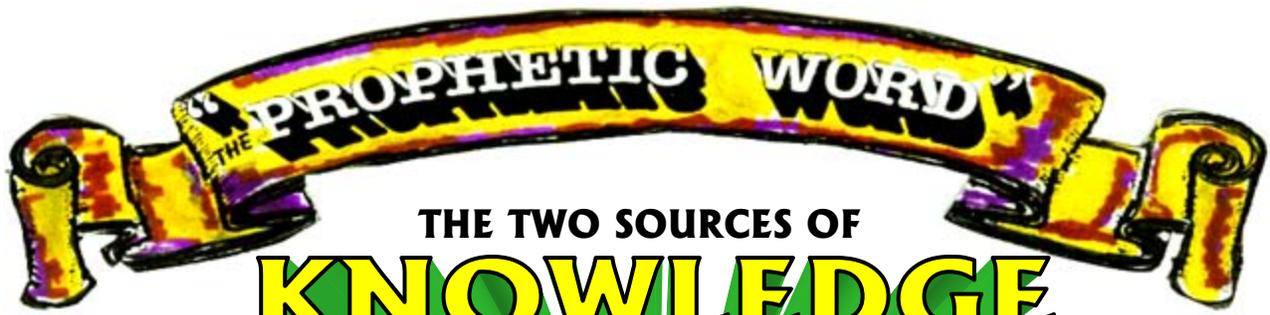


**"THIS IS THE WAY THAT YOU SHALL BLESS THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.  
SAY TO THEM:**

**'THE LORD BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU;  
THE LORD MAKE HIS FACE TO SHINE UPON YOU,  
AND BE GRACIOUS TO YOU;  
THE LORD LIFT UP HIS COUNTENANCE UPON YOU,  
AND GIVE YOU PEACE.'**

**SO SHALL THEY PUT MY NAME ON THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL,  
AND I WILL BLESS THEM."**

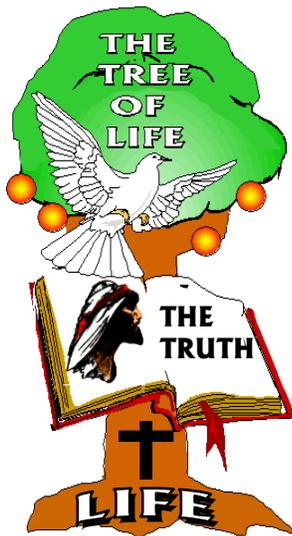
Num. 6:23-27



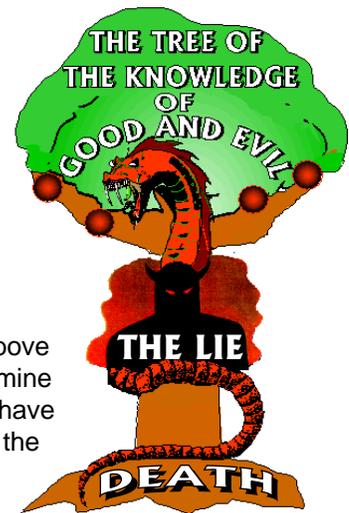
# THE TWO SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE

## PART ONE:

### "THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL"



**"TO WHICH OF THE TREES IN EDEN WILL YOU THEN BE LIKENED IN GLORY AND GREATNESS?"**  
Ezekiel 31:18



I would like to borrow Ezekiel's rhetorical question above and use it as a challenge to us as Christians, to examine the source of any "glory and greatness" that we may have achieved in life. Which of the two "trees in Eden" is the source of our wisdom and knowledge?

**"...THE TREE OF LIFE WAS ALSO IN THE MIDST OF THE GARDEN, AND THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL... OF EVERY TREE OF THE GARDEN YOU MAY FREELY EAT; BUT OF THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL YOU SHALL NOT EAT, FOR IN THE DAY THAT YOU EAT OF IT YOU SHALL SURELY DIE."** Gen. 2:9,16,17

**"THAT WHICH HAS BEEN IS WHAT WILL BE. THAT WHICH IS DONE IS WHAT WILL BE DONE. AND THERE IS NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN...IT HAS ALREADY BEEN IN ANCIENT TIMES BEFORE US."** Ecc. 1:9-10

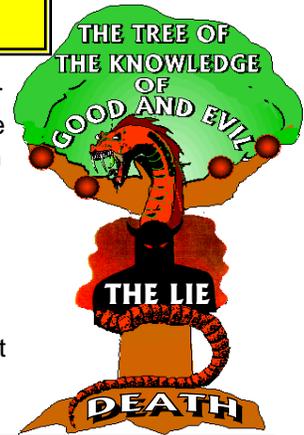
Solomon states, with good reason, that "There is nothing new under the sun..." because history does repeat itself. As an example, consider that basically there are only two types of religions in the world today and both find their origins in Genesis. Cain offered to God a form of religion based on his works, while Abel offered the only religion that is acceptable to God, one based upon God's grace. Christianity stands alone today as the only grace-based religion of salvation. All other "saving" religions are founded on man's works.

The subject of this newsletter is knowledge. The Bible speaks of two kinds of knowledge, and they also have their origins in Genesis. These two sources of knowledge are typified by the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. In part one of this subject I would like to convince you that the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is still available in our day and remains "forbidden fruit" for God's people as it was for Adam and Eve. As it was in ancient times, the fruit of this tree is still Satan's first line of temptation that he sets before God's people today. It worked with Eve, and he is sure it will work on us!

**"...THE TREE OF LIFE WAS ALSO IN THE MIDST OF THE GARDEN, AND THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL... OF EVERY TREE OF THE GARDEN YOU MAY FREELY EAT; BUT OF THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL YOU SHALL NOT EAT, FOR IN THE DAY THAT YOU EAT OF IT YOU SHALL SURELY DIE." Gen. 2:9,16,17**

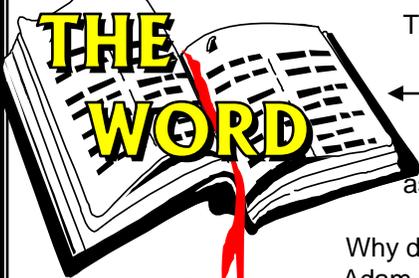


Why does Solomon tell us that there is nothing new under the sun? It is because God is an unchanging God and the devil remains an unchanging devil. It is true because man still has a God-given free will to continually choose between all the "good and evil, blessing and cursing, life and death," that God sets before him. It was true in the paradise setting of the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:9,16,17 above), and it was still true two thousand years later (Deut. 30:15,19 below) that God continued to set before His people, even in the promised land, two sources of choice. God is pro-choice!



**"SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU TODAY LIFE AND GOOD, DEATH AND EVIL... I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU LIFE AND DEATH, BLESSING AND CURSING; THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE..." Deut. 30:15,19**

We are not God's people living in the Garden of Eden as were Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:9,16,17), nor are we among the Children of Israel as they were about to enter into the promised land (Deut. 30:15,19). However we, like they, are a people who have set before us by the same unchanging God, choices between "good and evil, blessing and cursing, and life and death."



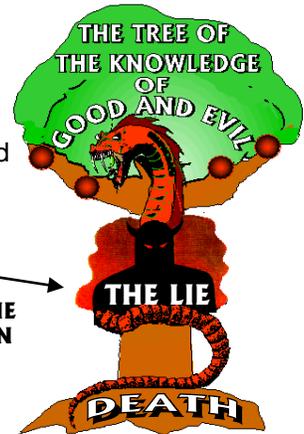
The two sources of knowledge that exist today have their roots either in THE WORD or THE WORLD. God calls us, as He did Adam and Eve, as He did the Children of Israel, to choose between what He allows to be set before us.



Why did God allow Satan to be in paradise along with Adam and Eve? Because he is the alternative choice. Why is the devil still around today? Because he remains the alternative choice to God!



I would suggest to you that the Tree of Life typifies THE TRUTH while the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil represents THE LIE. Consider Paul's prophetic contrast of the truth and the lie:

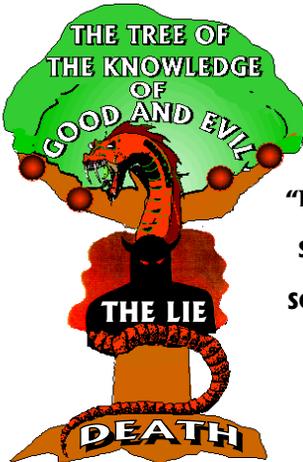


**"THE COMING OF THE LAWLESS ONE IS ACCORDING TO THE WORKING OF SATAN...WITH ALL UNRIGHTEOUS DECEPTION AMONG THOSE WHO PERISH, BECAUSE THEY DID NOT RECEIVE THE LOVE OF THE TRUTH, THAT THEY MIGHT BE SAVED. AND FOR THIS REASON, GOD WILL SEND THEM A STRONG DELUSION, THAT THEY SHOULD BELIEVE THE LIE, THAT THEY ALL MAY BE CONDEMNED WHO DID NOT BELIEVE THE TRUTH BUT HAD PLEASURE IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS....**

**BUT WE ARE BOUND TO GIVE THANKS TO GOD ALWAYS FOR YOU, BRETHREN BELOVED BY THE LORD, BECAUSE GOD FROM THE BEGINNING CHOSE YOU FOR SALVATION THROUGH SANCTIFICATION BY THE SPIRIT AND BELIEF IN THE TRUTH..." 2 Thess. 2:9-13**

Although God is the author of the truth and Satan of the lie, it is God who will eventually allow the lie to replace the truth. It is God Almighty, the righteous Judge, who will allow Antichrist's "unrighteous deception" to permeate the earth in the last days. It is imperative for us as members of the church which bears the title "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15), that we be found walking in the truth rather than being seduced by the lie of Satan.

**"THAT WHICH HAS BEEN IS WHAT WILL BE. THAT WHICH IS DONE IS WHAT WILL BE DONE. AND THERE IS NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN...IT HAS ALREADY BEEN IN ANCIENT TIMES BEFORE US."**  
Ecc. 1:9-10



THE LIE is going to deceive the whole world during the appointed time of the Lawless One. To see the foundational basis upon which the lie is built, we need only to consider what Genesis records of Satan's deceptive sales pitch to Eve pertaining to the benefits of eating from the forbidden Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil:

**"NOW THE SERPENT WAS MORE CUNNING THAN ANY BEAST OF THE FIELD WHICH THE LORD GOD HAD MADE. AND HE SAID TO THE WOMAN... 'YOU WILL NOT SURELY DIE. GOD KNOWS THAT IN THE DAY YOU EAT OF IT YOUR EYES WILL BE OPENED, AND YOU WILL BE LIKE GOD, KNOWING GOOD AND EVIL.' SO WHEN THE WOMAN SAW THAT THE TREE WAS GOOD FOR FOOD, THAT IT WAS PLEASANT TO THE EYES, AND A TREE DESIRABLE TO MAKE ONE WISE, SHE TOOK OF ITS FRUIT AND ATE."** Gen. 3:1-6 excerpts

Basically, Satan spun the lie that this tree produces a trinity of hidden knowledge that God was keeping from Adam and Eve. Their eyes would be opened to:

**SELF-CENTERED KNOWLEDGE THAT PUFFS UP**  
(PROMOTES PRIDE IN MAN)

1. **KNOW HOW TO "BE LIKE GOD"**
2. **KNOW HOW TO "MAKE ONESELF WISE"**
3. **KNOW "...GOOD AND EVIL"**

However, we must remember that this is a sales pitch coming from the one whom Jesus described as:



**"...HE WAS A MURDERER FROM THE BEGINNING, AND DOES NOT STAND IN THE TRUTH, BECAUSE THERE IS NO TRUTH IN HIM. WHEN HE SPEAKS A LIE, HE SPEAKS FROM HIS OWN RESOURCES, FOR HE IS A LIAR, AND THE FATHER OF IT...."** John 8:44-45

The Scriptures do teach that we are to "be like God" in that we are to be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29). It is true that we are to "make oneself wise" in that we are to get wisdom as the principal thing (Prov. 4:7), and as mature believers, we are called to "know good and evil" by having our senses trained to discern both good and evil (Heb.5:14).

Satan is not only the father of lies in whom there is no truth, but he is also "the god of this world (age) according to the apostle Paul (2 Cor. 4:4). The apostle John states that "...the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one" (1 Jn. 5:19). Paul warns that the course of this world is according to Satan's direction as "the prince and power of the air" (Eph. 2:2). This present world (age) belongs to Satan.



John warns New Testament believers not to love the world or the things in it because "all that is in the world (lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh and the pride of life) is not of the Father" (1 Jn. 2:15-16). What is John warning about except the forbidden fruit that Satan originally sold to Eve in the garden – the fruit that comes from eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil?

- "SO WHEN THE WOMAN SAW THAT THE TREE WAS GOOD FOR FOOD..."** Gen. 3:6 → **THE LUST OF THE FLESH**
- "...THAT IT WAS PLEASANT TO THE EYES..."** Gen. 3:6 → **THE LUST OF THE EYES**
- "...AND A TREE DESIRABLE TO MAKE ONE WISE..."** Gen. 3:6 → **THE PRIDE OF LIFE**

**"THAT WHICH HAS BEEN IS WHAT WILL BE. THAT WHICH IS DONE IS WHAT WILL BE DONE. AND THERE IS NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN...IT HAS ALREADY BEEN IN ANCIENT TIMES BEFORE US." Ecc. 1:9-10**

### LUST OF THE FLESH



**"...THE TREE WAS GOOD FOR FOOD..."**  
Gen. 3:6

As God's people, are we following right along with this Satanically deluded world that decides for itself what is "good for food" rather than believing what God's Word clearly states as food to be eaten and food to be avoided? (Deut.14, Lev. 11)

Why is it that America, the richest nation in the world, has the poorest health and the highest cancer rate? Satan deceived Eve to believe his fruit was "good for food" although God said it was forbidden. Can it be that that we have come to believe that which God said was unclean is now clean? Indeed, "...that which has been is what will be...it has already been in ancient times before us."

### LUST OF THE EYES

**"...THAT IT WAS PLEASANT TO THE EYES..."**  
Gen. 3:6

How could Eve (or us today) view something that God forewarned would lead to death and see it as "pleasant to the eyes"? Because Satan told her just the opposite of what God told her, "You will not surely die." She believed THE LIE rather than THE TRUTH. Why? Because the lie is easier to digest than the truth. The carnal man wants a religion without consequences. Are we today looking longingly at things that potentially can kill us spiritually, but believing the doctrinal lie of Satan of "Once save, always saved," and "Unconditional eternal security"?

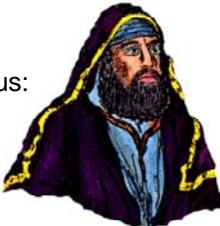
**SELF-CENTERED KNOWLEDGE THAT PUFFS UP (PROMOTES PRIDE IN MAN)**

### THE PRIDE OF LIFE

**"...AND A TREE DESIRABLE TO MAKE ONE WISE..."**  
Gen. 3:6

This is where I would like to spend the rest of this newsletter's thrust. Do you think that the church in America is feeding God's people a steady diet of knowledge that is SELF-CENTERED and promotes PRIDE? I do, and I hope to convince you that what is going on under the guise of "spiritual truth" is actually knowledge from Satan's "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil."

Paul warns us:



**...WE KNOW THAT WE ALL HAVE KNOWLEDGE. KNOWLEDGE PUFFS UP... IF ANYONE THINKS THAT HE KNOWS ANYTHING, HE KNOWS NOTHING YET AS HE OUGHT TO KNOW."**

1 Cor. 8:1-2

**"GUARD WHAT WAS COMMITTED TO YOUR TRUST, AVOIDING THE PROFANE AND VAIN BABBLINGS AND CONTRADICTIONS OF WHAT IS FALSELY CALLED KNOWLEDGE - BY PROFESSING IT, SOME HAVE STRAYED CONCERNING THE FAITH..."**

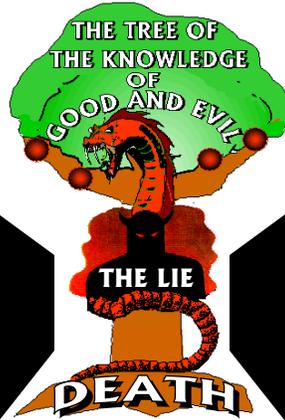
1 Timothy 6:20-21

Paul is speaking negatively about what is "falsely called knowledge." His warning is against the kind of knowledge that "puffs up." This type of knowledge is filled with "profane and vain babblings and contradictions" to what is revealed in God's Word. Such knowledge was being embraced in Paul's day (see Gnosticism) and was causing some to "stray from the faith." It is still going on in our day. The modern-day church is filled with self-centered knowledge that puffs up believers with pride. We are inundated with self-help, feel-good programs bent on sanctifying self-centeredness, self-importance, self-acceptance, self-awareness, self-love, and self-dependence. The church is "going down to Egypt for its help" (see Isa. 30:1-5, 31:1-3). The church is readily endorsing the world's cherished "12-step programs" as in harmony with God's Word, although it promotes developing a comfortable god of one's own imagination rather than embracing the image of God in the Bible. Also, problems like alcoholism and drug addiction are no longer identified as sin as the Bible plainly states, they are now considered to be "diseases." Soon this comfortable label will be applied to addiction to pornography, homosexuality and child molestation. The world's cherished principles of Freudian psychology are now widely accepted as "Christian psychology." That philosophy is an oxymoron filled with "profane and vain babblings and contradictions" with what is stated in God's Word!

**"THAT WHICH HAS BEEN IS WHAT WILL BE. THAT WHICH IS DONE IS WHAT WILL BE DONE. AND THERE IS NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN...IT HAS ALREADY BEEN IN ANCIENT TIMES BEFORE US."**  
 Ecc. 1:9-10

**IN TIMES PAST**

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



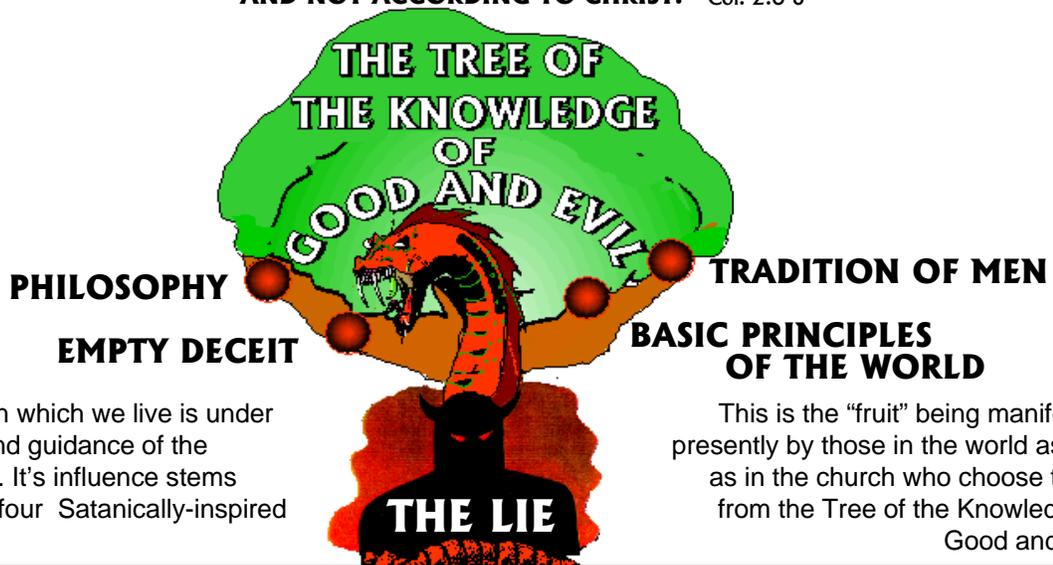
**IN THE FUTURE**

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

God's Word explicitly reveals that THE PAST as well as THE FUTURE contain a conflict between the truth and the lie. Are we to ignorantly believe that THE PRESENT in which we live is not also marked with this same conflict?

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

**"AS YOU HAVE THEREFORE RECEIVED CHRIST JESUS THE LORD, SO WALK IN HIM, ROOTED AND BUILT UP AND ESTABLISHED IN THE FAITH, AS YOU HAVE BEEN TAUGHT, ABOUNDING IN IT WITH THANKSGIVING. BEWARE LEST ANYONE CHEAT YOU THROUGH PHILOSOPHY AND EMPTY DECEIT, ACCORDING TO THE TRADITION OF MEN, ACCORDING TO THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE WORLD, AND NOT ACCORDING TO CHRIST."** Col. 2:6-8



The world in which we live is under the sway and guidance of the wicked one. It's influence stems from these four Satanically-inspired principles.

This is the "fruit" being manifested presently by those in the world as well as in the church who choose to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

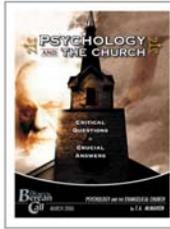
**"...EVERY GOOD TREE BEARS GOOD FRUIT, BUT A BAD TREE BEARS BAD FRUIT. A GOOD TREE CANNOT BEAR BAD FRUIT, NOR CAN A BAD TREE BEAR GOOD FRUIT... THEREFORE BY THEIR FRUITS YOU SHALL KNOW THEM."** Mat. 7:17-20

Limited space prevents me from greatly elaborating on these four subtle substitutes capable of cheating us of what is available in Christ. However, let me give you a good, vivid definition of each one and comment on them as space permits:

<http://www.thebereancall.org>

**"BEWARE LEST ANYONE CHEAT YOU THROUGH  
~ PHILOSOPHY ~**

**"STORING UP ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORKINGS OF THE MIND... THE LOVE OR PURSUIT OF THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE... A QUEST FOR TRUTH BY MEANS OF LOGICAL OR INTELLECTUAL REASONING... SPECULATIONS...THEORIES... PLAUSIBLE CONCEPTS... EXPLORING THE MENTAL POWERS OF LOGIC AND REASONING... DEVELOPING A LONG TERM COURSE FOR LIVING A DESIRABLE LIFE..."**



This website has a wealth of information that will help you to see what is happening to the church through the acceptance of the worldly principles of psychology as being "Christian."

It also warns against the 12- step programs as being in harmony with the Scriptures.

Nothing is further from the truth.

The wisdom of psychology looks within man for the answers to life. God's Word tells us, "in me...nothing good dwells" (Rom. 7:18). The answers to man's problems require that we look into who God is in us for "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil.4:13).

**"BEWARE LEST ANYONE CHEAT YOU THROUGH  
~ EMPTY DECEIT ~**

**"MADISON AVENUE TECHNIQUES" CRAFTY DECEPTION, THE PERVERSION OF TRUTH FOR THE PURPOSE OF MISLEADING, MISGUIDING... FRAUD, TRICKERY, LIES... TO DECEIVE BY MEANS OF FALSIFIED EVIDENCE... GUILF AND CLEVER MANEUVERING, OR MANIPULATION OF TRUTH TO GAIN ADVANTAGE... UNFULFILLED PROMISES..."**

This world will promise you anything, but deliver little or nothing of that which is promised. Why? Because its promises are filled with "empty deceit." What else can one expect from a world which "...lies under the sway of the wicked one" (1 Jn. 5:19), who is also called "the father of lies" (Jn. 8:44).

God's promises are based on truth and rest firmly on this stated fact, "...for it is impossible for God to lie (therefore) we have strong consolation...to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast..." (Heb. 6:18-19). Whatever is necessary for life and godliness has already been given to us in the form of "...exceedingly great and precious promises" (2 Pet. 1:4).

**"BEWARE LEST ANYONE CHEAT YOU THROUGH  
~ TRADITION OF MEN ~**

**"THE HANDING DOWN OF CHERISHED OPINIONS AND IDEALS... BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS HANDED DOWN BY WORD OF MOUTH... PRACTICES AND CUSTOMS TRANSFERRED FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION... AN INHERITED OR ESTABLISHED WAY OF THINKING OR PERFORMING THAT IS COMMONLY ACCEPTED AS HISTORICAL, BUT USUALLY LACKING EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT ITS CLAIM..."**

The traditions practiced by the world in which we live should never be viewed as "harmless traditions." Jesus warned that it was such traditions that caused them to be guilty of "...laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men...all too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition...making the Word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do" (Mark 7:8,9,13). Not only can Judaism be charged with this selective sin, but also Catholicism ranks as "the king of tradition." As Protestant believers, we would do well to examine the degree to which we too have replaced truth with tradition. Start with Christmas and Easter.

**"BEWARE LEST ANYONE CHEAT YOU THROUGH  
~ THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE WORLD ~**

**A FUNDAMENTAL LAW GOVERNING CONDUCT...A BELIEF THAT EXERCISES A DIRECTING INFLUENCE ON BEHAVIOR SUCH AS POLITICS, COMMERCE AND RELIGION...**



**"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. 2:16

Politics, commerce and religion in themselves easily qualify as being among "the basic principles of the world" in which we live. However, the apostle John is even more specific as to what these "basic principles of the world" are. They are "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life", the same three Satan used on Eve in the Genesis account, the same three he tried on Jesus in the wilderness temptation (Mat. 4:5-11), and are the same three that he presently uses on every believer to get them to worship something other than God. We must strive to remain a people who get their principles from THE WORD rather than from THE WORLD.

**THE LUST OF THE FLESH:**  
 "A PRINCIPLE FEEDING SELF-INDULGENCE"

AN INWARD FOCUS, OBSESSION, UPON AN UNHEALTHY APPETITE FOR PASSIONATE CRAVINGS, SEXUAL DESIRES, LONGINGS FOR SELF-GRATIFYING THINGS OR PLEASURES, EXCESSIVE SELF-INDULGENCE, PRACTICING AN OVER-INDULGENCE IN AREAS LIKE WHAT WE BUY, WHAT WE EAT, WHAT WE DRINK, WHAT WE WEAR, WHAT WE DRIVE, WHERE WE LIVE, ETC.

**THE LUST OF THE EYES:**  
 "A PRINCIPLE FEEDING COVETOUSNESS"

IMPACTED, TEMPTED, BAITED BY WHAT WE CAN SEE WITH OUR EYES THAT THIS WORLD POSSESSES. THE VISIBLE TANGIBLE THINGS SET BEFORE US BY THE GOD OF THIS WORLD:  
 "ALL THESE THINGS I WILL GIVE YOU..."  
 "THE DESIRE TO BE RICH" THAT CAUSES GOD'S PEOPLE TO:  
 "FALL INTO TEMPTATION AND A SNARE, AND INTO MANY FOOLISH AND HARMFUL LUSTS WHICH DROWN MEN IN DESTRUCTION AND PERDITION...AND STRAY FROM THE FAITH IN THEIR GREEDINESS, AND PIERCE THEMSELVES THROUGH WITH MANY SORROWS..." (1 Tm. 6:9-10)

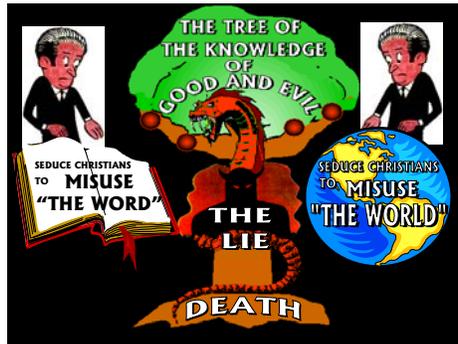
**THE PRIDE OF LIFE:**  
 "A PRINCIPLE FEEDING SELF-IMPORTANCE"

TO STAND OUT IN THE CROWD... OBSESSION WITH OUTWARD APPEARANCES BEFORE OTHERS. DRIVEN BY SUCCESS... THE DESIRE FOR RECOGNIZED ELITISM, SUPERIORITY, OR AUTHORITY... STRIVING FOR POWER, CONTROL OR POSITION. THE OBSSIVE NEED TO BE ADMIRER, ENVIED, RESPECTED, LOOKED UP TO...

Perhaps these definitions will help you to see what kind of things fall under the categories of "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life."

To sum up how Satan uses the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil" today, we need to see that basically he will seek to deceive Christians to either misuse the Word or misuse the world:

An example of Christians being deceived to "misuse the Word" for their own self-interests:



An example of Christians being deceived to "misuse the world" for their own self-interests:



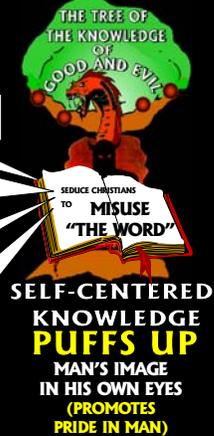
**"FAITH FOR PROSPERITY GOSPEL"**

"SEED FAITH AND 100 FOLD RETURN PRINCIPLES"

"THOUGH HE WAS RICH, YET FOR YOUR SAKES HE BECAME POOR, THAT YOU THROUGH HIS POVERTY MIGHT BECOME RICH"

"I AM THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS"

"HAVE GOD'S KIND OF FAITH"



"...AVOIDING... WHAT IS FALSELY CALLED KNOWLEDGE – BY PROFESSING IT, SOME HAVE STRAYED CONCERNING THE FAITH..."

1 Timothy 6:20-21

**"MIXTURE OF POLITICS AND RELIGION"**

"THIS IS ONE NATION UNDER GOD - GOD'S NEW ISRAEL"

"GOD HAS GIVEN YOU INALIENABLE RIGHTS TO PURSUE LIFE, LIBERTY AND HAPPINESS"

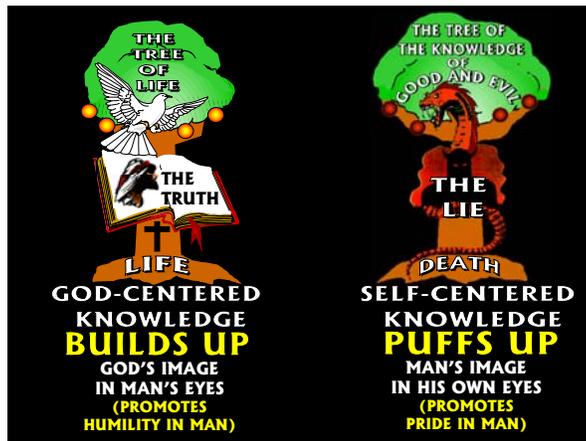
"GET BUSY AND ELECT A CHRISTIAN PRESIDENT FOR THIS CHRISTIAN NATION"

"LEGISLATE GOD'S LAWS OF MORALITY ON THE IMMORAL"



"...SOME DO NOT HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. I SPEAK THIS TO YOUR SHAME."  
 1 Cor. 15:34

"LET US KNOW, LET US PURSUE THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD."  
 Hosea 6:3

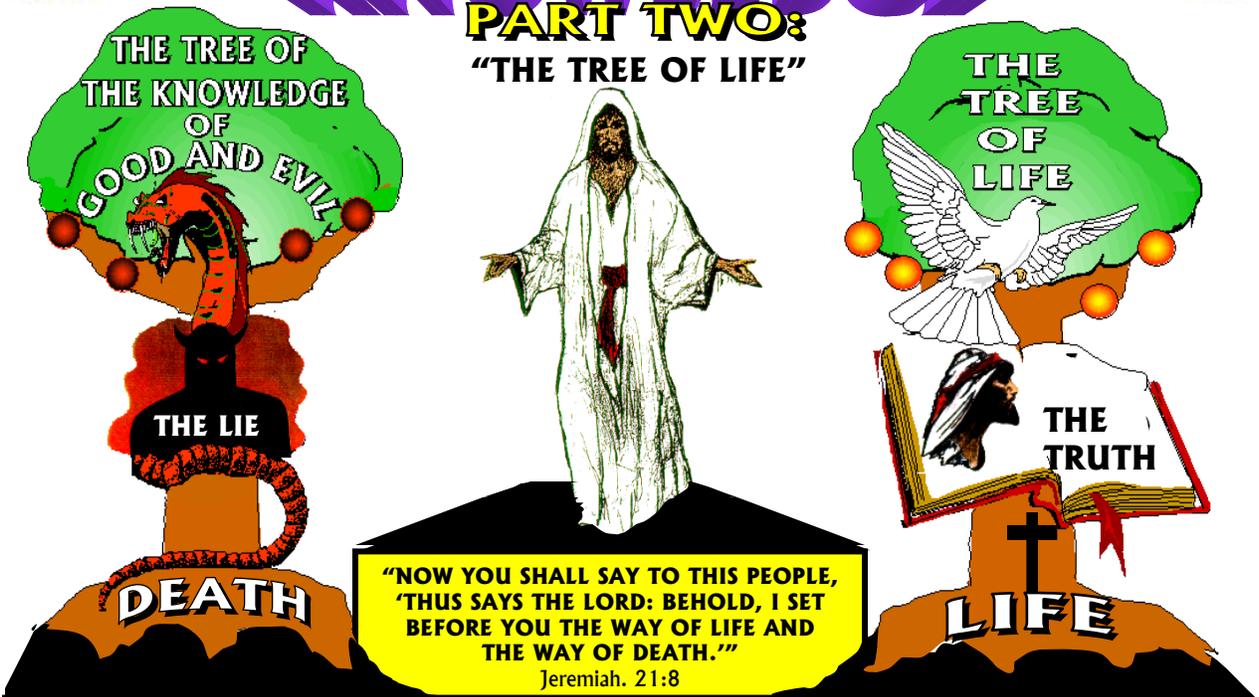


In our next newsletter, Lord willing, we will examine the contrast between what is "falsely called knowledge" (the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil) with what is true knowledge namely, the knowledge of God (the Tree of Life).

THE "PROPHETIC WORD"

# THE TWO SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE

## PART TWO: "THE TREE OF LIFE"



**"SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU TODAY LIFE AND GOOD, DEATH AND EVIL... I CALL HEAVEN AND EARTH AS WITNESSES TODAY AGAINST YOU, THAT I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU LIFE AND DEATH, BLESSING AND CURSING; THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE..."** Deuteronomy 30:15,19

When it comes to placing responsibility solely upon His own people to make life-changing decisions, God's Word will bear witness that He is definitely "pro-choice." He always has been, is presently, and will remain so in the future, because He testified of Himself in the Old Testament, "I am the Lord, I do not change" (Mal.3:6), and likewise, in the New Testament, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines." (Heb. 13:8-9).

When it comes to assuming responsibility for making decisions between "good and evil, life and death, blessing and cursing," we better be a people who are not "carried about with various and strange doctrines" such as the overblown Calvinist view of the sovereignty and predestination of God that divinely protects saved people from the consequences of their own choices. Neither should we take false security in the doctrinal blanket of "once saved, always saved," and "unconditional eternal security." These are "various and strange doctrines" that contain principles contrary to what the unchanging God records in His Word. Adam and Eve had choices set before them even in paradise. The children of Israel had choices set before them in the wilderness. And as stated above, Jeremiah the prophet is warning God's people that they can choose either "the way of life" or "the way of death." This was not written to unbelievers but rather to Israel – God's chosen people. Paul likewise gives warning to the church:

**"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. AND LET US NOT GROW WEARY WHILE DOING GOOD, FOR IN DUE SEASON WE SHALL REAP IF WE DO NOT LOSE HEART."** Galatians 6:7-9

We can do little in the way of review of what was covered in last month's newsletter, you need to read it. We looked at the fruit that the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil produces in the life of a Christian whom Satan deceives today as he did with Eve in the garden. Here is what "knowledge" Satan, the father of lies, promised Eve that this tree could produce:



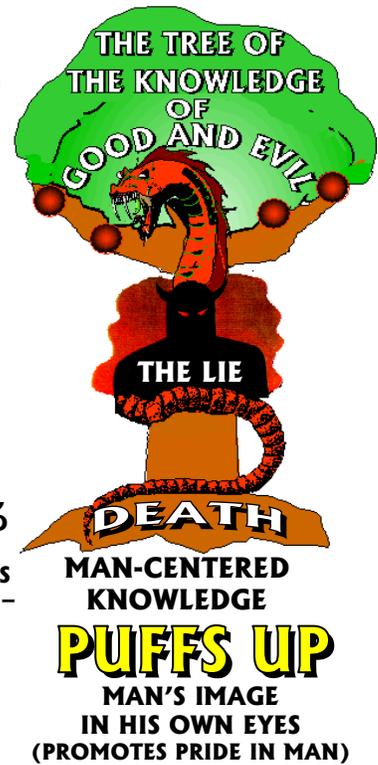
Paul gives ample warning to the church that this type of man-centered knowledge was still available in his day:



**"...WE KNOW THAT WE ALL HAVE KNOWLEDGE. KNOWLEDGE PUFFS UP... IF ANYONE THINKS THAT HE KNOWS ANYTHING, HE KNOWS NOTHING YET AS HE OUGHT TO KNOW."**  
1 Cor. 8:1-2

**"GUARD WHAT WAS COMMITTED TO YOUR TRUST, AVOIDING THE PROFANE AND VAIN BABBLINGS AND CONTRADICTIONS OF WHAT IS FALSELY CALLED KNOWLEDGE – BY PROFESSING IT, SOME HAVE STRAYED CONCERNING THE FAITH..."**  
1 Timothy 6:20-21

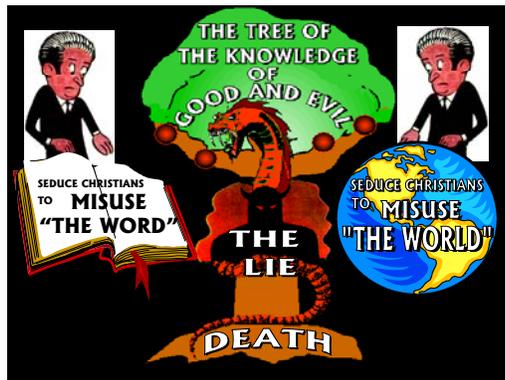
**"...SOME DO NOT HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. I SPEAK THIS TO YOUR SHAME."** 1 Cor. 15:34



**"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

In our last newsletter, I sought to give definition and insight into these four satanic subtle substitutes for what is true knowledge – the knowledge of God. The church today lives in the prophesied time in which "knowledge will increase" (Dan. 12:4). I greatly fear that the kind of knowledge circulating in the church (especially here in America) is what Paul labels as "...what is falsely called knowledge" which causes God's people to stray from what the Bible presents as "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). We are inundated with unbiblical self-help, self-esteem, feel-good philosophies that are totally man-centered and devoid of the power of God. Man-made traditions have made much of the Word of God of no effect in our day just as it did in the time of Jesus (see Mark 7:6-13). We find more emphasis placed on the basic principles of the world such as politics, commerce and man-made religion guiding the church than the basic principles of God's Word. Leonard Ravenhill lamented, "The church is in the world and the world is in the church." We use the world's slick methods of fundraising to cause "dynamic growth" in our churches. The churches are becoming more and more worldly so that the worldly are more comfortable sitting in the church. The "meet them where they are at" philosophy will keep them where they are at – carnal and worldly minded, a churched people who continue "behaving like mere men" (1 Cor. 3:3)

Satan's use of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil thrives in the church today on the willful misuse of the Word of God for sanctifying self-indulgence and covetousness. The American church is engulfed with "faith for prosperity" teachers who huckster the wares of "seed faith" and "hundred-fold return" get-rich-quick schemes.



The other way this tree thrives among God's people is through the misuse of the world. The political thrust of Christians to rule America with God's laws legislated on the unregenerate is totally without biblical basis. What ever happened to Jesus' declaration that "My Kingdom is not of this world?" (Jn. 18:36).

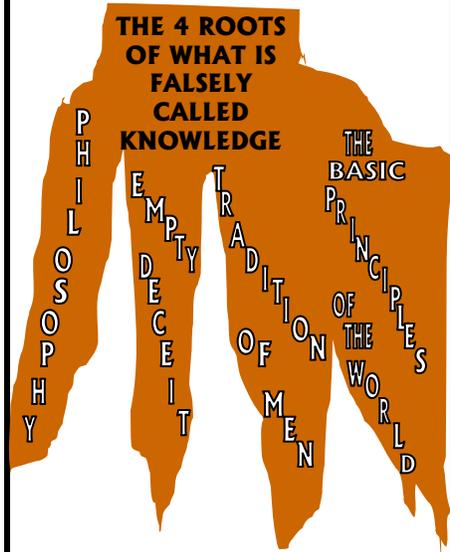
**"SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU TODAY LIFE AND GOOD, DEATH AND EVIL... I CALL HEAVEN AND EARTH AS WITNESSES TODAY AGAINST YOU, THAT I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU LIFE AND DEATH, BLESSING AND CURSING; THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE..."** Deuteronomy 30:15,19



**MAN-CENTERED KNOWLEDGE**

**PUFFS UP**

**MAN'S IMAGE IN HIS OWN EYES (PROMOTES PRIDE IN MAN)**



**"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**

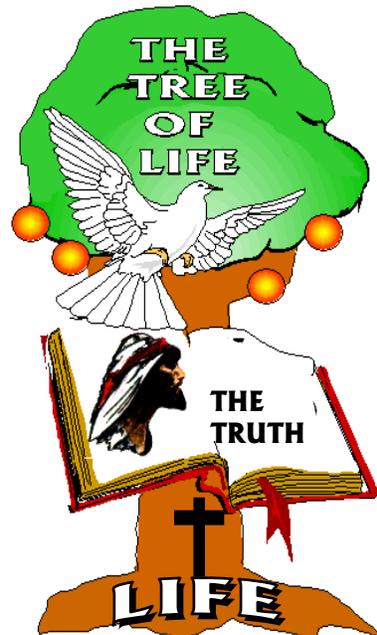
**"NOW YOU SHALL SAY TO THIS PEOPLE, 'THUS SAYS THE LORD: BEHOLD, I SET BEFORE YOU THE WAY OF LIFE AND THE WAY OF DEATH.'" Jeremiah. 21:8**



- What God set before Adam and Eve He continues to set before you and me;
- (1) a tree which produces forbidden fruit.
  - (2) a tree which bears permissible fruit.

As it was for Adam and Eve, it remains for us today; to make a choice between fruit ("knowledge") that produces death ("in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Gen. 2:17) and a tree which produces fruit ("knowledge") unto eternal life (Rev. 22:2).

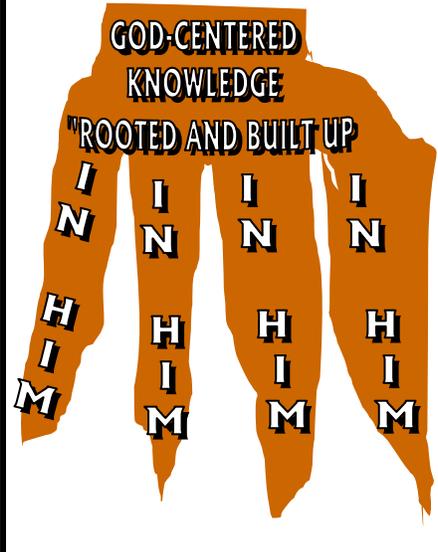
Jesus Christ is the Tree of Life personified. The Christian is to avoid all knowledge that can cheat him of being made complete in Christ:



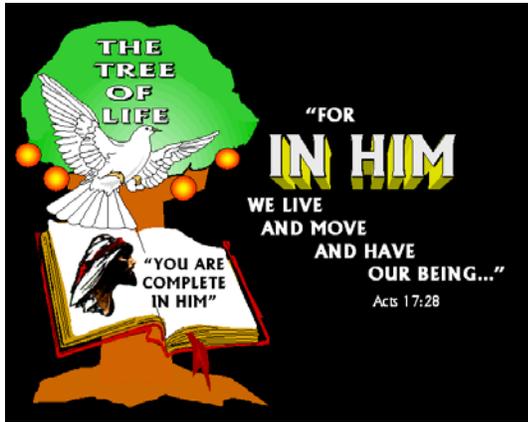
**GOD-CENTERED KNOWLEDGE**

**BUILDS UP**

**GOD'S IMAGE IN MAN'S EYES (PROMOTES HUMILITY IN MAN)**



**"AS YOU HAVE THEREFORE RECEIVED CHRIST JESUS THE LORD, SO WALK IN HIM, ROOTED AND BUILT UP IN HIM AND ESTABLISHED IN THE FAITH...FOR IN HIM DWELLS ALL THE FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY; AND YOU ARE COMPLETE IN HIM..." Col. 2:6,9**



In summarizing the believer's relationship to Jesus Christ, the phrase "in Him" was a repetitious favorite of the apostle Paul and the apostle John. In Paul's 12 epistles he used the phrase 26 times. John also repetitiously used this descriptive phrase 11 times in his first epistle.

Perhaps this one usage by Paul in the Book of Acts best sums up what is to be the normal Christian life here on earth; "For in Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). As followers of Christ, we must all ask ourselves whether this is a description of how we live our lives on earth surrounded by a world preferring to feed upon the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

It would be my suggestion to you that you use the listings below to read and meditate in both Paul and John's record of this Holy Spirit inspired phrase, "in Him." It is beyond our limited capability to enumerate them for you in this newsletter. If you would take the time to do so, I believe you will be greatly challenged in your walk with God as a follower of Jesus Christ.



**Paul's usage of "IN HIM"**

Acts 10:43	Eph. 1:13
Acts 17:28	Eph. 3:12
Rom. 4:24	Phil. 1:29
Rom. 10:14	Phil. 3:9
Rom. 15:12	Col. 1:17
2 Cor. 1:19	Col. 1:19
2 Cor. 1:20	Col. 2:6
2 Cor. 5:21	Col. 2:7
2 Cor. 13:4	Col. 2:9
Eph. 1:4	Col. 2:10
Eph. 1:7	Col. 2:11
Eph. 1:10	2 Thess. 1:12
Eph. 1:11	Heb. 2:13



These phrases of "in Him" can be used as a measuring stick of the level of your fervency for God and His kingdom.

**"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

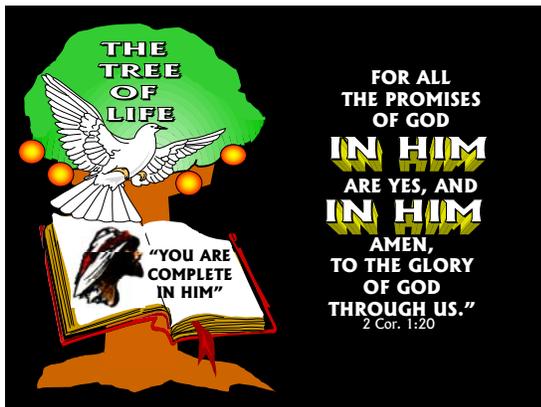


**John's usage of "IN HIM"**

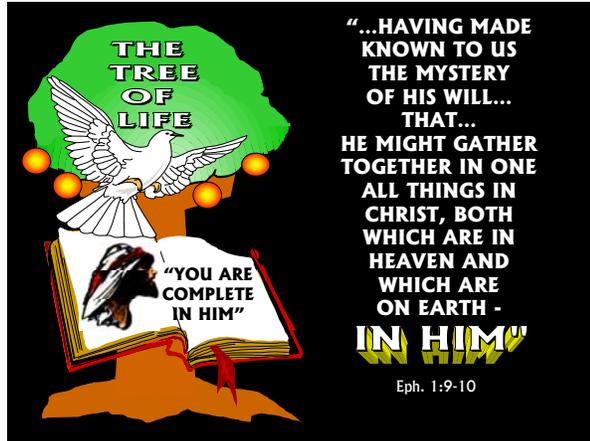
1 Jn. 1:5
1 Jn. 2:6
1 Jn. 2:8
1 Jn. 2:27
1 Jn. 2:28
1 Jn. 3:3
1 Jn. 3:5
1 Jn. 3:24
1 Jn. 4:13
1 Jn. 5:14
1 Jn. 5:20



In order to stimulate your interest in this vast and all encompassing subject, consider the magnitude of a few of the times Paul uses this phrase:

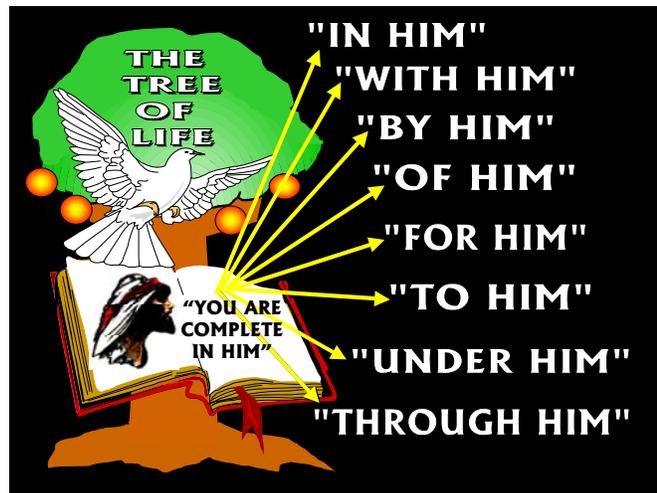


The foundation of the New Covenant is the revelation that Jesus is the mediator of "...a better covenant, which was established on better promises" (Heb. 8:6). Paul's revelation given to us in this passage from 2 Cor.1:20 is that all of God's promises find their fulfillment "in Him" and "through us". We are exhorted to "...imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Heb. 6:12). Why so? Because (1) God's "...exceedingly great and precious promises" supply all things necessary for a life of godliness and (2) the promises of God are given so that the believer may "...put on the divine nature (and) escape the corruption that is in the world through lust" ( see 2 Pet. 1:3-4).



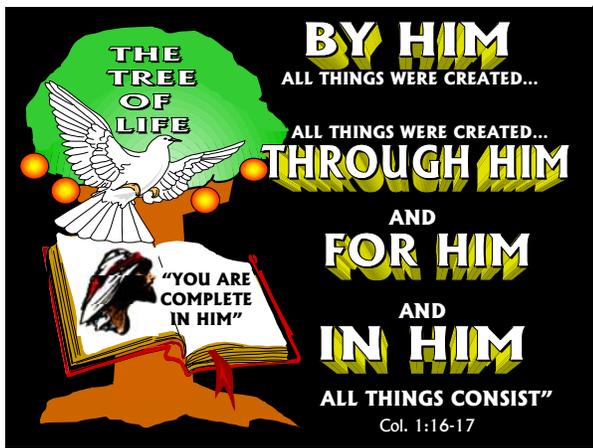
The “mystery” (hidden truth) of God’s will is that He is using Jesus Christ to unite together into one “...all things that are in Christ.” This encompasses the faithful Old Testament saints that Jesus brought up from Paradise (Abraham’s bosom) at His resurrection (Eph. 4:8-9, Mat. 27:51-53), as well as all new covenant faithful saints that will either be raised from the dead or raptured alive at the coming of Christ prior to the tribulation. Whatever is in heaven presently as well as whatever is on the earth, Jesus Christ will bring them into one. You can read about that in the Book of Revelation as it brings forth “New Jerusalem – the Lamb’s wife” (Rev. 21).

If you are not overwhelmed by going through all the references to what the believer is “in Him,” then look up these other often-repeated phrases throughout Paul’s epistles that also convey the completeness that is in Christ: →



It’s the same message, but conveyed through different phrases. The Holy Spirit wants us to fully grasp who it is that God the Father has established as supreme authority, a central figure that conveys the fullness of the Godhead bodily ( Col. 2:9). Jesus is not just “our savior,” He is Lord God Almighty, creator and sustainer of all things. Consider these examples of how Paul unites together various phrases that depict the magnitude of who Jesus Christ is:

(take the time to read carefully the fullness of these passages in your Bible)



Do you begin to grasp an inkling of why it is that Paul stated of Christ, “For in Him we live and move and have our being”? (Acts 17:28) There is no expression of God given that is not found also “in Him.” In fact, Paul, in the opening statement of his epistle to the Hebrews, says of Jesus Christ:

**“GOD...HAS IN THESE LAST DAYS SPOKEN TO US BY HIS SON, WHOM HE HAS APPOINTED HEIR OF ALL THINGS, THROUGH WHOM ALSO HE MADE THE WORLDS (aions - ages), WHO BEING THE BRIGHTNESS OF HIS GLORY AND THE EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS PERSON, AND UPHOLDING ALL THINGS BY THE WORD OF HIS POWER, WHEN HE HAD BY HIMSELF PURGED OUR SINS, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE MAJESTY ON HIGH...”** Heb. 1:1-3

**"...ROOTED AND BUILT UP IN HIM...AS YOU HAVE BEEN TAUGHT..." Col. 2:7**

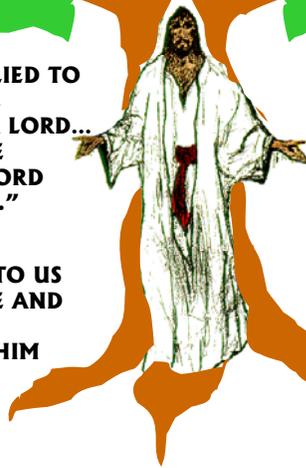
# THE TREE OF LIFE

**"GRACE AND PEACE BE MULTIPLIED TO YOU IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR GOD AND OF JESUS OUR LORD... BUT GROW IN THE GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST."**

2 Pet. 1:2, 2 Pet. 3:18

**"...HIS DIVINE POWER HAS GIVEN TO US ALL THINGS THAT PERTAIN TO LIFE AND GODLINESS, THROUGH THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIM WHO CALLED US... BE NEITHER BARREN NOR UNFRUITFUL IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."**

2 Pet. 1:3,8



**"THAT YOU MAY HAVE A WALK WORTHY OF THE LORD, FULLY PLEASING HIM, BEING FRUITFUL IN EVERY GOOD WORK AND INCREASING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD..."**

Col. 1:10

**"...ATTAINING TO...THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MYSTERY OF GOD, BOTH OF THE FATHER AND OF CHRIST, IN WHOM ARE HIDDEN ALL THE TREASURES OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE."**

Col. 2:2-3

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

Eph. 1:17

**"...SOME DO NOT HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. I SPEAK THIS TO YOUR SHAME."**

1 Cor. 15:34

The above sampling of Scriptures conveys what kind of knowledge God wants us to acquire. It is the knowledge of God. Proverbs states, "...the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding" (Prov. 9:10). Throughout God's Word you will find that the proper emphasis upon knowledge will be that which is God-centered, not man-centered. Consider Hosea the prophet's exhortation:



**"LET US KNOW, LET US PURSUE  
THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD**

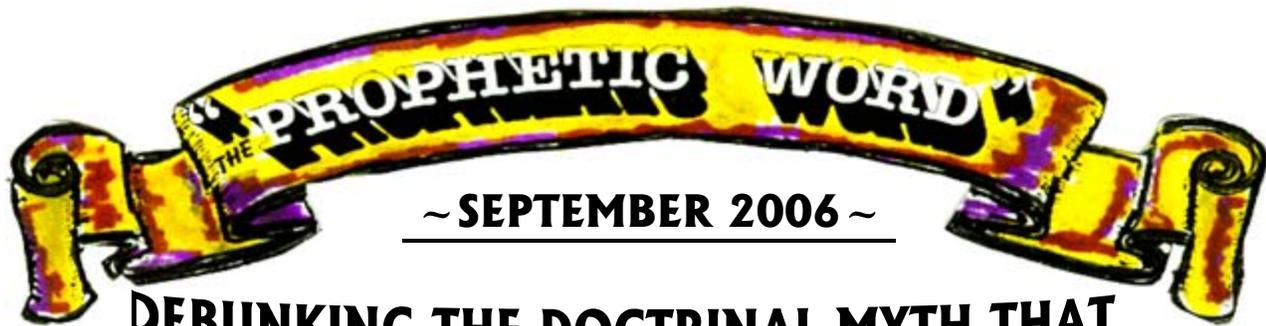
**FOR I DESIRE MERCY AND NOT SACRIFICE, AND  
THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD**

**MORE THAN BURNT OFFERINGS."**

Hosea 6: 2,6

This is the same Hosea who earlier reprovved the people of God with these words, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge....because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you..." (Hos. 4:6). In Romans Paul reminds us, "...what may be known of God...God has shown it to them...although they knew God...they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind..." (Rom. 1:19,21,28). Contrast that sad picture of God's people with this promise from God:

**"...BUT THE PEOPLE WHO KNOW THEIR GOD  
SHALL BE STRONG AND CARRY OUT GREAT EXPLOITS." Dan. 11:32**



# DEBUNKING THE DOCTRINAL MYTH THAT NO MAN KNOWS THE DAY NOR THE HOUR

## OF THE RAPTURE

**"FOR THE LORD HIMSELF WILL DESCEND FROM HEAVEN WITH A SHOUT...WITH THE TRUMPET OF GOD. AND THE DEAD WILL RISE FIRST. THEN WE WHO ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN SHALL BE CAUGHT UP TOGETHER WITH THEM IN THE CLOUDS TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR. AND THUS SHALL WE ALWAYS BE WITH THE LORD. THEREFORE COMFORT ONE ANOTHER WITH THESE WORDS. BUT CONCERNING THE TIMES AND THE SEASONS, BRETHREN, YOU HAVE NO NEED THAT I SHOULD WRITE TO YOU. FOR YOU YOURSELVES KNOW PERFECTLY THAT THE DAY OF THE LORD SO COMES AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT... BUT YOU, BRETHREN, ARE NOT IN DARKNESS, SO THAT THIS DAY SHOULD OVERTAKE YOU AS A THIEF..."**

1 Thess. 4:16-18, 5:1-4

Jesus did utter the words, "But of that day and hour, no one knows, no, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (Mat. 24:36). However, there is absolutely no doctrinal basis for applying those words to the event known as "the rapture." Not only, as we shall see, is this not the context surrounding this text, but such an application is in conflict with the clear words Paul told the church at Thessalonica (above).

Today's church does not "know perfectly" as did the church in Paul's day, simply because Christendom is being taught something different about the rapture than the stated "words of comfort" Paul originally spoke. The rapture has been placed under a nebulous mystical banner of "no man knows the day nor the hour." It is true that the rapture is a "mystery" (hidden truth). Paul states that in his other famous reference to this event (1 Cor. 15:51). However, the mystery, or hidden truth of which Paul speaks, is not the fact that "no man knows the day nor the hour", but rather that this event will happen simultaneously with the resurrection of the dead. This is the main clue to the exact timing of this great event, the rapture (1Thess 4:17, 1Cor. 15:52).

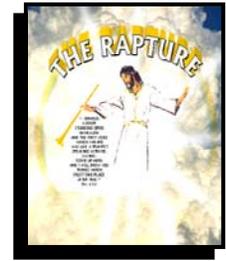
The intent of this newsletter is not an attempt to set an exact date for the rapture, but rather to debunk the exaggerated emphasis being placed on not knowing when this event is to take place. The early church knew the "times and the seasons" as Paul clearly states above. We do have enough evidence in Scripture as to the day and the hour it will take place. We do not know from scripture what specific year it will happen!

This present newsletter will not be an exhaustive look at the subject of the rapture, but rather it shall focus mainly on the erroneous aspect that “no man knows the day nor the hour.” If you want a complete in-depth study of this subject I have two suggestions for you:



1. There is presently a 16 page newsletter about the rapture posted under the classic section of “Newsletters” on my website ( [PastorRandyShupe.com](http://PastorRandyShupe.com) ).

2. Shortly, a complete, in-depth DVD series will be available on this subject as soon as I finish teaching it in our local fellowship. We will let you know when it is available for ordering.



For centuries, the teaching of the church has been taught contrary to Paul’s teachings on this subject. I do not know how far back the concept of “no man knows the day nor the hour” has been applied to the rapture, but it has generally been believed that Jesus could come for His church at anytime and at any moment. However, this is not what Jesus taught. Remember that in Paul’s two dissertations on the rapture (1 Thess. 4:17 and 1 Cor. 15:51-52), he states that the rapture will take place immediately on the heels of the resurrection of the dead. We cannot divorce the rapture from the resurrection of the dead. This is a specific event that Jesus addressed four times in the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John. Read it and you will see that the resurrection of the dead takes place specifically at “the last day” rather than “any day, anytime, or any hour.” The rapture can occur only AFTER the resurrection of the dead. When will that “day” take place? Jesus says four times in one chapter that it will take place “at the last day” ( Jn. 6:39, Jn. 6:40, Jn. 6:44, Jn. 6:54). We will speak more in our next newsletter of that “Last Day” in which the resurrection of the dead (and the rapture) will take place.

It is true that the scriptures state that Jesus will come “suddenly or quickly.” However, this is not implying that it can happen at anytime or at any moment in time. Paul states in his dissertation in 1 Corinthians 15 that the event of the rapture will happen “in a twinkling of an eye” which refers to how fast the event will occur rather than at what moment it might take place. Jesus stated also to the faithful church in Philadelphia, “Behold I come quickly!” (Rev. 3:11). He did not say he was coming “soon” but “quickly.” This passage also speaks of how suddenly or quickly the event will take place rather than conveying that it could, “spring out of nowhere” at “any time or at any moment in time” as generally believed.

It is true that the scriptures state Jesus will come as a thief on SOME believers who are “not looking for Him” and at a time when “they are not aware” as stated in Luke 12:40-46. There is a clear warning given to the FOOLISH virgins in Matthew 25:1-13 to “Watch, therefore for you (foolish virgins) know neither the day or the hour in which the Son of Man is coming (Mat. 25:13). However, this too, like Luke 12:40-46, is a warning to those who are not watching nor living in such a sanctified manner that they would be considered among “they who were ready” (Matt. 25:10). Jesus is bringing a reproof to the foolish virgins (believers) that it was they that did not know the day or the hour in which Christ was coming. The cure was to “watch.” He is not saying “no man can know”, but rather that the foolish virgins did not know, and therefore were not aware or ready at His coming. When warning about the tribulation that was coming upon the whole world, Jesus exhorts His followers:

**“BUT TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES, LEST YOUR HEARTS BE WEIGHED DOWN WITH CAROUSING, DRUNKENNESS, AND 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 FACE OF THE WHOLE EARTH. WATCH THEREFORE, AND PRAY ALWAYS THAT YOU MAY BE COUNTED WORTHY TO ESCAPE ALL THESE THINGS THAT WILL COME TO PASS, AND TO STAND BEFORE THE SON OF MAN.”** Luke 21:34-36

The scriptures always stress that a state of awareness and readiness should mark the believer as the possible day of the rapture approaches. It always contrasts those who are ready with those who are not. This day will come unexpectedly upon those who are not aware of the day and the hour. Paul taught “...this day should (not) overtake you as a thief...” (1Thess.5:4). You will find no scriptural support for the “laissez-faire” teaching that “no man (CAN) know the day nor the hour”, or that Jesus is coming “anytime, or at any moment in time.” The time of the rapture, the very day and hour (not the year) can be, and should be known! Only the careless and carefree do not live in awareness, watchfulness and readiness!

**THE RAPTURE**



"FOR THE LORD HIMSELF WILL DESCEND FROM HEAVEN WITH A SHOUT... THE DEAD IN CHRIST WILL RISE FIRST. THEN WE WHO ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN SHALL BE CAUGHT UP TOGETHER WITH THEM... TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR..."  
1 Thess. 4:16-17

**THE 2ND COMING**



"SO ALSO WILL THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE... IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TRIBULATION OF THOSE DAYS... ALL THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH WILL MOURN AND THEY WILL SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY..."  
Mat. 24:27-30

The rapture by Christ and the Second Coming of Christ are not the same events. Here are some of the differences between the two that are worthy of careful study. I point this out because the doctrinal waters of the rapture are often muddled by attributing events that belong to the Second Coming of Christ to the rapture by Christ.

**THE RAPTURE**



"COMES IN THE AIR"  
"THIEF IN THE NIGHT"  
"PRIOR TO WRATH"  
"BEGINS TRIBULATION"  
"CHURCH SAVED"

**THE 2ND COMING**



"COMES TO THE EARTH"  
"EVERY EYE BEHOLDS"  
"HEIGHT OF WRATH"  
"ENDS TRIBULATION"  
"ISRAEL SAVED"

One of the great prophetic chapters in scripture is Matthew 24. For the most part, this chapter deals with the events which lead up to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. It is within this chapter that we find the often quoted passage that is attributed to the rapture, "...of that day and hour no man knows ..." (Mat. 24:36).

Actually, there are three key passages found in Matthew Chapter 24 that are readily attached to the rapture. The combining of the three together is the strength of the argument for concluding "no man knows the day nor the hour." Here are the three:

**Matthew**  
**chapter**  
**24**

"AND HE WILL SEND OUT HIS ANGELS WITH A GREAT SOUND OF A TRUMPET, AND THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER HIS ELECT FROM THE FOUR WINDS, FROM ONE END OF HEAVEN TO THE OTHER."  
Mat. 24:31

"THEN TWO MEN WILL BE 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."  
Mat. 24:40-41

"BUT OF THAT DAY AND HOUR NO ONE KNOWS, NO, NOT EVEN THE ANGELS OF HEAVEN, BUT MY FATHER ONLY."  
Mat. 24:36

Although they sound like the event of the rapture, they are not passages describing it at all. We can prove that by first considering the context in which they are found. Any good English teacher will tell you that the "and", "then" and "but" lead-in words connect these verses to those found above them.

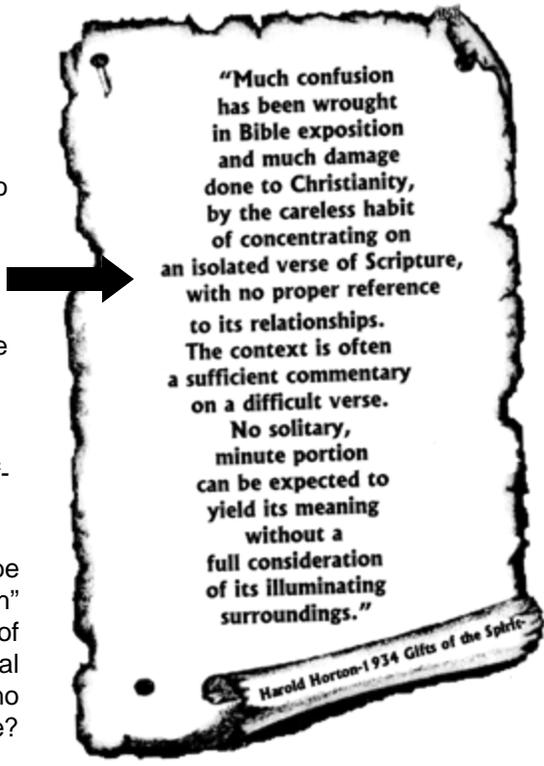
**Matthew**  
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Mat. 24:40-41

"BUT OF THAT DAY AND HOUR NO ONE KNOWS, NO, NOT EVEN THE ANGELS OF HEAVEN, BUT MY FATHER ONLY."  
Mat. 24:36

Take the time to read this exhortation by author Harold Horton pertaining to the importance of considering context of all selected "proof-text" scriptures.



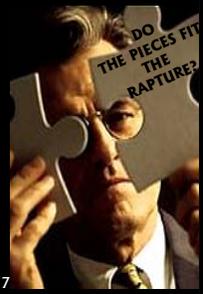
If you are going to be among those who "...need not be ashamed before God" and "rightly divide the word of truth" as 2 Tim. 2:15 exhorts, then you must develop the habit of scrutinizing the contextual setting of any and all doctrinal proof-text scriptures such as "...of that day and hour, no man knows..." Is this a verse about the day of the rapture? Let's see what the context reveals:

I am always amazed by the often omission of the word “but” by those who quote this verse as a “proof-text” for the rapture, “...of that day and hour no one knows...” What is really interesting is that even the verse above it, as well as the one below it, begins with the word “but.”

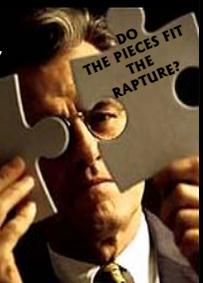
Reading this verse in its contextual setting does not support this as being a proof-text for the rapture at all, does it? Again, you could ask an English teacher what is the “that day” referring to in these verses. It is the “day” that heaven and earth will pass away! This is the day of which Jesus speaks “but of that day and hour no one knows...” The contextual setting goes on in the verse below to support the fact that all of Matthew Chapter 24 is speaking of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, not “the rapture.” We can prove this to be so by considering the context of the second passage I gave you earlier that is attributed to the rapture from this chapter:

Isolate the verse and it will sound like the rapture, but the context is not a people being taken away to ESCAPE judgment but rather this describes what happened in the days of Noah, “...the flood came and took them all away.” Friends, they all died in the flood by the hand of God’s judgment! You don’t want to be the one taken in this setting; and to prove that, you need only add the second great tool necessary to rightly divide the Word. In addition to “consider context” we must also “compare text.” Let us see what happens when we look at the other account of this scenario found in Luke Chapter 17:

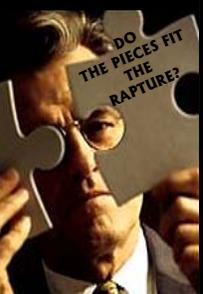
“HEAVEN AND EARTH WILL PASS AWAY, **BUT** MY WORDS SHALL NEVER PASS AWAY, **BUT** OF THAT DAY AND HOUR NO ONE KNOWS, NO, NOT EVEN THE ANGELS OF HEAVEN, **BUT** MY FATHER ONLY. **BUT** AS THE DAYS OF NOAH WERE, SO ALSO WILL THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE.” Mat. 24:35-37



“...UNTIL THE DAY THAT NOAH ENTERED THE ARK, AND DID NOT KNOW UNTIL THE FLOOD CAME AND TOOK THEM ALL AWAY, SO ALSO WILL THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE. **“THEN** TWO MEN WILL BE 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.” Mat. 24:38-41



“...THERE WILL BE TWO MEN IN ONE BED; THE ONE WILL BE TAKEN AND THE OTHER LEFT. TWO WOMEN WILL BE GRINDING TOGETHER, THE ONE WILL BE TAKEN AND THE OTHER LEFT. TWO MEN WILL BE IN THE FIELD; THE ONE WILL BE TAKEN AND THE OTHER LEFT.’ AND THEY ANSWERED AND SAID TO HIM, **‘WHERE, LORD?’** SO HE SAID TO THEM, **‘WHEREVER THE BODY IS, THERE THE EAGLES (VULTURES) WILL BE GATHERED TOGETHER.’”** Luke 17:34-37



**1** **CONSIDER CONTEXT**

“...THE CONTEXT IS OFTEN A SUFFICIENT COMMENTARY ON A DIFFICULT VERSE. NO SOLITARY, MINUTE PORTION CAN BE EXPECTED TO YIELD ITS MEANING WITHOUT FULL CONSIDERATION OF ITS ILLUMINATING SURROUNDINGS.”  
Harold Horton

**2** **COMPARE TEXT**

“...NOT IN WORDS WHICH MAN’S WISDOM TEACHES BUT WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT TEACHES, COMPARING SPIRITUAL THINGS WITH SPIRITUAL.”  
1 Cor. 2:13  
“BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY WORD SHALL BE ESTABLISHED.”  
2 Cor. 13:1

How important is it to “compare spiritual things with spiritual?” Matthew’s account does not ask “Where (are they taken) Lord? But Luke’s account does. They are taken TO judgment at the Second Coming of Christ rather than being taken AWAY from judgment by the rapture! These are not depictions of the rapture!

If you will read these passages (Ezek. 39:17-21, Rev.14:14-20, Rev.19:17-21) about the Second Coming of Christ, you will find that the carnivorous birds of the air (vultures and eagles) are called to a great feast of flesh of those gathered together for judgment at Armageddon! This is why Jesus answered the disciples question as to where they are taken with the words, “Where the body is, there the eagles (vultures) will be gathered together.” (Luke 17:37). It is noteworthy to see that this same statement is also made in the beginning of Matthew Chapter 24 (vs.28), just ten verses before Jesus depicts the scenario of “one taken and the other left” (vs.38). His whole theme and thrust in Matthew Chapter 24 is pending judgment just prior to His physical return to earth, “...so also will the coming of the Son of man be” (vs.37,39). Let us now consider the third passage from Matthew Chapter 24 which is attributed to the rapture, but is in reality, as context will again prove, a picture of the Second Coming of Christ:

As we look at these verses let us remember the two principles that we must apply to “rightly divide the Word of truth”:

## 1 CONSIDER CONTEXT

“...THE CONTEXT IS OFTEN A SUFFICIENT COMMENTARY ON A DIFFICULT VERSE. NO SOLITARY, MINUTE PORTION CAN BE EXPECTED TO YIELD ITS MEANING WITHOUT FULL CONSIDERATION OF ITS ILLUMINATING SURROUNDINGS.”

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## 2 COMPARE TEXT

“...NOT IN WORDS WHICH MAN’S WISDOM TEACHES BUT WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT TEACHES, COMPARING SPIRITUAL THINGS WITH SPIRITUAL.”

1 Cor. 2:13

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

2 Cor. 13:1

The “AND” with which the isolated verse begins compels us to consider the words spoken above it. The context begins in verse 27 →

We need not be a rocket scientist to see that this verse has nothing to do with the rapture, but rather has everything to do with the Second Coming of Christ “immediately AFTER the tribulation of those days...” Is the rapture “after the tribulation?” Does the rapture take place by the hand of angels sent forth to gather or by the hand of Jesus Himself descending from heaven? Does the rapture depict Jesus coming “on clouds of heaven with power and great glory” or as a “thief in the night?”

Yes, this verse does mention “the elect” being “gathered together” as well as the use of the sounding of a “trumpet.” However, the church is not the only “elect” mentioned in Scripture, Israel is also God’s “elect”

**“FOR JACOB MY SERVANT’S SAKE, AND ISRAEL MY ELECT.”** Isa. 45:4

Neither is “the trumpet” the exclusive property of the elect of the church. Jesus does “descend with...the trumpet of God...” as stated in the account of the rapture in 1Thess. 4:16-18. However, there is another use of the trumpet by God to “gather together” His other “elect” which is Israel:

**“AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS IN THAT DAY THAT THE LORD WILL THRESH... AND YOU WILL BE GATHERED ONE BY ONE, O YOU CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. SO IT SHALL BE IN THAT DAY THAT THE GREAT TRUMPET WILL BE BLOWN, THEY WILL COME... AND SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD IN THE HOLY MOUNT AT JERUSALEM.”** Isa 27:12-13

Notice Isaiah calls this trumpet “the great trumpet.” What is it called in Matthew Chapter 24 but “a great sound of a trumpet” (vs.31). This is not the trumpet sound of the rapture of the gathering together of the elect of the church, but rather the gathering together of the elect of Israel at the year of Jubilee:

**“THEN YOU SHALL CAUSE THE TRUMPET OF THE JUBILEE TO SOUND ON THE TENTH DAY OF THE SEVENTH MONTH; ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT YOU SHALL MAKE THE TRUMPET TO SOUND...AND EACH OF YOU SHALL RETURN TO HIS POSSESSION, AND EACH OF YOU SHALL RETURN TO HIS FAMILY.”** Lev. 25:9-10

The scripture is exacting. “The great trumpet” will be blown on the 6th Feast day given in Leviticus 23, the Day of Atonement, in the year of Jubilee. A comparison to Lev. 23:26-32, Zech.12:10-14, Mat. 24:30 and Rev. 1:7, will confirm that the Day of Atonement (6th Feast) will be the exact day upon which the Second Coming of Christ will take place. If God is so exacting about the Second Coming of Christ, rather than espousing the unbiblical claim, “no man know the day or the hour” for the rapture, we need only back up to the 5th Feast of Leviticus 23, the Feast of Trumpets, to find the probable “exact day” when the rapture will take place. Jesus is fulfilling these feasts one-by-one on their appointed day. Four are completed, three remain to be fulfilled. If the Feast of Trumpets is not the day of the rapture, what event does it represent in the ministry of Christ yet-to-be fulfilled? Why would only the rapture not be typified by the Feasts?

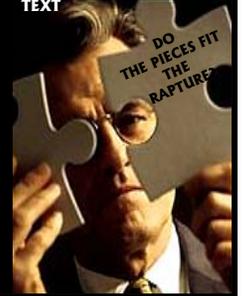
### THE ISOLATED VERSE:

1 CONSIDER CONTEXT

2 COMPARE TEXT

**“AND HE WILL SEND OUT HIS ANGELS WITH A GREAT SOUND OF A TRUMPET, AND THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER HIS ELECT FROM THE FOUR WINDS, FROM ONE END OF HEAVEN TO THE OTHER.”**

Mat. 24:31

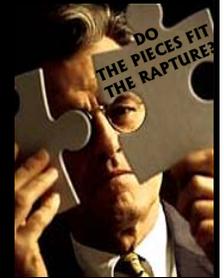


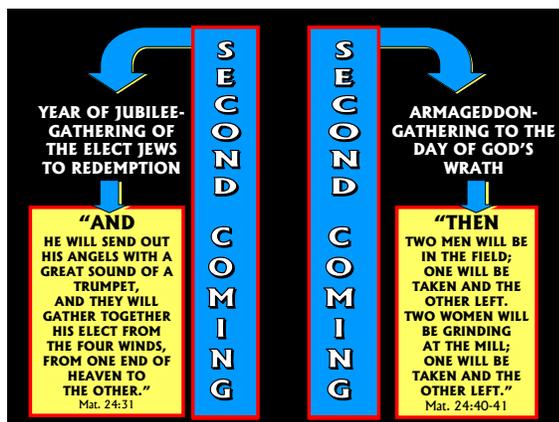
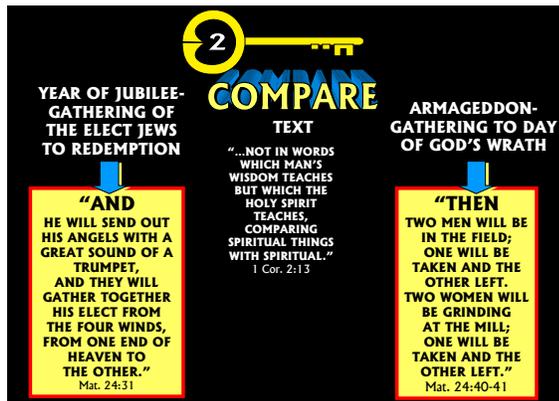
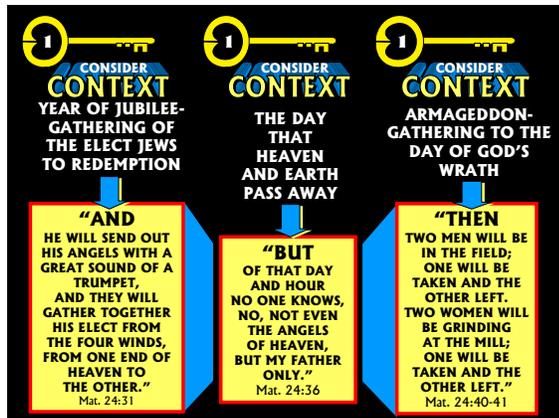
### THE CONTEXTUAL SETTING:

**“FOR AS THE LIGHTING COMES FROM THE EAST AND FLASHES TO THE WEST, SO ALSO WILL THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE. FOR WHEREVER THE CARCASS IS, THERE THE EAGLES WILL BE GATHERED TOGETHER. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TRIBULATION OF THOSE DAYS... THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN WILL APPEAR IN HEAVEN, AND THEN ALL THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH WILL MOURN AND THEY WILL SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY.**

**AND HE WILL SEND HIS ANGELS WITH A GREAT SOUND OF A TRUMPET, AND THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER HIS ELECT FROM THE FOUR WINDS, FROM ONE END OF HEAVEN TO THE OTHER.”**

Mat. 24:27-31





In summary, the foundation of "no man knows the day or the hour" crumbles when the context of these three isolated passages is considered. The "and", "but", and "then" reveal the subject of which Jesus is speaking. The verse, "of that day and hour no one knows" is speaking of the day that Heaven and earth will pass away. Why is this day unknown? Because prior to this event found in Rev. 20:11 in which "the heavens and earth (have) fled away", Satan must be released first, "for a little while" (Rev.20:3) in order that he may "gather the nations like the sand of the sea" against God and His saints (Rev. 20:7-8). How long is this period known as a "little while"? It is not specified. It could be days, months or years, therefore Jesus states, "...heaven and earth will pass away...but of that day and hour no one knows...". Likewise the context of Mat. 24:31 and Mat. 24:40-41 clearly shows these two "gatherings" take place at the Second Coming of Christ.

There is a distinction between these two gatherings that is important to note. One is a gathering of the remnant of the Jews to redemption but the other is a gathering of the wicked to the wrath of God's judgment. Other places in scripture will bear out this twofold gathering that takes place at the return of Jesus Christ. In the parable of the Wheat and the Tares Jesus said:

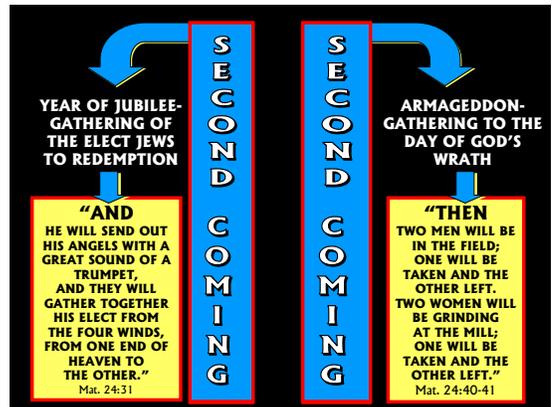
**"LET THEM BOTH GROW TOGETHER UNTIL THE HARVEST, AND AT THE TIME OF THE HARVEST I WILL SAY TO THE REAPERS, 'FIRST GATHER TOGETHER THE TARES AND BIND THEM IN BUNDLES TO BURN THEM, BUT GATHER THE WHEAT INTO MY BARN.'" Mat. 13:30**

The "reapers" to which Jesus refers in Matthew's account of the parable of the Wheat and the Tares, are singled out in Revelation Chapter 14:14-20. There are two different depictions of the reaping of the earth that take place in these passages. One appears to be a good reaping, but the other is specified to be a gathering unto the winepress of the wrath of God. These two harvestings of the earth can be easily overlaid upon the two "gatherings" we have been considering in Matthew 24:

The "comparing of spiritual things with spiritual" as we have done above, further verifies that the two so-called rapture "proof-text" passages of Matthew Chapter 24:31 and 24:40-41 are not two different pictures of this single event at all, but rather are two different depictions of two distinct gatherings of peoples that will take place at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The one-third remnant of the Jews Zechariah spoke of becomes "the wheat" that the angels will gather into God's "barn" at the time of the harvest. It is "the elect of Israel" that God will gather by means of the great trumpet of Jubilee. The other gathering will be "the tares" that are gathered to be burned. These are the ones that are gathered to "where the carcass and the vultures" are found-Armageddon!



The Second Coming of Christ has a specific “day” appointed to it. It will be on “the Day of Atonement”, which is the “10<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month” (Tishri) in the Jewish calendar as specified in Leviticus Chapter 23. As Leviticus 25 indicates, the specific “Day of Atonement” upon which Christ returns will be at the cycle of the Year of Jubilee when every man is “returned to his land” (Lev. 25:9-10).



**THE DAY OF THE RAPTURE**



If God is so specific about the “day” of His Second Coming, it stands to reason that He will likewise be very specific about the exact “day” of the rapture. Because of the heavy pattern of His Second Coming being directly tied to “the Day of Atonement”, it stands to reason that the 5<sup>th</sup> Feast day, the Feast of Trumpets, will be the exact “day” of the rapture. It will be on “the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month of Tishri in the Jewish calendar, as Leviticus 23 states.

**THE 5<sup>TH</sup> FEAST OF LEVITICUS 23: “THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS”**

**THE DAY OF THE SECOND COMING**

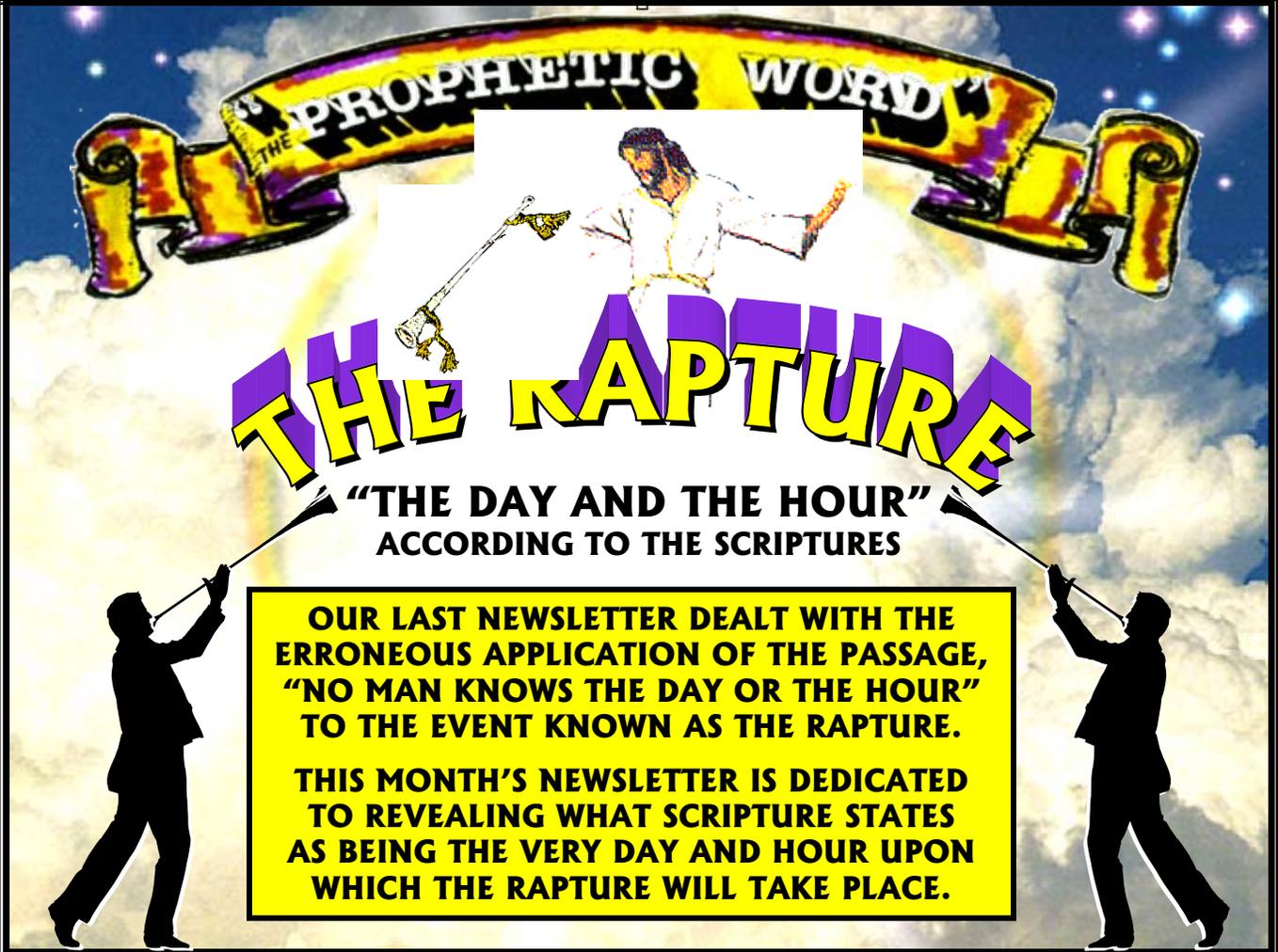


**THE 6<sup>TH</sup> FEAST OF LEVITICUS 23: “THE DAY OF ATONEMENT”**

The seven feasts of the Lord found in Leviticus 23 are the divine appointments of Jesus Christ. We can say that with authority because of the historical fact that He has fulfilled four of the seven on their appointed days with His “death, burial, resurrection, and the giving of the Holy Spirit. Only three remain unfulfilled and are reserved for the three great remaining objectives Christ is to complete, “the rapture (Trumpets) the Second Coming, (Atonement) and the Millennial Reign of Christ (Tabernacles).



We DO know the day of the rapture. It will take place on a yet-future Feast of Trumpets. Which one? We do not know. We also know the hour. The Wise and Foolish Virgin parable of Matthew 25 tells us that the bridegroom will come “at midnight.” Will you be found ready at His coming?



**OUR LAST NEWSLETTER DEALT WITH THE  
ERRONEOUS APPLICATION OF THE PASSAGE,  
"NO MAN KNOWS THE DAY OR THE HOUR"  
TO THE EVENT KNOWN AS THE RAPTURE.**

**THIS MONTH'S NEWSLETTER IS DEDICATED  
TO REVEALING WHAT SCRIPTURE STATES  
AS BEING THE VERY DAY AND HOUR UPON  
WHICH THE RAPTURE WILL TAKE PLACE.**

From the outset, please note that I did NOT say above that I know the very date upon which the rapture will take place, but rather that "the day and the hour" of that event is revealed in the Scriptures. This newsletter is not about "date setting", but rather is aimed at the wide-spread ignorance of what the Scriptures contain pertaining to the event known as "the rapture." If you have been fed a steady diet of, "no man knows the day or the hour" and therefore believe that "Jesus can come at any moment in time", you need to read the September 2006 newsletter posted on our website. This month's issue will build on the foundation laid in that previous newsletter. Unless you deal with the erroneous application of Matthew 24:36 to the rapture, you may find yourself as ill-prepared for this event as are the foolish virgins of Matthew 25 which Jesus leaves behind at His coming, and be found like the unfaithful servant described in Luke 12:41-48 who believed, "My master is delaying His coming," and therefore returned to a lifestyle of sinful behavior such as the unregenerate of the world practices. Jesus soberly forewarns all such servants of His that are unfaithful:

**"THE MASTER OF THAT SERVANT WILL COME ON A DAY WHEN HE IS NOT LOOKING FOR HIM, AND AT AN HOUR WHEN HE IS NOT AWARE, AND WILL CUT HIM IN TWO AND APPOINT HIM HIS PORTION WITH THE UNBELIEVERS." Luke 12:46**

We need only to contrast the above with Paul's words of comfort to the faithful believers:

**"FOR THE LORD HIMSELF WILL DESCEND FROM HEAVEN WITH A SHOUT...WITH THE TRUMPET OF GOD. AND THE DEAD WILL RISE FIRST. THEN WE WHO ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN SHALL BE CAUGHT UP TOGETHER WITH THEM IN THE CLOUDS TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR. AND THUS SHALL WE ALWAYS BE WITH THE LORD. THEREFORE COMFORT ONE ANOTHER WITH THESE WORDS. BUT CONCERNING THE TIMES AND THE SEASONS, BRETHREN, YOU HAVE NO NEED THAT I SHOULD WRITE TO YOU. FOR YOU YOURSELVES KNOW PERFECTLY THAT THE DAY OF THE LORD SO COMES AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT... BUT YOU, BRETHREN, ARE NOT IN DARKNESS, SO THAT THIS DAY SHOULD OVERTAKE YOU AS A THIEF... FOR GOD DID NOT APPOINT US TO WRATH, BUT TO OBTAIN SALVATION THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."**

1 Thess. 4:16-18, 5:1-9 excerpts

Let us begin with the most simplistic, “the HOUR” in which the rapture will take place. It is plainly stated in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins as being “at midnight”:

**“AND AT MIDNIGHT A CRY WAS HEARD, ‘BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM IS COMING; GO OUT TO MEET HIM!’”** Mat. 25:6

A sister in the Lord called me recently from an airport in which there was a man holding up signs and preaching that Jesus is coming according to the “Central Time Zone” of America. Since God is the center of all things, this man fervently warned people that Christ will come in an hour in accordance with America’s Central Time Zone. As bizarre as this premise is, there is a subtle underlying erroneous thought in Christianity that God causes the sun to rise and set on His favorite country, America. Perhaps it stems out of the “One Nation Under God” delusion that permeates American Christianity, or the false Puritan ideology that America has become God’s “New Israel” on the earth. When Jesus returns to earth it will not be on American soil! God’s divine time zone continues to be Israel! The “midnight hour” in which Christ will come as the Bridegroom for His faithful virgins will be according to Jerusalem time-bank on it! The moral to the story of the wise and foolish virgins is not what hour He will come, but rather the message that as much as half of His espoused virgins will be left behind at His coming! Let us not split doctrinal hairs over “the hour” of His coming. It is superfluous. Just obey Jesus’ warning:



**“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 FACE OF THE WHOLE EARTH. WATCH THEREFORE, AND PRAY ALWAYS THAT YOU MAY BE COUNTED WORTHY TO ESCAPE ALL THESE THINGS THAT WILL COME TO PASS, AND TO STAND BEFORE THE SON OF MAN.”** Luke 21:34-36

Where one may readily dismiss the idea of being taken up with the obvious sinfulness of “carousing and drunkenness,” what about the category Jesus mentions of “the cares of this life”? Are we pursuing the subtle substitute gospel of “The American Dream” of God-given, inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness? Is our Christian faith centered in the moral values imposed upon the Republican party by the Religious Right and the Moral Majority? Is the voting for a Christian president really the act of responsible Christian faith? Is America the Kingdom of God on earth? Is any of this in accordance with God’s Word? I think not! This kind of “cares of this life” can cause us to spin our wheels and spend our funds on things that have nothing to do with the real Kingdom of God. Holding fast to right priorities has always been a problem for God’s people. Paul and Peter both exhort the saints:



**“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... LET US WALK PROPERLY...”** Rom. 13:11-14

**“BELOVED, I BEG YOU AS SOJOURNERS AND PILGRIMS, ABSTAIN FROM FLESHLY LUSTS WHICH WAR AGAINST THE SOUL, HAVING YOUR CONDUCT HONORABLE AMONG THE GENTILES (THAT) THEY MAY, BY YOUR GOOD WORKS WHICH THEY OBSERVE, GLORIFY GOD IN THE DAY OF VISITATION.”**

1 Pet. 2:11-14



Paul tells us as believers, “Let us walk properly.” A proper Christian walk can only be defined by the Word of God, not by the constitution of an earthly kingdom functioning under the guise of “Christian faith.” The Constitution of the United States of America is not in harmony with the Word of God. The gospel of democracy has replaced the gospel of the Kingdom of God (read my book, “Restoring the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.”)

Peter exhorts the believers to have their “conduct honorable among the Gentiles.” Notice that he addresses them as “sojourners and pilgrims” rather than citizens of an earthly kingdom. His call is to “abstain from fleshly lusts” which includes the self-centered inalienable rights to pursuit of life, liberty and happiness in an earthly kingdom.

Although I feel it is needful to state the above, I am obviously straying from my intended subject.

Below is an overview of what I want to present to you as the scriptural position of the specified "DAY" of the rapture. It contains both a literal Lunar calendar date which specifies the very day upon which the rapture will take place, and it contains the exact dispensations ('periods in time') in which God intends to perform this event. Those dispensations in Scripture are called (1) "The Last Day" and (2) "The Day of The Lord."

Down through the centuries the church has espoused that Jesus' coming in the air at the rapture could be at any time, and at any moment in time. This is far from what the Scriptures state. He will come on the first day of the seventh Jewish month of Tishri on a yet-future feast day of Trumpets. He will NOT come until the appointed dispensation of (1) "The Last Day" and (2) "The Day of The Lord." Here are the three Scripture-based concepts that I want to present to you that peg "THE (very) DAY" of the rapture:

**THE FIRST DAY  
OF THE 7TH MONTH OF TISHRI**

**THE SPECIFIED DAY OF  
THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS**

Lev. 23:23-24

"THE DAY"  
OF  
**THE RAPTURE**  
OF THE SCRIPTURES

**THE LAST DAY**  
THE SPECIFIED DAY OF  
THE RESURRECTION  
OF THE DEAD  
Jn. 11:24, Jn. 6:39, 40, 44, 54

**THE DAY OF  
THE LORD**  
THE SPECIFIED DAY OF  
THE WRATH OF GOD  
Rom. 2:5, Isa. 2:10-12, 13:6-9,13,  
Zeph. 1:7,14-18

Let us now look at each of these concepts one by one. We will be somewhat limited as to the depth of what I can share with you by the physical size of our newsletter, but I believe I can give you enough insight to influence you to consider a greater in-depth study. I am presently presenting to our local congregation such an in-depth study on the rapture. We are ten lessons into the subject with perhaps an equal amount remaining to complete it. I will let you know when this DVD series is available for purchase, It is my persuasion that this subject constitutes the present urgent message that could be emphasized by the words God previously spoke to His churches, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev.3:22), for judgment begins at the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17).



While we are on the subject of “trumpets” I want to stress that Paul’s reference to the rapture taking place at “the last trumpet” is NOT referring to the last of the seven trumpets in the Book of Revelation in which the wrath of God is poured out on the earth. I find little promised comfort in what is contained within the first six trumpets. If the rapture takes place in the seventh, why is it not so stated in the contents of this trumpet? Because this is not the timing of the rapture!

In his dissertation on the rapture Paul reminds the faithful believers, “For God did not appoint us to wrath...” (1Thess. 5:9). These are trumpets of judgment, not redemption! More likely, Paul’s reference to “the last trumpet” refers to the blowing of the two silver (silver is a picture of redemption) trumpets found in Numbers 10:

**“MAKE TWO SILVER TRUMPETS...USE THEM FOR (1) CALLING THE ASSEMBLY AND (2) FOR DIRECTING THE MOVEMENT OF THE CAMPS...THE PRIESTS SHALL BLOW THE TRUMPETS... ALSO IN THE DAY OF YOUR GLADNESS, IN YOUR APPOINTED FEASTS...YOU SHALL BLOW THE TRUMPETS...THEY SHALL BE A MEMORIAL FOR YOU BEFORE YOUR GOD.”** Num. 10:1,8,10

There are two stages of the rapture (1) the dead in Christ rise first and (2) we who are alive and remain are caught up with them. The first silver trumpet will raise the dead (gather the assembly) and the LAST trumpet will rapture the living (move the camp). Note well that it is the PRIEST that blows the trumpet (Christ Himself will descent from heaven with...the trumpet of God”). Most important of all, note that God singled out “YOUR APPOINTED FEASTS” (Lev. 23) to blow these silver trumpets as a memorial before you and your God. He did not say to blow a shofar (ram’s horn) on the feast day as the Jews do today, but rather the two silver trumpets. These trumpets are a memorial between the believer and his God!

How much evidence do we need to be convinced that the rapture will take place on the appointed feast day – The Feast of Trumpets? We do know “the day” of the rapture, the literal calendar month and day in which this event will take place. It will be on the first day of seventh month of Tishri (Jewish Lunar calendar).

Let us now consider the second reference to the “day” in which the Scriptures state the rapture will take place.

## **THE LAST DAY**

### **THE SPECIFIED DAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD**

Just as the rapture is always tied to the blowing of “trumpets”, it is likewise always tied to the subject of the resurrection of the dead. Again, the mouth of two or three witnesses:

**“...BEHOLD I TELL YOU A MYSTERY: WE SHALL NOT ALL SLEEP, BUT WE SHALL ALL BE CHANGED – IN A MOMENT, IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE, AT THE LAST TRUMPET. FOR THE TRUMPET WILL SOUND, AND THE DEAD WILL BE RAISED INCORRUPTIBLE, AND WE SHALL BE CHANGED.”** 1 Cor. 15:51-52

**“FOR THIS WE SAY BY THE WORD OF THE LORD, THAT WE WHO ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN UNTIL THE COMING OF THE LORD WILL BY NO MEANS PRECEDE THOSE WHO ARE ASLEEP...THE DEAD WILL RISE FIRST. THEN WE WHO ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN SHALL BE CAUGHT UP WITH THEM...”** 1Thess. 4:15-16

Has the resurrection of the dead, of which Paul speaks, taken place yet? The answer is no, of course not! Then WHY, dear reader, have we for centuries preached that the rapture could take place at any moment or at any moment in time? Can the rapture take place before the resurrection of the dead? Not according to Paul – not according to God Himself! Does the Scripture tell us when the resurrection of the dead will take place? Yes, it is stated by Jesus four times in one chapter:

**“THIS IS THE WILL OF THE FATHER...THAT OF ALL HE HAS GIVEN ME I SHOULD LOSE NOTHING, BUT SHOULD RAISE IT UP AT THE LAST DAY (Jn. 6:39)  
...EVERYONE WHO...BELIEVES IN HIM MAY HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE;  
AND I WILL RAISE HIM UP AT THE LAST DAY (Jn. 6:40)  
...AND I WILL RAISE HIM UP AT THE LAST DAY” (Jn. 6:44)  
...AND I WILL RAISE HIM UP AT THE LAST DAY” (Jn. 6:54).**

What Jesus taught pertaining to the resurrection of the dead taking place "in the last day" appears to have been the common understanding at the time of Jesus, for even Martha, whom Jesus reproved for her busyness, knew that the resurrection of the dead was reserved for "the last day."

**"JESUS SAID TO HER, 'YOUR BROTHER WILL RISE AGAIN.' MARTHA SAID TO HIM, 'I KNOW THAT HE WILL RISE AGAIN IN THE RESURRECTION AT THE LAST DAY.'" Jn. 11:23-24**

The point is a simple one: The rapture, which is tied to the resurrection of the dead, cannot take place prior to the event known as "the last day." What is meant by this phrase? "The last day" takes place during "the last days." This "last day" is merely the "last day of the last days." Study the diagram below for it contains a wealth of insight into "the last days" as well as "the last day of the last days":



The "last days" (the last 3,000 years- day 5-6-7) began with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (see Heb. 9:26, Heb. 1:1-2, 1 Pet. 1:20). We are nearing the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> day (2,000 years from the cross). There remains one more day which is called "the last day" and is also known as "the Day of The Lord." (which we will consider on the next page). The resurrection of the dead will take place at the beginning of "the last day" and the rapture will follow on its heels, and not before!

All seven of the Feasts of the Lord of Lev. 23 find their completion within "the last days." The last three feasts that are yet to be fulfilled constitute the parameters of "the last day" which is also called "the Day of the Lord." Within the confines of "the last day/the Day of The Lord", the resurrection/rapture will take place (first) on the Feast of Trumpets. The tribulation will begin. After seven years, Jesus Christ will return to the earth on the Feast day known as "The Day of Atonement." What follows is the last feast which is Tabernacles. It will forcibly be observed every year of the Millennial Reign of Christ, as Zechariah 14 reveals. These "last (3) days" are confirmed by the prophet Hosea pertaining to God's dealings with Israel. Study this prophecy carefully, for it confirms what is stated above:

**"I (SAYS GOD) WILL RETURN AGAIN TO MY PLACE TILL THEY (ISRAEL) ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR OFFENSE. THEN THEY WILL SEEK MY FACE; IN THEIR AFFLICTION THEY WILL DILIGENTLY SEEK ME... COME (SAYS ISRAEL) AND LET US RETURN TO THE LORD; FOR HE HAS TORN, BUT HE WILL HEAL US; HE HAS STRICKEN, BUT HE WILL BIND US UP. AFTER TWO DAYS (2,000 YEARS) HE WILL REVIVE US; ON THE THIRD DAY (THE LAST DAY/DAY OF THE LORD) HE WILL RAISE US UP, THAT WE MAY LIVE IN HIS SIGHT." Hosea 5:15, 6:1-2**

# THE DAY OF THE LORD

## THE SPECIFIED DAY OF THE WRATH OF GOD

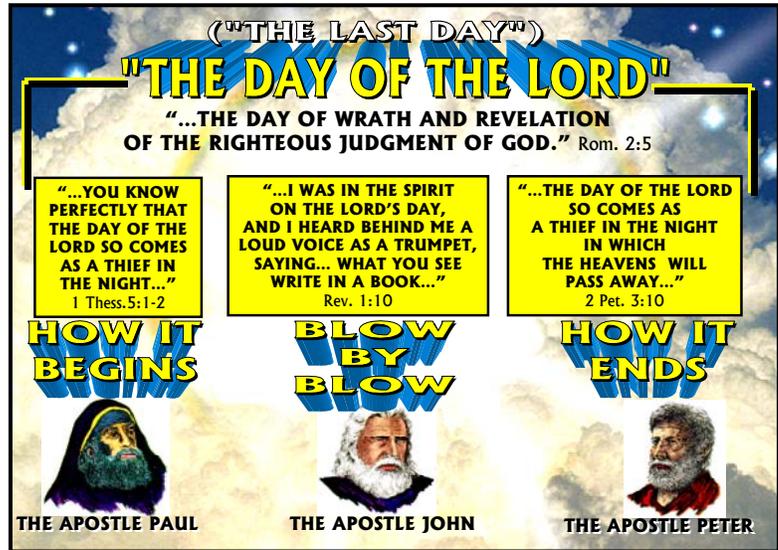
I must be very brief about this vast day as we have very little space left. Ten of the O.T. prophets spoke extensively about "the Day of The Lord." Look them up in a concordance and read them carefully for Peter reminds us to "be mindful of the words spoken before by the holy prophets" ( 2Pet. 3:3). What you will find is that the running theme of the prophets about this day is that it is "the day of the fierce anger of the Lord" (Isaiah 2:10-12, 13:6-9,13). Also you will see repeatedly that it is "a day of darkness in which there is no brightness" (see Amos 5:18-20).

Not only are we to have our minds full of the words of the prophets but Peter adds "...and of us the apostles of the Lord" (2 Pet.3:2).

Study this diagram as well.

Three of God's apostles spoke about "The Day of The Lord." Paul tells us when it will begin while Peter tells us when it will end. The apostle John was given a blow-by-blow account of "The Day of The Lord."

Revelation begins with John being "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" (Rev. 1:10). This is NOT speaking of the Sabbath day, but rather of "the Day of The Lord." Jesus gives John a threefold division to this book in saying, "Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this" (Rev. 1:19).



John sees Jesus behind him as "The Righteous Judge" who is standing in the midst of His churches calling five of the seven to "repent or else." Peter states that "judgment begins at the house of God" (1 Pet. 4:17). John is "in the Spirit on the Day of the Lord", the "Day of the fierce wrath of God", Jesus appears and commissions him to write a book about "The Day of The Lord" and give it to the churches, because that is where judgment begins! The rapture takes place according to the apostle Paul at the beginning of The Day of The Lord when Jesus comes as "a thief in the night" (1Thess. 5:2). Paul tells the faithful, "But you, brethren, are not in darkness so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light...God did not appoint us to wrath..." (1Thess. 5:4-9).

The church is presently "the light of the world" (Mat. 5:14) and "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1Tim.3:15). By the rapture on the Feast of Trumpets, at the beginning of "the last day", at the beginning of "The Day of The Lord", God will remove both THE LIGHT and THE TRUTH and replace them with a strong delusion of THE LIE and DARKNESS. Read 2 Thessalonians very carefully! The purpose of the rapture is not to keep God's people from tribulation, or to escape our daily problems, but rather it is for the purpose of enabling The Day of The Lord to be a "Day of darkness with no brightness in it" (Amos 5:18-20).

The rapture MUST be a pre-tribulation, pre-wrath, event! The Day of The Lord cannot become a day of darkness as long as "the light of the world" is still present! The strong delusion called "The Lie" cannot come forth as long as "the truth" is still present! The great darkness of The Day of The Lord is SPIRITUAL DARKNESS as prophesied by the prophets:

**"I WILL SEND A FAMINE ON THE LAND... OF HEARING THE WORD OF THE LORD, THEY SHALL WANDER FROM SEA TO SEA, AND FROM NORTH TO EAST; THEY SHALL RUN TO AND FRO, SEEKING THE WORD OF THE LORD, BUT SHALL NOT FIND IT."**  
Amos 9:11-12

**"THE WHOLE VISION HAS BECOME TO YOU LIKE THE WORDS OF A BOOK THAT IS SEALED, WHICH MEN DELIVER TO ONE WHO IS LITERATE, SAYING, 'READ THIS, PLEASE', AND HE SAYS, 'I CANNOT, FOR IT IS SEALED.'"**  
Isa. 29:11

More could be said about "The Day of The Lord", but as you can see, we are out of space.



# THE RAPTURE AT "THE LAST TRUMPET"

**"BEHOLD, I TELL YOU A MYSTERY:  
WE SHALL NOT ALL SLEEP, BUT WE SHALL ALL BE CHANGED –  
IN A MOMENT, IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE,  
AT THE LAST TRUMPET.**

**FOR THE TRUMPET WILL SOUND,  
AND THE DEAD WILL BE RAISED INCORRUPTIBLE, AND WE SHALL BE CHANGED."** 1Cor. 15:51-53

God invested the greatest revelation of the rapture to the apostle Paul. He wrote three epistles in which much truth centers upon unfolding the events that lead up to the pre-tribulation, pre-wrath rapture of the faithful saints. Those three in-depth references are stated in the diagram below. I suggest you take the time to read carefully through them in your Bible, for I am unable to display them for you in this newsletter due to the lengthiness of those passages. Also in the diagram below, I have briefly stated a synopsis of the modern-day widespread confusion and error surrounding what Paul wrote. We considered the first of these errors in our Sept/Oct. newsletters. Due to a proper lack of emphasis such as Paul placed on "the dead rise first," the popular theme of "no man knows the day or the hour" replaced the fact that the rapture cannot take place until the appointed time of the resurrection of the dead. Five times it is stated that this event takes place "at the last day" (Jn. 6:39-54, 11:24). You cannot have a rapture prior to the prophesied dispensation in which the resurrection of the dead takes place. Jesus cannot come "at any moment, at any time."

In this issue of our newsletter we will deal with the erroneous application of the rapture taking place at "the last (7<sup>th</sup>) trumpet" found in the book of Revelation. This error has spawned the dreadful and hopeless "post-tribulation rapture" theory which stands in direct opposition to Paul's teaching. The promise of the rapture is given as "words of comfort" (1Thess. 4:18) to assure the faithful, wise virgins of the church that "God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Thess. 5:9)

**1 Cor. 15:51-53**

**MISAPPLICATION  
OF REVELATION'S  
"LAST (7<sup>TH</sup>) TRUMPET"**



**1Thess. 4:15 - 5:10**

**OMISSION  
OF PREREQUISITE:  
"THE DEAD RISE FIRST"**

**2Thess. 2:1-12**

**MISTRANSLATION  
OF "APOSTASIA":  
"THE FALLING AWAY"**

In our December newsletter, we will consider the erroneous modern-day translation of "Apostasia" as "the falling away" of the saints from the faith rather than Paul's contextual theme of "the departure" of the saints from the earth. You will be surprised to learn where this error first began. There is NO massive or measurable "falling away from the faith" predicted as a pre-requisite sign prior to the rapture! Yes, it is true that Paul warned of "some" departing from the faith (1Tim.4:1), but "some" is not a measurable sign since such departures from the faith have been going on ever since the beginning of the church.

Since we are dealing with a stated "mystery" (hidden truth), we will need to cultivate a little of the Sherlock Holmes mentality of scrutinizing all the facts. This will require that we apply the two basic concepts necessary to "Rightly divide the Word of truth." —> 1.

## CONSIDERATION OF CONTEXT

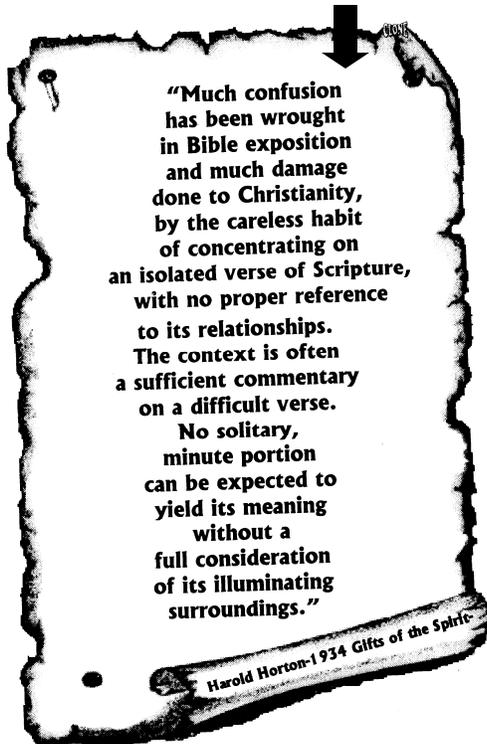
**"BEHOLD, I TELL YOU A MYSTERY:  
WE SHALL NOT ALL SLEEP, BUT WE SHALL ALL BE CHANGED –  
IN A MOMENT, IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE,  
AT THE LAST TRUMPET. FOR THE TRUMPET WILL SOUND,  
AND THE DEAD WILL BE RAISED INCORRUPTIBLE, AND WE SHALL BE CHANGED."**

1Cor. 15:51-52

## —> 2. COMPARE WITH OTHER PASSAGES



In the hour of doctrinal confusion in which we find ourselves today, I feel compelled to continue to set before you Harold Horton's warning about isolated passages of Scripture often being misinterpreted and breeding confusion:



**"...WE SHALL ALL BE CHANGED...  
AT THE LAST TRUMPET.  
FOR THE TRUMPET WILL SOUND,  
AND THE DEAD WILL BE RAISED  
INCORRUPTIBLE, AND WE SHALL BE CHANGED."**  
1Cor. 15:51-52

Paul did make reference to the rapture taking place "at the last trumpet."

Since we cannot presently question Paul directly, we must look carefully at not only WHAT he has said, but WHY he said it. Is this description of the rapture in 1 Cor. 15:51-52 just an impulsive random thought that Paul suddenly injects into his dissertation, or perhaps is it "the grand finale" of what he has been teaching all along?

First Corinthians is a 16-page letter written to the church. If one receives a 16-page letter from a friend, does the recipient begin reading his letter on "page 15" and hastily draw conclusions from what the author is saying? Is there nothing important in the first 14 pages that might shed a different perspective on such hastily drawn conclusions?

I believe this is exactly what the church today has done with Paul's reference in Corinthians to "the last trumpet." Hastily, with little thought or examination, multitudes of Christians have made a quantum leap from Corinthians to the book of Revelation and its depicted seventh trumpet as being the only thing Paul could be speaking of as "the last trumpet" that heralds in the promised rapture. However, to do so turns "The Blessed Hope of His glorious appearing" (Titus 2:13) into a day of doom and gloom as the seven trumpets of Revelation vividly predict. A post-tribulation rapture is an oxymoron that stands in direct opposition to all of Paul's teachings on the subject. Such a dismal promise of passing through the first six trumpets of Revelation before the rapture takes place cannot fulfill Paul's concluding words to the church at Thessalonica to, "Comfort one another with these words" (1Thess. 4:18).

Granted, as good Bereans searching the Scriptures, we should consider the possibility of whether Paul is referencing the last of the seven trumpets in Revelation as "the last trumpet." The fact is true that it is the only other trumpet reference in the New Testament. However, there is a great big hole in the possibility of this being what Paul meant. Consider this thought:



**PAUL WROTE HIS REVELATION OF "THE LAST TRUMPET" IN 1 CORINTHIANS IN THE YEAR**

**56 A.D.**

A total of forty years separates the writing of First Corinthians and the book of Revelation! In fact, Paul was dead and buried 28 years before John wrote the book of Revelation, for he was martyred in 68 A.D.



**JOHN WROTE HIS REVELATION OF "THE 7 TRUMPETS" IN REVELATION IN THE YEAR**

**96 A.D.**

Neither Paul nor the early church of his day, could have drawn the conclusion that "the last trumpet" of the rapture is one and the same as the seventh trumpet of Revelation. This conclusion has been solely drawn by "the latter-day saints," and I don't mean the Mormons! It is the Christian church today that makes the hasty assumption that Paul's reference can be none other than the seventh trumpet of Revelation. Why is this so? I believe it is because of the general disdain for and rejection by the church of for anything that is in the Old Testament that is associated with the Law of God. Paul has no such disdain, but rather makes the following positive expressions about the contents of the law such as:

**"FOR THE LAW, HAVING A SHADOW OF THE GOOD THINGS TO COME, AND NOT THE VERY IMAGE OF THE THINGS..."** Heb. 10:1

**"...REGARDING A FEAST DAY, OR A NEW MOON OR SABBATHS, WHICH ARE A SHADOW OF THINGS TO COME, BUT THE SUBSTANCE IS OF CHRIST"** Col. 2:16-17

The church today does not ask of God as did the psalmist of old:

**"OPEN MY EYES, THAT I MAY SEE WONDROUS THINGS FROM YOUR LAW."** Psm. 119:18

Because the church will not doctrinally look backward for revelation and insight through the type and shadow of God's law, they can only leap forward to the contents of Revelation for the meaning of "the last trumpet." It is significant that Paul makes no attempt to clarify or explain what the revelation of "the last trumpet" might be. It is stated so simply that it appears that all understood what was meant by it. This is due to the teaching methods of the apostle Paul. He taught Gentile believers, like those in Corinth, with Old Testament type and shadow. There is a greater underlying theme in First Corinthians than just the resurrection of the dead and the rapture, and it has to do with the Levitical Law of the Feasts. Paul makes this illuminating statement based on God's law:

**"CHRIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD AND HAS BECOME THE FIRSTFRUITS....  
...ALL SHALL BE MADE ALIVE. BUT EACH ONE IN HIS OWN ORDER.  
CHRIST THE FIRSTFRUITS,  
AFTERWARD THOSE WHO ARE CHRIST'S AT HIS COMING..."**

1 Cor. 15:20-23



In describing Christ's resurrection from the dead, Paul refers to Him as "the Firstfruits." This is a direct reference back to the type and shadow of the seven feasts of the Lord given in Leviticus 23. The third feast listed is Firstfruits. Jesus Christ raised from the grave not on the pagan day celebrated as "Easter," but rather on the very biblical and prophetic appointed day of Firstfruits stated in the Levitical Law. As the Old Testament priest would wave the Firstfruit offering from the harvest before the people on this appointed day, Jesus Christ, the true Firstfruits offering, was raised from the dead.

Notice that Paul, after making the statement "Christ the Firstfruits," then makes reference to the resurrection of the rest of the dead that is to take place (1) "each one in his own order" and (2) "afterward, those who are Christ's at His coming." The revelation of the mystery of the rapture with its "last trumpet" follows these comments. Paul has in mind the next feast that is in chronological order that will (1) raise the dead and (2) rapture the living. It is the feast of Trumpets that Paul has in mind in addressing "the last trumpet" that heralds in the rapture of those believers found faithfully living in Christ at His coming.

Paul has a teaching theme in First Corinthians and it is built around the type and shadow of the seven Feasts of the Lord given in Leviticus 23. Way back in the fifth chapter Paul began to teach these Gentile believers (like you and me) what Christ is doing and in what order He is doing it, and the seven feasts are his overall theme. He began with (1) the first feast which is Passover. He then progresses to (2) the second feast which is Unleavened bread. In Chapter Fifteen (3) he introduces Christ as fulfilling the third feast, which is Firstfruits. Since his subject is the resurrection of the dead, he skips the fourth feast which is Pentecost in which the Holy Spirit was given on that very day (Acts 2:1-4), and jumps to describing, what I believe, is (5) the fifth feast, which is "Trumpets."

(1)  
**"...CHRIST, OUR PASSOVER, WAS SACRIFICED FOR US, THEREFORE LET US KEEP THE FEAST..."**  
 1 Cor. 5:7-8



(2)  
**"YOU ARE TRULY UNLEAVENED... LET US KEEP THE FEAST... WITH THE UNLEAVENED BREAD OF SINCERITY AND TRUTH."**  
 1 Cor. 5:7-8



(3)  
**"CHRIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD AND HAS BECOME THE FIRSTFRUITS... ALL SHALL BE MADE ALIVE. BUT EACH ONE IN HIS OWN ORDER. CHRIST THE FIRSTFRUITS, AFTERWARD THOSE WHO ARE CHRIST'S AT HIS COMING..."**  
 1 Cor. 15:20-23



(5)  
**"BEHOLD, I TELL YOU A MYSTERY: ...AT THE LAST TRUMPET... FOR THE TRUMPET WILL SOUND AND THE DEAD WILL BE RAISED... AND WE SHALL BE CHANGED."**  
 1 Cor. 15:51-52



Paul is not looking ahead to the prophetic and futuristic seven trumpets of Revelation in his reference to "the last trumpet", for he was oblivious of this not-yet-revealed truth. Rather Paul is looking backward to the Old Testament type and shadow contained within the Law of the Lord to preach the fullness of Christ to Gentile believers. As you can see above, it's theme permeated First Corinthians throughout.

Do the Feasts have anything in common with the blowing of trumpets that might indeed reveal what Paul had in his mind pertaining to "the last trumpet?" the answer is an emphatic yes. In Numbers 10 we read:

**"MAKE... TWO SILVER TRUMPETS... IN THE DAY OF YOUR GLADNESS, IN YOUR APPOINTED FEASTS, AND AT THE BEGINNING OF YOUR MONTHS, YOU SHALL BLOW THE TRUMPETS...THEY SHALL BE A MEMORIAL FOR YOU BEFORE YOUR GOD..."**  
 Num. 10:10,29



These were not the blowing of the traditional Jewish shofars (rams horns), but rather were two very special silver trumpets created for special events, namely the feasts. Notice they were blown at EVERY appointed feast as well as at the beginning of every new month. The feast of Trumpets is unique in that it is the ONLY one of the seven feasts that began on the first day of the month (see Lev. 23:24). All the other feasts were calculated from the first day of month. Therefore Trumpets would be a very special feast day in that it was a day appointed for a double portion of the blowing of trumpets. It was (1) an appointed feast day for blowing the two silver trumpets, and (2) it was also the first day of the month which was also to be a day of sounding these two silver trumpets. As they were an ongoing memorial, Paul, as a feast-observing Jew, would have been very familiar with these two trumpets in his day.

Consider the entirety of the type and shadow that Numbers 10 records of these two silver trumpets:



**"...IN THE DAY OF YOUR GLADNESS, IN YOUR APPOINTED FEASTS, AND AT THE BEGINNING OF YOUR MONTHS, YOU SHALL BLOW THE TRUMPETS... AND THEY SHALL BE A MEMORIAL FOR YOU BEFORE YOUR GOD..."**

Num. 10:10

**"MAKE TWO SILVER TRUMPETS..."**



As we have seen, they were to mark all the seven feasts of the Lord, but especially the feast of Trumpets which was the only feast day that was celebrated on the first day of the month.

Unfortunately, Jewish tradition has labeled the feast of Trumpets as their New Year.

This is not what Exodus 12:2 establishes as the Jewish New Year.



**"...WHEN YOU GO TO WAR IN YOUR LAND AGAINST YOUR ENEMY WHO OPPRESSES YOU, THEN YOU SHALL SOUND AN ALARM WITH THE TRUMPETS, AND YOU WILL BE REMEMBERED BEFORE YOUR GOD, AND YOU WILL BE SAVED FROM YOUR ENEMIES..."**

Num. 10:9

Not all has been lost to tradition. This recent photo taken during Israel's last war with Hezbollah shows that the Jewish leaders are still using the silver trumpets as God instructed them as a defense against their enemies.



**"THE SONS OF AARON THE PRIESTS, SHALL BLOW THE TRUMPETS... AND THESE SHALL BE TO YOU AS AN ORDINANCE FOREVER THROUGHOUT YOUR GENERATIONS"**

Num. 10:8

This is an illuminating type and shadow recorded in Numbers 10 that pertains to the rapture specifically. It is the priests who are to blow the trumpets. This is an unchanging ordinance "forever." Paul, in describing the rapture in 1Thess. 4:16, makes the point that it is "The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout...and with the trumpet of God. At the rapture it will be Jesus Himself, "our High Priest" (Heb.8:1), who will sound the trumpet of God. As a point of contrast, the seven trumpets of Revelation are sounded by seven angels, not by the Lord Himself, our High Priest!

**"...YOU SHALL USE THEM FOR  
(1) CALLING THE ASSEMBLY...  
AND  
(2) FOR DIRECTING THE MOVEMENT OF THE CAMPS..."**

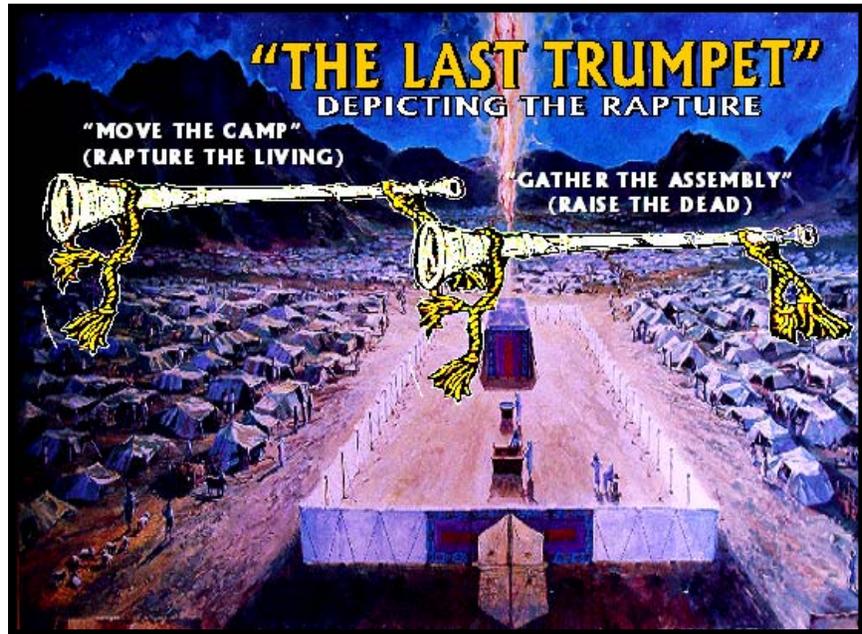
Num. 10:2-7

It is here that we find the exacting type and shadow of the rapture. Two stages are mentioned here by God for the Children of Israel in their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. The two silver trumpets were used to "call together the assembly" of the three million plus people of God, and they were used to announce when it was time for "the movement of the camp." The first trumpet gathered them together, and "the last trumpet" (2<sup>nd</sup> trumpet) would "move the camp."

How beautifully these two silver trumpets depict the two stages of the the rapture, (1) the resurrection of the dead typified by “gathering the assembly” and (2) the rapture of the living by the “movement of the camp.”

It is also significant that God gave these trumpets while His people were moving through the wilderness on their way from captivity in Egypt to the Promised Land located on the other side of the Jordan River.

We too are to be “strangers and pilgrims” who are on their way to a city whose builder and maker is God (see Heb. 11:10-16).



Moses was a type of Christ as our Deliverer from the bondages of Egypt (a type of the world). Pharaoh was a type of Satan who would not let God's people go from being his slaves. The Promised Land represents what God has in store for His people “on the other side of Jordan.” Those who went back to Egypt (the world) and those who died in the wilderness, of whom “God was not well pleased” represent the foolish virgins of the parable Jesus gave about the rapture (Mat. 25:1-13). Most of God's original people delivered from Egypt sought to go back rather than forward. They died in the wilderness bearing the testimony:

**“BUT WITH MOST OF THEM, GOD WAS NOT WELL PLEASED, FOR THEIR BODIES WERE SCATTERED IN THE WILDERNESS. NOW THESE THINGS BECAME OUR EXAMPLES...ALL THESE THINGS HAPPENED TO THEM AS EXAMPLES, AND THEY WERE WRITTEN FOR OUR ADMONITION, ON WHOM THE END OF THE AGES HAVE COME”**  
1 Cor. 10:5,11

Note well that the above illustration is found in the same “16-page letter” (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians) that contains the subject we are considering, “the last trumpet” that brings forth the rapture. Beware that the revelation of “the last trumpet” does not become just a “Pride” trip, for God has called us to a “Bride trip! It is “they that were ready” that go in with Jesus the Bridegroom! The foolish are left behind! We ARE promoting a pre-tribulation, pre-wrath rapture, but we are NOT promoting “everybody goes” that has been born again and rescued from Egypt! When Jesus described the tribulation that is coming, He told His disciples:

**“BUT TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES, LEST YOUR HEARTS BE WEIGHED DOWN WITH CAROUSING, DRUNKENNESS, AND THE CARES OF THIS LIFE, AND THAT DAY COME UPON YOU UNEXPECTEDLY. FOR IT WILL COME AS A SNARE ON ALL THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE FACE OF THE WHOLE EARTH. WATCH THEREFORE, AND PRAY ALWAYS THAT YOU MAY BE COUNTED WORTHY TO ESCAPE ALL THESE THINGS THAT WILL COME TO PASS, AND TO STAND BEFORE THE SON OF MAN.”** Luke 21:34-36



Among the many, many awful things Jesus described in that tribulation period would be those things that are contained within the seven trumpets of Revelation

Although it does not say so, it is my conviction that these seven trumpets are made of brass.

Brass is always a picture of judgment while silver is a picture of redemption. Redemption is not contained in the seven trumpets, only judgment and wrath. Let's consider that more fully:



**"FOR GOD DID NOT APPOINT US TO WRATH,  
BUT TO OBTAIN SALVATION THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST..."**  
1Thess. 5:9

# THE WRATH OF GOD

**"...HIDE US FROM THE FACE OF HIM WHO SITS ON THE THRONE AND FROM THE WRATH OF THE LAMB! FOR THE GREAT DAY OF HIS WRATH HAS COME, AND WHO IS ABLE TO STAND?"**

Rev. 6:16-17

Every one of the seven trumpets of Revelation are filled with cataclysmic destruction by God of both the earth and its inhabitants. In the previous "seven seals" God allowed one-fourth of mankind to be killed (Rev.6:8). The sixth trumpet kills another one-third. No wonder Jesus said, "watch and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass..." (Luke 21:36). He did not say He would carry you through this destruction, did He? No, He did not! What He said to the faithful saints of the Philadelphia church was:



<b>1ST TRUMPET:</b>	<b>2ND TRUMPET:</b>	<b>3RD TRUMPET:</b>	<b>4TH TRUMPET:</b>	<b>5TH TRUMPET:</b>	<b>6TH TRUMPET:</b>	<b>7TH TRUMPET:</b>
"HAIL, FIRE MINGLED WITH BLOOD... ONE THIRD TREES AND ALL GREEN GRASS IS BURNED"	"BURNING MOUNTAIN ...SEA BECOMES BLOOD... ONETHIRD OF SEA CREATURES AND SHIPS DESTROYED"	"ONE THIRD OF RIVERS AND SPRINGS BECOME WORM WOOD... MANY MEN DIE FROM BITTER WATER"	"ONE THIRD OF SUN, MOON, AND STARS DARKENED ... ONE THIRD OF NIGHT AND ONE THIRD OF DAY LOST"	BOTTOMLES PIT OPENS MEN TORTURED BY BEAST! FIVE MONTHS.. MEN SEEK DEATH BU CAN'T FIND IT"	200 MILLION SUPER NATURAL BEAST LOOSED... KILL ONE THIRD OF MANKIND"	CONTAIN THE 7 THUNDERS AND THE 7 BOWLS THAT COMPLETE GOD'S WRATH ON EARTH

**"I KNOW YOUR WORKS. SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR, AND NO ONE CAN SHUT IT; FOR YOU HAVE A LITTLE STRENGTH, HAVE KEPT MY WORD, AND HAVE NOT DENIED MY NAME...BECAUSE YOU HAVE KEPT MY COMMAND TO PERSEVERE, I ALSO WILL KEEP YOU FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL WHICH SHALL COME UPON THE WHOLE WORLD, TO TEST THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH."** Rev. 3:8-10

God has no intention of subjecting those who have already been tested and found faithful to the likes of what is contained in the first six trumpets. Who needs to be raptured at all if we must make it through the seven seals and the first six trumpets before we are raptured? Such a dismal promise does not fit Paul's words found in his dissertations on the rapture:

**"FOR THE LORD HIMSELF WILL DESCEND FROM HEAVEN... WITH THE TRUMPET OF GOD...THE DEAD WILL RISE FIRST, THEN WE WHO ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN SHALL BE CAUGHT UP TOGETHER WITH THEM IN THE CLOUDS TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR. AND THUS WE SHALL ALWAYS BE WITH THE LORD. THEREFORE COMFORT ONE ANOTHER WITH THESE WORDS... FOR GOD DID NOT APPOINT US TO WRATH, BUT TO OBTAIN SALVATION THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST... THEREFORE COMFORT EACH OTHER..."**

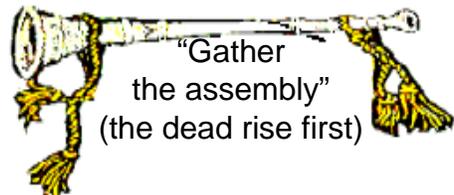
1Thess. 4:16-18, 5:9-11 excerpts

**"BEHOLD, I TELL YOU A MYSTERY: WE SHALL NOT ALL SLEEP, BUT WE SHALL ALL BE CHANGED - IN A MOMENT, IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE, AT THE LAST TRUMPET. FOR THE TRUMPET WILL SOUND, AND THE DEAD WILL BE RAISED INCORRUPTIBLE, AND WE SHALL BE CHANGED."**

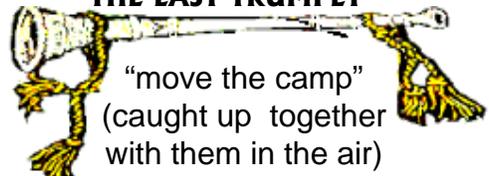
1Cor. 15:51-52

Only the trumpets of Numbers 10 provide such "words of comfort"

**"THE FIRST TRUMPET"**



**"THE LAST TRUMPET"**





# THE ERRONEOUS DOCTRINE OF THE LAST DAYS "FALLING AWAY" OF THE SAINTS



**"NOW, BRETHREN,  
CONCERNING THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST  
AND OUR GATHERING TOGETHER TO HIM,  
WE ASK YOU,**

**NOT TO BE SOON SHAKEN IN MIND OR TROUBLED,  
EITHER BY SPIRIT OR BY WORD OR BY LETTER, AS IF FROM US,  
AS THOUGH THE DAY OF CHRIST HAD COME.**

**LET NO ONE DECEIVE YOU BY ANY MEANS;  
FOR THAT DAY WILL NOT COME UNLESS THE FALLING AWAY COMES FIRST,  
AND THE MAN OF SIN IS REVEALED, THE SON OF PERDITION...**

**DO YOU NOT REMEMBER THAT WHEN I WAS STILL WITH YOU I TOLD YOU THESE THINGS?  
AND NOW YOU KNOW WHAT IS RESTRAINING,  
THAT HE MAY BE REVEALED IN HIS OWN TIME.  
FOR THE MYSTERY OF LAWLESSNESS IS ALREADY AT WORK;  
ONLY HE WHO NOW RESTRAINS WILL DO SO UNTIL HE IS TAKEN OUT OF THE WAY.  
AND THEN THE LAWLESS ONE WILL BE REVEALED..."**

2 Thess. 2:1-7

Paul wrote the above exhortation to the believer in order that "no one would deceive you by any means", and yet one of the greatest doctrinal deceptions has been birthed from the mistranslation and misapplication of his comforting words to a shaken church that had been robbed of its biblical hope of a pre-wrath rapture.

The three great abiding doctrines are "faith, hope and love" (1Cor. 13:13). In Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians he commends them for manifesting all three:

**"WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD ALWAYS FOR YOU...REMEMBERING...YOUR WORK OF FAITH,  
LABOR OF LOVE, AND PATIENCE OF HOPE IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST..."** 1Thess. 1:2-3

However, in Paul's second epistle, he can only commend them for possessing two out of the three:

**"WE ARE BOUND TO THANK GOD ALWAYS FOR YOU BRETHREN, AS IT IS FITTING,  
BECAUSE YOUR FAITH GROWS EXCEEDINGLY, AND THE LOVE OF EVERY ONE OF YOU ABOUNDS..."** 2Thess. 1:3

Paul omits praising their "hope" for it is greatly lacking due to the circulation of false letters written in Paul's name that promoted the concept that "the Day of Christ" (Day of the Lord-day of God's wrath) had already begun. "Caesar Nero", which totaled 666 in Greek numerics, was being proclaimed to be the dreaded antichrist. Paul writes this second epistle with the purpose of restoring hope in the hearts of God's people. This newsletter is dedicated to the same purpose.

"Much confusion has been wrought in Bible exposition and much damage done to Christianity, by the careless habit of concentrating on an isolated verse of Scripture, with no proper reference to its relationships. The context is often a sufficient commentary on a difficult verse. No solitary, minute portion can be expected to yield its meaning without a full consideration of its illuminating surroundings."

Harold Horton-1934 Gifts of the Spirit

In our last newsletter I gave you these two crucial principles which must be cultivated if we are going to avoid the pitfalls of myriads of doctrinal deceptions that surrounds us:

CONSIDERATION OF  
**CONTEXT**

**COMPARE**  
WITH OTHER PASSAGES



Harold Horton's exhortation to always consider contextual settings of isolated passages remains a timely word of warning to us today.

**"NOW, BRETHREN,  
CONCERNING THE COMING OF  
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST (1)  
AND OUR GATHERING TOGETHER  
TO HIM,**

**WE ASK YOU,  
NOT TO BE SOON SHAKEN IN  
MIND OR TROUBLED,  
EITHER BY SPIRIT OR BY WORD (2)  
OR BY LETTER, AS IF FROM US,  
AS THOUGH THE DAY OF CHRIST  
HAD COME.**

**LET NO ONE DECEIVE YOU  
BY ANY MEANS; (3)  
FOR THAT DAY WILL NOT COME  
UNLESS  
THE FALLING AWAY COMES FIRST,  
AND THE MAN OF SIN  
IS REVEALED,  
THE SON OF PERDITION...**

**DO YOU NOT REMEMBER THAT  
WHEN I WAS STILL WITH YOU I  
TOLD YOU THESE THINGS? (4)  
AND NOW YOU KNOW WHAT IS  
RESTRAINING,**

**THAT HE MAY BE REVEALED  
IN HIS OWN TIME. (5)  
FOR THE MYSTERY OF  
LAWLESSNESS IS (6)  
ALREADY AT WORK;**

**ONLY HE WHO NOW RESTRAINS  
WILL DO SO UNTIL HE IS TAKEN  
OUT OF THE WAY. (7)  
AND THEN  
THE LAWLESS ONE  
WILL BE REVEALED..."**

2 Thess. 2:1-7

These passages in 2Thessalonians are difficult to digest. We must use a little "Sherlock Holmes mentality" to unravel their true meaning. There are seven major points that Paul makes in 2Thess. 2:1-7. I have placed numbers (1-7) beside them for quick reference.

Let us begin by considering the context (1) in which we find Paul's reference to the two marks he singles out as preceding the coming of "the Day of Christ" in which God's wrath (2Thess. 2:9-12) will release the antichrist and his deception on the earth. These two marks are; "the falling away" and "the man of sin is revealed." (3)

Paul opens with (1) a two-point theme which is, "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him." We should expect all that follows this twofold theme to contain an elaboration of these already stated objectives. Therefore "the falling away" and "the revealing of the man of sin" are to be considered in relationship to "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" and "our gathering together to Him." Remember, these are words of comfort to the saints with the objective of restoring their diminishing hope in the rapture. There is little hope or comfort to be found in the popular notion that before "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him" the saints can expect to see first "the falling away and the revealing of the man of sin." Context refutes that theory. Paul goes on to elaborate the fact that the man of sin cannot be revealed BEFORE "He who is restraining is taken out of the way" (5). It is "THEN" that the antichrist will be revealed! (7). That restraining person stated as a "He" can only be the Holy Spirit. When is He taken out of the way? Context would demand that it takes place "at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him." Try to get into Paul's train of thought! He is using the truth of the restrainer as an argument that antichrist CANNOT precede the removal of the Holy Spirit which was given as a comforter to be with the church FOREVER (see Jn.14:16-17).

**"NOW, BRETHREN,  
 CONCERNING THE COMING OF  
 OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST (1)  
 AND OUR GATHERING TOGETHER  
 TO HIM,  
 WE ASK YOU,  
 NOT TO BE SOON SHAKEN IN  
 MIND OR TROUBLED,  
 EITHER BY SPIRIT OR BY WORD (2)  
 OR BY LETTER, AS IF FROM US,  
 AS THOUGH THE DAY OF CHRIST  
 HAD COME.**

**LET NO ONE DECEIVE YOU  
 BY ANY MEANS; (3)  
 FOR THAT DAY WILL NOT COME  
 UNLESS  
 THE FALLING AWAY COMES FIRST,  
 AND THE MAN OF SIN  
 IS REVEALED,  
 THE SON OF PERDITION...**

**DO YOU NOT REMEMBER THAT (4)  
 WHEN I WAS STILL WITH YOU I  
 TOLD YOU THESE THINGS?  
 AND NOW YOU KNOW WHAT IS  
 RESTRAINING,  
 THAT HE MAY BE REVEALED (5)  
 IN HIS OWN TIME.  
 FOR THE MYSTERY OF  
 LAWLESSNESS IS (6)  
 ALREADY AT WORK;  
 ONLY HE WHO NOW RESTRAINS  
 WILL DO SO UNTIL HE IS TAKEN  
 OUT OF THE WAY.  
 AND THEN (7)  
 THE LAWLESS ONE  
 WILL BE REVEALED..."**

2 Thess. 2:1-7

Are we to believe that the contents of points (1) and (2) (words of comfort concerning the coming of Christ and our gathering together to Him) are being fulfilled by this, widely accepted "doom and gloom" interpretation of the contents of point (3)?

**"BEFORE THE "DAY OF CHRIST" CAN COME THERE MUST FIRST BE "THE FALLING AWAY" OF THE SAINTS FROM THE FAITH. SECONDLY, BEFORE THIS DAY CAN COME, "THE MAN OF SIN" MUST BE REVEALED.**

Such an interpretation certainly is not imparting to God's people comforting truths that will help them to "...not be soon shaken in mind or troubled...as though the Day of Christ had come." Neither does some indefinable and nebulous sign of "the falling away" fulfill Paul's opening theme of "Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him." How many would need to "fall away" to make this a clear sign of the pending coming of Christ and our gathering together to Him? Believers have been "falling away" from the inception of the church to this very day! How can this be a measurable sign preceding "the Day of Christ?"

We must then add that points (5) (6) and (7) stand in direct conflict with such an interpretation that "the man of sin is revealed first." Paul clearly states in these verses that antichrist is revealed AFTER "He who restrains is taken out of the way", and it is "THEN" that "the lawless one will be revealed" rather than beforehand.

Will the Holy Spirit be "taken out of the way" before the church is "taken out of the way" by means of the rapture? Does that make sense? It does not to this teacher! Paul's context is not in harmony with what is being presented to God's people today pertaining to the prerequisite sign of "the falling away."

Note that Paul reminds the saints, "Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?" (4).

Search throughout Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians and see if you can find any mention of "the falling away" of saints from the faith. It is not there. Why so? Because he did not, and is not in his second epistle, preaching such a falling away from the faith as a sign that must precede the rapture. The theme of First Thessalonians is the rapture prior to God's wrath! There is NO depiction of a great falling away of the saints from the faith in any of Paul's epistles. What Paul did teach was this:

**"NOW THE SPIRIT EXPRESSLY SAYS THAT IN THE LATTER TIMES  
 SOME WILL DEPART FROM THE FAITH,  
 GIVING HEED TO DECEIVING SPIRITS AND DOCTRINES OF DEMONS." 1Tim. 4:1**

Notice Paul does not say "MANY" or "MOST" will depart, but rather "SOME." How do you measure "some" departing from the faith? How many must we observe to meet the criteria of "some"? Can we say that when we see the sign of "some" departing from the faith that we know "the Day of Christ" is at hand?

CONSIDERATION OF  
**CONTEXT**

**COMPARE**  
 WITH OTHER PASSAGES



**I WOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST TO YOU THAT IT IS NOT  
 “THE DEPARTING OF THE SAINTS FROM THE FAITH”  
 THAT PAUL PRESENTS IN 2THESSALONIANS, BUT RATHER  
 “THE DEPARTING OF THE SAINTS FROM THE EARTH”!**

**“NOW, BRETHREN,  
 CONCERNING THE COMING OF OUR  
 LORD JESUS CHRIST AND OUR  
 GATHERING TOGETHER TO HIM,  
 WE ASK YOU,  
 NOT TO BE SOON SHAKEN IN MIND OR  
 TROUBLED, EITHER BY SPIRIT OR BY  
 WORD OR BY LETTER, AS IF FROM US,  
 AS THOUGH THE DAY OF CHRIST HAD  
 COME. LET NO ONE DECEIVE YOU BY  
 ANY MEANS; FOR THAT DAY WILL NOT  
 COME UNLESS**

**THE FALLING AWAY**

**COMES FIRST,  
 AND THE MAN OF SIN IS REVEALED,  
 THE SON OF PERDITION...DO YOU NOT  
 REMEMBER THAT WHEN I WAS STILL  
 WITH YOU I TOLD YOU THESE THINGS?  
 AND NOW YOU KNOW WHAT IS  
 RESTRAINING, THAT HE MAY BE  
 REVEALED IN HIS OWN TIME.  
 FOR THE MYSTERY OF LAWLESSNESS IS  
 ALREADY AT WORK; ONLY HE WHO  
 NOW RESTRAINS WILL DO SO UNTIL HE  
 IS TAKEN OUT OF THE WAY. AND THEN  
 THE LAWLESS ONE WILL BE REVEALED...”**  
 2 Thess. 2:1-7

Let us make a substitution of the term “the falling away” with the words “the departure.” Read it and decide which one makes perfect sense in context, “the falling away” (of the saints from the faith) or “the departure” (of the saints from the earth)?

**“NOW, BRETHREN,  
 CONCERNING THE COMING OF OUR  
 LORD JESUS CHRIST AND OUR  
 GATHERING TOGETHER TO HIM,  
 WE ASK YOU,  
 NOT TO BE SOON SHAKEN IN MIND OR  
 TROUBLED, EITHER BY SPIRIT OR BY  
 WORD OR BY LETTER, AS IF FROM US,  
 AS THOUGH THE DAY OF CHRIST HAD  
 COME. LET NO ONE DECEIVE YOU BY  
 ANY MEANS; FOR THAT DAY WILL NOT  
 COME UNLESS**

**THE DEPARTURE**

**COMES FIRST,  
 AND THE MAN OF SIN IS REVEALED,  
 THE SON OF PERDITION...DO YOU NOT  
 REMEMBER THAT WHEN I WAS STILL  
 WITH YOU I TOLD YOU THESE THINGS?  
 AND NOW YOU KNOW WHAT IS  
 RESTRAINING, THAT HE MAY BE  
 REVEALED IN HIS OWN TIME.  
 FOR THE MYSTERY OF LAWLESSNESS IS  
 ALREADY AT WORK; ONLY HE WHO  
 NOW RESTRAINS WILL DO SO UNTIL HE  
 IS TAKEN OUT OF THE WAY. AND THEN  
 THE LAWLESS ONE WILL BE REVEALED...”**  
 2 Thess. 2:1-7

Look at the comparison chart below and you will see what happens to our understanding of this whole teaching when we substitute the concept of “the falling away” (of the saints from the faith) with “the departure” (of the saints from the earth).

Keep in mind that in Paul’s first epistle to the Thessalonians he presented the concept of rapture with the moral to the story being:

**“THEREFORE  
 COMFORT  
 ONE ANOTHER  
 WITH THESE WORDS”**  
 (1Thess. 4:18)

Which of these two scenarios contain such words of comfort for the saints?

RENDER “APOSTASIA” <b>“THE FALLING AWAY”</b> ORDER OF EVENTS: 1. SAINTS FALL AWAY FROM FAITH IN GOD... 2. THE APPEARANCE OF THE ANTICHRIST ON EARTH... 3. THEN THE RAPTURE OF THE SAINTS FROM THE EARTH... ↑ “COMFORT ONE ANOTHER WITH THESE WORDS” ?	RENDER “APOSTASIA” <b>“THE DEPARTURE”</b> ORDER OF EVENTS: 1. SAINTS DEPART FROM THE EARTH... 2. THE RESTRAINER IS TAKEN OUT OF THE WAY... 3. THEN THE ANTICHRIST IS REVEALED ON EARTH... ↑ “COMFORT ONE ANOTHER WITH THESE WORDS”
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With this single substitution of “departure” for “falling away” we now have a sequence of events that stands in perfect harmony with Paul’s earlier teaching on the rapture in First Thessalonians. We are not to look for the appearance of antichrist prior to the coming of Jesus Christ! This is Paul’s real argument.

Is there a justifiable basis upon which we can make the substitution of “departure” in place of “falling away”? My answer is an overwhelming “yes!” I first became aware of the possibility of “departure” being an alternative translation of the Greek word “apostasia” instead of “falling away” when I read this footnote in the Amplified Bible under 2Thess. 2:3:

**a Robert Jamieson, A.R. Fausset and David Brown, A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments.**  
**b Alexander Souter, Pocket Lexicon of the Greek New Testament.** → **c A possible rendering of the Greek apostasia is “departure [of the church].”**

There is a lot more evidence than just a “possible rendering” of this word as “departure”! Consider this: →

The following data was taken from an article by Dr. Thomas Ice of the Pre-Trib Research Center.

You can read this article in its entirety at this website location:

<http://www.pre-trib.org/article-view.php?id=165>. Consider these excerpts:

**"THE FIRST SEVEN  
ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS ALL RENDERED  
THE NOUN "APOSTASIA"  
AS EITHER "DEPARTURE"  
OR "DEPARTING."  
(SPANS 1384 to 1608)  
(WYCLIFFE BIBLE (1384); TYNDALE BIBLE(1526);  
COVERDALE BIBLE (1535); CRANMER BIBLE (1539);  
BREECHES BIBLE (1576); BEZA BIBLE (1583);  
GENEVA BIBLE (1608)**

**THE LATIN VULGATE BIBLE  
TRANSLATED IN 400 A.D.  
ALSO RENDERED "APOSTASIA"  
AS "DEPARTURE."**

**"THE KING JAMES BIBLE  
WAS THE FIRST VERSION TO DEPART FROM THE  
ESTABLISHED TRANSLATION OF "APOSTASIA" AS  
DEPARTURE... THE TRANSLATORS OF THE KING  
JAMES VERSION INTRODUCED THE NEW  
RENDERING OF "APOSTASIA" AS "FALLING  
AWAY."**

**NO GOOD REASON WAS EVER GIVEN FOR THE  
CHANGE. MOST ENGLISH TRANSLATORS HAVE  
FOLLOWED THE KJV IN DEPARTING FROM  
TRANSLATING "APOSTASIA" AS "DEPARTURE"..."**

Do we have a legitimate basis for rendering "apostasia" as "departure" instead of "falling away"? Historically, all the way back to 400 A.D. and right up through 1608 this Greek word was ALWAYS translated as "departure." Note well that it was the King James version that was the first to depart from the norm, and without ever giving a reason for the change. I find this ironic in light of all the present dogmatic hype being placed on the King James Bible as the only "authorized" and "real" Word of God. Let's call a spade, a spade! The blatant changing of "departure" to "falling away" by the KJV is a bad translation made without any justifiable merit. It is also the King James Version than mistranslates the Greek word "Pascha" (Strong's #3957) as "Easter" in Acts 12:4, when throughout Scripture it is always rendered as "Passover." "Easter", with its origins rooted in the pagan goddess Ishtar, is not "Passover." Let's face it, the King James Version is a translation just like all the rest. Perhaps it does not have as many translation errors as some of the more modern translations, but it does have a few vitally significant ones!

Today, only the Kenneth Wuest translation continues to translate this word as "departure," although as mentioned earlier, the Amplified Bible contains a footnote to the possible rendering of this word as departure.

Not being a Greek scholar, I will now quote from Dr. Thomas Ice's article as to why he believes it is better to render the Greek word "apostasia" as "departure" rather than "falling away":

The Greek noun *apostasia* is only used twice in the New Testament. In addition to 2 Thessalonians 2:3, it occurs in Acts 21:21 where, speaking of Paul, it is said, "that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake (*apostasia*) Moses." The word is a Greek compound of *apo* "from" and *istemi* "stand." Thus, it has the core meaning of "away from" or "departure." The Liddell and Scott Greek Lexicon defines *apostasia* first as "defection, revolt," then secondly as "departure, disappearance."<sup>[1]</sup> Gordon Lewis explains how the verb from which the noun *apostasia* is derived supports the basic meaning of departure in the following:

The verb may mean to remove spatially. There is little reason then to deny that the noun can mean such a spatial removal or departure. Since the noun is used only one other time in the New Testament of apostasy from Moses (Acts 21:21), we can hardly conclude that its Biblical meaning is necessarily determined. The verb is used fifteen times in the New Testament. Of these fifteen, only three have anything to do with a departure from the faith (Luke 8:13; 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb 3:12). The word is used for departing from iniquity (2 Tim. 2:19), from ungodly men (1 Tim. 6:5), from the temple (Luke 2:27), from the body (2 Cor. 12:8), and from persons (Acts 12:10; Luke 4:13).<sup>[2]</sup>

"It is with full assurance of proper exegetical study and with complete confidence in the original languages," concludes Daniel Davey "that the word meaning of *apostasia* is defined as departure."<sup>[3]</sup> Paul Lee Tan adds the following:

What precisely does Paul mean when he says that "the falling away" (2:3) must come before the tribulation? The definite article "the" denotes that this will be a definite event, an event distinct from the appearance of the Man of Sin. The Greek word for "falling away", taken by itself, does not mean religious apostasy or defection. Neither does the word mean "to fall," as the Greeks have another word for that. [*pipto*, I fall; TD] The best translation of the word is "to depart." The apostle Paul refers here to a definite event which he calls "the departure," and which will occur just before the start of the tribulation. This is the rapture of the church.<sup>[4]</sup>

So the word has the core meaning of departure and it depends upon the context to determine whether it is used to mean physical departure or an abstract departure such as departure from the faith.

It is important to note that Paul uses a definite article with the noun *apostasia*. What does this mean? Davey notes the following: Since the Greek language does not need an article to make the noun definite, it becomes clear that with the usage of the article reference is being made to something in particular. In II Thessalonians 2:3 the word *apostasia* is prefaced by the definite article which means that Paul is pointing to a particular type of departure clearly known to the Thessalonian church.<sup>[7]</sup>

Dr. Lewis provides a likely answer when he notes that the definite article serves to make a word distinct and draw attention to it. In this instance he believes that its purpose is "to denote a previous reference." "The departure Paul previously referred to was 'our being gathered to him' (v. 1) and our being 'caught up' with the Lord and the raptured dead in the clouds (1 Thess. 4:17)," notes Dr. Lewis.<sup>[8]</sup> The "departure" was something that Paul and his readers clearly had a mutual understanding about. Paul says in verse 5, "Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?"

The use of the definite article would also support the notion that Paul spoke of a clear, discernable event. A physical departure, like the rapture would fit just such a notion. However, the New Testament teaches that apostasy had already arrived in the first century (cf. Acts 20:27-32; 1 Tim. 4:1-5; 2 Tim. 3:1-9; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; Jude 3-4, 17-21) and thus, such a process would not denote a clear event as demanded by the language of this passage. Understanding departure as the rapture would satisfy the nuance of this text. E. Schuyler English explains as follows:

Again, how would the Thessalonians, or Christians in any century since, be qualified to recognize the apostasy when it should come, assuming, simply for the sake of this inquiry, that the Church might be on earth when it does come? There has been apostasy from God. rebellion against Him. since time began.<sup>[9]</sup>

Whatever Paul is referring to in his reference to "the departure," was something that both the Thessalonian believers and he had discussed in-depth previously. When we examine Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, he never mentions the doctrine of apostasy, however, virtually every chapter in that epistle speaks of the rapture (cf. 1:9-10; 2:19; probably 3:13; 4:13-17; 5:1-11). In these passages, Paul has used a variety of Greek terms to describe the rapture. It should not be surprising that he uses another term to reference the rapture in 2 Thessalonians 2:3. Dr. House tells us:

Remember, the Thessalonians had been led astray by the false teaching (2:2-3) that the Day of the Lord had already come. This was confusing because Paul offered great hope, in the first letter, of a departure to be with Christ and a rescue from god's wrath. Now a letter purporting to be from Paul seems to say that they would first have to go through the Day of the Lord. Paul then clarified his prior teaching by emphasizing that they had no need to worry. They could again be comforted because the departure he had discussed in his first letter, and in his teaching while with them, was still the truth. The departure of Christians to be with Christ, and the subsequent revelation of the lawless one, Paul argues, is proof that the Day of the Lord had not begun as they had thought. This understanding of *apostasia* makes much more sense than the view that they are to be comforted (v. 2) because a defection from the faith must precede the Day of the Lord. The entire second chapter (as well as 1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11) serves to comfort (see w. 2, 3, 17), supplied by a reassurance of Christ's coming as taught in his first letter.<sup>[10]</sup>

Since pretribulationists believe that the restrainer mentioned in verses 6 and 7 is the Holy Spirit and teaches a pre-trib rapture, then it should not be surprising to see that there is a similar progression of thought in the progression of verse 3. Allan MacRae, president of Faith Theological Seminary in a letter to Schuyler English has said the following concerning this matter:

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I wonder if you have noticed the striking parallel between this verse and verses 7-8, a little further down. According to your suggestion verse 3 mentions the departure of the church as coming first, and then tells of the revealing of the man of sin. In verses 7 and 8 we find the identical sequence. Verse 7 tells of the removal of the Church; verse 8 says: "And then shall that Wicked be revealed." Thus close examination of the passage shows an inner unity and coherence, if we take the word *apostasia* in its general sense of "departure," while a superficial examination would easily lead to an erroneous interpretation as "falling away" because of the proximity of the mention of the man of sin.<sup>[11]</sup>

Kenneth Wuest, a Greek scholar from Moody Bible Institute added the following contextual support to taking *apostasia* as a physical departure:

But then *hee apostasia* of which Paul is speaking, precedes the revelation of Antichrist in his true identity, and is to *katechon* that which holds back his revelation (2:6). The *hee apostasia*, therefore, cannot be either a general apostasy in Christendom which does precede the coming of Antichrist, nor can it be the particular apostasy which is the result of his activities in making himself the alone object of worship. Furthermore, that which holds back his revelation (vs. 3) is vitally connected with *hoo katechoon* (vs. 7), He who holds back the same event. The latter is, in my opinion, the Holy Spirit and His activities in the Church. All of which means that I am driven to the inescapable conclusion that the *hee apostasia* (vs. 3) refers to the Rapture of the Church which precedes the Day of the Lord, and holds back the revelation of the Man of Sin who ushers in the world-aspect of that period.<sup>[12]</sup>

Over the last four newsletters I have sought to reveal the errors that surround Paul's teachings on the rapture. This is a chart which reveals the essence of those errors. →

God's intention for the rapture is to impart to God's people the vision of "The Blessed Hope" as revealed in this flowing continuous sentence of Paul which depicts the fullness of what the Christian life is supposed to be:

**"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, 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

I pray that the last four newsletters have brought you understanding in the midst of the confusion that surrounds the subject of the rapture. If you would like a more in-depth look at this subject then consider ordering my latest DVD series on the subject:

**1 Cor. 15:51-53**

**MISAPPLICATION OF REVELATION'S "LAST (7<sup>TH</sup>) TRUMPET"**



**1 Thess. 4:15 - 5:10**

**OMISSION OF PREREQUISITE: "THE DEAD RISE FIRST"**

**2 Thess. 2:1 - 12**

**MISTRANSLATION OF "APOSTASIA": "THE FALLING AWAY"**



**"THE RAPTURE"**

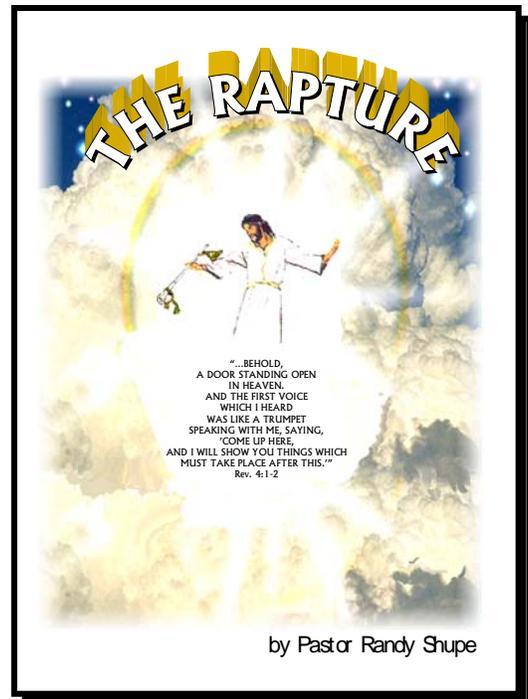
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There is no greater subject in the Bible that brings forth more controversy and confusion than the hotly debated topic of the rapture. Many teach against it altogether.

Those who do embrace a literal rapture champion one of three dispensational positions; a "pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, or post-tribulation" occurrence. Since "...God is not the author of confusion..." (1Cor. 14:33), we must assume that a complete analysis and harmonizing of all the Scriptures pertaining to this event are not being properly considered.

Paul states that the rapture is "a mystery" (1Cor.15:51). Therefore we must cultivate a little "Sherlock Holmes mentality" in which we carefully scrutinize every shred of evidence if we are to understand this mystery.



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"AND SO WE HAVE  
THE PROPHETIC WORD  
CONFIRMED,  
WHICH YOU DO WELL TO  
HEED AS A LIGHT THAT  
SHINES IN A  
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UNTIL THE DAY DAWNS  
AND  
THE MORNING STAR  
RISES IN  
YOUR HEARTS..."

2 Pet. 1:19



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