

THE PROPHETIC WORD

**NEWSLETTER
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Pastor Randy Shupe



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~ JANUARY 2008 NEWSLETTER ~



HAVING A GOOD CONFESSION

PART ONE:

“KNOWING WHAT TO CONFESS”

Thank you for all your prayers and expressed concerns for my personal well-being over the last year. I was forced to take a sabbatical from writing newsletters in 2007 mainly due to an accident. I fell off a ladder, broke a bone in my hand, dislocated my elbow, and damaged my shoulder enough to need surgery. I have spent the last year in painful therapy. I am fully restored and very thankful to God for His goodness and His mercy. Thank you for caring.

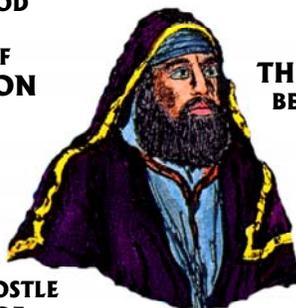
Pastor Randy

Please do not pre-conclude from this newsletter's title that in my year's absence I have become a convert to the "faith-for-prosperity" message. However, we must be careful to accept the validity of an emphasis that the apostle Paul places on the need for a Christian to have a good confession. Here are some examples:

**“(HAVING) ...CONFESSED
THE GOOD CONFESSION
IN THE PRESENCE
OF MANY WITNESSES...”**

1 Tim. 6:12

**“...THEY GLORIFY GOD
FOR
THE OBEDIENCE OF
YOUR CONFESSION
TO THE GOSPEL
OF CHRIST...”**
2 Cor. 9:13



**“...JESUS CHRIST
WHO WITNESSED
THE GOOD CONFESSION
BEFORE PONTIUS PILATE...”**

1 Tim. 6:13

**“...CONSIDER THE APOSTLE
AND HIGH PRIEST OF
OUR CONFESSION,
CHRIST JESUS”**
Heb. 3:1

**“LET US
HOLD FAST
OUR
CONFESSION ...”**

Heb.4:14

**“LET US
HOLD FAST
THE CONFESSION
OF OUR HOPE
WITHOUT WAVERING,
FOR HE WHO PROMISED
IS FAITHFUL.”**
Heb10:23

We can see that there is a valid biblical emphasis placed upon the need for the believer to have a good confession. Let us now see if we can establish what Paul meant by this stated emphasis.

Perhaps it is the common application of a confession being something that is either criminal or Catholic. Paul's use of this word confession is made neither to the police nor to a priest. It is not a negative expression of guilt at all, but rather a very positive affirmation of what one truly believes. If the word confession bothers you, then freely substitute it with either the word "declaration" or "proclamation." Both are found in the definition of the Greek word translated as confession.

There is added revelation contained in the Greek language that helps us understand what Paul means by the believer having a good confession.

The two root words from which "confession" (homologeō) is derived convey the idea that a good confession will be "in agreement with, say the same as," what is written in the eternal, unchanging, Word of God! Our confession is to be a proclamation, a declaration, an acknowledgment, in agreement with, the same as, what is proclaimed and declared in the Word of God!!

CONFESSION

(GREEK: (Strong's 3670) "HOMOLOGEO")

GR. ROOT (Strong's 3674) "HOMOS"

GR. ROOT (Strong's 3056) "LOGOS"



**"AT THE SAME PLACE-
BE TOGETHER"**

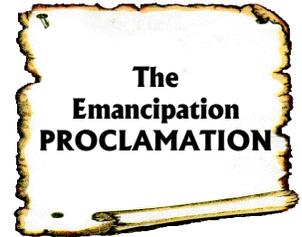
**"THE ETERNAL
WORD OF GOD"**

**"IN AGREEMENT WITH, TO SAY THE SAME AS,
TO ACKNOWLEDGE,
MAKE A DECLARATION - PROCLAMATION"**

I prefer the words declaration and proclamation rather than confession. We know of two famous documents in secular history that were declarations and proclamations. They were:



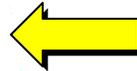
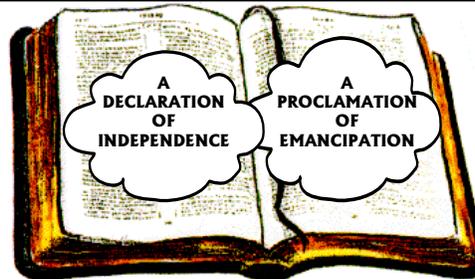
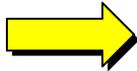
These two famous secular documents were issued as a protest against tyranny and slavery. The DECLARATION of Independence was a statement of resistance issued against the tyranny of the King of England over the American colonies. The Emancipation PROCLAMATION was a statement issued to abolish the practice of slavery in America.



I suggest to you that similar concepts lie behind God's intentions for His people to make declarations and proclamations (confessions) pertaining to the liberty and freedom the Christian possesses against the unjust tyranny and slavery to sin and Satan's kingdom. Paul states this challenge to every believer:

"STAND FAST THEREFORE IN THE LIBERTY BY WHICH CHRIST HAS MADE US FREE, AND DO NOT BE ENTANGLED AGAIN WITH A YOKE OF BONDAGE... FOR YOU BRETHREN, HAVE BEEN CALLED TO LIBERTY; ONLY DO NOT USE LIBERTY AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE FLESH..." Gal. 5:1,13

The Bible provides the believer with a host of DECLARATIONS of independence from the imposed tyranny of the "king," the god of this present evil world, Satan.



The contents of the Word of God provide the believer with a multitude of PROCLAMATIONS of their emancipation from Satan's imposed slavery to sin.

"IF YOU ABIDE (CONTINUE) IN MY WORD... YOU SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE." John 8:31-32

"SANCTIFY (SET APART) THEM BY YOUR TRUTH. YOUR WORD IS TRUTH." John 17:17

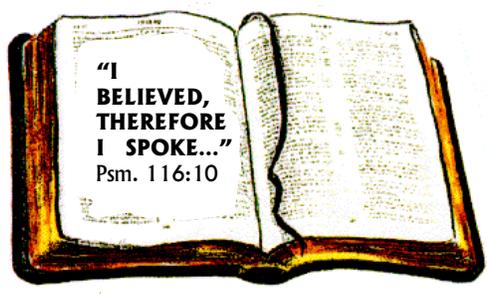
**"LET THE REDEEMED OF THE LORD SAY SO,
WHOM HE HAS REDEEMED
FROM THE HAND OF THE ENEMY."
Psm. 107:2**

God expects the redeemed to "say so," not just to "know so." The believer is to verbally declare and proclaim (confess) how God has delivered them from the hand of the enemy. Why is this so? Because God Himself makes verbal proclamations and declarations:

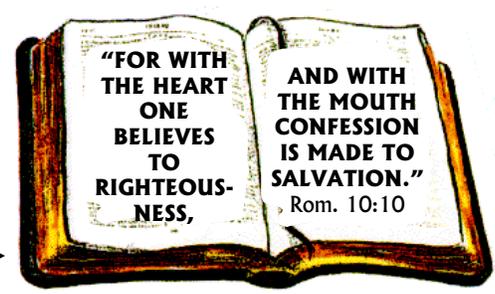
**"I HAVE DECLARED AND SAVED, I HAVE PROCLAIMED..." Isa 43:12
"WHO CAN PROCLAIM AS I DO? THEN LET HIM DECLARE IT...
HAVE I NOT TOLD YOU FROM THAT TIME, AND DECLARED IT?" Isa 44:7-8**

Because God Himself does so, we find the psalmist freely following His divine pattern:

**"I HAVE PROCLAIMED THE GOOD NEWS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE GREAT CONGREGATION;
INDEED, I DO NOT RESTRAIN MY LIPS, O LORD, YOU YOURSELF KNOW...
I HAVE DECLARED YOUR FAITHFULNESS AND YOUR SALVATION..." Psm. 40:9-10**



Truth from God that is initially believed in the heart is to be verbalized with the mouth. This principle is stated both in the old and in the new covenant:



**"IF YOU CONFESS WITH
YOUR MOUTH
THE LORD JESUS,
AND
BELIEVE IN
YOUR HEART
THAT GOD
HAS RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD,
YOU WILL BE SAVED."
Rom. 10:9**

Salvation itself is not based just on what we believe in our heart, but also upon what we confess (proclaim and declare) with our mouth. It takes verbal confession to complete the process of salvation.

**THE HEART
AND WITH
THE MOUTH**

When we see the word "salvation" or "save" we tend to view it only as the means by which we obtain eternal life. Strong's concordance reveals that it has a much broader meaning:

NT:4991 (Strong's)	SALVATION
<i>lyoteria</i> (so-tay-ree'-ah); feminine of a derivative of NT:4990 as (properly, abstract) rescue or safety (physically or morally): <i>KJV</i> - deliver, health, salvation, save, saving.	

Therefore, "confession is made unto salvation," can be applied to obtaining "safety, to be rescued, to be delivered, to obtain health" as well as receiving eternal life! Jesus bears witness to this expanded view of salvation when He proclaimed:

**"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE HAS ANOINTED ME TO PREACH
THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR, HE HAS SENT ME TO HEAL THE BROKENHEARTED,
TO PREACH DELIVERANCE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND;
TO SET AT LIBERTY THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, TO PREACH THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD." Luke 4:18-19**

Can you see God's DECLARATION of independence and His PROCLAMATION of emancipation for mankind in these verses? What is His objective? It is to set at LIBERTY those who are oppressed!

We see then that there is an aspect of faith pertaining to confession. Let us consider now this question:

Confession with the mouth is a big emphasis of the popular, but erroneous, "faith-for-prosperity" message. Ponder well this contrast: →

We are to confess, but what are we to confess? Can I confess into existence anything that I want to believe? I recently heard a man state that he commands fish to jump on his hook. Is that what Jesus told Peter to do when he was not catching any fish? No, rather he told Peter to cast his net on the other side of the boat where the fish were (Jn. 21:6). This is important: Jesus did not tell Peter to speak something into existence, but rather he directed him to what was already in existence.

WHICH IS BIBLICAL FAITH?

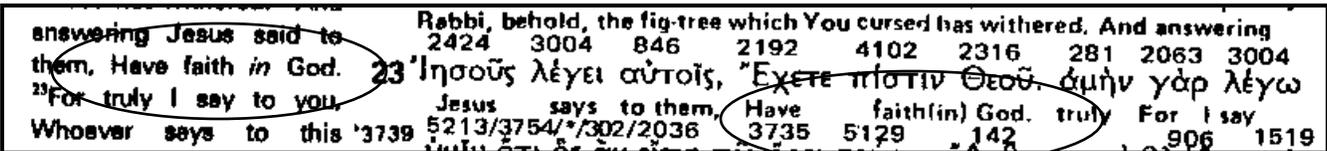


BELIEVE
WHAT WE **CONFESS**
WITH OUR MOUTH?

CONFESS WITH OUR MOUTH
WHAT WE **BELIEVE**
IN OUR HEART?

The error of the "faith-for-prosperity" movement centers around the concept that a believer, by having faith like God, can speak things into existence just as God did when He said, "Let there be light!" (Gen.1:3). This kind of presumptuous faith is built around a confession in which the believer, by faith, commands the work of God's hands using the passage: "Concerning the work of My hands, you command Me" (Isa. 45:11). However, if you read the context of that verse you will see that God is reproving rather than condoning them to command the work of God's hands (see Isa 45:9-10).

Another favorite twisting of Scripture is proclaimed by saying that in the Greek translation, Jesus is really saying, "Have God's kind of faith" instead of the common translation, "Have faith in God." Are they right? They are not. Here is a scanned image from "The Greek Interlinear Greek-English New Testament" by Jay P. Green Sr.:



There is a huge difference between the concept of "Have God's kind of faith" and that of "Have faith in God."



**"HAVING
A GOOD
CONFESSION"**

IS
SAYING
WHAT GOD
HAS
ALREADY SAID

Biblical faith, making a biblical confession, is not a product of "Having God's kind of faith," but rather we express true faith by "Having faith in God." What I read in His Word, I believe with my heart, and confession of what God has said leads to salvation (safety, rescue, health, deliverance).

I am not to confess things into existence, but rather to believe and to confess what God states already exists. I can only express faith by confessing (proclaiming, declaring) the contents of what is written in God's (Logos) Word.

**"BUT WHAT DOES IT SAY?
'THE WORD IS NEAR YOU,
EVEN IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART'
(THAT IS, THE WORD OF FAITH WHICH WE PREACH)...
SO THEN FAITH COMES BY HEARING, AND HEARING
COMES BY THE WORD OF GOD."** Rom. 10:8,17

The "word of faith" movement being taught today is not the same as "the word of faith" as presented above by the apostle Paul. True faith comes from hearing the Word of God, not by mimicking God's ability to speak things into existence. The believer has no such power or authority!



**FAITH
COMES BY
HEARING**

**WHAT GOD HAS SAID,
NOT BY WHAT I SAY**



"HIS DIVINE POWER HAS GIVEN TO US ALL THINGS THAT PERTAIN TO LIFE AND GODLINESS. UNTO US HAVE BEEN GIVEN EXCEEDINGLY GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES THAT THROUGH THESE YOU MAY BE PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE..ESCAPE THE CORRUPTION THAT IS IN THE WORLD."
2 Pet. 1:3-4

What portion of the Word of God is it that is designed to generate faith in the heart? It is the promises of God. It has been estimated that there are over 5,000 promises in God's Word that express His revealed will for His people. Some of those promises are reserved for Israel alone, but the majority are expressions for the Gentile church that has become first partaker of Israel's New Covenant.

Consider these key passages that speak about the importance of the promises of God:



"AND WE DESIRE THAT EACH ONE OF YOU SHOW THE SAME DILIGENCE TO THE FULL ASSURANCE OF HOPE UNTIL THE END, THAT YOU DO NOT BECOME SLUGGISH, BUT IMITATE THOSE WHO THROUGH FAITH AND PATIENCE INHERIT THE PROMISES..."
Heb. 6:11-12



"FOR ALL THE PROMISES OF GOD IN HIM ARE YES, AND IN HIM AMEN, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THROUGH US."
2 Cor. 1:20

Have you ever noticed that the foundation of the Old as well as the New Covenant is based upon God's promises?

"BUT NOW HE HAS OBTAINED A MORE EXCELLENT MINISTRY, INASMUCH AS HE IS ALSO MEDIATOR OF A BETTER COVENANT, WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED ON BETTER PROMISES."
Heb. 8:6

Faith can only be expressed through laying hold of a promise from God's Word. If there is no valid expression of a promise in God's Word, then there can be no valid expression of faith. We can only confess (proclaim, declare) what is written in God's Word. All of our own words spoken in faith are nothing but words of presumption. Faith has a foundation. Paul expresses it as:

"NOW FAITH IS THE SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR, THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN."
Heb. 11:1



"I HOPE IN YOUR WORD"
Psalm 119:114
(NOT MY OWN)

The substance of faith is rooted in "things hoped for." Hope is not abstract, it is specific. The psalmist states the source of specific hope: "I hope in Your Word."

When God gives a promise, it creates hope. Faith clings to that hope until it becomes "the evidence of things not seen."

Hope is future reality-not present reality:

"FOR WE WERE SAVED IN THIS HOPE, BUT HOPE THAT IS SEEN IS NOT HOPE; FOR WHY DOES ONE HOPE FOR WHAT HE SEES? BUT IF WE HOPE FOR WHAT WE DO NOT SEE, THEN WE EAGERLY WAIT FOR IT WITH PERSEVERANCE."
Rom. 8:24-25

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

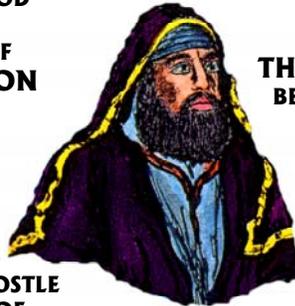
God has plainly stated above what will cause believers to stand out among unbelievers:

They have become a people of hope that springs from becoming partakers of "the covenants of promise."

For that to be a visible, tangible distinction, we are going to have to do our part; which brings us back to Paul's emphasis upon the believer's confession:

**"(HAVING) ...CONFESSED
THE GOOD CONFESSION
IN THE PRESENCE
OF MANY WITNESSES..."**
1 Tim. 6:12

**"...THEY GLORIFY GOD
FOR
THE OBEDIENCE OF
YOUR CONFESSION
TO THE GOSPEL
OF CHRIST..."**
2 Cor. 9:13



**...JESUS CHRIST
WHO WITNESSED
THE GOOD CONFESSION
BEFORE PONTIUS PILATE..."**

1 Tim. 6:13

**"...CONSIDER THE APOSTLE
AND HIGH PRIEST OF
OUR CONFESSION,
CHRIST JESUS"**
Heb. 3:1

**"LET US
HOLD FAST
OUR
CONFESSION ..."**

Heb.4:14

**"LET US
HOLD FAST
THE CONFESSION
OF OUR HOPE
WITHOUT WAVERING,
FOR HE WHO PROMISED
IS FAITHFUL."**
Heb10:23

"A GOOD CONFESSION"

A PROCLAMATION – A DECLARATION



**VERBALIZING
WHAT ONE BELIEVES
TO BE
AN ACCURATE AND COMPLETE
STATEMENT OF TRUTH"**

As a writer, I often find myself carefully choosing the words to set down on a written page. My purpose is to purify my thoughts with the best possible words in order to clearly convey my message. Consider what God states about His own words:

**"THE WORDS OF THE LORD
ARE PURE WORDS,
LIKE SILVER TRIED IN A FURNACE OF EARTH,
PURIFIED SEVEN TIMES."**

Psm. 12:6

There is no more pure expression of faith than what is written in God's Word. It needs no further purification. Rather it needs to be believed in the heart and confessed with the mouth.

There is one more thought I would like to express to you about God's Word:

"THE ENTIRETY OF YOUR WORD IS TRUTH."

Psm. 119:160

Lord willing, In our next three newsletters we shall examine several important confessions (proclamations, declarations) found in God's Word that need to be on the lips of the redeemed. In them we will seek to stress the importance of confessing the entirety of the truth contained within these declarations.

These are the three confessions that we shall examine in our next three newsletters. I believe these are areas in which a good confession among God's people is greatly lacking.

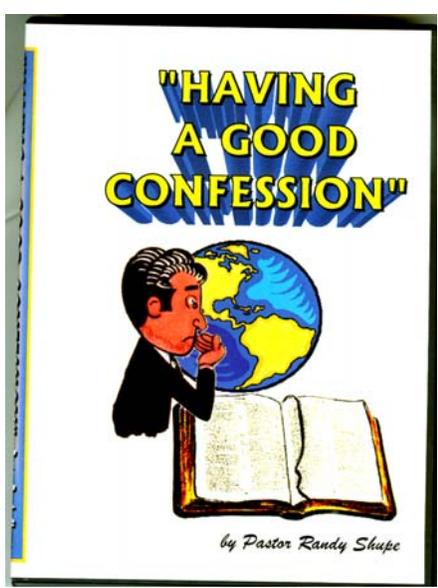


**CONFESSING
A COMPLETE COVENANT**

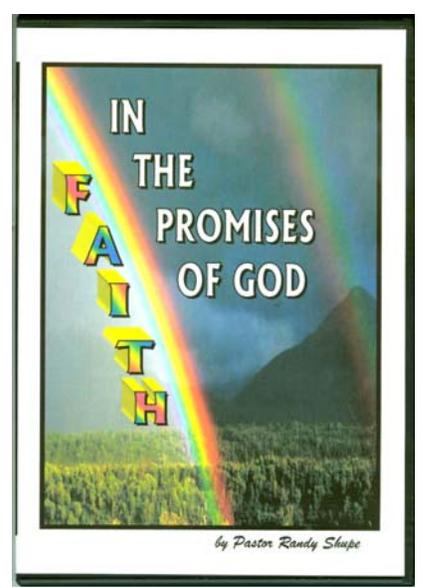
**"A GOOD
CONFESSION"**

**CONFESSING
SOUND DOCTRINE**

**CONFESSING
A SOLID FOUNDATION**



I would encourage you to order these two DVD teachings. One is a single teaching on the promises of God, and the other is a four part teaching on the subject of this newsletter as well as the three to follow.



We will send both of them to you for \$ 25.00 including shipping and handling.

Pastor Randy Shupe



HAVING A GOOD CONFESSION

PART TWO:

"MAKING A COMPLETE CONFESSION"

Our last newsletter dealt with the meaning of Paul's urging for God's people to maintain a good confession (1 Tim. 6:12, 6:13, Heb 3:1, 4:14, 10:23, 2 Cor. 9:13). I showed you that a "confession" is a verbal declaration, a proclamation that is in agreement with God's (Logos) written Word. A confession is saying the same as God has recorded in His Word.

In this newsletter, I want to stress the importance that our confession of God's Word needs to be "accurate and complete statements of truth." We live in times in which half truths are presented as whole truths. It has been well said that half a truth is no better than a lie.

The theme of this newsletter, as well as the two that will follow it, is to demonstrate what constitutes "an accurate and complete statement of truth." If indeed truth is to make us free and sanctify (set apart) the believer, it will take "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

These are the three areas that we shall address in which it is vital that we express "an accurate and complete statement of truth."

**CONFESSING
A COMPLETE COVENANT**

The first area that we shall address in this newsletter is the importance of confessing (proclaiming, declaring) what is sound doctrine.

**"A GOOD
CONFESSION"**

**CONFESSING
SOUND DOCTRINE**

**CONFESSING
A SOLID FOUNDATION**

"A GOOD CONFESSION"

A PROCLAMATION- A DECLARATION

**VERBALIZING
WHAT ONE BELIEVES
TO BE
AN ACCURATE AND COMPLETE
STATEMENT OF TRUTH**

"...YOU SHALL KNOW
THE TRUTH, AND THE
TRUTH SHALL MAKE
YOU FREE?"
Jn. 8:31-32



"SANCTIFY
THEM BY
YOUR TRUTH.
YOUR WORD
IS TRUTH?"
Jn. 17:17

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

2 Tim.4:1-4 excerpts

Paul prophetically warns of times coming in which believers with itching ears will be most willing to exchange sound doctrine for doctrine that sounds good.

As an antidote to such spiritual poison, I want to teach you a good doctrinal confession which I urge you to commit to memory.

In a moment We will examine what Paul presents as the contents of the doctrine of Christ, but first consider this sober warning from the apostle John pertaining to departure from what constitutes "the doctrine of Christ":

"LOOK TO YOURSELVES, THAT WE DO NOT LOSE THOSE THINGS WE WORKED FOR, BUT THAT WE MAY RECEIVE A FULL REWARD.

WHOEVER TRANSGRESSES AND DOES NOT ABIDE IN THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST DOES NOT HAVE GOD. HE WHO ABIDES IN THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST HAS BOTH THE FATHER AND THE SON.

IF ANYONE COMES TO YOU AND DOES NOT BRING THIS DOCTRINE, DO NOT RECEIVE HIM INTO YOUR HOUSE NOR GREET HIM; FOR HE WHO GREETS HIM SHARES IN HIS EVIL DEEDS." 2 Jn. 8-11

"A GOOD CONFESSION"

**A PROCLAMATION – A DECLARATION
VERBALIZING...AN ACCURATE AND
COMPLETE STATEMENT OF TRUTH"**

**THE
CONFESSION
OF
THE
DOCTRINE
OF CHRIST**



Obviously John's descriptive warning can be applied to both the cultic Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormon missionaries that come to our doors with their false gospels. However, Satan brings subtle substitutes from within the confines of Christianity by means of partial and half truths being presented as the whole truth. Note John's warning that it is possible to "...lose those things we worked for" and not be able to "receive a full reward" if we fail to embrace "the doctrine of Christ." What is this doctrine? Consider this verse that leads into Paul's presentation of what constitutes "the doctrine of Christ:"

**"...IN DOCTRINE SHOWING INTEGRITY, REVERENCE, INCORRUPTIBILITY,
SOUND SPEECH THAT CANNOT BE CONDEMNED...
SHOWING ALL GOOD FIDELITY, THAT THEY MAY ADORN
THE DOCTRINE OF GOD OUR SAVIOR IN ALL THINGS."** Titus 2:7-10

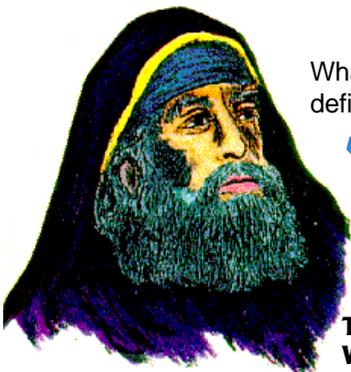
What follows this lead-in statement is one continuous sentence in which Paul defines what he means by "the doctrine of God our savior," or as John calls it:

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

**"FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION
HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN,
TEACHING US THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS,
WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY IN THE PRESENT AGE,
LOOKING FOR THE BLESSED HOPE AND GLORIOUS APPEARING
OF OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST,**

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

**AND PURIFY FOR HIMSELF HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE,
ZEALOUS FOR GOOD WORKS. "** Titus 2:11-14



“FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN, TEACHING US THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY IN THE PRESENT AGE, LOOKING FOR THE BLESSED HOPE AND GLORIOUS APPEARING OF OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM EVERY LAWLESS DEED AND PURIFY FOR HIMSELF HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE, ZEALOUS FOR GOOD WORKS.”

Titus 2:11-14

A ONE - SENTENCE CONFESSION
(PROCLAMATION – DECLARATION)

It is most important to take note of the fact that Paul gives us the contents of “the doctrine of God our savior” (Titus 2:10) in one flowing continuous sentence in verses 11-14 of Titus Chapter Two.

This is an “accurate and complete statement of truth.” I urge every believer in Christ to commit this complete doctrinal statement to memory. It is my conviction that if you had no other expression of truth available to you, this one single declaration would be sufficient in content to govern your life as a follower of Christ. It is sufficient to produce in you a life that will be well-pleasing to Christ.

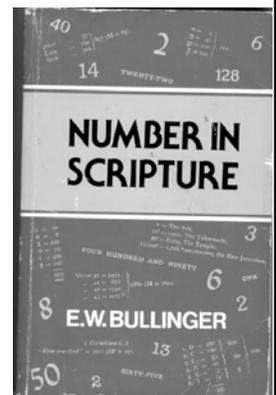
To aid you in memorizing this doctrinal confession (and to convince you of its significance), let us now break this one continuous, flowing sentence into five individual and distinct statements:

1. **FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN,**
2. **TEACHING US THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY IN THE PRESENT AGE,**
3. **LOOKING FOR THE BLESSED HOPE AND GLORIOUS APPEARING OF OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST,**
4. **WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM EVERY LAWLESS DEED**
5. **AND PURIFY FOR HIMSELF HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE, ZEALOUS FOR GOOD WORKS.**

FIVE DIFFERENT STATEMENTS
(PROCLAMATIONS – DECLARATIONS)

The number five in Bible numerics represents God’s grace. The Old Testament tabernacle of Moses abounds with the number five. If you are unaware of the significance of Bible numerics, I would suggest this classic work for your consideration:

It is not without significance that the opening statement of this doctrinal confession introduces the appearance of “the grace of God.” This is a reference to the person of Jesus Christ, not merely a doctrine. Notice the grace of God has “appeared to all men.” This initial doctrinal statement is well taught in Christianity. However, it is not well taught what the grace of God came “teaching.” The four statements that follow the opening revelation of God’s grace are to be the results that are to be produced by the grace of God. There is more to the grace of God than the initial act of forgiveness of sin!



- G** 1. FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN,
- R** 2. TEACHING US THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY IN THE PRESENT AGE,
- A** 3. LOOKING FOR THE BLESSED HOPE AND GLORIOUS APPEARING OF OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST,
- C** 4. WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM EVERY LAWLESS DEED
- E** 5. AND PURIFY FOR HIMSELF HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE, ZEALOUS FOR GOOD WORKS.

"...THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST ...IF ANYONE COMES TO YOU AND DOES NOT BRING THIS DOCTRINE, DO NOT RECEIVE HIM..."

2 John 9-10

Does your theological definition of God's grace include ALL of the above statements? Is this the common understanding or teaching of God's grace that you have received? Let me show you what is considered to be the only applicable statements of God's grace from the above list of Paul. It looks more like this:

- G** 1. FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN,
- R** OMITTED
- A** 3. LOOKING FOR THE BLESSED HOPE AND GLORIOUS APPEARING OF OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST,
- C** 4. WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM EVERY LAWLESS DEED
- E** OMITTED

The common presentation of grace gives emphasis unto only three of Paul's five points. Grace for salvation via the new birth is solidly presented as the foundation of the Christian faith. However, in the zeal to preach "saved by grace," the doctrine of good works is greatly discouraged.

Grace for partaking in the rapture is taught as the guarantee of every born-again Christian, regardless of how he/she lives as a Christian. However, this is a perversion of God's grace.

The sole objective of God's grace is presented as: "to redeem us from every lawless deed." However, this is not the only objective that Paul places under the grace of God.

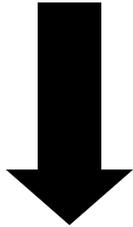
The kind of grace that Paul preached not only stressed redemption from sin (lawless deeds), but also that such grace was expected to produce a forgiven people who would be zealous for good works. This fifth statement of Paul about "good works" is omitted from today's grace teaching. In the zeal of preaching, "not saved by works" the message of saved "for good works" has been disparaged.



**G
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1. **FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN,**

← GRACE



In spite of the watered-down teaching today of the grace of God, Paul reveals to us that when we begin with the grace of God we should end up with a people zealous for good works. Works follow grace! This is sound doctrine. Grace divorced from producing good works is doctrine that sounds good. Which do you want? Sound doctrine or doctrine that sounds good?

5. **AND PURIFY FOR HIMSELF HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE, ZEALOUS FOR GOOD WORKS.**

← WORKS

TRUTH EMPHASIZED:

"FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED THROUGH FAITH, AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES, IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD, NOT OF WORKS, LEST ANYONE SHOULD BOAST."
Eph. 2:8-9

Lest you think this is a not purposeful omission by modern-day theology, look at the popular presentation of grace on the left expressed by Ephesians 2:8-9. Why do they omit adding the verse on the right which follows it? (Eph. 2:10) Because they preach grace divorced from works. Paul's balanced perspective is: we are saved "NOT OF WORKS" but saved "FOR GOOD WORKS"

TRUTH OMITTED:

"FOR WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS FOR GOOD WORKS, WHICH GOD PREPARED BEFOREHAND THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM."
Eph. 2:10

What kind of good works is God looking for? To answer that you need to re-insert the omitted second step Paul lists after his opening statement about the grace of God:

**G
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1. **FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN,**

← Paul's point is not only to let us know that the grace of God that brought salvation has appeared to all men, but also that Jesus, (the grace of God) came "teaching us" what kind of lifestyle is expected of the recipient of God's grace.

2. **TEACHING US THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY IN THE PRESENT AGE,**

← God's grace teaches the born-again believer that is "saved by grace and not of works," to live a life filled with good works such as "denying ungodliness, worldly lusts" and to now choose to "live soberly, righteously and Godly in the present age."

4. **WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM EVERY LAWLESS DEED**

God has "prepared beforehand that we should walk in good works." The whole counsel of God pertaining to the grace of God is that such "amazing grace" is going to produce a people that are purified from sin as well as forgiven of their sins! Paul is careful to state this dualistic objective as constituting the whole counsel of God with the end result of having received the grace of God.

5. **AND PURIFY FOR HIMSELF HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE, ZEALOUS FOR GOOD WORKS.**

Perverted grace is not a new problem. Jude revealed that in his day the grace of God was also being perverted:

"CONCERNING OUR COMMON SALVATION...CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS. FOR CERTAIN MEN HAVE CREPT IN UNNOTICED... UNGODLY MEN, WHO TURN THE GRACE OF GOD INTO LICENTIOUSNESS..."

Jude 3,4

What else does Paul present to us that is contained within this presentation of the doctrine of God our savior as depicted in Titus 2:11-14? Look now at the first three statements:

1. **FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN,**
2. **TEACHING US THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY IN THE PRESENT AGE,**
3. **LOOKING FOR THE BLESSED HOPE AND GLORIOUS APPEARING OF OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST,**

STATEMENT OF THE

PAST

Our past experience in God is that we have become born again by receiving the grace of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

STATEMENT OF THE

PRESENT

The present emphasis God wants the believer to focus upon is how we are to live in a godless and perverse society.

STATEMENT OF THE

FUTURE

However, we need a vision for the future. This is the coming of Christ at the rapture for the faithful wise virgins who have been living for Him in the present.

In these first three opening statements Paul covers the three great progressive, doctrinal positions of the believer:

1. **FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN,**

← JUSTIFICATION OF THE BELIEVER

“THEREFORE, HAVING BEEN JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST...” Rom. 5:1

Our justification (means by which we are made innocent) is by faith in the work of Christ on the cross. This is what Jesus meant when He said on the cross, “It is finished!!” Nothing can be added to justification through the blood of Christ (see 2 Cor. 5:21)

2. **TEACHING US THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY IN THE PRESENT AGE,**

← SANCTIFICATION OF THE BELIEVER

“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 THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD, YOUR SANCTIFICATION...THAT EACH ONE OF YOU SHOULD KNOW HOW TO POSSESS HIS OWN VESSEL IN SANCTIFICATION AND HONOR... SANCTIFY YOU COMPLETELY...YOUR WHOLE SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY BE PRESERVED BLAMELESS AT THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.” 1 Thess. 4:3-4, 5:23

Sanctification means to be “set apart, to be holy in conduct.” It is the Holy Spirit who was sent to the justified believer in Christ to take him/her into progressive paths of sanctification (see 2 Cor. 3:18). To ignore the call to sanctification is to ignore the present work of the Holy Spirit. Present-day theology revels in being “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise unto the day of redemption” (Eph. 1:13-14). The counterbalance to that truth is stated in Chapter 4 of Ephesians: “and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30). Can we cling to the words of comfort and ignore the verse that confronts?

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

← GLORIFICATION OF THE BELIEVER

“...IF WE SUFFER WITH HIM, THAT WE MAY ALSO BE GLORIFIED TOGETHER...THE SUFFERINGS OF THIS PRESENT TIME ARE NOT WORTHY TO BE COMPARED WITH THE GLORY WHICH SHALL BE REVEALED IN US.” Rom. 8:17-18

Glorification means “to dignify, honor, glorify.” This is the future for the believer who does not skip the middle ground of paying the price of sanctification. Only if we “deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, live soberly, righteously and Godly in the present age” do we have the right to “look for the blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our great God and savior, Jesus Christ.” The glory that awaits the believer at the rapture or at the resurrection of the dead, will be bestowed according to the degree of sanctification that we embrace in this life. This is why this middle ground of sanctification cannot be eliminated from what the grace of God came teaching. Truth is, no sanctification-no glorification! We can also deduce “no sanctification-no rapture!”

"...TURN THE GRACE OF GOD INTO LICENTIOUSNESS"

Jude 4

- 1. **FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN,**
- OMITTED
- 3. **LOOKING FOR THE BLESSED HOPE AND GLORIOUS APPEARING OF OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST,**
- 4. **WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM EVERY LAWLESS DEED**
- OMITTED

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Perhaps we can begin to see why both the Old and New Testaments stress:

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

Deut. 4:2

"FOR I TESTIFY TO EVERYONE WHO HEARS THE WORDS OF...THIS BOOK: IF ANYONE ADDS TO THESE THINGS, GOD WILL ADD TO HIM THE PLAGUES THAT ARE WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK; AND IF ANYONE TAKES AWAY FROM THE WORDS OF THE BOOK...GOD SHALL TAKE AWAY HIS PART FROM THE BOOK OF LIFE..."

Rev. 22:18-19

"THIS IS THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD IN WHICH WE STAND"

1 Pet. 5:12

- 1. **FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN,**
- 2. **TEACHING US THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY IN THE PRESENT AGE,**
- 3. **LOOKING FOR THE BLESSED HOPE AND GLORIOUS APPEARING OF OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST,**
- 4. **WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM EVERY LAWLESS DEED**
- 5. **AND PURIFY FOR HIMSELF HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE, ZEALOUS FOR GOOD WORKS.**

**G
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A
C
E**

We cannot achieve the full purpose of God apart from embracing the whole counsel of God. We cannot just isolate points 1,3 and 4 because they are words of comfort and ignore points 2 and 5 because they contain words that confront us. Remember, this is one continuous sentence from the apostle Paul. It was not meant to be chopped up into pieces we like and pieces we don't like. Christianity is not a cafeteria! With God it is all or nothing at all. Man takes away from what God has said, and he certainly adds to what God has said. Remember, these are the times in which we live:

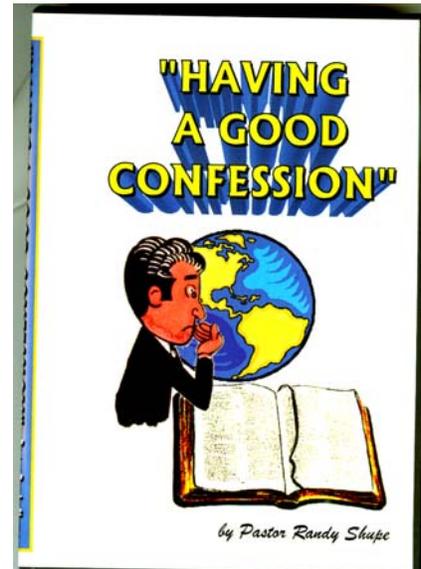
"PREACH (PROCLAIM) THE WORD!...FOR THE TIME WILL COME WHEN THEY WILL NOT ENDURE SOUND DOCTRINE, BUT ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN DESIRES, BECAUSE THEY HAVE ITCHING EARS, THEY WILL HEAR UP FOR THEMSELVES TEACHERS, AND THEY WILL TURN THEIR EARS AWAY FROM THE TRUTH, AND BE TURNED ASIDE TO FABLES."

2 Tim. 4:1-4 excerpts



As stated in our last newsletter, the subject matter we are presently studying is available as a DVD series. There are four lessons in this series (nearly 4 hours).

You can order this DVD series from our ministry for \$ 12.00 including shipping and handling.





~ MARCH 2008 NEWSLETTER ~

HAVING A GOOD CONFESSION



PART THREE: "MAKING A COMPLETE COVENANT CONFESSION"

This is our third newsletter dedicated to the often-used reference of Paul toward a believer's confession (1 Tim. 6:12, 6:13, Heb 3:1, 4:14, 10:23, 2 Cor. 9:13). I showed you that a "confession" is a verbal declaration, a proclamation that is in agreement with God's (Logos) written Word. A confession is saying the same as God has recorded in His Word.

We are presently looking at three needful confessions (proclamations, declarations) that a sincere Christian should embrace.

In our last newsletter we identified the first of these three areas of needful confession as we looked at a declaration of sound doctrine found in Titus 2:11-14. This is one continuous, flowing sentence from the apostle Paul, describing what should be the results of receiving the grace of God:



"FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN, TEACHING US THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY IN THE PRESENT AGE, LOOKING FOR THE BLESSED HOPE AND GLORIOUS APPEARING OF OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM EVERY LAWLESS DEED AND PURIFY FOR HIMSELF HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE, ZEALOUS FOR GOOD WORKS."

Titus 2:11-14

**CONFESSING
A COMPLETE COVENANT**

In this newsletter we shall examine what the Scriptures define as the contents of the New Covenant. We shall then compare it to what is generally accepted as the New Covenant.



**CONFESSING
SOUND DOCTRINE**

**CONFESSING
A SOLID FOUNDATION**



As we saw with today's watered-down, doctrinally-deficient presentation of grace, there are also missing ingredients in the modern-day presentation of the New Covenant.

In Titus 2:11-14 Paul gave us the complete confession of sound doctrine pertaining to the grace of God. Therefore it is fitting that he also was inspired to set down on paper an accurate and complete depiction of the contents of the New Covenant which today is widely believed to be solely a covenant of grace. However, we find the contents to be far more than grace for forgiveness of sins:

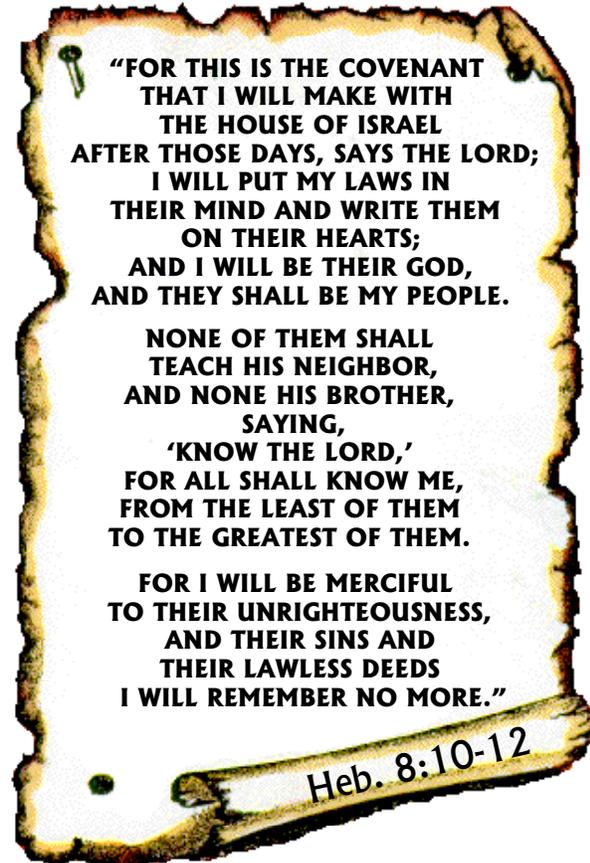
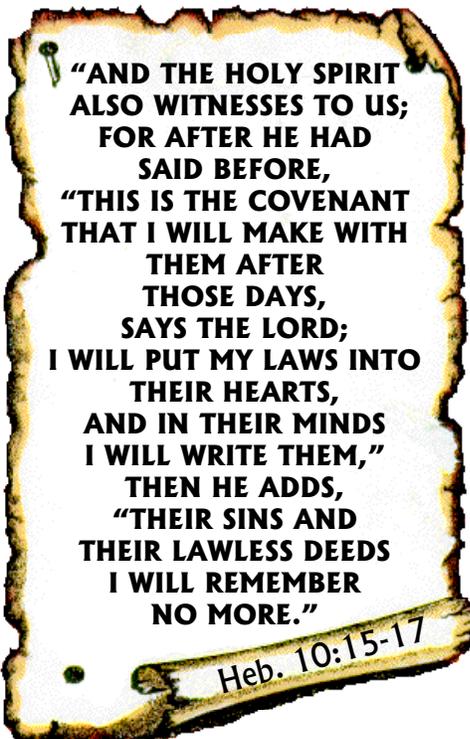


"THE COVENANT OF CHRIST"

Heb. 8:6

"A GOOD CONFESSION"

**A PROCLAMATION,
A DECLARATION,
VERBALIZING
AN ACCURATE AND
COMPLETE
STATEMENT OF TRUTH"**



Do not be misled by the above opening remark that singles out this covenant as the one God will make with Israel. This is also the church's covenant as well. Paul makes this point in the tenth Chapter of Hebrews:

If you will look at Jeremiah 31:31-34 you will see repeated what is stated above in Hebrews 8:10-12. The New Covenant was first prophesied to the Jews. Because (for the most part) the Jews rejected Christ, the Gentiles became first partakers of this New Covenant that was promised to Israel. Take the time to read the 11th Chapter of Romans. It is important for Gentiles to see God's full plan. The church has not replaced Israel as so many teach. Here are brief excerpts:

"GOD HAS NOT CAST AWAY HIS PEOPLE WHOM HE FOREKNEW...EVEN AT THIS PRESENT TIME THERE IS A REMNANT ACCORDING TO THE ELECTION OF GRACE...TO PROVOKE THEM TO JEALOUSY, SALVATION HAS COME TO THE GENTILES...HARDENING IN PART HAS HAPPENED TO ISRAEL UNTIL THE FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES HAS COME IN. AND SO ALL ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED...FOR THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS. CONCERNING THE GOSPEL THEY ARE ENEMIES...BUT CONCERNING THE ELECTION THEY ARE BELOVED...EVEN SO THESE ALSO HAVE BEEN DISOBEDIENT, THAT THROUGH THE MERCY SHOWN YOU THEY ALSO MAY OBTAIN MERCY."

Romans Chapter 11 excerpts

Not only is Romans Chapter 11 essential reading for every Gentile believer to dispel the notion that the church has replaced Israel, but also I will urge everyone to read Hebrews Chapters 7 through 9. Here are a few important excerpts: →

The point that I want to convey is that there is only one New Covenant that Jesus is mediating by means of His death. I say that because of the silly and sloppy argument that Jesus cut a New Covenant with the church that is different from what I have shown you from Jeremiah 31 and Hebrews 8. Jesus only dies to mediate one New Covenant. The church was not given a nebulous, undefined, "grace only" covenant. The church has been grafted into the covenants of Israel. We join them-they are not joining us! Consider Paul's words to Gentile believers like you and me:

"THEREFORE REMEMBER THAT YOU, ONCE GENTILES IN THE FLESH...THAT AT THAT TIME YOU WERE WITHOUT CHRIST, BEING ALIENS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL AND STRANGERS FROM THE COVENANTS OF PROMISE, HAVING NO HOPE AND WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD. BUT NOW IN CHRIST JESUS YOU WHO ONCE WERE FAR OFF HAVE BEEN MADE NEAR BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. FOR HE HIMSELF IS OUR PEACE, WHO HAS MADE BOTH ONE (Jew and Gentile) AND HAS BROKEN DOWN THE MIDDLE WALL OF DIVISION BETWEEN US...SO AS TO CREATE IN HIMSELF ONE NEW MAN FROM THE TWO, THUS MAKING PEACE, AND THAT HE MIGHT RECONCILE THEM BOTH TO GOD IN ONE BODY THROUGH THE CROSS..."
 Eph. 2:11-16

"...JESUS HAS BECOME A SURETY OF A BETTER COVENANT"
 Heb. 7:22

"...HE IS ALSO MEDIATOR OF A BETTER COVENANT, WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED ON BETTER PROMISES."
 Heb. 8:6

"HE IS THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT, BY MEANS OF DEATH...FOR WHERE THERE IS A TESTAMENT, THERE MUST ALSO OF NECESSITY BE THE DEATH OF THE TESTATOR. FOR A TESTAMENT IS IN FORCE AFTER MEN ARE DEAD, SINCE IT HAS NO POWER AT ALL WHILE THE TESTATOR LIVES."
 Heb. 9:15-17

"FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD; I WILL PUT MY LAWS IN THEIR MIND AND WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. NONE OF THEM SHALL TEACH HIS NEIGHBOR, AND NONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,' FOR ALL SHALL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST OF THEM TO THE GREATEST OF THEM. FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE."
 Heb. 8:10-12

It is not difficult to see that the New Covenant has three distinct clauses:

There is no way that we can rightly summarize this covenant as only being "a covenant of grace" when God also plainly states His desire is to place His law in our minds and on our hearts as well as to forgive our sins.

1. **"I WILL PUT MY LAWS IN THEIR MIND AND WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS..."**
 (vs.10)

2. **"I WILL BE THEIR GOD, THEY WILL BE MY PEOPLE, FOR 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)

LAW



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

(vs.10)

GRACE



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

(vs.12)

God plainly states that the New Covenant is a covenant of law and grace. How often do we hear the distinction made, "The Old Covenant was a covenant of law, but the New Covenant is a covenant of grace." Not true! The truth of the matter is that BOTH the Old and the New Covenants contain "law and grace." If you have studied the Old Covenant's method by which God covered their sins with the blood of bulls and goats (the ceremonial law of the tabernacle of Moses), you can plainly see that God's grace was contained within the law. When they sinned against the law, God, by the law, told them how to bring their sins under the covering of the blood of bulls and goats.

No one was "saved" by keeping a strict covenant of law. Rather, God's grace was administered by means of the law itself. Within the law was the forgiveness (covering) of sins. That is a covenant of "law and grace." The distinction between the Old and the New is simply this:

OLD COVENANT:

**LAW WAS
ADMINISTERED FIRST,
BUT GRACE WAS
CONTAINED WITHIN IT.**

NEW COVENANT:

**GRACE IS
ADMINISTERED FIRST,
BUT LAW IS
CONTAINED WITHIN IT.**

Look at these two terms in the New Covenant and ask yourself why God has placed His law in it along side of His grace?

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

(vs.12)

Because God not only wants to forgive our lawless deeds, but also He wants to stop us from committing lawless deeds. The isolated Grace term of the covenant itself will not do that, but the added law term will produce a law-abiding people by the power of God's Spirit within them!

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

(vs.10)

Did not Paul exclaim, "...shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not!" (Rom. 6:1). Saint of God, take the time to read Romans Chapter 6! Look at this contrast Paul makes:

**"HAVING BEEN SET FREE FROM SIN, YOU BECAME SLAVES OF
RIGHTEOUSNESS...JUST AS YOU PRESENTED YOUR MEMBERS AS
SLAVES OF UNCLEANNES, AND OF LAWLESSNESS LEADING TO
MORE LAWLESSNESS, SO NOW PRESENT YOUR MEMBERS AS
SLAVES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR HOLINESS." Rom. 6:18-19**

Is not Paul beginning with grace ("you have been set free from sin") and ending up with the same sinner saved by grace becoming "slaves of righteousness for holiness"? Is this not a covenant of grace and law? How else can these words of Paul be understood:

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

Study carefully the whole counsel of God as depicted below. God was careful to first send Jesus Christ to fulfill the initial grace term of the New Covenant and then, after removing Christ from the earth, to send the Holy Spirit to fulfill the law term of the covenant in the lives of the forgiven. How much of the covenant do we want? Is "pardon" of sin sufficient for you, or do you want "power" over sin as well?

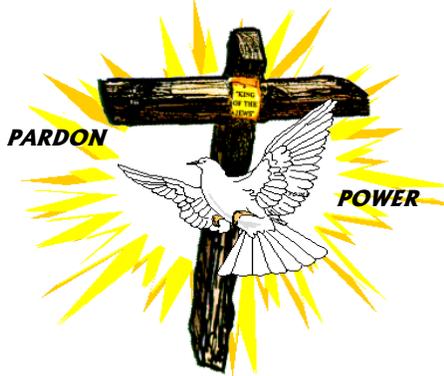
**PARDON
(OF SIN)**

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

(vs.12)

THE WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

"GOD HAS RECONCILED US TO HIMSELF THROUGH JESUS CHRIST...FOR HE MADE HIM WHO KNEW NO SIN TO BE SIN FOR US, THAT WE MIGHT BECOME THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM."
2 Cor. 5:18,21



Can we claim the benefits of Christ's ministry on the cross and ignore the stated objectives of God's Spirit pertaining to His law? Can we really cling to a "grace only" covenant?

**POWER
(OVER SIN)**

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

(vs.10)

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

"YOU ARE MANIFESTLY AN EPISTLE OF CHRIST... WRITTEN...BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD, NOT ON TABLETS OF STONE BUT ON TABLETS ...OF THE HEART."
2 Cor. 3:2

If you are convinced that "grace and law" are part of your covenant, let us now add the capstone truth to it:



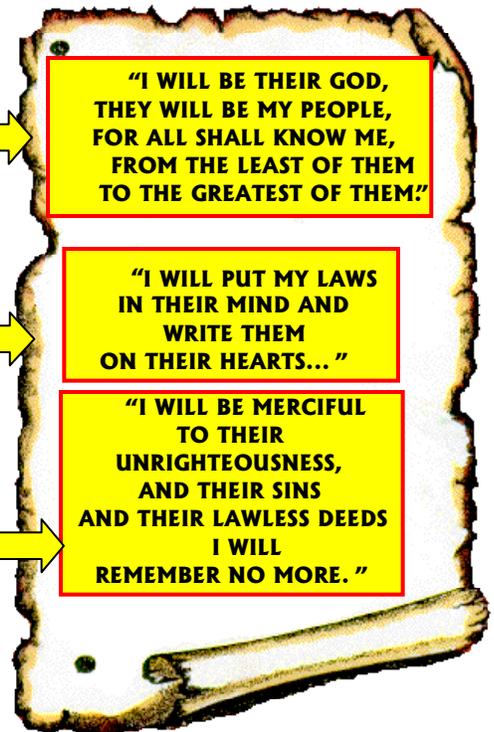
"AND THIS IS ETERNAL LIFE, THAT THEY MAY KNOW YOU, THE ONLY TRUE GOD, AND JESUS CHRIST WHOM YOU HAVE SENT."
Jn. 17:3

Today, the presentation of the New Covenant is so weak and watered-down that "eternal life" is preached under the initial term of the covenant, God's grace. However, Jesus speaks of eternal life in the context of knowing the Father as well as Jesus Christ.

KNOW GOD

LAW

GRACE



Which is the greatest term of the New Covenant? Is it grace? Is it law? I believe it is rather "knowing God." Consider:

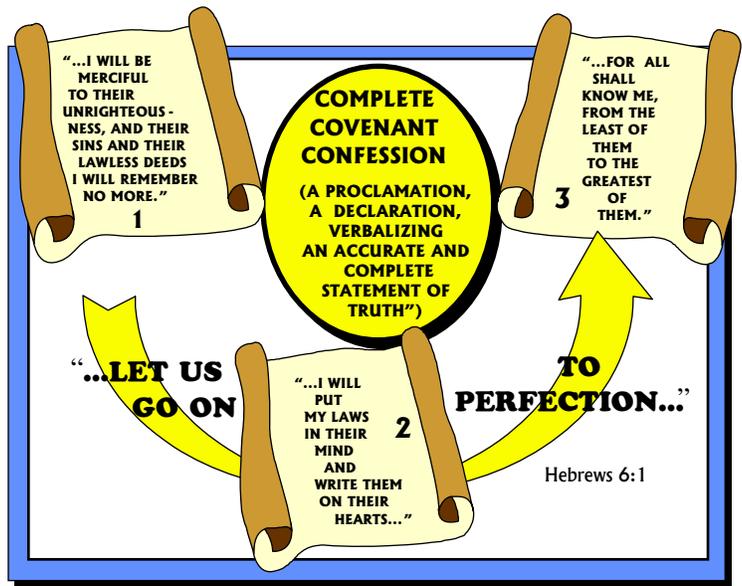
"LET US KNOW, LET US PURSUE THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD... FOR I DESIRE...THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD MORE THAN BURNT OFFERINGS."
Hosea 6:3,6

How much of the New Covenant are you willing to confess? How much of God do you want? Is it sufficient just to be related to God by means of the new birth? Is forgiveness of sins all that you want from God? Do you not want "power" over sin as well as "pardon" of sin?

Do you want to continue to live in the "outer court" of the Tabernacle or to go on to the fullness of what God has for you?

How important is knowing God to you as it was the the apostle Paul? (Phil.3).

Do you want to "go on unto perfection" as Paul challenges the believer to do in Hebrews Chapter 6 or are you content with just embracing "the elementary principles of Christ" (Heb. 6:1-2)?



"IN THAT DAY I WILL MAKE A COVENANT FOR THEM...I WILL BETROTH YOU TO ME FOREVER; YES, I WILL BETROTH YOU TO ME IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE, IN LOVINGKINDNESS AND MERCY; I WILL BETROTH YOU TO ME IN FAITHFULNESS, AND YOU SHALL KNOW THE LORD."
Hosea 2:18-20

These two Old Testament passages are extremely prophetic declarations of the fullness of the New Covenant that we have entered into with God.

One flows from the heart of God Himself declaring and proclaiming a confession of what He has in mind for the faithful believer.

The second confession (proclamation and declaration) flows from the believer toward his God in heart-felt appreciation for the terms of the covenant.

One can easily see that God has more in mind for the believer than just to forgive him of his sins by the grace of God.

What will be your response to what God offers in His New Covenant?

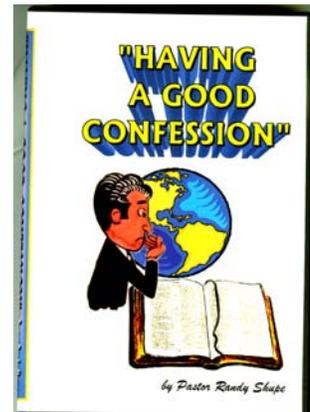
"...MADE A COVENANT BEFORE THE LORD, TO FOLLOW THE LORD AND TO KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS AND HIS TESTIMONIES AND HIS STATUTES, WITH ALL HIS HEART AND ALL HIS SOUL, TO PERFORM THE WORDS OF THIS COVENANT THAT WERE WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK. AND ALL THE PEOPLE TOOK THEIR STAND FOR THE COVENANT."
2 Kings 23:3

Pastor Randy Shupe



As stated in our last newsletter, the subject matter we are presently studying is available as a DVD series. There are four lessons in this series (nearly 4 hours).

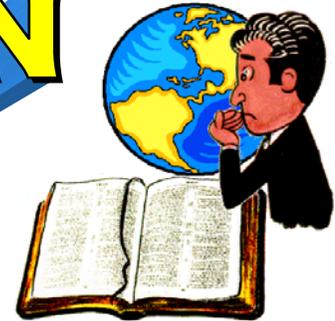
You can order this DVD series from our ministry for \$ 12.00 including shipping and handling.





HAVING A GOOD CONFESSION

PART FOUR: "A SOLID FOUNDATION CONFESSION"



This is our fourth newsletter dealing with Paul's admonition for the believer to "Have a Good Confession" (1 Tim. 6:12, 6:13, Heb 3:1, 4:14,10:23, 2 Cor. 9:13). We have looked at two of the three "good confessions" (proclamations, declarations) that I believe are essential truths that God's people need to embrace. We live in times of partial truths being presented as whole truths. The two confessions at the bottom of the page depict "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" pertaining to the subject of God's grace. There is no greater abuse to truth than what is being presented today under the banner of grace. Titus 2:11-14 shows us that there is far more to grace than forgiveness of sins. Hebrews 8:10-12 portrays that the New Covenant is not merely a covenant of grace as commonly presented.

We shall now examine what the Scripture conveys is a good confession pertaining to the solid foundation of God. Again we will find an abuse of the doctrine of grace.

**CONFESSING
A SOLID FOUNDATION**

Contrary to wide-spread belief, the solid foundation of God is not based upon unbiblical precepts such as "once save, always saved," or "unconditional eternal security."

**"A GOOD
CONFESSION"**

**CONFESSING
SOUND DOCTRINE**

"FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN, TEACHING US THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY IN THE PRESENT AGE, LOOKING FOR THE BLESSED HOPE AND GLORIOUS APPEARING OF OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM EVERY LAWLESS DEED AND PURIFY FOR HIMSELF HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE, ZEALOUS FOR GOOD WORKS. "

Titus 2:11-14

**CONFESSING
A COMPLETE COVENANT**

"...I WILL PUT MY LAWS IN THEIR MIND AND WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. NONE OF THEM SHALL TEACH HIS NEIGHBOR, AND NONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,' FOR ALL SHALL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST OF THEM TO THE GREATEST OF THEM. FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE."

Heb. 8:10-12

It should come as no surprise that this third confession also comes from the mouth of the apostle Paul as did the first two that we previously examined in our last two newsletters. Paul boldly proclaimed,

"FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN, TEACHING US THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY IN THE PRESENT AGE, LOOKING FOR THE BLESSED HOPE AND GLORIOUS APPEARING OF OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM EVERY LAWLESS DEED AND PURIFY FOR HIMSELF HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE, ZEALOUS FOR GOOD WORKS."

Titus 2:11-14

WHAT PAUL PREACHED ABOUT THE GRACE OF GOD...

Paul did not preach that good works were an affront to the grace of God. Rather he taught that no one can be saved "BY GOOD WORKS", but rather that we are saved "FOR GOOD WORKS."



"...IF ANYONE PREACHES ANY OTHER GOSPEL TO YOU THAN WHAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED, LET HIM BE ACCURSED."

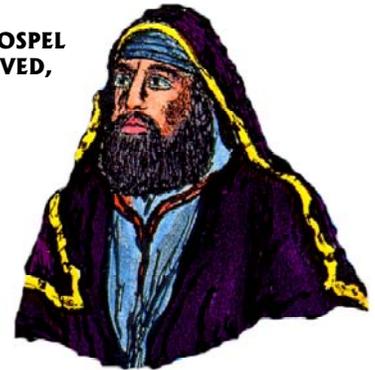
Gal. 1:9

"FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD; I WILL PUT MY LAWS IN THEIR MINDS AND WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. NONE OF THEM SHALL TEACH HIS NEIGHBOR, AND NONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,' FOR ALL SHALL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST OF THEM TO THE GREATEST OF THEM. FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE."

Heb. 8:10-12

WHAT PAUL PREACHED ABOUT THE NEW COVENANT FROM GOD...

Paul did not preach that the New Covenant was limited to a "covenant of grace" while the Old Covenant was a covenant of law. Rather he preached that the New Covenant contains grace and law.



"...THE SOLID FOUNDATION OF GOD STANDS, HAVING THIS SEAL: 'THE LORD KNOWS THOSE WHO ARE HIS,' AND, 'LET EVERYONE WHO NAMES THE NAME OF CHRIST DEPART FROM INIQUITY' "

2 Timothy 2:19

WHAT PAUL PREACHED ABOUT THE SOLID FOUNDATION OF GOD...

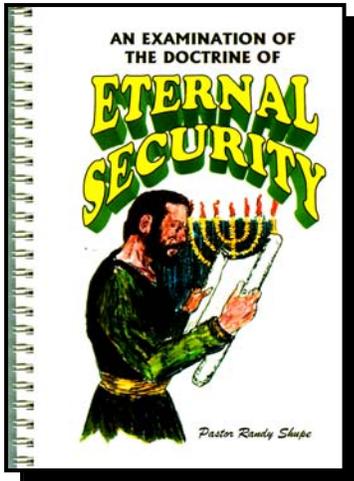
Neither did Paul preach that the solid foundation of God was based on "unconditional eternal security" or "once saved, always saved." Rather he taught the above foundation that places responsibility of the recipient of God's grace to "depart from iniquity."

God entrusted to Paul the writing of two thirds of the New testament. Why so? Because of his faithfulness to the message of the grace of God:

"...I RECEIVED FROM THE LORD JESUS, TO TESTIFY TO THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE 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."

Acts 20:24-27

The message of this newsletter is committed to revealing what is the solid foundation of God. We will not be able to address the error of a counterfeit foundation of God being presented under the banner of “unconditional eternal security.” The Bible does teach eternal security. It does not teach unconditional eternal security. The doctrine of eternal security belongs to the eternally minded, not to the carnally minded. A carnally minded believer is in real trouble with His God. Read the eighth Chapter of Romans in which you will find:



“FOR TO BE CARNALLY MINDED IS DEATH, BUT TO BE SPIRITUALLY MINDED IS LIFE AND PEACE. BECAUSE THE CARNAL MIND IS ENMITY AGAINST GOD; FOR IT IS NOT SUBJECT TO THE LAW OF GOD, NOR CAN IT BE. SO THEN, THOSE WHO ARE IN THE FLESH CANNOT PLEASE GOD...IF YOU LIVE ACCORDING TO THE FLESH YOU WILL DIE; BUT IF BY THE SPIRIT YOU PUT TO DEATH THE DEEDS OF THE BODY, YOU WILL LIVE. FOR AS MANY AS ARE LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD, THESE ARE THE SONS OF GOD.”

Romans 8:6-14

If you are hung up in “once saved, always saved” or “unconditional eternal security”, then you need to read the booklet I wrote on this subject. I believe it holds the delicate balance on the subject of eternal security. Either we harmonize ALL that Scripture says about this subject or risk embracing either unsound doctrine that sounds good, or even worse, taking comfort in what is in reality a false doctrine altogether. You can order this book from our ministry for \$ 7.95 plus \$ 2.00 shipping.

Let us begin now to examine what Paul does present as “the solid foundation of God.” It has two seals of Divine affirmation. Here is the first one:

You will remember that in our last newsletter we examined the three terms of the New Covenant, one of which was:

“...FOR ALL SHALL KNOW ME...”

Heb. 8:12

Now we see that we are not only to “know God”, but here we find part of the solid foundation of God is

“...THE LORD KNOWS THOSE WHO ARE HIS.”

2 Tim. 2:19

Pay attention to all the terms of the covenant and “you shall know God.” Pay equal attention to the contents of the solid foundation of God and you will be among those whom God knows

The real issue here is that we know what it means when God says, “I know those who are mine.”

The answer is similar to what we saw when we examined in our last newsletter what it means “to know God.” We do not know God in all His fullness simply by the act of the new birth. The new birth produces relationship to God. To know God means that we maintain an on-going intimate fellowship with God. We walk with God, we talk to God, we are taught about God, we listen to God’s voice, and we obey what He says. That is fellowship with God.

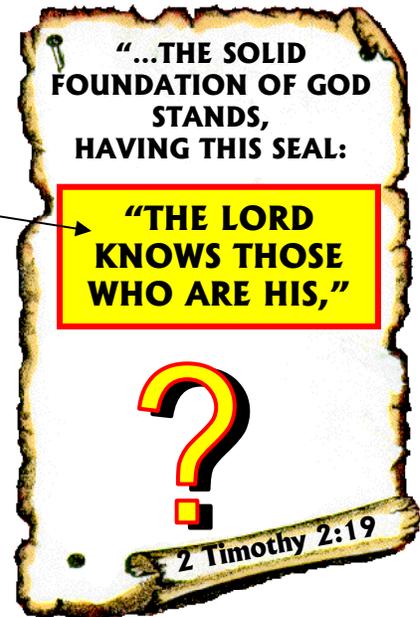
This statement regarding God’s solid foundation is the same. It still speaks of fellowship, but it is about God having intimate fellowship with us! The Lord is “intimate” (knows) with those who are His.

“...FOR ALL SHALL KNOW ME...”

Heb. 8:12

“...THE LORD KNOWS THOSE WHO ARE HIS.”

2 Tim. 2:19



If the Word defines for us what it means that “all shall know Me”, does it also define for us what it means for the Lord to know those who are His? The answer is a big yes!

**"THE LORD
KNOWS THOSE
WHO
ARE HIS,"**
2 Tim. 2:19

**"IF ANYONE
LOVES GOD,
THIS ONE
IS KNOWN BY HIM"**
1 Cor. 8:3

What does it mean, "The Lord knows those who are His"? It means that those who love God are known by Him (conversely, those who do not love God are not known by Him). Rather than speculating as to what the first seal of the solid foundation of God means, we find Paul clearly defining its meaning for us. "The Lord knows those who are His" is not an expression of how much God loves the believer (although He does), but rather this first seal is an expression of how much the believer loves God. Let me stress that it is not proven by how much the believer says he loves God, for the apostle John repeatedly warns in his first epistle, "If we say" (1 Jn. 1:6,8,10, 2:4,6,9). To "say" we love God is easy. There is an absolute litmus test that will prove that we love God, and it goes beyond our words:



**"HE WHO HAS MY COMMANDMENTS AND KEEPS THEM,
IT IS HE WHO LOVES ME...
IF ANYONE LOVES ME, HE WILL KEEP MY WORD...
HE WHO DOES NOT LOVE ME DOES NOT KEEP MY WORDS..."**
John 14:21-24

The litmus test for whether we love God is not what we say, but rather what we do. Obedience proves we love God and disobedience proves that we do not. So we can see that this first seal of a solid foundation in God speaks of the believer manifesting his love for God through obedience to God's commandments. We cannot biblically relegate "The Lord knows those who are His" to the fact that God knows whether we are born again or not, but rather we find greater harmony by means of comparing spiritual to spiritual as instructed in 1 Cor. 2:13. The Bible is its own best commentary. Therefore, we conclude "The Lord knows those who are His," is defined by "If anyone loves God, this one is known by Him."

Let us now consider the second seal of this solid foundation of God upon which the believer stands:

**"LET EVERYONE
WHO NAMES
THE NAME OF CHRIST
DEPART
FROM INIQUITY"**
2 Tim. 2:19

Wow! This is a far cry from "unconditional eternal security" and "once saved, always saved," isn't it? It is plain to see that this aspect of the solid foundation of God, just like the last one, is placing responsibility upon the recipient of God's grace (the born-again believer) to respond to God with more than words, they are to "depart from iniquity." The first seal requires the believer to love God by keeping His commandments. Christians are not only to believe God loves them, but also to respond to His love with this biblical declaration:

"WE LOVE HIM BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US."
1 Jn. 4:19

Modern-day Christianity oversimplifies God's grace with the limited definition, "the unmerited favor of God." Here is Strong's complete definition of the grace of God:

5485. χάρις charis, khar'-ece; from 5483; graciousness (as gratifying), of manner or act (abstr. or concr.; lit., fig. or spiritual; espec. the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; including gratitude):—acceptable, benefit, favour, gift, grace (-ious), joy liberality, pleasure, thank (-s, -worthy).

Notice the popular term, "unmerited favor," is not even in the definition. Rather we find a two-fold meaning of grace: (1) The Divine influence on the heart, and (2) its reflection in the life. When a person receives God's grace in their heart, it is to produce a reflection in the life! "We love Him because He first loved us" demonstrates this two-fold impact of God's grace. Grace that does not produce "its reflection in the life" is not the true grace of God!

The fullness of God's grace causes the believer to lay the solid foundation of God in their heart by love, they obey God's commandments, and by love, they depart from iniquity. This is the "reflection in the life" that God's grace produces. Divine influence comes upon the heart and it reflects in the life lived for God!

Look carefully at the comparison below of the words of Paul and the words of Jesus and you will see where Paul obtained his "solid foundation" theology! It came from something that Jesus taught His disciples. Note Paul places his two seals in quotations. Why so? Because they originated as quotes from the words of Jesus found in Matthew Chapter 7. Consider the comparison:



"...THE SOLID FOUNDATION OF GOD STANDS HAVING THIS SEAL:

"THE LORD KNOWS THOSE WHO ARE HIS,"

"LET EVERYONE WHO NAMES THE NAME OF CHRIST DEPART FROM INIQUITY"
2 Tim. 2:19



"NOT EVERYONE WHO SAYS TO ME, 'LORD, LORD' SHALL ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, BUT HE WHO DOES THE WILL OF MY FATHER IN HEAVEN. MANY WILL SAY TO ME IN THAT DAY, 'LORD, LORD, HAVE WE NOT PROPHESED IN YOUR NAME, CAST OUT DEMONS IN YOUR NAME, AND DONE MANY WONDERS IN YOUR NAME?'"

THEN I WILL DECLARE TO THEM, 'I NEVER KNEW YOU!'"

"DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE INIQUITY."
Mat. 7:21-23

It is because Jesus first prophetically stated that He would say to "many" of His followers, "I never knew you" that Paul proclaims, "The Lord knows those who are His." It is because Jesus first prophetically declared that He would say to many of His followers, "Depart from Me, you who practice iniquity" that Paul proclaims, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Paul's solid foundation is the same as Jesus' solid foundation! Neither Paul nor Jesus supports the popular theory of "once saved, always saved" or "unconditional eternal security."

The believer needs to walk in such a way that "God knows those who are His." What kind of walk is it? It is a walk of obedience in which we prove our love for God by keeping His commandments. Why so? Because as we have seen, "If anyone loves God, this one is known by God" (1 Cor. 8:3). Can we know if we love God? Yes we can, "he who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves me..." (Jn. 14: 21).

The believer needs to be on a pathway of "departing from iniquity." If the believer does not choose to do so, then he/she is in danger of hearing Jesus say to them, "Depart from Me, you who practice iniquity." Let me state it quite plainly, quite bluntly:

EITHER HEAR THE WORDS OF PAUL, "DEPART FROM INIQUITY"

OR

HEAR THE WORDS OF JESUS, "DEPART FROM ME YOU WHO PRACTICE INIQUITY."

Christians are being lulled to sleep with ear-tickling doctrines that sound good, but are far from being sound doctrine! Paul prophetically warns of this mark upon believers in the last days:

"...FOR THE TIME WILL COME WHEN THEY WILL NOT ENDURE SOUND DOCTRINE, BUT ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN DESIRES, BECAUSE THEY HAVE ITCHING EARS, THEY WILL HEAR UP FOR THEMSELVES TEACHERS, AND THEY WILL TURN THEIR EARS AWAY FROM THE TRUTH, AND BE TURNED ASIDE TO FABLES." 2 Tim.4:1-4 excerpts

"Once saved, always saved" and "unconditional eternal security" are such fables that are not based upon truth!

“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.”

Matthew 7:13-14



“BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS, WHO COME TO YOU IN SHEEP’S CLOTHING, BUT INWARDLY THEY ARE RAVENOUS WOLVES. YOU WILL KNOW THEM BY THEIR FRUITS.”

Matthew 7:15-16

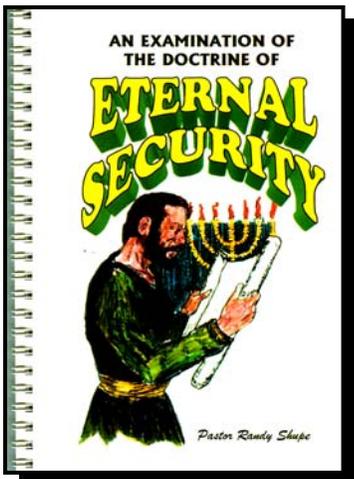
The broad way of salvation being presented today lacks the message of repentance. Where there is no repentance preached there will be no discipleship, no following Jesus, and no “turning away” from sin. Consider these two passages below, one from the Old Testament and one from the New.

The message is the same:

“...IF THEY HAD STOOD IN MY COUNSEL, AND HAD CAUSED MY PEOPLE TO HEAR MY WORDS, THEN THEY WOULD HAVE TURNED THEM FROM THE EVIL OF THEIR DOINGS...HE WHO HAS MY WORD, LET HIM SPEAK MY WORD FAITHFULLY...I AM AGAINST THOSE PROPHETS WHO... CAUSE MY PEOPLE TO ERR... THEY HAVE PERVERTED THE WORDS OF THE LIVING GOD, THE LORD OF HOSTS, OUR GOD.” Jeremiah 23:16-36 excerpts

“...GOD, HAVING RAISED UP HIS SERVANT JESUS (the prophet), SENT HIM TO BLESS YOU, IN TURNING AWAY EVERY ONE OF YOU FROM YOUR INIQUITIES.” Acts 3:26

What is the biggest threat to God’s people? It is the message of false prophets in sheep’s clothing who, like in Jeremiah’s day, are “causing God’s people to err” by means of “perverting the Words of the Lord.”

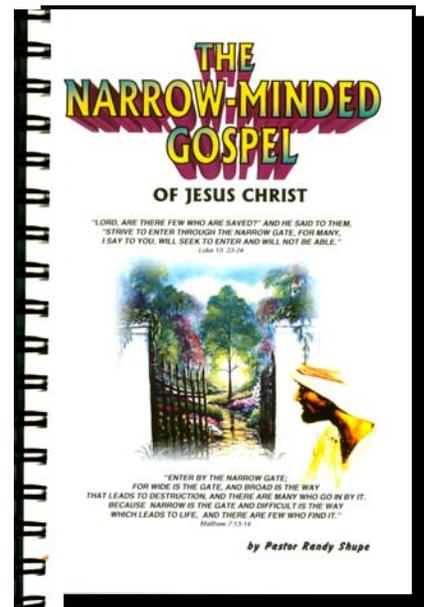


In addition to the booklet I recommended to you earlier, I would also recommend this more in-depth book, “*An Examination of the Doctrine of Eternal Security*”, that I wrote dealing with the only message Jesus proclaimed about salvation. For the most part, what Jesus states as the way of salvation is not what is being presented in main-stream Christianity today.

This is a book about salvation. In it are two plans of salvation. One is God’s plan and the other is a satanically-inspired alteration of God’s plan. Jesus calls these two concepts (1) the narrow gate and the difficult way, and (2) the wide gate and the broad way. Only one of these two plans leads to eternal life and it is the narrow gate and the difficult way.

Jesus warns clearly that the wide gate and the broad way lead to destruction (eternal misery). Today’s gospel is divorced from the call to repent and it is devoid of the message of the Kingdom of God. It is “another gospel” which preaches forgiveness of sin as it’s main objective. Where there is no repentance, there is no forgiveness of sin nor any victory over sin! This book will enlighten the reader to what the Scriptures teach about salvation in the Kingdom of God.

(You can order this book from our ministry for \$ 9.95 plus \$ 3.00 for shipping.)



In conclusion, ponder once more the three crucial confessions (declarations, proclamations) that we have considered over our last three newsletters. Once again I will suggest to you that you memorize them to counteract much of what is being presented under the banner of "sound doctrine" when in essence, much of it is merely doctrines of men that sound good. This is sound doctrine:

**"...THE SOLID
FOUNDATION OF GOD STANDS,
HAVING THIS SEAL:
"THE LORD KNOWS THOSE WHO ARE HIS,"
AND,
"LET EVERYONE WHO NAMES THE NAME OF CHRIST
DEPART FROM INIQUITY"
2 Tim. 2:19-20**

SOLID FOUNDATION

**"A GOOD
CONFESSION"**

SOUND DOCTRINE

"FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN, TEACHING US THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY IN THE PRESENT AGE, LOOKING FOR THE BLESSED HOPE AND GLORIOUS APPEARING OF OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM EVERY LAWLESS DEED AND PURIFY FOR HIMSELF HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE, ZEALOUS FOR GOOD WORKS."

Titus 2:11-14

A COMPLETE COVENANT

"...I WILL PUT MY LAWS IN THEIR MIND AND WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. NONE OF THEM SHALL TEACH HIS NEIGHBOR, AND NONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,' FOR ALL SHALL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST OF THEM TO THE GREATEST OF THEM.

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

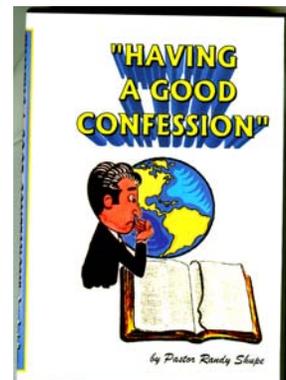
Heb. 8:10-12

Pastor Randy Shupe



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You can order this DVD series from our ministry for \$ 12.00 including shipping and handling.



"PROPHETIC WORD"

~MAY 2008 NEWSLETTER~

ESTABLISHING RIGHT PRIORITIES

IN A WRONG WORLD

"BUT WHAT THINGS WERE GAIN TO ME, THESE I HAVE COUNTED LOSS FOR CHRIST... AND COUNT THEM AS RUBBISH THAT I MAY GAIN CHRIST..."
Phil. 3:7-8



"THEREFORE, IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATION; OLD THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY; BEHOLD, ALL THINGS HAVE BECOME NEW."
2 Cor. 5:17

These two declarations by the apostle Paul need to be endorsed by every born-again believer in Christ.

Experiencing the new birth does not change the world in which we live. The new birth must change how we live in this present world that still lies under the sway, control and influence, of the wicked one; the god of this present evil world (age) (1 Jn. 5:19, Eph. 2:2, 2 Cor. 4:4)

The new birth is to produce a new life. This transcends the act of being forgiven for our sinful past.

OLD PRIORITIES

FORMED BY



THE GOD OF THIS WORLD

NEW PRIORITIES

FORMED BY

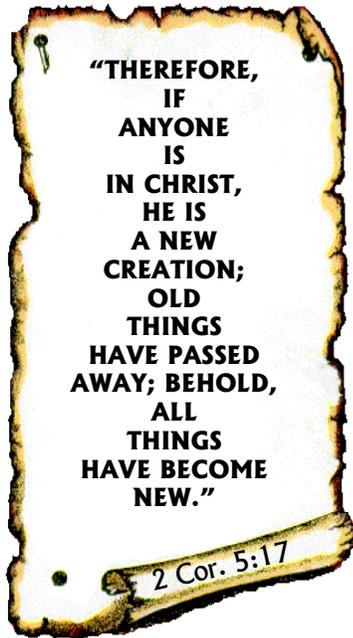


THE WORD OF GOD

God is looking for a people willing to change their priorities in life from being those which were formed by the principles of the world into those formulated by the principles of the Word.

This newsletter is an introduction to the many that will follow it that will be dedicated to this subject. God has clearly defined priorities in His Word that stand in direct opposition to the priorities held dear by the world.

I want to share with you twelve priorities God sets before every believer. These twelve priorities will, in essence, "spell" Christianity for us. Are you ready?



How to "spell" Christianity:

**C
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1. **I AM A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST**
2. **I AM A PRIEST TO GOD THRU CHRIST**
3. **I AM A SERVANT OF CHRIST**
4. **I AM A SOLDIER OF CHRIST**
5. **I AM A WITNESS FOR CHRIST**
6. **I AM AN AMBASSADOR FOR CHRIST**
7. **I AM THE SALT/LIGHT OF THE WORLD**
8. **I AM A STRANGER/PILGRIM ON EARTH**
9. **I AM THE SPIRITUAL HOUSE OF CHRIST**
10. **I AM PART OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**
11. **I AM A MEMBER OF THE BODY OF CHRIST**
12. **I AM THE ESPOUSED BRIDE OF CHRIST**

These are God's revealed priorities for His people. These twelve themes permeate God's Word. Each category describes a particular role in which God views His people.

It is important that we see ourselves as God sees us or we can be just like the deceived church of Laodicea who held a completely different evaluation of themselves compared to how God saw them.

How can such a vast disparity of views exist between Christ and professing Christians?

It is created by holding a difference in priorities. Laodicea measures itself by accepted worldly standards rather than the criteria spelled out in God's Word. The result is lukewarm religion in the sight of God, although these believers are quite content with who they are in their own sight.

HOW GOD SEES SOME OF HIS PEOPLE



"I AM RICH, HAVE BECOME WEALTHY AND NEED NOTHING"

HOW SOME OF HIS PEOPLE SEE THEMSELVES



"YOU DO NOT KNOW THAT YOU ARE WRETCHED, MISERABLE, POOR, BLIND AND NAKED."

Rev. 3:17

Let me illustrate. Here is what the Word of God defines as "pure and undefiled religion":

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

Is this what religion is known for in America? Hardly! Due to politically-based religion inherited from the zealous but errant Puritans, Christians are bent on seizing the earthly kingdom of America and making it into the kingdom of God on earth (as if we have such a God-given commission). Christianity in this country is pursuing an unbiblical, self-appointed mandate to "remove the spots from the world" (abortion, pornography, gay marriage) rather than "keeping oneself unspotted from the world." By which of these two mandates will Jesus judge the success of His people? Is Jesus pleased with self-commissioned priorities that stand in opposition to His Word? This is misguided zeal based on wrong priorities!



“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



**PHILOSOPHY
(LOVE OF KNOWLEDGE)**

**EMPTY DECEIT
(FAKERY-HYPOCRISY)**

**THE TRADITION
OF MEN**

**THE BASIC PRINCIPLES
OF THE WORLD
(LUST OF THE FLESH,
LUST OF THE EYES,
PRIDE OF LIFE)**

Not only do these opposing things exist in the secular world, but also various subtle forms exist within religion itself. The best way Satan can deceive the saints is to cover his deception with a religious cloak. The church is iodated with high-minded intellectual so-called knowledge. Paul warns of "...what is falsely called knowledge-by professing it, some have erred concerning the faith" (1 Tim. 6:20-21). Who is not aware of the empty deceit (fakery-hypocrisy) that circulates within the church under the guise of "Spirit-led anointing."

Religious tradition is still at work, "...making the Word of God of no effect..." (Mark 7:13). It permeates not only Judaism and Catholicism, but also Protestantism.

**THE KNOWLEDGE
OF GOD**

**PURE IN HEART
(SINCERITY AND TRUTH)**

**THE TRUTH
OF GOD’S WORD**

**THE BASIC PRINCIPLES
OF THE WORD
(FAITH,
HOPE,
LOVE)**

Christianity embraces the world’s childish, pagan-based holidays and ignores God’s prophetic Holy Feast days.

How much of what we see in American Christianity is promoting the same basic principles of the world (lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life) instead of being marked with the basic principles of the Word (faith, hope and love). Much of Christian “worship” music on TV today sounds no different from the secular world’s music performances. Many a Christian singer looks like an audition for “American Idol” rather than leading God’s people into the presence of God Almighty. Hard words-hard times!

To get us on track and to keep us from being derailed, we need to focus all of our energies and disciplines upon God’s priorities for His people. The twelve priorities I listed for you previously can be further divided into three distinctly different relationships. Here they are:

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

2 Cor. 5:17

**WHAT I AM
TO BE
TO GOD**

- I AM A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST**
- I AM A PRIEST TO GOD THRU CHRIST**
- I AM A SERVANT OF CHRIST**
- I AM A SOLDIER OF CHRIST**

**WHAT I AM
TO BE TO
THE WORLD**

- I AM A WITNESS FOR CHRIST**
- I AM AN AMBASSADOR FOR CHRIST**
- I AM THE SALT/LIGHT OF THE WORLD**
- I AM A STRANGER/PILGRIM ON EARTH**

**WHAT I AM
TO BE TO
THE BRETHREN**

- I AM THE SPIRITUAL HOUSE OF CHRIST**
- I AM PART OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**
- I AM A MEMBER OF THE BODY OF CHRIST**
- I AM THE ESPOUSED BRIDE OF CHRIST**

In the remainder of this newsletter, I will give you a preview of the contents of our next twelve newsletters:

"AS HE SPOKE THESE WORDS, MANY BELIEVED IN HIM. THEN JESUS SAID TO THOSE JEWS WHO BELIEVED HIM, 'IF YOU ABIDE (CONTINUE) IN MY WORD, YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES INDEED. AND YOU SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE.'"

John 8:30-32



NUMBER 1:

I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT A DISCIPLE OF JESUS CHRIST

SEEING OURSELVES AS GOD SEES US



THE PRIORITY OF BEING A DISCIPLE

Modern-day Christianity emphasizes the importance of becoming a convert of Christ via the new birth. Although Jesus preached the necessity of being born again (Jn.3:3,5), He emphasized the need to become His disciple (Jn. 13:35).

Being a convert is a past tense, one-time experience. Becoming a disciple is an ongoing, present tense lifestyle. A convert "likes Christ", but a disciple seeks to "become like Christ." A convert embraces the finished work of the cross of Christ, but a disciple takes up his own cross in order to deny self and follow Christ (Luke 9:23).

"LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST JESUS...WHO... MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION, TAKING THE FORM OF A SERVANT... HE HUMBLING HIMSELF AND BECAME OBEDIENT TO THE POINT OF DEATH, EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS."

Philippians 2:5-8



NUMBER 2:

I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT A SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST

SEEING OURSELVES AS GOD SEES US



THE PRIORITY OF BEING A SERVANT

Although they were apostles, we find Jude, Peter, James and Paul open their epistles by identifying themselves primarily as "servants of Jesus Christ" (Jude 1, 2 Pet. 1:1, James 1:1, Phil. 1:1)

Lofty titles produce authority and respect and thrive on maintaining a reputation. No so for the servant who serves behind the scenes rather than being in a position to be seen. Jesus taught, "The Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve" (Matt. 20:28). In the kingdom of God, greatness is achieved through becoming a servant. (Matt. 20:25-27, Luke 12:43-44).

"YOU THEREFORE MUST ENDURE HARDSHIP AS A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST. NO ONE ENGAGED IN WARFARE ENTANGLES HIMSELF WITH THE AFFAIRS OF THIS LIFE, THAT HE MAY PLEASE HIM WHO ENLISTED HIM AS A SOLDIER."

2 Timothy 2:3-4



NUMBER 3:

I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT A SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST

SEEING OURSELVES AS GOD SEES US



THE PRIORITY OF BEING A SOLDIER

Notice that being a soldier who pleases God has nothing to do with involvement with "the affairs of this life." Our warfare as Christians is not against the ills of society such as abortion, pornography or even political injustices. Our warfare is against "the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:10-18). Our warfare is not against flesh and blood but rather against "principalities, powers, rulers of darkness and spiritual wickedness in heavenly places" (2 Cor. 10:3-5, Eph. 6:10-18). Our battle is a spiritual one for the souls of men. We are here to rescue Americans from America rather than rescuing the earthly kingdom of America itself. Big difference!

"GOD, WHO HAS RECONCILED US TO HIMSELF THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, HAS GIVEN US THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION... AND HAS COMMITTED TO US THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION. THEREFORE WE ARE AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST, AS THOUGH GOD WERE PLEADING THROUGH US... BE RECONCILED TO GOD." 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

NUMBER 4:

**I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT
AN AMBASSADOR
FOR JESUS CHRIST**



SEEING OURSELVES AS GOD SEES US

"BUT YOU SHALL RECEIVE POWER WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS COME UPON YOU; AND YOU SHALL BE WITNESSES TO ME IN JERUSALEM, AND IN ALL JUDEA AND SAMARIA, AND TO THE END OF THE EARTH." Acts 1:8

NUMBER 5:

**I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT
A WITNESS
(MARTYR)
UNTO JESUS CHRIST**



SEEING OURSELVES AS GOD SEES US

"YOU ALSO...ARE A HOLY PRIESTHOOD TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST...A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, HIS OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE, THAT YOU MAY PROCLAIM THE PRAISES OF HIM WHO HAS CALLED YOU OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELOUS LIGHT; WHO ONCE WERE NOT A PEOPLE BUT ARE NOW THE PEOPLE OF GOD..." 1 Peter 2:5,9-10

NUMBER 6:

**I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT
A HOLY, ROYAL
PRIESTHOOD**



SEEING OURSELVES AS GOD SEES US

THE PRIORITY OF BEING AN AMBASSADOR

Many Christians clamor for some kind of ministry or ministry gift. Every Christian already has a ministry-the ministry of reconciliation. We are ambassadors representing the Kingdom of God and Jesus Christ, king of the kingdom.

No greater honor or position can be bestowed that is greater than an ambassador commissioned to speak for the King of the universe. It is a simple calling. We are take the message given to us by our king and deliver it on His behalf. We are to tell them what we have been told, no more, no less. We have a gift from God to give. It is the gift of eternal life.

THE PRIORITY OF BEING A WITNESS

The biblical concept of being a witness transcends the words we speak. The Pharisees were good with words spoken, but bad with deeds performed. Jesus condemned such "witnessing" (Matt. 23:1-4, Mark 7:6-7). Paul said of his gospel, "...we did not come to you in word only, but also in much power...you know what kind of men we were among you..." (1 Thess. 1:5)

Effective witnessing includes a changed life that is demonstrated before men. We must become, "...(an) epistle...known and read by all men... manifestly an epistle of Christ...written...by the Spirit of the living God..." (2 Cor. 3:2-3)

THE PRIORITY OF BEING A PRIEST

Catholicism teaches that only a few celibate men are called to function as priests. However, God calls every believer to function as a holy and royal priesthood that knows how to offer to God spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to Him through Jesus Christ.

Seven acceptable sacrifices are plainly stated in God's Word . Do you know what they are? If not, how can you fulfill your calling as a priest to God? Do you realize that you will be judged as to what kind of priest you have been as a follower of Christ?

"YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH; BUT IF THE SALT LOSES ITS FLAVOR...IT IS THEN GOOD FOR NOTHING BUT TO BE...TRAMPLED UNDER FOOT BY MEN. YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD... LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN, THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN."

Matthew 5:13-16

NUMBER 7:

I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT

**THE SALT OF THE EARTH
THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**



SEEING OURSELVES AS GOD SEES US

"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..."

1 Peter 2:11-12

NUMBER 8:

I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT

**A STRANGER
AND
A PILGRIM
ON THE EARTH**



SEEING OURSELVES AS GOD SEES US

"YOU ALSO AS LIVING STONES, ARE BEING BUILT UP A SPIRITUAL HOUSE..." 1 Peter 2:5

"...THE WHOLE BUILDING, BEING JOINED TOGETHER, GROWS INTO A HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD, IN WHOM YOU ALSO ARE BEING BUILT TOGETHER FOR A HABITATION OF GOD IN THE SPIRIT."

Ephesians 2:21-22

NUMBER 9:

I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT

**A SPIRITUAL HOUSE,
A HOLY TEMPLE
IN THE LORD**



SEEING OURSELVES AS GOD SEES US

THE PRIORITY OF BEING SALT AND LIGHT

Salt is not as meaningful today as it was in biblical times. So precious and so scarce was it that the Roman soldiers were paid their wages in salt. Thus the saying, He is not worth his salt." Jesus is warning about believers being "worthless salt" who have lost their flavor, their ability to season others, not able to "season your speech with salt" as Paul exhorts in Col. 4:6.

Likewise, the believer is commissioned to be "the light of the world."

God identified Himself as, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 Jn. 1:5). We are exhorted to, "...walk in the light as He is in the light..." (1 Jn. 1:7).

We are also warned to make sure, "...the light in you is not darkness..." (Mat. 6:23)

THE PRIORITY OF BEING A STRANGER AND A PILGRIM

"For we are sojourners and pilgrims before you, as were all our fathers..." (1 Chron. 29:15). "...and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth...therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God..." (Heb. 11:13,16).

Here is a neglected calling among the people of God today! Foreign is, "...here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come" (Heb. 11:14) and, "...our citizenship is in heaven, from which we eagerly wait..." (Phil. 3:20).

Christianity, especially here in America has become an earthbound religion rooted in earthly citizenship in an earthly country. The contents of the U.S. Constitution are more revered as of Divine origin than the contents of the Bible such as the calling to be strangers and pilgrims on earth.

THE PRIORITY OF BEING PART OF THE SPIRITUAL HOUSE, THE HOLY TEMPLE

All of the previous eight priorities are individual ones. Not so the remaining four. These are corporate objectives that require interaction with other believers.

It is "living stones" being built together to form a corporate spiritual house (1 Pet. 2:5). It is believers "being joined together" and believers "being built together" that becomes "a habitation for God" (Eph. 2:21-22). Isolating ourselves from corporate Christianity will not produce this priority in our lives. We are not to "forsake assembling ourselves together, as is the manner of some..." (Heb. 10:25)

**"...I WRITE SO THAT YOU MAY KNOW HOW YOU OUGHT TO CONDUCT YOURSELF IN THE HOUSE OF GOD, WHICH IS THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH."
1 Timothy 3:15**



NUMBER 10:

**I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT
THE CHURCH
("THE CALLED-OUT ONES")**



SEEING OURSELVES AS GOD SEES US

**"...BY ONE SPIRIT WE WERE ALL BAPTIZED INTO ONE BODY - WHETHER JEWS OR GREEKS, WHETHER SLAVES OR FREE...THE BODY IS NOT ONE MEMBER BUT MANY... THERE ARE MANY MEMBERS, YET ONE BODY... NOW YOU ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST, AND MEMBERS INDIVIDUALLY."
1 Corinthians 12:13-27 excerpts**



NUMBER 11:

**I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT
A MEMBER OF
THE BODY
OF JESUS CHRIST**



SEEING OURSELVES AS GOD SEES US

**"...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 ("SIMPLE PURITY") THAT IS IN CHRIST."
2 Corinthians 11:1-3**



NUMBER 12:

**I AM IN GOD'S SIGHT
THE ESPOUSED
BRIDE
OF JESUS CHRIST**



SEEING OURSELVES AS GOD SEES US

THE PRIORITY OF BEING PART OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

Church means "the called-out ones." Hebrews singles out Abraham as being "...called to go out..." (Heb. 11:8). As examples of a people of faith, God said of them, "...had they called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better...a heavenly country"(Heb.11:15-16).

What is the church in the eyes of God? It is, "...the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). Is the church living up to its name?

What is the purpose of the church?

Paul says this of the church's highest calling, "...that now the manifest wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places" (Eph. 3:10). Does today's church even know what this means?

THE PRIORITY OF BEING PART OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

"There are many members, yet one body." Take the time to read all that Paul has to say in this 12th Chapter of 1st Corinthians. "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you.'" Paul warns, "...there should be no schism in the body, but the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it." Again Paul reiterates, "Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually."

The body is to function properly with all its members. The body is to be subject to its head which is Christ (Col. 1:18)

THE PRIORITY OF BEING PART OF THE BRIDE OF JESUS CHRIST

Adam had his bride formed out of a part of his body while he slept. Jesus is called by Paul, "the last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45). Will the bride of Christ be formed out of the body of the last Adam while it sleeps on earth?

Strong possibility in light of Paul's words from 2 Cor. 11:1-3.

A prophetic picture is given of the bride, "...the marriage of the Lamb has come and His wife has made herself ready. And it was granted to her to be arrayed in fine linen clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints" (Rev.19:7-8).

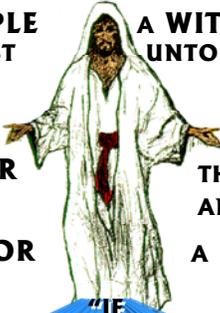


THE PRIORITY OF BECOMING A **DISCIPLE** OF JESUS CHRIST

We are studying what are God-ordained priorities for His people. In our previous newsletter we identified twelve such criteria specified in God's Word. These specific areas identify the God-given roles in which our Master sees every one of His people. It is important for the Christian to see himself just as God sees him. Why so? Because these will be areas of accountability by which God will eventually judge the stewardship of His people (Rom. 14:10-12, 2 Cor. 5:9-10, Luke 12,42-44, 19:11-19, Matt. 25:14-23). These are areas of stewardship that will be measured by Christ in determining the degree of the believer's eternal rewards in Heaven. Eternal life is truly a gift, but eternal rewards are not. In the end, it will matter how we have lived our lives as Christians. Have we followed God's priorities in our lives or have we set our own goals and ambitions as we see best?

The illustration below divides these twelve priorities into two categories. Eight of them can be achieved as individual accomplishments. The remaining four are far more difficult as they require corporate involvement with other Christians. There will be a great loss of reward for those believers who do not choose to assemble with their brethren in Christ. They indeed may find it easier not to do so, but it will be proven to be a costly mistake.

INDIVIDUALLY

A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST		A WITNESS UNTO CHRIST
A SERVANT OF CHRIST		A PRIEST TO GOD
A SOLDIER OF CHRIST		THE SALT OF THE EARTH, AND THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD
AN AMBASSADOR FOR CHRIST		A STRANGER/PILGRIM ON EARTH

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

CHRISTIANITY

THE HOUSE OF CHRIST THE CHURCH OF CHRIST THE BODY OF CHRIST THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

CORPORATELY

This newsletter is dedicated to examining the first individual priority, which is to embrace the call of becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ. It has been well said that, "disciples are made, not born." Every born-again believer is called to embrace the difficult pathway of being made into a disciple. Many Christians like Christ, but the objective of a disciple is to become Christ-like. Big difference!

"I THEREFORE...APPEAL AND BEG YOU TO WALK (LEAD A LIFE) WORTHY OF THE DIVINE CALLING TO WHICH YOU HAVE BEEN CALLED – WITH A BEHAVIOR THAT IS A CREDIT TO THE SUMMONS TO GOD’S SERVICE."
 Eph. 4:1 Amplified

"...THOSE WHO ARE THE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE. FOR WHOM HE FOREKNEW, HE ALSO PREDESTINED TO BE CONFORMED INTO THE IMAGE OF HIS HIS SON."
 Rom. 8:28-29



THE MAKING OF A DISCIPLE

"BUT WE ALL... BEHOLDING... THE GLORY OF THE LORD, ARE BEING TRANSFORMED INTO THE SAME IMAGE FROM GLORY TO GLORY... BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD."
 2 Cor. 3:18

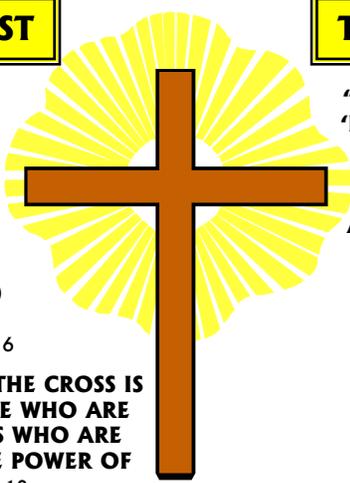
"...TILL WE ALL COME ... TO A PERFECT MAN, TO THE MEASURE AND STATURE OF THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST..."
 Eph. 4:13

The Christian is called to much more than "receiving Jesus" and His free gift of eternal life. The new birth is to produce a new life, a life of discipleship. It is not left to our own imagination as to what "discipleship" means. These three passages make it quite clear that we are called with a Divine calling, to be conformed, transformed into the full measure and stature of Jesus Christ This is not accomplished by the new birth. Note it is this calling to which the Christian has been "predestined." It is not predestined unto salvation, but rather to be conformed into Christ's image. It is a life-long process of progressing from "glory to glory" as we yield our lives to the work of the Holy Spirit.

This is discipleship. This is the narrow gate and the difficult way Jesus describes as a path that few will choose to enter. Eliminate discipleship, and salvation becomes a wide gate and a broad way that allows many to easily enter. However, Jesus says this is the way that eventually leads to destruction. Why so? Because it creates a lack of purpose and motivation for the Christian life beyond the conversion experience. The word Christian means "a follower of Christ," not one who just receives Christ. If you are going to be a follower of Christ, then you must expect to be "double-crossed" in this life:

THE CROSS OF THE CHRIST

THE CROSS OF THE CHRISTIAN



"...HAVING MADE PEACE THROUGH THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS..." Col.1:20

"...THAT HE MIGHT RECONCILE THEM BOTH (Jew and Gentile) TO GOD...THROUGH THE CROSS..." Eph. 2:16

"FOR THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS IS FOOLISHNESS TO THOSE WHO ARE PERISHING, BUT TO US WHO ARE BEING SAVED, IT IS THE POWER OF GOD." 1 Cor. 1:18

"THEN HE SAID TO THEM ALL, 'IF ANYONE DESIRES TO COME AFTER ME, LET HIM DENY HIMSELF, AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS DAILY, AND FOLLOW ME.'" Luke 9:23

"AND HE WHO DOES NOT TAKE UP HIS CROSS AND FOLLOW AFTER ME IS NOT WORTHY OF ME." Mat. 10:38

"AND WHOEVER DOES NOT BEAR HIS CROSS AND COME AFTER ME CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE." Luke 14:27

THE CROSS OF CHRIST JUSTIFIES...
 ("make innocent, make righteous")

THE CROSS OF THE CHRISTIAN SANCTIFIES...
 ("set apart, holy in conduct")

The cross of Christ makes people **TO LIKE CHRIST...**

The cross of a Christian makes the believer **TO BE LIKE CHRIST...**

The cross of Christ provides **ETERNAL LIFE...**

The cross of the Christian provides **ETERNAL REWARDS...**

REMAIN CONVERTS TO CHRIST

"I COULD NOT SPEAK TO YOU AS TO SPIRITUAL PEOPLE BUT AS TO CARNAL, AS TO BABES IN CHRIST. I FED YOU WITH MILK AND NOT WITH SOLID FOOD; FOR UNTIL NOW YOU ARE STILL NOT ABLE TO RECEIVE IT, AND EVEN NOW YOU ARE STILL NOT ABLE, YOU ARE STILL CARNAL.

FOR WHERE THERE IS ENVY, STRIFE, AND DIVISIONS AMONG YOU, ARE YOU NOT CARNAL AND BEHAVING LIKE MERE MEN?

1 Cor. 3:1-3

Take the time to read this stark contrast of two churches described in the New Testament. Both churches were founded by and were under the personal care of the apostle Paul. That implies that they did not lack for proper teaching, so why the difference between them? Why is one remaining so carnal and immature while the other is so obviously self-motivated and filled with dynamic results visible to the eye? The answer lies in the personal choice made between remaining a convert to Christ vs. embracing the call to discipleship. We know well the saying, "Birds of a feather, flock together." The carnal will flock to its own kind for it breeds contentment. The spiritual, however, will flock to the gathering of those who are spiritually-minded and inspire and motivate one another to even greater things.

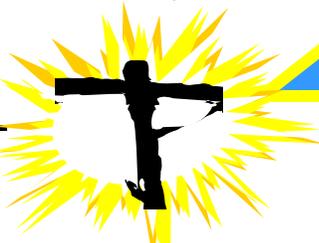
BECOME DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

"YOU BECAME FOLLOWERS OF US AND OF THE LORD, HAVING RECEIVED THE WORD IN MUCH AFFLICTION, WITH JOY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, SO THAT YOU BECAME EXAMPLES TO ALL...WHO BELIEVE. FOR FROM YOU THE WORD OF THE LORD HAS SOUNDED FORTH...IN EVERY PLACE. YOUR FAITH TOWARD GOD HAS GONE OUT, SO THAT WE DO NOT NEED TO SAY ANYTHING...YOU TURNED TO GOD FROM IDOLS TO SERVE THE LIVING AND TRUE GOD, AND TO WAIT FOR HIS SON FROM HEAVEN... WHO DELIVERS US FROM THE WRATH TO COME."

1 Thess. 1:6-10

THE TWIN FOUNDATION STONES OF DISCIPLESHIP

THE MAKING OF A DISCIPLE



THE CROSS

"THEN HE SAID TO THEM ALL, 'IF

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

Luke 9:23

"AND WHOEVER DOES NOT BEAR HIS CROSS AND COME AFTER ME CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE."

Luke 14:27

"IF"

is the biggest little word in the Bible. In these verses there are two uses of the word "IF."

Every Christian must be confronted by these conditional words of Jesus for there can be no meaningful discipleship apart from embracing them both.

One "if" calls us to embrace the daily cross of denying the self life in order to live selflessly for Christ.

The other "if" calls us to continue in God's Word far beyond what is recorded as the conversion experience. There is much more freedom ahead for the Christian who chooses to continue in truth.



THE WORD

"THEN HE SAID TO THOSE JEWS WHO BELIEVED HIM, 'IF

YOU ABIDE (CONTINUE) IN MY WORD, YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES INDEED.

AND YOU SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE.' "

John 8:31-32

What makes the difference between remaining carnal (like Corinth) or becoming spiritual (like Thessalonica)? It is whether, and to what degree, we embrace the cross and the Word in our lives. Paul can preach till he is blue in the face! The carnal-minded believer will not allow into his life the power of the cross or the power of the Word. They are satisfied to be carnal converts that have escaped hellfire via the new birth. Who needs more?

We have identified the twin foundations of discipleship: the cross and the Word. Let us now add the third element of discipleship which is the capstone to this spiritual pyramid: the Holy Spirit. Notice that all three are sources of Divine POWER:



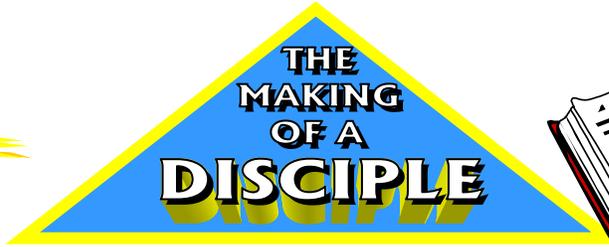
SPIRIT POWER

**“BUT YOU SHALL RECEIVE
POWER
WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS COME UPON YOU...”**
Acts 1:8



CROSS POWER

**“FOR THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS..
TO US WHO ARE BEING SAVED
IT IS THE
POWER
OF GOD.”**
1 Cor. 1:18



WORD POWER

**“FOR THE WORD OF GOD...
IS ALIVE AND
FULL OF
POWER...”**
Heb. 4:12 Amplified

The Greek word translated in these verses as “power” is “dunamis.” It means, “worker of miracles, strength, abundance and mighty wonderful work” (Strong’s Concordance #1411). It is the source from which we get the word “dynamite.” Discipleship is not a white-knuckle-club based on human energy and effort trying to be what God wants us to be. God knows we need supernatural (“dynamite”) power, and it is available in abundance to the willing and submitted believer.

Discipleship mainly centers upon the soul of the believer. The soul consists of the mind, the will, and the emotions. Who is not aware that these three areas are the prime targets for Satan’s temptations? God wants to restore our soul (Psm.23:3). How will this be accomplished? By means of His three sources of Divine dunamis power. He intends to start with the mind being renewed by the power of God’s Word. The principle of “taking up our cross and denying self” brings power to our will. A renewed mind will help the will to make the right choices. The fruit of the Spirit is given to bring our emotions under the power and control of the Holy Spirit. Uncontrolled emotions get us in trouble. The emotions are not to control our mind or our will.

“THE DISCIPLINED DISCIPLE”

1. A DISCIPLINED

MIND

POWER OF



THE WORD



2. A DISCIPLINED

WILL

POWER OF



THE CROSS



3. DISCIPLINED

EMOTIONS

POWER OF



THE SPIRIT

These passages from Romans Chapter 12 gives us the proper order for the soul in God's sight. →

The renewing of the mind transforms the believer's way of thinking from continued conformity to this world. Principles and philosophy of the Word take priority over those of the world. We change how we think.

If we change how we think it will impact our decisions. The will is where we make our decisions based upon what we value as right thinking in our minds.

This third passage from Romans is filled with emotional outpourings such as "affectionate,,fervent...rejoicing...weeping." Here we find that the right use of our emotions are out-workings of a renewed mind and an influenced will.

Contrast the above to how the soul of the undisciplined (believer or unbeliever) becomes inverted. What one feels emotionally overrides the will and the mind. These undisciplined emotions rule the soul:

"THE DISCIPLINED DISCIPLE"

HAS A SOUL IN RIGHT ORDER:

1. A DISCIPLINED

MIND

"AND DO NOT BE CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD, BUT BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND,



2. A DISCIPLINED

WILL

THAT YOU MAY PROVE WHAT IS THAT GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE AND PERFECT WILL OF GOD..."



3. DISCIPLINED

EMOTIONS

...BE KINDLY AFFECTIONATE TO ONE ANOTHER WITH BROTHERLY LOVE...FERVENT IN SPIRIT...REJOICING IN HOPE, PATIENT IN TRIBULATION... BLESS THOSE WHO PERSECUTE YOU; BLESS AND DO NOT CURSE. REJOICE WITH THOSE WHO REJOICE, AND WEEP WITH THOSE WHO WEEP..."

"THE UNDISCIPLINED DISCIPLE"

HAS AN INVERTED SOUL:

1. UNDISCIPLINED
EMOTIONS



2. UNDISCIPLINED
WILL



3. UNDISCIPLINED
MIND



The arm of flesh

"THE DISCIPLINED DISCIPLE"

HAS A SOUL IN RIGHT ORDER:

1. A DISCIPLINED
MIND



2. A DISCIPLINED
WILL



3. DISCIPLINED
EMOTIONS



Spirit-led power

"I COULD NOT SPEAK TO YOU AS TO SPIRITUAL PEOPLE BUT AS TO CARNAL, AS TO BABES IN CHRIST. I FED YOU WITH MILK AND NOT WITH SOLID FOOD; FOR UNTIL NOW YOU ARE STILL NOT ABLE TO RECEIVE IT, AND EVEN NOW YOU ARE STILL NOT ABLE, YOU ARE STILL CARNAL. FOR WHERE THERE IS ENVY, STRIFE, AND DIVISIONS AMONG YOU, ARE YOU NOT CARNAL AND BEHAVING LIKE MERE MEN?"
1 Cor. 3:1-3

"IF"

is the biggest little word in the Bible. In these verses there are two uses of the word "IF."

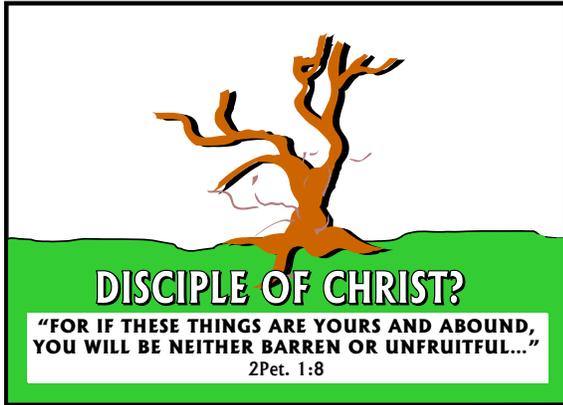
Every Christian must be confronted by these conditional words of Jesus for there can be no meaningful discipleship apart from embracing them both.

One "if" calls us to embrace the daily cross of denying the self life in order to live selflessly for Christ.

The other "if" calls us to continue in God's Word far beyond what is recorded as the conversion experience. There is much more freedom ahead for the Christian who chooses to continue in truth.

"YOU BECAME FOLLOWERS OF US AND OF THE LORD, HAVING RECEIVED THE WORD IN MUCH AFFLICTION, WITH JOY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, SO THAT YOU BECAME EXAMPLES TO ALL...WHO BELIEVE. FOR FROM YOU THE WORD OF THE LORD HAS SOUNDED FORTH...IN EVERY PLACE. YOUR FAITH TOWARD GOD HAS GONE OUT, SO THAT WE DO NOT NEED TO SAY ANYTHING...YOU TURNED TO GOD FROM IDOLS TO SERVE THE LIVING AND TRUE GOD, AND TO WAIT FOR HIS SON FROM HEAVEN... WHO DELIVERS US FROM THE WRATH TO COME."
1 Thess. 1:6-10

We can't say we are a disciple and look like this barren tree on the left. The proper picture the world needs to see is the one on the right which is filled with fruit prepared for the taking.



Fruit must be grown, it is not a gift. How can one produce the fruit of the Spirit in their life? I believe the answer lies in this parable that Jesus told:

"A CERTAIN MAN HAD A FIG TREE PLANTED IN HIS VINEYARD, AND HE CAME SEEKING FRUIT ON IT AND FOUND NONE. THEN HE SAID TO THE KEEPER OF HIS VINEYARD, 'LOOK, FOR THREE YEARS I HAVE COME SEEKING FRUIT ON THIS FIG TREE AND FIND NONE. CUT IT DOWN; WHY DOES IT USE UP THE GROUND?' BUT HE ANSWERED AND SAID TO HIM, 'SIR, LET IT ALONE THIS YEAR ALSO, UNTIL I DIG AROUND IT AND FERTILIZE IT. AND IF IT BEARS FRUIT, WELL. BUT IF NOT, AFTER THAT YOU CAN CUT IT DOWN.'"

Luke 13:6-9

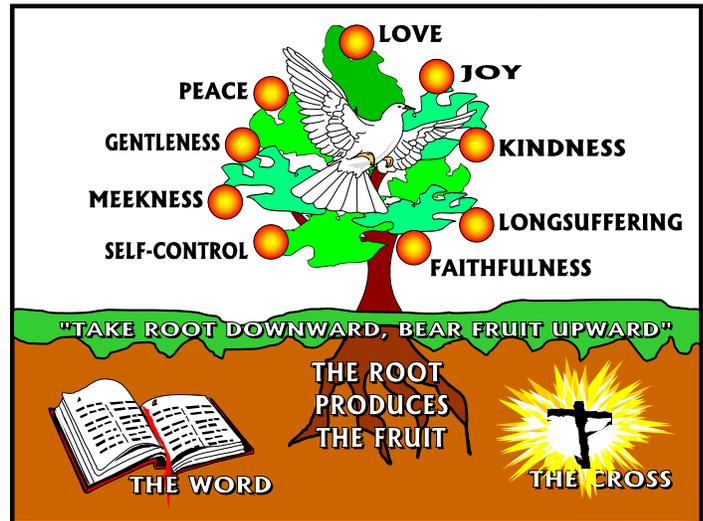


One who ignores the call to discipleship is like the barren tree that continues to fail to show any fruit as evidence of being alive. What is the cure? It is to dig around its roots and fertilize the ground.

When it comes to bearing the Fruit of the Spirit as outward evidence of being a disciple of Christ, we must realize that the initiative to "dig and fertilize" belongs to the disciple, not the Spirit. As the believer utilizes the Word of God to renew the mind and takes up his/her cross daily in order to deny self, the mandate to "dig and fertilize" is fulfilled. As illustrated in this diagram, "the root produces the fruit." This is a repeated principle of God's Word

"...TAKE ROOT DOWNWARD, AND BEAR FRUIT UPWARD."

2 Kings 19:30, Isa. 37:31



Often I hear people exclaim in frustration, "I called on the Holy Spirit for manifestation of His fruit, but nothing happened." As I stated earlier, there is a distinction between "the gifts of the Spirit" and "the fruit of the Spirit." When it comes to manifestation of the fruit of "self-control, meekness, gentleness, faithfulness, long-suffering, kindness, love, joy and peace," they are the outworking of the Word and the cross being sown into our daily lives as disciples. The root produces the fruit. The Holy Spirit does not give fruit as a gift. If we are not consistently "digging around and fertilizing the ground," then the root cannot produce the fruit when we desire it. We remain a tree that is "barren and unfruitful" in times of crisis.

Prepare the ground of your heart by choosing to be a disciple with a Word and cross mentality to guide your steps. Yes it is true, it is the "narrow gate" and the "difficult way," but it leads to a life that is well-pleasing to the Master.



THE PRIORITY OF BECOMING A
WITNESS
UNTO JESUS CHRIST

This newsletter is dedicated to the second priority that God's Word sets before the people of God. We have examined what constitutes becoming a disciple of Christ, we will now ponder what it means to be a witness unto Jesus Christ. Notice that the one who calls us to be witnesses was Himself a "faithful and true witness." God never asks of His people more than what He was Himself. As the Scripture states, "It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher..." (Matt. 10:25).

"...AND YOU SHALL BE WITNESSES TO ME..."
Acts 1:8



"THESE THINGS SAYS ...THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS..."
Rev. 3:14

The priority of being a good witness cannot be divorced from our previous subject of being a good disciple. The call to be witnesses unto Christ comes from the one who was Himself, "the faithful and true witness." Consider well the contrast below, for our ability to effectively witness can only flow out of what kind of disciple we have become:

TRUE AND FAITHFUL DISCIPLES




MAKE TRUE AND FAITHFUL WITNESSES

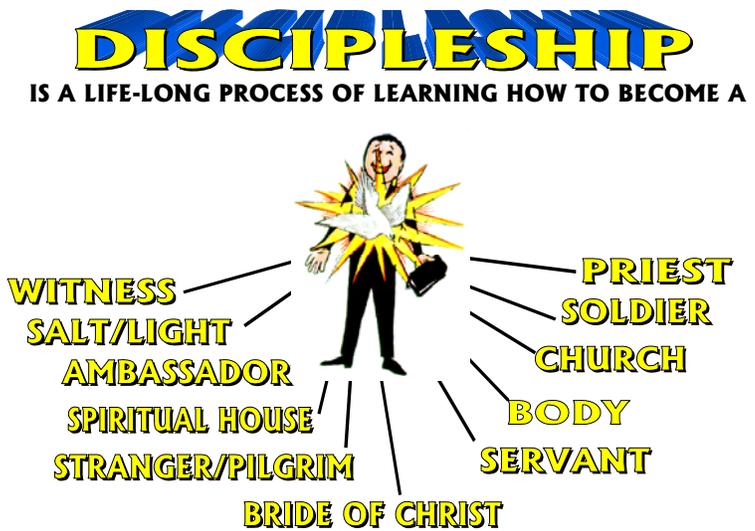
UNDISCIPLINED AND UNFAITHFUL DISCIPLES




MAKE UNDISCIPLINED AND UNFAITHFUL WITNESSES

Of the twelve priorities we are considering, discipleship is the key that unlocks the remaining eleven priorities:

Our present subject is the call to be a witness. It has been well said that, "action speaks louder than words." What we do can either enhance or distract from the words we say. What we say may be totally correct and true, but if it flows from a life that is contradictory to what we say, our words have little or no impact. Place the proper emphasis upon being a good disciple and you will also be a good witness.



Mahatma Gandhi formed one of the world's largest cults after first rejecting Christianity. Sadly, he stated as his reason, "Of all the world's religions, Christianity is the most noble...I would have become a follower of Christ had it not been for Christians." Our actions do speak louder than our words.

We don't usually think of Jesus as a disciple, but the Scriptures prove otherwise. The words He spoke came directly from His Father. The life of Jesus was one of constant tutorship (discipleship) by His Father. His "faithful and true witness" flowed out of that intense, personal discipleship. The same must be true for the Christian. If we are to be a "faithful and true witness" unto Jesus Christ, then we must take our direction (tutorship, discipleship) directly from the Word of God which, in essence, is Christ (Jn.1:1,14, Rev.19:13). Only then we will know what to speak and even when to speak.

JESUS AS A DISCIPLE:

"THE SON CAN DO NOTHING OF HIMSELF, BUT WHAT HE SEES THE FATHER DO; FOR WHATEVER HE DOES, THE SON ALSO DOES IN LIKE MANNER. FOR THE FATHER LOVES THE SON AND SHOWS HIM ALL THINGS THAT HE HIMSELF DOES..."
Jn. 5:19-20

"I SPEAK TO THE WORLD THOSE THINGS WHICH I HEARD FROM HIM... I DO NOTHING OF MYSELF, BUT AS THE FATHER TAUGHT ME, I SPEAK THESE THINGS... I ALWAYS DO THOSE THINGS THAT PLEASE HIM."
Jn. 8:28-29

THE CHRISTIAN AS A DISCIPLE:

"THE SON CAN DO NOTHING OF HIMSELF, BUT WHAT HE SEES THE FATHER DO; FOR WHATEVER HE DOES, THE SON ALSO DOES IN LIKE MANNER. FOR THE FATHER LOVES THE SON AND SHOWS HIM ALL THINGS THAT HE HIMSELF DOES..."
Jn. 5:19-20

"I SPEAK TO THE WORLD THOSE THINGS WHICH I HEARD FROM HIM... I DO NOTHING OF MYSELF, BUT AS THE FATHER TAUGHT ME, I SPEAK THESE THINGS... I ALWAYS DO THOSE THINGS THAT PLEASE HIM."
Jn. 8:28-29

"IT IS ENOUGH FOR A DISCIPLE THAT HE BE LIKE HIS TEACHER..."
Matt. 10:25

Such Divine discipleship is evidence of true humility and dependence upon someone greater than ourselves. Consider two expressions of such dependence and humility:

**"OH LORD,
I KNOW THE WAY OF MAN
IS NOT IN HIMSELF;
IT IS NOT IN MAN WHO WALKS
TO DIRECT HIS OWN STEPS.
O LORD,
CORRECT ME, BUT WITH JUSTICE;
NOT IN YOUR ANGER,
LEST YOU BRING ME TO NOTHING."**
Jer. 10:23-24

**"THE LORD
HAS GIVEN ME THE TONGUE OF THE LEARNED,
THAT I SHOULD KNOW HOW TO SPEAK
A WORD IN SEASON TO HIM WHO IS WEARY.
HE AWAKENS ME MORNING BY MORNING,
HE AWAKENS MY EAR TO HEAR AS THE LEARNED.
THE LORD
HAS OPENED MY EAR; AND I WAS NOT REBELLIOUS,
NOR DID I TURN AWAY...THE LORD WILL HELP ME;
THEREFORE I WILL NOT BE DISGRACED."**
Isa. 50:4,7

I would like you to consider below what I refer to as "the creed of a witness." A creed is a declaration, a statement of principles or beliefs that are designed to govern conduct and behavior. This particular creed is taken from Paul's dissertation about Christianity found in 2 Corinthians 2:14-17 and the following Chapter, 2 Cor. 3:1-6.

As you read through it you will see that Paul uses two different illustrations to convey what Christianity should convey. The first illustration is that of the believer being the "fragrance and aroma" of Christ, and the second depicts the believer as "an epistle" that when read, it reflects Christ.

**FRAGRANCE...
AROMA...**



14 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. *manifests*
 15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. [2 Cor. 4:3]
 16 To the one we are the aroma of death to death, and to the other the aroma of life to life. And who is sufficient for these things?
 17 For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ. 2 Pet. 2:3 • adulterating for gain • 2 Cor. 1:12

**AN EPISTLE...
(LETTER)
KNOWN
AND READ
BY ALL MEN...**



Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you?
 2 You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men.
 3 you are manifestly an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.
 4 And we have such trust through Christ toward God.
 5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God,
 6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

2 Cor. 2:14-3:-6

Paul chooses two practical illustrations to which we can easily relate to. One is likening Christianity to what we can smell with our noses and the other illustration likens it to what we can read with our own eyes. The reason Paul uses such plain illustrations is to drill home the point that our witness for the most part is to unbelievers that still abide in darkness. They need tangible, visible means to be impacted. It does not get any more simple than what we can smell with our noses and see with our eyes.



We all know that life in the natural realm consists of a mixture of things that smell good and things that smell bad, some very bad! Here is a contrast of examples:

FRAGRANCE...
AROMA...



WITNESSES

**PERFUME...
THANKSGIVING
TURKEY...
FRESH AIR...
FRESH BREAD...
FRESH FLOWERS...
FRESHLY BREWED
COFFEE...**

**SMELLS
GOOD**

FRAGRANCE...
AROMA...



WITNESSES

**BAD BREATH...
DIRTY DIAPERS...
WET TENNIS
SHOES...
CIGARETTE ODOR
ROTTEN GARBAGE
SKUNK ODOR...
WASTE
TREATMENT
PLANTS...**

**SMELLS
BAD**

We know all too well that we are turned on by things that smell good, but we are turned off by things that smell bad. No one lingers in the presence of bad smells. How does our witnessing smell to others?



**"THROUGH US DIFFUSES
THE FRAGRANCE OF HIS
KNOWLEDGE IN EVERY
PLACE...WE ARE TO GOD
THE FRAGRANCE OF
CHRIST AMONG THOSE
WHO ARE BEING SAVED
AND AMONG THOSE
WHO ARE PERISHING. TO
THE ONE WE ARE THE
AROMA OF DEATH TO
DEATH, AND THE OTHER
THE AROMA OF LIFE
TO LIFE..."**

2 Cor. 2:14-15

**"DEAD FLIES
PUTREFY
THE PERFUMER'S
OINTMENT,
AND CAUSE IT TO GIVE
OFF
A FOUL ODOR;
SO DOES
A LITTLE FOLLY
(GIVE OFF A FOUL ODOR)
TO ONE RESPECTED
FOR WISDOM
AND
HONOR."**

Ecc. 10:1-2



Let me stress the point that we may speak words as a witness that are perfect, but it may be our actions that make what we say ineffective. How we live is such an important part of witnessing. The point can be made by considering two of the ten commandments:

**THE THIRD
COMMANDMENT:**

**"YOU SHALL
NOT
TAKE
THE NAME
OF
THE LORD
YOUR GOD
IN VAIN..."**

EX. 20:7

**THE NINTH
COMMANDMENT:**

**"YOU SHALL
NOT
BEAR
FALSE
WITNESS
AGAINST
YOUR
NEIGHBOR."**

EX. 20:16

Taking the name of the Lord in vain has nothing to do with using the Lord's name in profanity. Rather it speaks of those who name the name of the Lord (such as Christian), but do not live in such a way that brings honor to that name. This individual has received the name of the Lord in vain, in a useless, non-productive manner. This is why Paul exhorts, "...let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19).

It is quite possible to say I am a Christian, but not live like it. I have taken His name in vain.

**FAILURE TO BE A GOOD
DISCIPLE
OF CHRIST**

**"YOU SHALL
NOT
TAKE
THE NAME
OF
THE LORD
YOUR GOD
IN VAIN..."**

EX. 20:7

**FAILURE TO BE A GOOD
WITNESS
TO CHRIST**

**"YOU SHALL
NOT
BEAR
FALSE
WITNESS
AGAINST
YOUR
NEIGHBOR."**

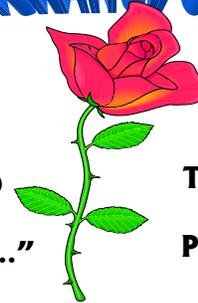
EX. 20:16

In doing so, I can also break the spirit of the ninth commandment. My witness as a lifestyle is a false one in spite of my correct words. The Pharisees responded to Jesus with the question, "Who is my neighbor?" The word means "those close to you." These are the people who know us best. If you are going to be a good witness for Christ, you must also be a good disciple of Christ. We must not take the name of the Lord in vain nor bear a false witness by living differently than what we speak. This is hypocrisy which God hates.

We do not just witness to those who are perishing, but also to those who are being saved (2 Cor. 2:15).

According to Paul, we are the aroma of "death to death" to the brethren and we are the aroma of "life to life" to the lost. This is a paradox to say the least! However, it is truth. We witness to believers in a different way than to unbelievers. We represent "death" to the believer and "life" to the unbeliever. The thrust of Scriptures support this concept. Here are a few examples:

**"FOR WE ARE TO GOD
THE FRAGRANCE OF CHRIST"**



**"AMONG
THOSE WHO
ARE
BEING SAVED..."**

**"AMONG
THOSE WHO
ARE
PERISHING."**

**TO THE ONE WE ARE THE AROMA OF DEATH TO DEATH,
AND THE OTHER THE AROMA OF LIFE TO LIFE..."**
2 Cor. 2:14-15

**THE AROMA OF
"DEATH
to
DEATH"**

"I DIE DAILY"
1 Cor. 15:31

**"RECKON
YOURSELVES TO
BE
DEAD INDEED
TO SIN,
BUT ALIVE
TO GOD
IN CHRIST JESUS
OUR LORD."**
Rom. 6:11

**"AMONG
THOSE WHO
ARE BEING
SAVED..."**

**THE AROMA OF
"LIFE
to
LIFE"**

**"I HAVE BEEN CRUCIFIED
WITH CHRIST,
IT IS NO LONGER I WHO LIVE,
BUT CHRIST LIVES IN ME,
AND THE LIFE WHICH
I NOW LIVE IN THE FLESH
I LIVE BY FAITH
IN THE SON OF GOD,
WHO LOVED ME
AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME."**
Gal. 2:20

**"THE THIEF DOES NOT COME
EXCEPT TO STEAL, AND TO
KILL, AND TO DESTROY.
I HAVE COME
THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE,
AND THAT THEY MAY HAVE IT
MORE ABUNDANTLY."**
John 10:10

**"AMONG
THOSE WHO
ARE
PERISHING."**

Are you beginning to see that witnessing encompasses much more than giving out a simple tract containing the "Roman Road to Salvation" or "God's Four Spiritual Laws"? Such literature is helpful, but it is not all-inclusive. Mahatma Gandhi was looking for more, and so are all sincere seekers of truth. People watch what you do as well as listen to what you say.

There is another means by which we can grasp the depth of being a witness for Christ. Consider this:

**"...AND YOU SHALL BE WITNESSES TO ME..." Acts 1:8
(Greek-"Martus"
3144 Strong's Concordance)**

The word translated as "witness" is also rendered in other places as "martyr." To be a witness for Christ is to be a martyr for Christ. We saw that Christ Himself was a witness, and we also know that He suffered a martyr's death. God never asks of His people what He has not done Himself. Perhaps God may not ask of all of us to die for Him as a martyr (witness). However, He certainly is asking of all of us to be a "living martyr" for Him. That is ongoing discipleship, being a living martyr (witness) for Jesus. It is significant to note that the martyr's crown is promised to those who live for Christ as well as those who die for Him:

**"...BE FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH
AND I WILL GIVE YOU
THE CROWN OF LIFE."**
Rev. 2:10

**"...BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO ENDURES TEMPTATION;
FOR WHEN HE HAS BEEN PROVED, HE WILL RECEIVE
THE CROWN OF LIFE
WHICH THE LORD HAS PROMISED TO THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."**
James 1:12

AN EPISTLE... (LETTER)

KNOWN AND READ BY ALL MEN...



Paul's second illustration in this "creed of a witness" from 2 Corinthians portrays what Christianity is to be like, which is of being an "epistle of Christ" that is capable of being "known and read by all men."

Perhaps you have heard people under public scrutiny use the phrase, "we are an open book" in trying to convey sincerity and integrity. What they are saying is, "we have nothing to hide or conceal."



Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you?

2 You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men;

3 you are manifestly an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.

4 And we have such trust through Christ toward God.

5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God,

6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

2 Cor. 3:1-6.



**"...YOU ARE OUR EPISTLE...KNOWN AND READ BY ALL MEN;
YOU ARE MANIFESTLY AND EPISTLE OF CHRIST...
WRITTEN NOT WITH INK
BUT BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD,
NOT ON TABLETS OF STONE BUT ON TABLETS OF FLESH,
THAT IS, OF THE HEART."**

2 Cor. 3:2-3

We must not quickly gloss over what is written above, for the magnitude of what is being said about God's intention for the Spirit-led believer in Christ is mind-boggling truth!

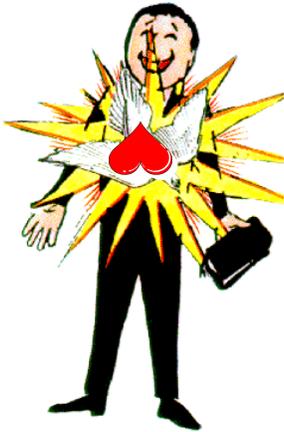
We know that the Spirit authored the Word of God (2 Pet. 1:21).

We know that "all Scripture is inspired by God" (2 Tim. 3:16).

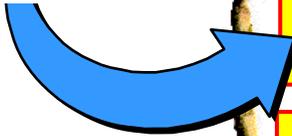
We know that God Himself etched the Ten Commandments on stone and gave them to Moses for His people (Ex. 24:12).

But now there is a promise of a great new thing that God intends to perform. He will make the Spirit-led believer to become an "epistle of Christ" that will be written by the same Spirit who authored the Word of God.

This will not be an epistle written with ink, such as given to the apostle Paul on many occasions, nor will it be etched on tablets of stone, but rather it will take place upon a living, walking, talking epistle that has God's Word written on the fleshly tablets of the heart!



"...YOU ARE OUR EPISTLE... KNOWN AND READ BY ALL MEN; YOU ARE MANIFESTLY AND EPISTLE OF CHRIST... WRITTEN NOT WITH INK BUT BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD, NOT ON TABLETS OF STONE BUT ON TABLETS OF FLESH, THAT IS, OF THE HEART." 2 Cor. 3:2-3



What Paul states in 2 Corinthians 3:2-3 is merely an elaboration of what is recorded in one of the three terms of the New Covenant found in Hebrews 8:10-12. The epistle of Hebrews states simply that God's intention is to "...put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts..." Paul, in 2 Corinthians 3:2-3, is filling in the details as to how this term of the covenant will be accomplished. It will take place by the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the lives of submitted believers who choose to become disciples in order to be effective witnesses.

Let me emphasize once more that witnessing does not begin with words, but rather with deeds. Effective witnessing flows out of who we are, not merely out of what we say. It is my firm conviction that effective witnessing flows out of discipleship. These two passages will support that concept:

TRUE AND FAITHFUL DISCIPLES



MAKE TRUE AND FAITHFUL WITNESSES

We walk it before we talk it. Both of these passages clearly state that witnessing takes place by ANSWERING the inquiry made by the unbeliever.

They see something-they ask something.
They don't see anything-they don't ask anything.

We ought to know how we are to "answer each one," and we are to be ready to give a defense to everyone "who asks you" for a reason of the hope that is within you.

"WALK IN WISDOM TOWARD THOSE WHO ARE OUTSIDE, REDEEMING THE TIME. LET YOUR SPEECH ALWAYS BE WITH GRACE, SEASONED WITH SALT, THAT YOU MAY KNOW HOW YOU OUGHT TO ANSWER EACH ONE."

Col. 4:5-6

"SANCTIFY THE LORD GOD IN YOUR HEARTS, AND ALWAYS BE READY TO GIVE A DEFENSE TO EVERYONE WHO ASKS YOU A REASON OF THE HOPE THAT IS WITHIN YOU, WITH MEEKNESS AND FEAR."

1 Pet. 3:15



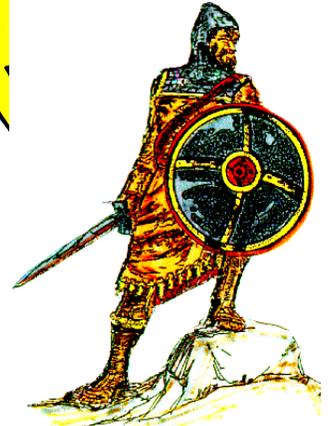
~ AUGUST 2008 NEWSLETTER ~

THE PRIORITY OF BECOMING A SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST

**"BUT YOU O MAN OF GOD...
FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH..."** 1 Tim. 6:11-12

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

**NO ONE ENGAGED IN WARFARE ENTANGLES HIMSELF
WITH THE AFFAIRS OF THIS LIFE, THAT HE MAY PLEASE HIM WHO
ENLISTED HIM AS A SOLDIER."** 2 Tim. 2:3-4



To use a popular phrase to summarize the above passages of Scripture, "Them's fightin' words!" Yes, they are. However, we must properly define what is really meant by them. In a country steeped in the patriotic philosophy of "God and country," multitudes of American Christians think they know what "fighting the good fight of faith" is all about. After all, we have done it through two World Wars. In spiritual ignorance Christians have embraced the songwriter's bad theological mix of, "Praise God, and pass the ammunition!" However, such religiously-inspired patriotic enthusiasm has not been limited to Christians in America. Consider the so-called divine inspiration by which the majority of Christian Germans were duped twice, in two World Wars, into goose-stepping across Europe with their destructive war machines:

"GOD WITH US"

banner



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

"GOD WITH US"

Nazi belt buckle



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

Pertaining to the subject of war, I am reminded of what Jesus said about the poor, "For you have the poor with you always" (Matt. 26:11). Not only do we have the poor with us always, but we have war with us always. Earthly kingdoms fight earthly wars one with another and will continue to do so until the Lord Jesus Christ establishes His Kingdom on earth during His Millennial reign. Only then shall it come to pass, "...they shall learn war no more" (Isa.2:4).

However, this is a future dispensation that is not applicable to this present time. Right now, His Kingdom is "not of this world."

Here is the foundational truth that Jesus established 2,000 years ago at His first coming and remains in effect until His second coming. Inbetween His first and second coming, this foundational principle is to govern the actions of His people on earth pertaining to all earthly kingdoms: →

This foundational truth Jesus expresses must become the basis for understanding the true meaning for "fighting the good fight of faith," for "enduring hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," and for "pleasing Him who enlisted us as a soldier." The warfare of which Paul speaks that the Christian soldier is engaged in cannot be the kind of war found in earthly kingdoms warring with one another, for these must be classified as "the affairs of this life" which Paul forbids the believer from becoming entangled with. Think about this: Paul said of his own life, "I have fought the good fight..." (2 Tim. 4:7). Paul was a Roman citizen, was he not? Did he fight in any earthly war as a good citizen of Rome? Ridiculous thought, isn't it? Yet, he "fought the good fight of faith," so it obviously refers to something other than participation in patriotic wars of an earthly kingdom with another earthly kingdom.

How does Satan seduce God's people to become "entangled in the affairs of this life?" He adds the "God with us" factor. He did so with Christians in Germany, and sadly, he is also doing the same with much of American Christianity. American Christians, like Paul, are also citizens of an earthly kingdom. Paul ignored his earthly citizenship in favor of his heavenly one (Phil. 3:20), but most American Christians give high priority to their earthly citizenship over their heavenly one due to the whole-hearted endorsement of the "God with us" factor. By embracing the "One Nation Under God" and "God and country" philosophies, we too, like the Germans, have become duped into becoming entangled in the affairs of this life. After all, God has chosen us as a nation destined to be different from all other nations, hasn't He? This is deception! America is not the New Israel of God as the Puritans taught. No nation on earth has replaced Israel's role in God's sight, including America:

"HE DECLARES HIS WORD...HIS STATUTES... HIS JUDGMENTS TO ISRAEL. HE HAS NOT DEALT THUS WITH ANY NATION..." Psm. 147:19-20

"FOR THE LORD HAS CHOSEN JACOB FOR HIMSELF, ISRAEL FOR HIS SPECIAL TREASURE." Psm.135:4

Rather than accepting what is plainly stated in God's Word, Christians are filling their heads with high-minded, theological fantasy about America's God-given role such as is espoused in this popular, but very unbiblical book:

"...THE PURITANS SAW THEMSELVES AS CALLED INTO THEIR NEW PROMISE LAND IN ORDER TO FOUND A NEW ISRAEL, WHICH WOULD BE A LIGHT TO THE WHOLE WORLD... A CITY SET UPON A HILL. THE PURITANS UNDERSTOOD NEW ENGLAND TO BE A TYPE AND EMBLEM OF NEW JERUSALEM... A MODEL OF THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST UPON EARTH... LIVING PROOF TO THE REST OF THE WORLD...THE STAGE FOR A NEW ACT IN THE DRAMA OF MANKIND'S REDEMPTION... WE AMERICANS, WERE MEANT TO BE A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES... A DEMONSTRATION TO THE WORLD..." (Excerpts from *The Light and the Glory*- Peter Marshall)

The above erroneous Puritan philosophy is the foundation for the pie-in-the-sky ideology of America being "One Nation under God." This Puritan error is the underlying foundation for the present political obsession that American Christians have with the affairs of the earthly kingdom of America. I suggest strongly that you look up these three revealing articles on my website under "Classic Newsletters" (PastorRandyShupe.com)

"THE PURITAN WAY VS. THE PILGRIM WAY"

"THE OXYMORON OF MIXING POLITICS AND RELIGION"

AMERICA IN THE SIGHT OF GOD: NEW ISRAEL OR NEW ROME?"

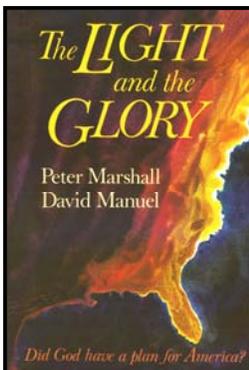
"BUT YOU O MAN OF GOD... FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH..."
1 Tim. 6:11-12

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

NO ONE ENGAGED IN WARFARE ENTANGLES HIMSELF WITH THE AFFAIRS OF THIS LIFE, THAT HE MAY PLEASE HIM WHO ENLISTED HIM AS A SOLDIER."
2 Tim. 2:3-4



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



"THEN THE DEVIL, TAKING HIM UP ON A HIGH MOUNTAIN, SHOWED HIM ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD IN A MOMENT OF TIME. AND THE DEVIL SAID TO HIM, 'ALL THIS AUTHORITY I WILL GIVE YOU, AND THEIR GLORY; FOR THIS HAS BEEN DELIVERED TO ME, AND I GIVE IT TO WHOMEVER I WISH. THEREFORE, IF YOU WILL WORSHIP BEFORE ME, ALL WILL BE YOURS.'" Luke 4:5-7



"God With Us"



As Christians, we have no problem with Satan having such delegated authority over all of history's secular, pagan, murderous, horrific nations that have been, and still exist on the face of the earth. However, most Christians will have problems believing America is included in "all the kingdoms of this world." After all, isn't America "God's New Israel" (as the Puritans called it) and the only "One Nation Under God," and the only nation bold enough to proclaim, "In God We Trust," all over its money and its buildings! "Certainly Germany was duped by the **"God With Us"** factor,

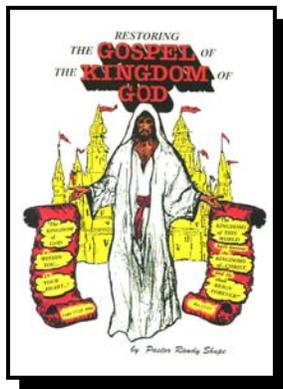
"God With Us"



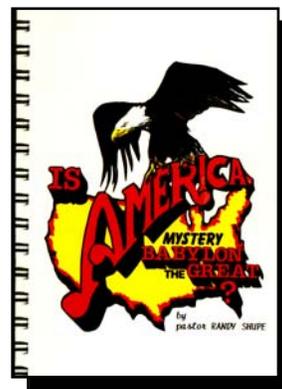
but not America, we think we are the real deal! But are we?

That is a question worth researching. I do not believe Satan has a greater deceptive force on earth than that of using a sanctimonious, religious covering of God's approval for what Satan himself is orchestrating on earth. I am going to suggest that you consider the contents of these various works which I have written over the last 15 years to help you answer that vital question:

All three of these books deal with Satan's subtle substitutes for the real spiritual Kingdom of God that is functioning on the earth under the sovereign headship of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ! Not a physical, geographical nation is this spiritual kingdom, but rather one that exists in the hearts of God's kingdom citizens scattered over the whole face of the earth in every nation on earth.



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There is no earthly kingdom that God has ordained to be His "New Israel." The Puritans fell for Satan's subtle substitute of America, an earthly kingdom, becoming a physical manifestation of God's Kingdom on earth, and so are many American Christians doing in their futile attempt to seize "back" America for God.

We are told by Jesus to, "seek first the Kingdom of God..." (Matt. 6:33). He also has plainly stated, "My Kingdom is not of this world...if My Kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight..." (Jn.18:36). Why then, dear Christian, is so much effort being placed on fighting for possession and control of this earthly kingdom? What are we doing for the real Kingdom of God?

“ AND FROM THE DAYS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST UNTIL THE PRESENT TIME, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN HAS ENDURED VIOLENT ASSAULT, AND VIOLENT MEN SEIZE IT BY FORCE [AS A PRECIOUS PRIZE--A SHARE IN THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM IS SOUGHT WITH MOST ARDENT ZEAL AND INTENSE EXERTION].” Matt 11:12 Amp.

It is imperative that we seize the right kingdom. It is not the Puritan one that says America has been commissioned to be God's "New Israel" on earth which modern-day Christians should set their hearts upon. Think this thing through! If the Puritans were right, where does that place our brothers and sisters throughout the whole world who cannot be part of this literal, physical "new" kingdom of God? If America is God's "New Israel" then why does prophecy continue to predict that Jesus Christ is going to set His feet down on Mt. Olivet in "old Israel" and rule and reign out of Jerusalem for 1,000 years? Should He not rather set His feet down on Mt. Hood in America, His "New Israel" and reign out of Washington D.C.? This is as erroneous theology as the Roman Catholic view that "St. Peter's Square" has become the center of God's Kingdom on earth. Jesus is not going to rule and reign from the Pope's throne in Rome either. Jesus gave us clear warning about such nonsense:

“NOW WHEN HE WAS ASKED BY THE PHARISEES WHEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD WOULD COME, HE ANSWERED THEM AND SAID, ‘THE KINGDOM OF GOD DOES NOT COME WITH OBSERVATION; NOR WILL THEY SAY, ‘SEE HERE!’ OR ‘SEE THERE!’ FOR INDEED, THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU.” Luke 17:20-21

It saddens the heart of this teacher of God's Word to see how obsessed American Christians have become with this visible, tangible earthly kingdom of America as if the Puritans were right in their analogy:

“...THE PURITANS SAW THEMSELVES AS CALLED INTO THEIR NEW PROMISE LAND IN ORDER TO FOUND A NEW ISRAEL, WHICH WOULD BE A LIGHT TO THE WHOLE WORLD... A CITY SET UPON A HILL. THE PURITANS UNDERSTOOD NEW ENGLAND TO BE A TYPE AND EMBLEM OF NEW JERUSALEM... A MODEL OF THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST UPON EARTH... LIVING PROOF TO THE REST OF THE WORLD...THE STAGE FOR A NEW ACT IN THE DRAMA OF MANKIND'S REDEMPTION... WE AMERICANS, WERE MEANT TO BE A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES...A DEMONSTRATION TO THE WORLD...” (Excerpts from The Light and the Glory- Peter Marshall)

Christians are being fed a steady diet that America is slowly slipping away from its God-given calling and therefore it is the responsibility of every Christian to be politically involved in restoring the Puritan mission. Birthed out of this false mission of restoration are a multitude of religious causes such as the anti-abortion, anti-pornography, anti-gay marriage, etc. Such activity is viewed as "fighting the good fight of faith."

Then there is also the fierce battle by the Religious Right conservatives to be the main force in American politics so that the moral values God gave to Christians may be legislated upon the un-regenerate populace apart from the new-birth experience. Who needs the gospel? What is needed are Christian judges on the Supreme Court to carry out the enforcement of God's laws on the unwilling. Who needs the gospel? What is needed is a Christian President to rule the roost. By the way, who are you going to vote for this election year, dear Politically-minded Christian? Even James Dobson, in utter frustration, has stated that this might be the first year that he does not vote, although in the last election he broadcast the message that it would be sin against God if a Christian did not vote. This kind of sand theology sinks quickly when one must choose between the lesser of two evils (not-conservative-enough candidates.) Let go of such ideology! Christian morality does not come by means of the vote! This line of self-righteous reasoning is hypocrisy! Could you obey God apart from first becoming born-again? How then can the un-regenerate? Can anyone obey God's commandments apart from the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit? Paul answers that position of folly:

“I DO NOT SET ASIDE THE GRACE OF GOD; FOR IF RIGHTEOUSNESS COMES THROUGH THE LAW, THEN CHRIST DIED IN VAIN.” Gal. 2:21

The "Great Commission" has become the great omission. Note how it begins:

“GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL THE NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU...” Matt.28:19-20

The great omission that politically-based Christians are making in America is the leaving out of verse 19 of the Great Commission, "Go...make disciples...baptizing them..." That is the prerequisite mandate of the new birth! We rather find a hypocritical preference in the political brand of Christianity by beginning their gospel message with verse 20, "teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you." Genuine conversion must take place prior to teaching the observation of God's commandments. "Thou shall not murder" is God's commandment to His people. So are His laws dealing with homosexuality! The laws of God are for the people of God! We would have more people of God if we preached the first half of the Great Commission before we preached the second half to obey God's commandments. Prayer in the schools and the placement of the Ten Commandments outside of governmental buildings is more of the Puritan error. Teach your children to pray as Jesus taught (Matt. 6:5-13). Place the Ten Commandments where the Word of God says they are supposed to be-in your heart! (Heb. 8:10, 2 Cor.3:3).

January began with all the buzz words that typically surround the upcoming elections. This year's buzz word is "change." Want to know how to spell "change"? Each of the six January candidates shown below, has a different idea of what kind of "change" America needs. Their ideas change as often as the Presidency, every eight years or less. That is the way this earthly kingdom functions and is a tip-off that it is not by any means the Kingdom of God as the Puritans so taught. Consider the stark comparisons:

JESUS CHRIST IS
THE SAME
YESTERDAY, TODAY,
AND FOREVER
Heb. 13:8



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

NOT **THE SAME**
EVERY 8 YEARS OR LESS



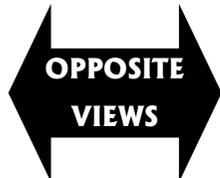
LATEST ADVOCATES OF
CHANGE

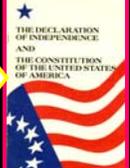
IN GOD'S KINGDOM THE LEADER NEVER CHANGES. NEITHER DO THE LAWS CHANGE THAT GOVERN THE KINGDOM. IN GOD'S KINGDOM IT IS THE PEOPLE THAT ARE TO BE CHANGED BY THE CONSISTENCY OF ITS (PERFECT) LEADERSHIP AND ITS UNCHANGING (PERFECT) LAWS.

WHY? BECAUSE

IN AMERICA'S KINGDOM THE LEADER IS ALWAYS CHANGING. THE LAWS THAT GOVERN THE KINGDOM ARE CONSTANTLY BEING CHANGED BY THE PEOPLE THAT ARE GOVERNED BY THEM. IN THIS EARTHLY KINGDOM THE PEOPLE ARE NOT REQUIRED TO CHANGE, BUT RATHER THEY CHANGE THEIR LEADERS AND LAWS TO SUIT THEMSELVES.

WHY? BECAUSE



<p>THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS A THEOCRACY ("DIVINE RULE")</p>  <p>GOVERNMENT IN WHICH THE WILL OF GOD PREVAILS</p>	<p>NOT THE SAME AUTHOR</p>	<p>AMERICA IS A DEMOCRACY ("SELF-RULE")</p>  <p>GOVERNMENT IN WHICH THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE PREVAILS</p>
<p>THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS A THEOCRACY (GOVERNED BY GOD HIMSELF)</p> <p>"...HE IS THE HEAD..." Col. 1:18</p>		<p>THE "KINGDOM" OF AMERICA IS A DEMOCRACY (PEOPLE GOVERN THEMSELVES)</p>

**THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS BASED UPON SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES:
"RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE AND JOY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT"**
Rom. 14:17



**THE KINGDOM OF AMERICA IS BASED UPON PHYSICAL OBJECTIVES:
"LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS"**
U.S. Constitution

From these few brief comparisons can we continue to believe that these two vastly different kingdom concepts came from the same author, God Himself?

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

Pastor Randy Shupe



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

1 Tim. 6:11-12

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

2 Tim. 2:3

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

2 Tim. 2:4

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

Matt.28:19-20

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

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

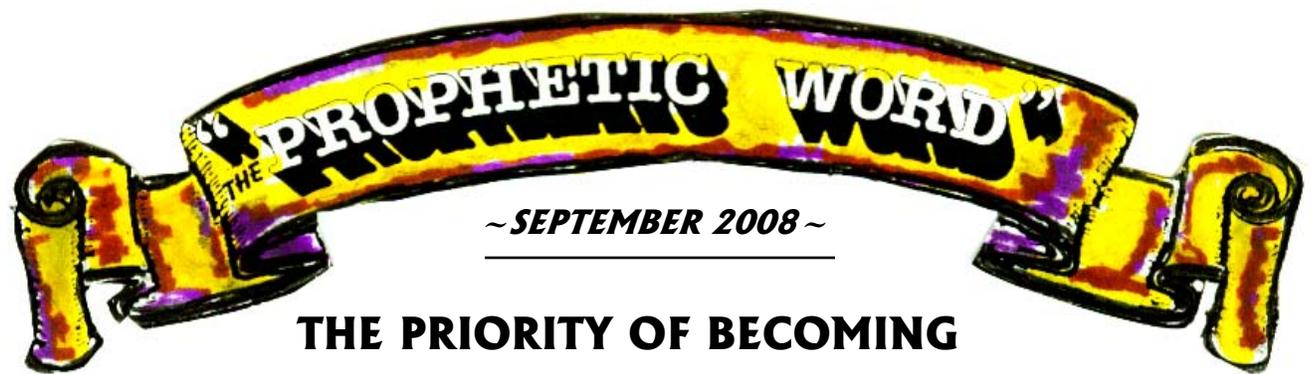
Col. 1:13

The Christian is taken out of all kingdoms of this world, all the ones Satan showed Jesus in a moment of time, including America, and has presently been translated into the Kingdom of the Son of His love. For the believer to have "God with us" it will require embracing the spiritual Kingdom of God as it is revealed and defined in God's Word. God will not be with us, if we substitute an earthly kingdom to expel all of our energy, time and money seeking to capture it for God. That is why Roe vs. Wade still remains in effect thirty-five years and counting, for it has nothing to do with God's Kingdom. Yes, it is murder, but that commandment is to govern the people of God. They killed the children at the anticipation of the first coming of Christ and they will be doing so prior to His second coming. The mandate for believers in America is to rescue Americans, not America! We are to preach the good news of the Kingdom of God into which every born-again believer is thus translated. Its King forever is Jesus. In this Kingdom there are no elections, no voting, the laws are perfect, and so is the Lawgiver, Lord and King, Jesus Christ (Isa. 33:22).

Eventually, this Kingdom will be manifest on earth, first in the Millennium, and then in eternity-for all eternity. You can read about that "New Jerusalem" in Revelation Chapters 21-22. The Puritan's "New Jerusalem," (America) is a poor substitute for the real deal. Let us go for the gold:

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

Matt 11:12 Amp.



~ SEPTEMBER 2008 ~

THE PRIORITY OF BECOMING

STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON THE EARTH

**"BY FAITH HE SOJOURNED IN THE LAND... AS IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY...
FOR HE WAITED FOR THE CITY WHICH HAS FOUNDATIONS,
WHOSE BUILDER AND MAKER IS GOD."** Heb.11:9-10

**"NEVERTHELESS, WE, ACCORDING TO HIS PROMISE,
LOOK FOR A NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH IN WHICH RIGHTEOUSNESS DWELLS."**
2 Pet. 3:13

**"THESE ALL DIED IN FAITH,
NOT HAVING RECEIVED
THE PROMISES,
BUT HAVING SEEN THEM AFAR
OFF, WERE ASSURED OF THEM,
EMBRACED THEM,
AND CONFESSED
THAT THEY WERE
STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS
ON THE EARTH.**

**FOR THOSE WHO SAY SUCH
THINGS DECLARE PLAINLY THAT
THEY SEEK A HOMELAND.
AND TRULY IF THEY HAD CALLED
TO MIND THAT COUNTRY FROM
WHICH THEY HAD COME OUT,
THEY WOULD HAVE HAD
OPPORTUNITY TO RETURN.
BUT NOW THEY DESIRE A BETTER,
THAT IS A HEAVENLY COUNTRY.
THEREFORE GOD IS NOT
ASHAMED TO BE CALLED THEIR
GOD, FOR HE HAS
PREPARED A CITY FOR THEM."**

Heb.11:13-14



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

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

**"FOR WE ARE ALIENS
(STRANGERS) AND
PILGRIMS BEFORE YOU,
AS WERE
ALL OUR FATHERS..."**
1 Chron. 29:15

**"BELOVED, I BEG OF YOU AS
SOJOURNERS AND PILGRIMS,
ABSTAIN FROM FLESHLY
LUSTS WHICH WAR
AGAINST THE SOUL..."**
1 Pet. 2:11-17

The above Scriptures (except one) were written to New Testament believers to establish a visionary, governing philosophy as to how, as born-again believers, we must view our life on this temporal earth. Take the time to ponder them carefully and ask yourself, "Does this biblical, philosophical theme permeate my Christian attitude toward the earthly kingdom in which I presently live, even if it is here in America?"

As the 2008 Presidential election draws near, I believe most Christians in this country are oblivious to the above biblical concepts as to what constitutes a life of faith that is pleasing and acceptable to God. Far too many of God's people are obsessed with the pursuit of a politically-based, earth-bound form of religion that is focused on capturing the soil of men for God rather than the souls of men. This is a subtle substitute of Satan.

If you are presently among the segment of American Christians who believe they have been given by God a different philosophy of life than the Scriptural one on the previous page of "Strangers and Pilgrims," then try filling in some Scriptures (not the Constitution) in the empty spaces below that condone the authorization of that God-given calling to be actively involved in the politics of the earthly kingdom (government) of America:

Chapter and Verse:



Chapter and Verse:

Chapter and Verse:

Chapter and Verse:

Chapter and Verse:



Chapter and Verse:

If you were able to write in a few Scriptures, note that you took them from the Old Testament's commission upon Israel and not from the New Testament's specific commission to the church as the present manifestation of the Kingdom of God. Why so? Because the example of Israel is where the Puritans got their justification of America being birthed as God's new "One Nation Under God," the so-called "New Israel of God":

"...THE PURITANS SAW THEMSELVES AS CALLED INTO THEIR NEW PROMISE LAND IN ORDER TO FOUND A NEW ISRAEL, WHICH WOULD BE A LIGHT TO THE WHOLE WORLD... A CITY SET UPON A HILL. THE PURITANS UNDERSTOOD NEW ENGLAND TO BE A TYPE AND EMBLEM OF NEW JERUSALEM... A MODEL OF THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST UPON EARTH... LIVING PROOF TO THE REST OF THE WORLD... THE STAGE FOR A NEW ACT IN THE DRAMA OF MANKIND'S REDEMPTION... WE AMERICANS, WERE MEANT TO BE A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES... A DEMONSTRATION TO THE WORLD..."
 (Excerpts from The Light and the Glory- Peter Marshall)

Such false claims make the Puritans guilty of what is labeled today as "identity theft." Rather, it is the church (born-again believers) universally located in every nation of the world that is to be "a light to the Gentiles... a demonstration to the world.. for mankind's redemption. It is the message of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, not democracy, that is given to achieve those ambitious goals. The church of Jesus Christ on earth does not have such a commission from God to establish a literal, geographical kingdom on earth, or to turn America into His Kingdom. Dear saints, that is why the New Testament epistles are devoid of any theological,doctrinal support or example for the brand of earthly-minded Christianity that is readily being endorsed in this country.

Paul the apostle, although a devout Jew, was also a Roman citizen by natural birth (Acts 22:28). However, upon becoming a citizen of heaven's Kingdom via the new birth, he proclaimed to all believers (like you and me), "For our citizenship is in heaven..." (Phil. 3:20). Why is this not the confession of the saints today? Do you think Paul would jump on the Christian political bandwagon here in America if he were a naturalized citizen of this modern-day Roman empire? Did he give even the slightest hint in his writings that such behavior would be approved by God as a believer's God-given responsibility as a naturalized citizen in an earthly kingdom? No, he did not! Rather, we find him forsaking his earthly Roman citizenship in favor of his heavenly one! Just compare the foundational principles of the Kingdom of God vs. the kingdom ("government") of America, and note that even God's image of the Spirit as a dove is in stark contrast to America's chosen predator image of the eagle. Shouldn't it bother you that the eagle was also the emblem of the original pagan Roman Empire that persecuted the Jewish people as well as the early Christians? These are not birds of a feather, and neither is this American kingdom the inspiration of God as claimed by the Puritans.



"FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT FOOD AND DRINK, BUT

**RIGHTEOUSNESS
PEACE
AND JOY**

IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"THE INALIENABLE RIGHT TO PURSUE

**LIFE
LIBERTY
HAPPINESS"**

Declaration of Independence



If you need an Old Testament character as an example for modern-day Christianity, then use the one given great emphasis in the chapter of faith (Heb. 11), Abraham. After all, Abraham is called, "The father of us all" (Rom. 4:16). Abraham was "The friend of God" (Jam. 2:23). We are "Abraham's seed" (Gal. 3:29). We are to imitate "the faith of Abraham" (Rom. 4:16-22, Heb. 6:12-15). Look at our opening Scriptures once more, for many of them focus upon the testimony of Abraham as being our prime example of how we are to live in an earthly kingdom as followers of Christ:

"BY FAITH HE (ABRAHAM) SOJOURNED IN THE LAND... AS IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY... FOR HE WAITED FOR THE CITY WHICH HAS FOUNDATIONS, WHOSE BUILDER AND MAKER IS GOD."

Heb.11:9-10

"THESE ALL DIED IN FAITH, NOT HAVING RECEIVED THE PROMISES, BUT HAVING SEEN THEM AFAR OFF, WERE ASSURED OF THEM, EMBRACED THEM, AND CONFESSED THAT THEY WERE STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON THE EARTH.

FOR THOSE WHO SAY SUCH THINGS DECLARE PLAINLY THAT THEY SEEK A HOMELAND. AND TRULY IF THEY HAD CALLED TO MIND THAT COUNTRY FROM WHICH THEY HAD COME OUT, THEY WOULD HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO RETURN. BUT NOW THEY DESIRE A BETTER, THAT IS A HEAVENLY COUNTRY. THEREFORE GOD IS NOT ASHAMED TO BE CALLED THEIR GOD, FOR HE HAS PREPARED A CITY FOR THEM."

Heb.11:13-14



"FOR WE ARE ALIENS (STRANGERS) AND PILGRIMS BEFORE YOU, AS WERE ALL OUR FATHERS..."

1 Chron. 29:15

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

Heb.13:14

"BELOVED, I BEG OF YOU AS SOJOURNERS AND PILGRIMS, ABSTAIN FROM FLESHLY LUSTS WHICH WAR AGAINST THE SOUL..."

1 Pet. 2:11-17

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

Phil. 3:20

"NEVERTHELESS, WE, ACCORDING TO HIS PROMISE, LOOK FOR A NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH IN WHICH RIGHTEOUSNESS DWELLS."

2 Pet. 3:13

STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS

ON THE EARTH

Let me pose some questions that are already answered clearly and plainly in the above verses:

(1) Who is God not ashamed to be called "their God"? Is it those who are waiting for God's city or those who are choosing to be mindful of the country from which God called them out? (2) Which country are we to be mindful of, desirous of; the one from which we were called out, or the "better heavenly country?" (3) Which "city" (country) has foundations whose builder and maker is God? Is it America, that the Puritans claimed is God's "New Israel," His new "One Nation Under God," or is it the city which is to come afterward-in the life which is to come? (4) Where will righteousness dwell, in the halls of Congress by means of the Christian's efforts to legislate morality upon immorality, control the appointment of judges on the Supreme Court, or will such righteousness have to wait for the coming of the "new heavens and new earth?" (5) Where is the citizenship of the believer? Is it here on earth, or is it in heaven?

The answers are quite obvious and yet much of American Christendom manifests a life that is totally opposite of those answers. American Christianity is very mindful of the country from which they were called out and continues to labor hard and fast, mired in the political process of finding an acceptable presidential candidate, as if such activity held all the solutions for the believer in Christ. This misguided fervency stems out of Christian leaders who do look for political solutions to spiritual problems. Consider these two quotes from a well-known politically motivated Christian leader: One statement was made prior to the 2004 elections and the other early on in the 2008 campaign-then you will understand why the average Christian is also very confused:

"ANY CHRISTIAN WHO DOES NOT PARTAKE IN THE ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD PERSONALLY ACCOUNTABLE BY GOD FOR THE EVIL THAT TAKES PLACE IN THIS COUNTRY."

(James Dobson in 2004)

"I CERTAINLY CAN'T VOTE FOR HILLARY CLINTON OR BARACK OBAMA BASED ON THEIR VIRULENTLY ANTI-FAMILY POLICY POSITIONS. IF THESE ARE THE NOMINEES IN NOVEMBER, I SIMPLY WILL NOT CAST A BALLOT FOR PRESIDENT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE.

(James Dobson in 2008)

"ANY CHRISTIAN WHO DOES NOT PARTAKE IN THE ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD PERSONALLY ACCOUNTABLE BY GOD FOR THE EVIL THAT TAKES PLACE IN THIS COUNTRY."

(James Dobson in 2004)

Shakespeare made famous the saying,
"To be, or not to be,
that is the question."

For the Christian we should ponder,
"To vote, or not to vote,
that is the question."

"I CERTAINLY CAN'T VOTE FOR HILLARY CLINTON OR BARACK OBAMA BASED ON THEIR VIRULENTLY ANTI-FAMILY POLICY POSITIONS. IF THESE ARE THE NOMINEES IN NOVEMBER, I SIMPLY WILL NOT CAST A BALLOT FOR PRESIDENT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE."

(James Dobson in 2008)

There is not one shred of evidence to support the claim that God holds the Christian responsible for the evil that is in the land due to failure to vote in earthly elections. The Scriptures state that God holds His own people accountable for their own sins, not the sins of the unconverted heathen in the land:

"IF MY PEOPLE WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME WILL HUMBLE THEMSELVES, AND PRAY AND SEEK MY FACE, AND TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS, THEN I WILL HEAR FROM HEAVEN, AND WILL FORGIVE THEIR SIN AND HEAL THEIR LAND."

2 Chron. 7:14

Those words were written for the Jewish people at the time of the dedication of their Jewish temple in Jerusalem. It is not a mandate for pagan America. However, if you, as followers of Christ in America, want to see God heal this land, then the burden lies upon the Christians in America to live like Christians. The moral laws of God were written for the people of God, not for the heathen. Rather than being obsessed with the self-righteous cause of placing stone-carved images of the Ten Commandments in front of secular, Roman-based pagan government buildings, we the Christians, should focus upon fulfilling the mandate to have them written of the tablets of our hearts:

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

Heb. 8:10



"YOU ARE MANIFESTLY AN EPISTLE OF CHRIST... WRITTEN...BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD, NOT ON TABLETS OF STONE BUT ON THE TABLETS OF... THE HEART ."

2 Cor. 3:2-3

Perhaps the heathen are loathing Christianity because of the hypocrisy they see. Perhaps they rightly cry out, "Physician, heal yourself!" (Luke 4:23). If the divorce rate is as high (or even higher) among Christians as it is among the heathen, why should they care about our "family value issues" being part of the political consideration for picking the best president? Can you blame them for saying, "Why don't you mind your own business?" that's good advice, for our Master taught:

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

I have come to see that much of American Christianity does not understand Jesus' statement about being about His Father's business either. The Father's business is bringing souls into the Kingdom of God. It is not about seizing the soil of men for God. God does not want His people to rescue America. He wants us to rescue Americans from America! As long as believers continue to hold on to the Puritan-based error of America being divinely appointed as the only "One Nation Under God" (God's New Israel"), they will continue to pursue the concept of "restoring" this wayward manifestation of "the Kingdom of God on earth," back to what they believe are God-centered foundations. This unbiblical ideology will never be achieved simply because you cannot bring to restoration something that never existed in the first place. America's foundations are Roman to the core. Its government is a carbon copy of the Roman Empire (see the recommended list of books at the end of this newsletter). God would NEVER pattern a government of His own making after the very secular, pagan-based government that slaughtered Jews and Christians during the time of Christ's first coming. I believe this modern-day Roman empire (America) will be in charge of the world at Christ's Second coming. Continue to pursue political solutions to spiritual problems and you will be in danger of propelling into power the soon-coming Roman Antichrist himself!

Search the Word of God and you will find the government God chooses for His people has always been a THEOCRACY. God is not the author of DEMOCRACY. The Bible begins with, "In the beginning, God...", not with "We the people..." It was such "we the people" thinking that turned an eleven day journey in the wilderness into a forty-year nightmare. It was in the wilderness that democracy was birthed in the rebellious hearts of God's high-minded people:

"ALL THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL MURMURED AGAINST MOSES AND AARON, AND THE WHOLE CONGREGATION SAID TO THEM, 'IF WE HAD ONLY DIED IN THE LAND OF EGYPT...WOULD IT NOT BE BETTER FOR US TO RETURN TO EGYPT? SO THEY SAID TO ONE ANOTHER, 'LET US SELECT A LEADER AND RETURN TO EGYPT!'" Num. 14:2-4

Are we any different in this land today in saying, "Let us elect a leader who will hold our Christian values and lead this country in the ways of God?" How did Christian President George W. Bush do? I don't need to elaborate on that, do I? You cannot be a dedicated Christian leader and be the President of a modern-day Roman Empire! Like the ancient Roman Empire, America is a multi-cultural, multi-religion based society. Much of the population is materialistic, hedonistic and heathenistic and are not about to be governed by strict Christian family values. God gave those values to His people to govern the Kingdom of God that abides in the heart. America is not that Kingdom. Let it go!

When it comes to appointing the world's leaders, the Bible is very specific that it is God Himself who does so. He does not commission it to His people to determine through the voting process. Consider:

"...THE MOST HIGH GOD RULES IN THE KINGDOM OF MEN, AND APPOINTS OVER IT WHOMEVER HE CHOOSES." Dan. 5: 21

"BLESSED BE THE NAME OF GOD FOREVER AND EVER. FOR WISDOM AND MIGHT ARE HIS. AND HE CHANGES THE TIMES AND THE SEASONS; HE REMOVES KINGS AND RAISES UP KINGS..." Dan. 2:20-21

"FOR HIS DOMINION IS AN EVERLASTING DOMINION, AND HIS KINGDOM IS FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION. ALL THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH ARE REPUTED AS NOTHING; HE DOES ACCORDING TO HIS WILL IN THE ARMY OF HEAVEN AND AMONG THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH. NO ONE CAN RESTRAIN HIS HAND..." Dan. 4:34-35

"THE KING'S HEART IS IN THE HAND OF THE LORD, LIKE THE RIVERS OF WATER, HE TURNS IT WHEREVER HE WISHES." Prov. 21:1

"THERE IS NO AUTHORITY EXCEPT FROM GOD, AND THE AUTHORITIES THAT EXIST ARE APPOINTED BY GOD..." Rom. 13:1

"FOR GOD HAS PUT IT INTO THEIR HEARTS TO FULFILL HIS PURPOSE, TO BE OF ONE MIND, AND TO GIVE THEIR KINGDOM TO THE BEAST, UNTIL THE WORDS OF GOD ARE FULFILLED." Rev. 17:17

Perhaps dear Christian, you are ready to cast your vote for the man you think is best fitted to support Christian rule in this earthly kingdom of men, or like James Dobson, perhaps you will sit this one out instead of being forced to choose between the lesser of two evils. However, the man who is going to end up in that office will be placed there by God Himself to fulfill His prophetic purposes for this nation in the last days. You may not share my views, but I am strongly convinced that America is part of Daniel's prophesied last-day Roman Empire that will dominate the world. Is this not the direction that this only-superpower-in-the-world, is headed? Is not America, as the world's only superpower, not already committed to be the policeman of the whole world?

Dear saints, the Tribulation is rapidly approaching and God is preparing the world for it by removing kings and raising up kings! We are not going to vote in a Christian utopia of family values in America while God prepares the rest of the world for the coming Tribulation! Quality leadership is diminishing over the whole earth! It will happen in America also. This is God's hand in preparing for the rise of the world leader, Antichrist. It is God who continues to allow Osama Bin Laden to remain at large. It is God who does not permit the Christian political movement to overturn Roe vs. Wade. Things are not going to get better if we believe prophecy. Remember, the last days will be like those of Noah and Lot! Those were days of great evil, days in which homosexuality prevailed over morality. The infinite God has not commissioned his church to determine who is best fitted to rule in ungodly kingdoms. We are not here to make sure that we maintain our so-called God-given rights to the pursuit of "life, liberty and happiness" while the rest of the world plunges into Hell in a hand-basket! Such man-centered, selfish objectives are not founded in the Word of God for any Christian. Let the church focus on the God-given priorities as they are plainly stated in the Word of God. Leave the election of the rulers of the kingdoms of this world to God. He alone knows what is needed to fulfill His purposes. It should bother Christians in this country greatly that our custom-made brand of self-centered religion is out of sync with what the majority of the Body of Christ is still experiencing throughout the world! Where are the inalienable rights of believers in Russia, China and the Sudan? Isn't God short-changing the majority of the Body of Christ by giving only American Christians such selfish guarantees to pursue life, liberty and happiness?

Voting in an earthly election in a kingdom that clearly is not the Kingdom of God that Jesus preached constitutes "entanglement in the affairs of this life" (2 Tim. 2:4). To insist that it is one's Christian duty to vote is a clear mark that there is little or no understanding of the true Kingdom of God in the heart. I stated this challenge earlier: Upon what biblical foundations does such Christian duty rest? You will be hard pressed to come up with any solid evidence from the Scriptures. These concepts are historically based on false principles such as portrayed in *"The Light and The Glory."* Such Christian duty is the by-product of endorsing constitutionally-based principles that have no support in the Scriptures. The Declaration of Independence stands in direct opposition to many of the principles of God's Word. God could not have inspired both of them. One is a counterfeit. Let me approach this American politically-based theology from a broader perspective. Polls state that three-fourths of Americans claim to be Christian because they were born in a Christian nation. However, physical birth does not make one a Christian. Realistically, perhaps only one-fourth of those professing to be Christians may be truly born-again. I suspect that even this figure is high. However, if that is a realistic number, this would mean that American Christians comprise about 20 percent of the Body of Christ throughout the world. Regardless of the exact percentages, we (true) Christians in this country must face the reality that we do not comprise the majority of the Body of Christ in the world. Christianity did not originate in this country. Here is the point:

**COULD THIS CUSTOM-MADE POLITICALLY-BASED BRAND OF AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY
FUNCTION IN THE BODY OF CHRIST IN THE REST OF THE WORLD?**

Should not Christianity function anywhere in the world? What we espouse as Christianity should also be able to be embraced universally by Christians throughout the world. It will, if it is based upon the stranger and pilgrim mentality derived from the existence of an alternate Kingdom that abides in the heart of the believer rather than placing our trust in what our political involvement in an earthly kingdom can provide. Most of Christendom in the world still lives in the midst of evil, oppressive dictatorships such as the early church experienced at the hands of Nero of Rome. How did the early church live in such an environment? They confessed that they had another King other than Rome's Caesar. They confessed allegiance only to the Kingdom of God. Such confession often cost them their jobs, their possessions and even their lives. There were no exclusive inalienable rights provided by God to protect them. Ponder how Paul describes the persecuted Christians in his day:

**"...YOU ENDURED A GREAT STRUGGLE WITH SUFFERINGS: PARTLY WHILE YOU WERE MADE A SPECTACLE
BOTH BY REPROACHES AND TRIBULATIONS, AND PARTLY WHILE YOU BECAME COMPANIONS OF THOSE WHO
WERE SO TREATED; FOR YOU HAD COMPASSION ON ME IN MY CHAINS,
AND JOYFULLY ACCEPTED THE PLUNDERING OF YOUR GOODS, KNOWING THAT YOU HAVE A BETTER
AND MORE ENDURING POSSESSION FOR YOURSELVES IN HEAVEN."** Heb. 10:32-34

This exhortation of Paul could still be proclaimed today to most of the Body of Christ throughout the world, but not here in America! "Plunder our goods?" We will exercise our inalienable rights and sue! The foundation of American Christianity is rooted in political solutions for what is stated by Paul above. Is it logical that God has done for the 20 percent of American Christianity what He would not do for the 80 percent of the Body of Christ throughout the world? Something is very wrong with this scenario for the Word of God tells us that God is not a respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11 KJV). As a preacher of God's Word here in America, I should be able to take what I have preached in America and preach it in Africa, China, India, Russia – to wherever the Body of Christ abides. If I must alter my message then I am not preaching the truth to Americans. God's truth must be universal, for that is what the Body of Christ is. The call to be strangers and pilgrims on earth is a universal message. The message of the Kingdom of God presently abiding in the heart of the believer is universal truth. Only if I preach that Jesus Christ is King of His Kingdom and that He desires His Kingdom laws to govern our hearts, am I preaching a universal message. Could I preach to them that the solution to their woes is to exercise their Christian duty to elect a Christian president? Too bad God did not give the majority of the Body of Christ democracy and a Bill of Rights to protect them from the evil that is in the world. Look again at this delusional statement from *"The Light And The Glory"*:

"...WE AMERICANS, WERE MEANT TO BE A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES...A DEMONSTRATION TO THE WORLD..."

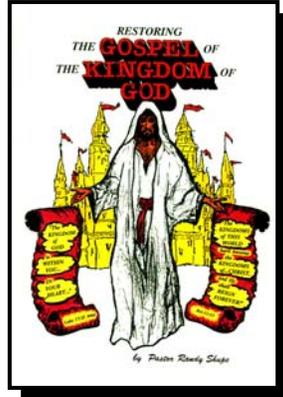
No, we Americans were not! This is the universal commission of the church. American Christians believe that the form of government in this country was divinely given by God. This is delusional thinking birthed by the Puritan theology. It should not matter to Christians who is the President of this country! We are not here to pursue life, liberty and happiness. The early church was not defeated from its commission to reconcile the world to God even by the evil oppressive ruler, Nero of Rome. The more Christians he slaughtered, the more the church grew. All of church history over the last 2,000 years bears the same testimony. Whoever was in power of earthly kingdoms was of no importance to the gospel of the Kingdom of God. This is not accepted thinking in this country among Christians. It matters greatly who is the President, and that is why the emphasis upon the Christian duty to vote. Not to do so is viewed as accountable sin. You won't find that in the Bible!

I am well aware that I have stated some hard things in this brief newsletter. I would like to suggest some in-depth reading material to back up what I have stated to be truth needful for God's people to carefully consider.

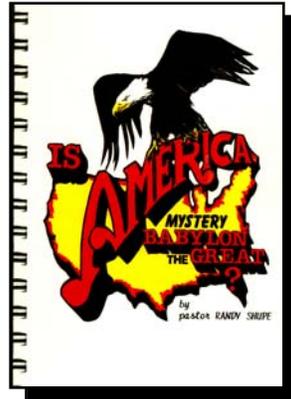
I have written these three books to help you to consider the overwhelming evidence pertaining to America not being what it claims to be, namely, "One Nation Under God."

The fourth book is an out-of-print book (we have re-printed) by a secular historian that debunks the Puritan claim that America is God's "New Israel." He proves rather that it is a "New Rome" fashioned after the ancient Roman Empire. If he is right (and I believe he is), Christians are being sold a bill of goods pertaining to the origin of this country as being divinely inspired by God Almighty as the Puritans claimed.

Also let me suggest the reading of this 16 page article I printed in a previous newsletter:



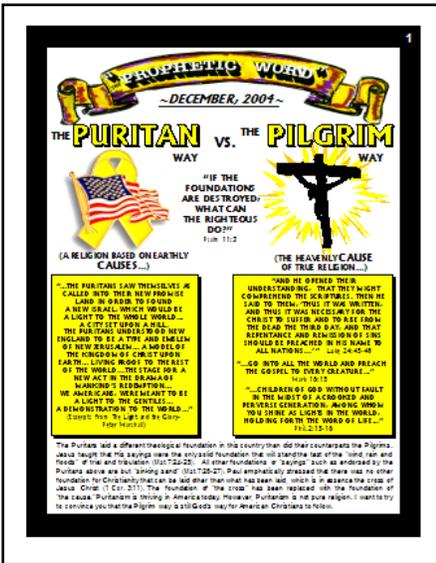
\$ 8.95 ea



\$ 8.95 ea

"The gospel" literally means "good news." Jesus and Paul preached the good news of the Kingdom of God. Modern-day theology has eliminated the core message of the Kingdom of God, reducing it to "you must be born again." There is more to the Kingdom of God than the new birth. This 268 page book calls for the restoration of the message of the Kingdom of God. It deals also with three subtle substitutes that Satan presents for the true Kingdom of God. You will be shocked by what they are! This book emphasizes what is to be the present manifestation of the Kingdom of God in the hearts of God's people.

Could a nation whose cherished motto is "one nation under God," and whose currency bears the declaration "in God we trust," be what the Word of God calls "Mystery Babylon the Great"? This book presents the overwhelming evidence that America is Mystery Babylon. It explores the numerical evidence hidden in the great seal of the United States as well as the historical comparison of ancient Rome and modern-day America. It presents the political evidence of America as the new world order to come. Every follower of Christ should know the hidden identity of Mystery Babylon.



You can read (or copy) this newsletter from our website, "www.PastorRandyShupe.com". It is listed under Newsletters, Classic section. I have made many references to the Puritans in this month's newsletter. This "classic" one will clarify what errors the Puritans were endorsing. These ancient Puritans are the source behind the politically-motivated thrust of Christianity today.

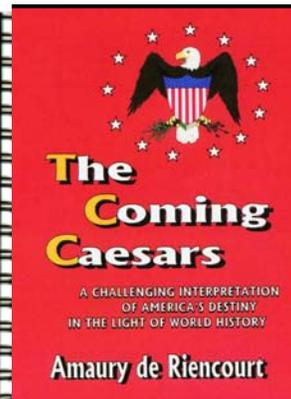


\$ 14.95 ea

This second book about Babylon is my most recent. It updates and greatly expounds on this subject. Babylon is a trinity of kingdoms that have a common denominator. Their roots are immersed in the ancient Roman Empire. They are:

- The United States of America
- The Roman Catholic Church
- And The European Union

Together they will form the last days kingdom of "Mystery Babylon the Great."



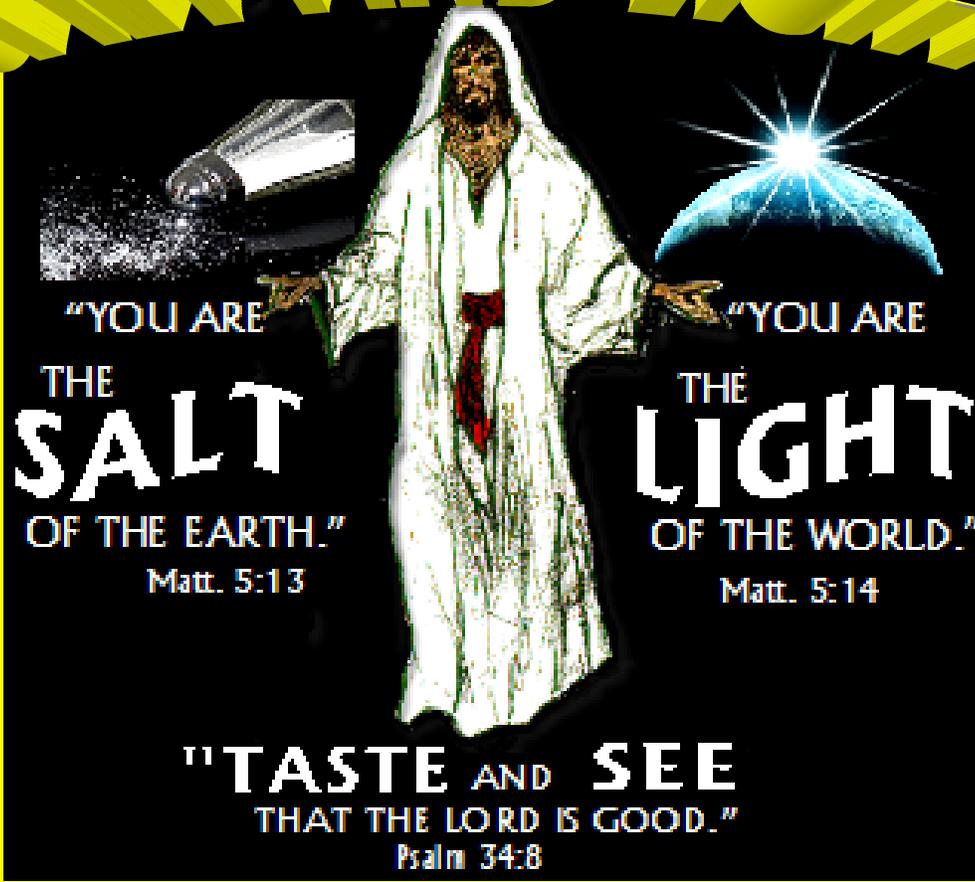
\$ 10.95 ea

This is a secular book written in 1957 by the French historian, Amaury de Riencourt. This book will convince the skeptic that America is not the cherished "New Israel" of the Puritans but rather is a "New Rome" patterned after the ancient Roman Empire. Consider this quote from its contents:

"Our Western world, America and Europe, is threatened with CAESARISM on a scale unknown since the dawn of the Roman Empire (pg.5)...It is IN WASHINGTON and not in London, Paris, or Berlin that the CAESARS OF THE FUTURE WILL ARISE (pg.6).

"PROPHETIC WORD"
 ~ OCTOBER 2008 NEWSLETTER ~

**THE PRIORITY OF BECOMING
 "SALT AND LIGHT"**



**"YOU ARE
 THE
 SALT
 OF THE EARTH."
 Matt. 5:13**

**"YOU ARE
 THE
 LIGHT
 OF THE WORLD."
 Matt. 5:14**

**"TASTE AND SEE
 THAT THE LORD IS GOOD."
 Psalm 34:8**

The invisible God expects the unsaved world to be able to "taste and see" the goodness of Himself by means of His own people on earth fulfilling the dual mandate to become salt ("taste") and light ("see"). This newsletter is dedicated to establishing the importance and meaning of these two priorities in the hearts and minds of God's people. Clear warning is given to Christians who fail to function properly in these areas:

**"YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH;
 BUT IF THE SALT LOSES ITS FLAVOR, HOW SHALL IT BE SEASONED?
 IT IS THEN GOOD FOR NOTHING BUT TO BE THROWN OUT AND TRAMPLED UNDER FOOT BY MEN.
 YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.**

**A CITY THAT IS SET ON A HILL CANNOT BE HIDDEN. NOR DO THEY LIGHT A LAMP
 AND PUT IT UNDER A BASKET, BUT ON A LAMPSTAND, AND IT GIVES LIGHT TO ALL WHO ARE IN THE HOUSE.
 LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN, THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS
 AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN." Matt. 5:13-16**

THE DUALISTIC MANDATE FOR EVERY FOLLOWER OF CHRIST:

 <p>"YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH."</p>  <p>"SALT IS GOOD; BUT IF THE SALT HAS LOST ITS FLAVOR, HOW SHALL IT BE SEASONED? IT IS NEITHER FIT FOR THE LAND NOR FOR THE DUNGHILL, BUT MEN THROW IT OUT. HE WHO HAS EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR!" LUKE 14:34-35</p>	<p>← 1 2 →</p>	<p>"YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. A CITY THAT IS SET ON A HILL CANNOT BE HIDDEN. NOR DO THEY LIGHT A LAMP AND PUT IT UNDER A BASKET, BUT ON A LAMPSTAND, AND IT GIVES LIGHT TO ALL WHO ARE IN THE HOUSE. LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN, THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN." Matt. 5:14-16</p>  <p>"YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD." Matt. 5:14</p>
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Of this dualistic mandate we are readily more familiar and comfortable understanding the call to be "the light of the world" for we know that the Word says, "God is light" (1 Jn. 1:5), but it is not recorded anywhere that "God is salt." We easily understand the application of light representing good and darkness depicting evil (Jn. 3:19-20).

To understand the significance of New Testament believers being "the salt of the earth", we must first consider what God has recorded of the importance of salt in the Old Testament. Consider these references:

COVENANT OF SALT: Num. 18:19 2 Chron.13:5

"ALL THE HEAVE OFFERINGS OF THE HOLY THINGS, WHICH THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL OFFER TO THE LORD, I HAVE GIVEN TO YOU AND TO YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS WITH YOU AS AN ORDINANCE FOREVER; IT IS A COVENANT OF SALT FOREVER BEFORE THE LORD WITH YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS WITH YOU."

"SHOULD YOU NOT KNOW THAT THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL GAVE DOMINION OVER ISRAEL TO DAVID FOREVER, TO HIM AND HIS SONS, BY A COVENANT OF SALT?"

SACRIFICES OF SALT: Lev. 2:13, Ex. 30:35,37

"AND EVERY OFFERING OF YOUR GRAIN OFFERING YOU SHALL SEASON WITH SALT; YOU SHALL NOT ALLOW THE SALT OF THE COVENANT OF YOUR GOD TO BE LACKING FROM YOUR GRAIN OFFERING. WITH ALL YOUR OFFERINGS YOU SHALL OFFER SALT."

"YOU SHALL MAKE OF THESE AN INCENSE, A COMPOUND ACCORDING TO THE ART OF THE PERFUMER, SALTED, PURE AND HOLY...IT SHALL BE TO YOU HOLY FOR THE LORD."

MIRACLE OF SALT: 2 Kings 2:19-22

"THEN THE MEN OF THE CITY SAID TO ELISHA, 'PLEASE NOTICE, THE SITUATION OF THIS CITY IS PLEASANT, AS MY LORD SEES; BUT THE WATER IS BAD, AND THE GROUND BARREN.' AND HE SAID, 'BRING ME A NEW BOWL, AND PUT SALT IN IT.' SO THEY BROUGHT IT TO HIM. THEN HE WENT OUT TO THE SOURCE OF THE WATER, AND CAST IN THE SALT THERE, AND SAID, 'THUS SAYS THE LORD: 'I HAVE HEALED THIS WATER; AND THERE SHALL BE NO MORE DEATH OR BARRENNESS.' SO THE WATER REMAINS HEALED TO THIS DAY..."

Although the Scripture does not explain why God chose salt as the basis of His covenants and holy offerings, we can see clearly that there is a significant emphasis to salt being used by God in His interactions with man. I believe this quotation from an encyclopedia sheds some light on why salt might have been chosen by God:

"Salt cannot be burned or destroyed. Perhaps because of salt's durability, God used it as a metaphor to indicate that as salt keeps its flavor, so the Lord's covenant with the priesthood was durable. More likely, however, is that the "covenant of salt" refers to a practice that rendered contracts irrevocable during the time period in which the Bible was written. In biblical times, men carried pouches of salt on their belts. When a pact, promise, or contract was made, the men from each of the participating parties would intermingle the salt from their own pouches with the salt from the pouches of the other party. This reminded the men that they could not retrieve their own salt from the other pouch, symbolizing the fact that they could not go back on their word... In 2 Chron. 13:5, salt refers to God's irrevocable pledge and intended loyalty in fulfilling the Davidic covenant and God's desire for the loyalty of David's lineage to Him if the people are to enjoy the blessings of the covenant. The preservative quality of salt represents the fidelity or loyalty intended in keeping the covenant."

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Let us consider some interesting facts about salt: It was once so scarce and precious that it was used as money. Caesar's soldiers received part of their pay in common salt. This was known as "salarium" from which the word "salary" comes. In the days when workers were paid their wages in salt, the still often-used expression "he is not worth his salt", meant a person was not working hard enough to earn his wages.

What did Jesus have in mind when He made this statement:

"YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH; BUT IF THE SALT LOSES ITS FLAVOR, HOW WILL IT BE SEASONED? IT IS GOOD FOR NOTHING BUT TO BE THROWN OUT AND TRAMPLED UNDERFOOT BY MEN." Mat. 5:13

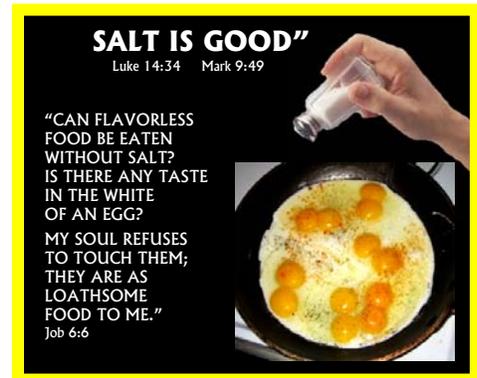
Salt that had lost its flavor was used to build Rome's great networks of roads. Roman soldiers built one of the great military roads in history, the Via Salaria (Salt Road). Originating from the salt works located at Ostia, it stretched all the way to the city of Rome. Pure salt was precious, but the majority of salt is impure due to other unwanted chemicals and contaminated with imbedded granules of sand. Therefore they built roads with it. Such useless salt was considered "...good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men."

It is noteworthy that salt that has been contaminated loses its strength when subjected to extremes of temperature and climate (especially dampness). The impurities react chemically with the salt and rob it of its savor, making it good for nothing - useless. As "the salt of the earth", believers are surrounded continually by evil and impurity. We function under spiritual "extremes of temperature and climate." This evil can overwhelm anyone if precautions are not taken. The Lord calls the believers "the salt of the earth." Salt is a preservative. If we have salt in us we can preserve a witness to truth. However, we can be corrupted by the surroundings in which we live. Spiritual "salt" is needed to halt corruption in our own lives.

One problem we might have with fully understanding salt from a biblical perspective is that, for us, salt is so common. It's everywhere, it's in everything, and it's relatively cheap. It seems, therefore, an insignificant thing. But for people in biblical times the word "salt" prompted a set of associations that were precise. In addition to being a preservative to halt corruption of meat, salt was a precious seasoning. Consider how Job viewed the value of salt as a seasoning. →
So could it be said of popcorn. Without salt, everyone will attest it is loathsome to eat. (Have you ever tried salt on watermelon-umm good!). So many good foods are enhanced by a proper seasoning with salt. However, we all have experienced the effect of using too much salt. As believers, we can not only be "salt-less" in expressing Christ to others, but we can also be too salty in attempting to fulfill Paul's mandate to "season our conversation with salt":

"WALK IN WISDOM TOWARD THOSE WHO ARE OUTSIDE, REDEEMING THE TIME. LET YOUR SPEECH ALWAYS BE WITH GRACE, SEASONED WITH SALT, THAT YOU MAY KNOW HOW YOU OUGHT TO ANSWER EACH ONE." Col. 4:5-6

God's "Covenant of Salt" in the Old Testament was meant to convey the fidelity or loyalty intended in keeping the covenant, both by God Himself and those with whom the covenant was made. For the most part, such imagery has been lost in the lives of God's people in the New Covenant. Salt is no longer precious or costly. It is cheap-just like much of the presentation of the gospel has become one of "cheap grace" in which Christ does all the dying and suffering while the Christian does all the believing and receiving.



Jesus said, "...Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another" (Mark 9:50). Salt-less Christianity is seen by unbelievers when brethren cannot get along together. It is seen in the fact that divorce among Christians has exceeded that of unbelievers. It is seen when believers practice fornication and adultery, covetousness and greed, just as much as the unbelievers. The only difference is that believers do those same things to the tune of "Amazing Grace."

One more illustration of "salt" is found in the New Testament as a sober warning to all believers. It is the story of Lot's wife. Jesus uses her demise into a pillar of salt as a warning to all Christians who hold dear to self-preservation. Christ used the imagery of the cross to portray what the daily life of a believer will be like:



"IF ANYONE DESIRES TO COME AFTER ME, LET HIM DENY HIMSELF, AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS DAILY, AND FOLLOW ME...FOR WHAT ADVANTAGE IS IT TO A MAN IF HE GAINS THE WHOLE WORLD, AND IS HIMSELF DESTROYED OR LOST?"

Luke 9:23-25

"REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE"

"REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE. WHOEVER SEEKS TO SAVE HIS LIFE WILL LOSE IT, AND WHOEVER LOSES HIS LIFE WILL PRESERVE IT."

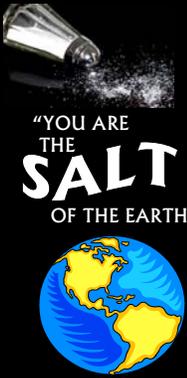
LUKE 17:32-34



Lot's wife looked back in a longing way to the world she was reluctantly being forced to abandon. It looked good to her even though God was about to bring swift judgment upon it for its sinful ways. She became a useless pillar of salt. Keeping this in mind, Jesus warns us all, "Remember Lot's wife." However, in the midst of a very lukewarm church steeped in cheap grace, "take this with a grain of salt." We use this saying today with little understanding of its meaning. If a truth is going down hard, seems difficult to swallow, then take it with a grain of salt to make it taste better.

Let us now look at the second topic of

THE DUALISTIC MANDATE FOR EVERY FOLLOWER OF CHRIST:

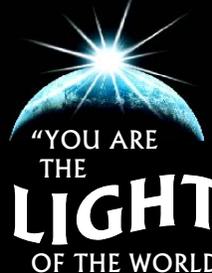


"YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH."

"SALT IS GOOD; BUT IF THE SALT HAS LOST ITS FLAVOR, HOW SHALL IT BE SEASONED? IT IS NEITHER FIT FOR THE LAND NOR FOR THE DUNGHILL, BUT MEN THROW IT OUT. HE WHO HAS EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR!"

LUKE 14:34-35

← 1 2 →



"YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD."

"YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. A CITY THAT IS SET ON A HILL CANNOT BE HIDDEN. NOR DO THEY LIGHT A LAMP AND PUT IT UNDER A BASKET, BUT ON A LAMPSTAND, AND IT GIVES LIGHT TO ALL WHO ARE IN THE HOUSE. LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN, THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN."

Matt. 5:14-16

Again we are going to see Jesus make a contrast of believers. In the first area we saw Him compare "salt" (believers) who had flavor to those who had lost their flavor, becoming useless to God. In this second illustration we will see Jesus comparing "light" (believers) who were set on a hill, lighting the house for all to see good works that glorified God the Father, but to other "light" (believers) who "hid their light under a basket." In other words, they chose rather not to show forth any good works that would glorify God the Father.

Let me remind you of God's objective in this dual mandate:

It is by becoming "the salt of the earth" that believers enable the unbelievers to "taste" that the Lord is good. It is by becoming "the light of the world" that believers enable the unbelievers to "see" that the Lord is good. This is why God wants His people to be "salt and light." We are here to reveal the invisible God to

"...THOSE WHO ARE PERISHING... WHOSE MINDS THE GOD OF THIS AGE HAS BLINDED, WHO DO NOT BELIEVE..."

(2 Cor. 4:3-4)



"YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH." Matt. 5:13

"YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD." Matt. 5:14

"TASTE AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS GOOD."

Psalms 34:8

**"GOD
IS
LOVE"**

1 John 4:16

Don't you just love how simplistic the Scriptures can be at times? Here are two statements about God: "God is Love" and "God is light." We tend to favor "God is love" because we have love clearly illustrated for us in Paul's "love Chapter", 1 Cor. 13. Let us see if we can define as clearly what it means for God to be compared to light.

**"GOD
IS
LIGHT"**

1 John 1:5

**"LET THERE
BE
LIGHT!"**

Genesis 1:3

The subject of light permeates the Scriptures throughout. God opens the Word by stating in Genesis, "Let there be light!" (Gen. 1:3) Note that He also closes the Scriptures with the illustration that Jesus Christ will replace the need of the sun in eternity with the phrase, "They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord gives them light." (Rev. 22:5). The SON replaces the SUN!

**"FOR
THE LORD
GIVES
THEM LIGHT."**

Revelation 22:5

**"YOU ARE
CLOTHED WITH
HONOR AND MAJESTY,
WHO COVER YOURSELF
WITH LIGHT
AS WITH A GARMENT."**

Psalms 104:1-2

Consider these parallel truths from the Old and the New Testaments. God who is light, covers Himself with light like a garment. As King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ dwells in what is called "unapproachable light." The SON is just like the SUN itself. The brilliance of the sun makes it unapproachable. So is God due to His brilliance. However, God records that, in eternity, "They shall see His face" (Rev. 22:4).

**"KING OF KINGS
AND LORD OF LORDS...
DWELLING IN
UNAPPROACHABLE LIGHT,
WHOM NO MAN HAS SEEN..."**

1 Timothy 6:15-16

**"LIGHT HAS COME
INTO THE WORLD,
AND MEN
LOVED DARKNESS
RATHER THAN
THE LIGHT..."**

John 3:19

Now the Scriptures begin to make a transition from what God is as light and what God expects His people to be as "children of light." We who once were in darkness have become light in the Lord and are now commanded to "Walk as children of light." God not only says, "God is light" but goes on to say, "and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 Jn. 1:5). If we continue to "walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth" (1 Jn. 1:6).

**"YOU ONCE
WERE DARKNESS,
BUT NOW YOU ARE
LIGHT IN THE LORD.
WALK AS
CHILDREN OF LIGHT."**

Eph. 5:8

**"I AM
THE LIGHT
OF THE WORLD"**

John 8:12

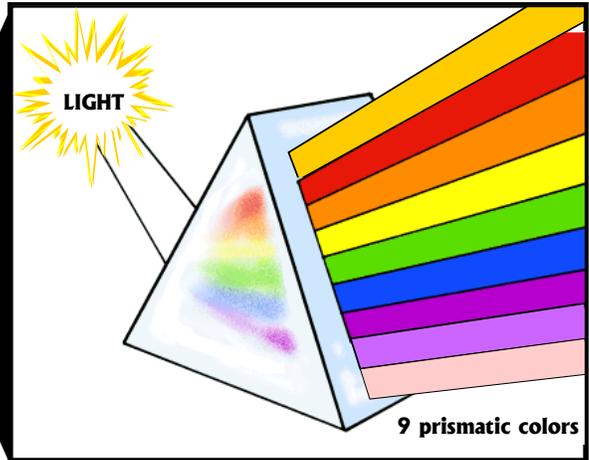
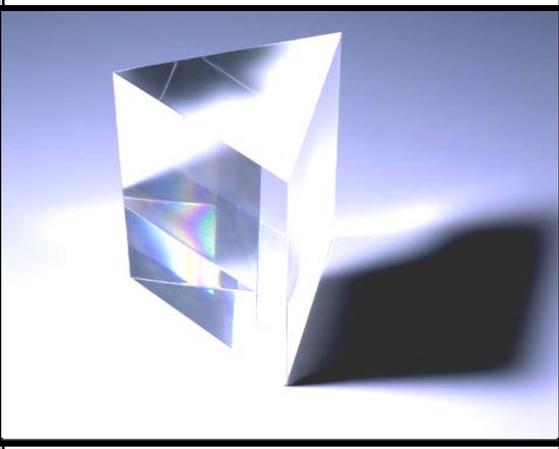
Compare these two inescapable truths: What Jesus Christ is Himself as "the light of the world" has become the divine commission that has now been transferred to His people who live on the face of the earth.

Let us now consider how it is that we believers are to fulfill the mandate given by God to His people to be "the light of the world."

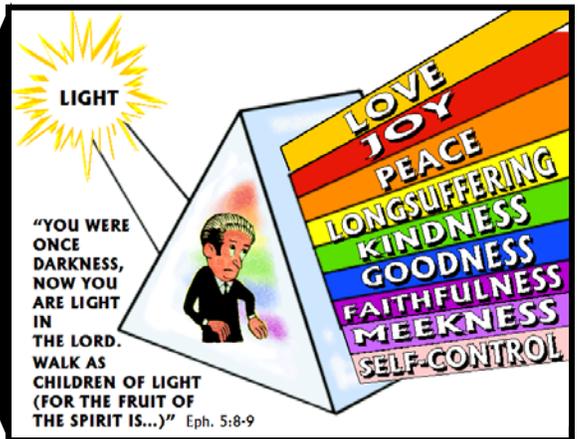
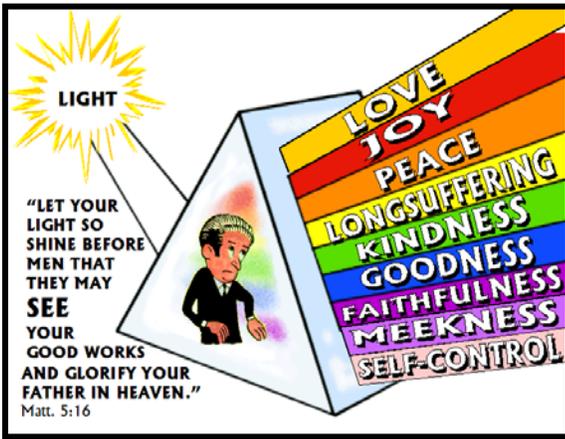
**"YOU ARE
THE LIGHT
OF THE WORLD"**

Matt. 5:14

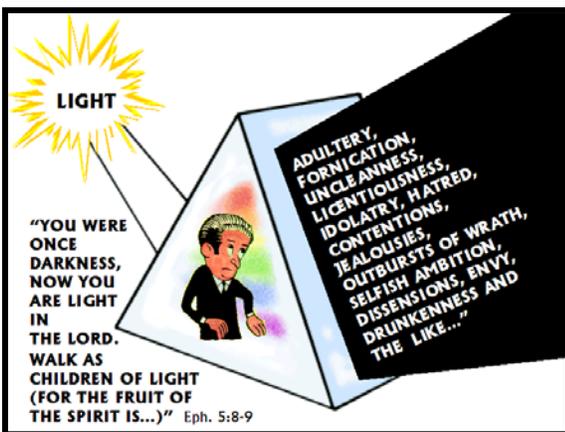
Let us see if we can use a natural illustration to gain spiritual insight as to what it means for God's people to be "the light of the world.". God is invisible due to the fact that He dwells in "unapproachable light" which makes it impossible for Him to be seen (1 Tim. 6:16). So is light in its purest form, invisible. Light illuminates what it falls upon, but light itself, like God, is invisible. However, what comprises light can be seen when it is passed through a prism such as demonstrated in these two examples:



The believer functions as God's prism. As "God (who) is light", is filtered through the sanctified and Spirit-led life of the believer, unregenerated mankind can "see" God by means of the believer's good works (Mat. 5:16). What are seen as good works are the nine fruits of the Spirit as numerated in Gal. 5:22-23 and Eph. 5:9:



However, even born-again believers still have a "flesh"(sin) nature, born of Satan, as does every unregenerated person. Sadly, far too many of God's people continue to "walk after the flesh" instead of the new spirit nature received by means of the new birth (Gal. 5:16-17). This kind of "prism" reflects the "works of darkness" (Gal. 5:19-21, Eph. 5:8-9, Rom. 13:12) instead of what comprises God's light:

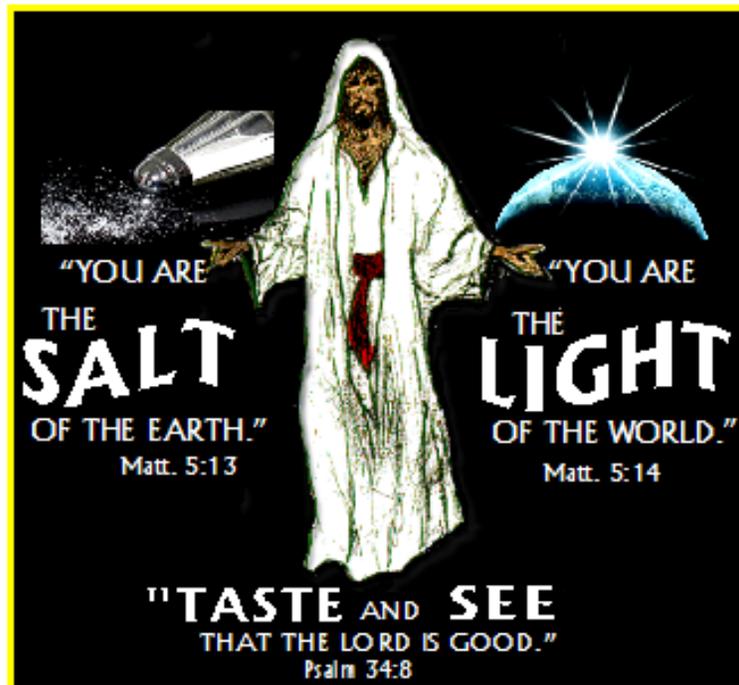




Pastor Randy Shupe

So important is this subject, I produced a separate DVD just on these two subjects. This teaching was taken from the Priorities Series. Please note that if you have the Priorities Series, you already have these two teachings.

If not, I suggest you order a copy of this 2 hour DVD mini series in order that you may grasp what is meant by the call to God's people to be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world."



Pastor Randy Shupe

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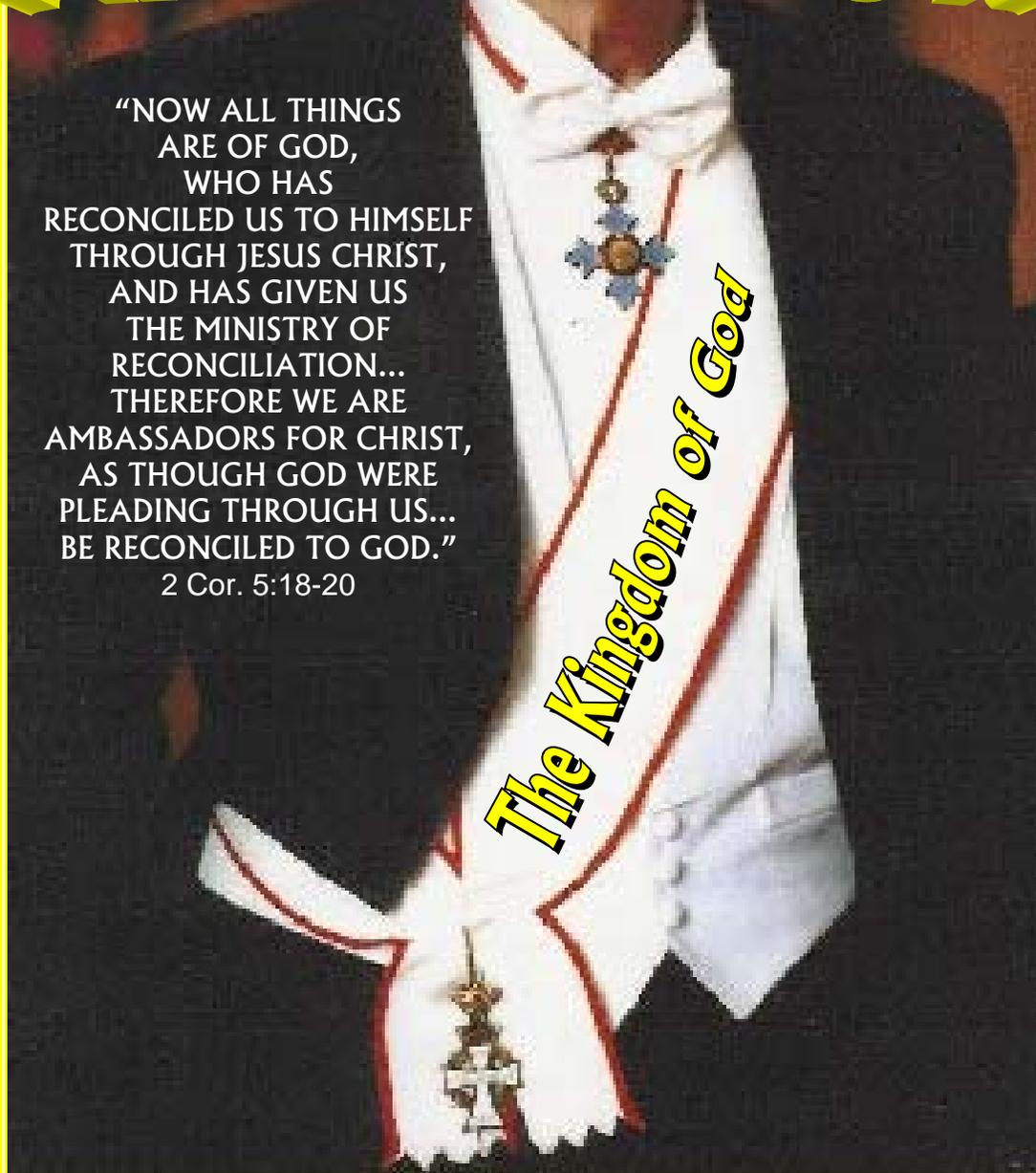
**THE PRIORITY OF
BEING JESUS CHRIST'S**

AMBASSADOR

"NOW ALL THINGS
ARE OF GOD,
WHO HAS
RECONCILED US TO HIMSELF
THROUGH JESUS CHRIST,
AND HAS GIVEN US
THE MINISTRY OF
RECONCILIATION...
THEREFORE WE ARE
AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST,
AS THOUGH GOD WERE
PLEADING THROUGH US...
BE RECONCILED TO GOD."

2 Cor. 5:18-20

The Kingdom of God



The call to be a Christian is not easy when you consider some of the vivid illustrations God uses to remind us what that role entails. I have displayed them graphically for you below.

We can begin to see that it is as diversified as Joseph's "robe of many colors" or like the "many crowns on His head" used in Revelation to describe Christ's multiple roles.

We are working our way through this list of 12 priorities. It is a graphic way to spell "Christianity." →

We have looked at being a disciple, a soldier, a stranger and pilgrim, a witness, and the call to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

We are now adding what should be considered a very "high calling of God" upon the believer while he/she is still on the earth: the divine calling of every believer to be an "Ambassador for Christ."

C H R I S T I A N I T Y

1. I AM A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST
2. I AM A SERVANT OF CHRIST
3. I AM A SOLDIER OF CHRIST
4. I AM AN AMBASSADOR FOR CHRIST
5. I AM A WITNESS UNTO CHRIST
6. I AM A PRIEST TO GOD
7. I AM THE SPIRITUAL HOUSE OF CHRIST
8. I AM THE SALT/LIGHT OF THE WORLD
9. I AM A STRANGER/PILGRIM ON EARTH
10. I AM PART OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST
11. I AM A MEMBER OF THE BODY OF CHRIST
12. I AM THE ESPOUSED BRIDE OF CHRIST

Believers seem to clamor for some kind of "ministry." Here is a God-given ministry for every believer, "The ministry of reconciliation" performed by means of the believer's high calling as an "Ambassador for Christ."



SERVANT



AMBASSADOR



BRIDE



SOLDIER



PRIEST



SALT



LIGHT



PILGRIM

**"GOD... HAS GIVEN US
THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION...
AND HAS COMMITTED TO US
THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION."
2 Cor. 5:18-19**



**"THEREFORE WE ARE
AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST,
AS THOUGH GOD WERE
PLEADING THROUGH US..."
2 Cor. 5:20**

"AMBASSADOR"

**"AN AMBASSADOR IS A DIPLOMATIC OFFICIAL
ACCREDITED TO A FOREIGN SOVEREIGN OR
GOVERNMENT... TO SERVE AS THE OFFICIAL
REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS OR HER OWN COUNTRY...
AMBASSADORS ARE MINISTERS
OF THE HIGHEST RANK,
WITH AUTHORITY TO REPRESENT
THEIR HEAD OF STATE."**

Webster

Ponder the above definition Webster gives of an ambassador as equally applicable to the believer's appointment as an "Ambassador for Christ" who is the sovereign King over the eternal, everlasting Kingdom of God. As such, believers become "the official representative...ministers of the highest rank, with authority to represent their Head of State" (Christ and His Kingdom!)

When a believer thinks of being called into the ministry, the general trend is to think of such a calling as consisting of being appointed by Christ in this manner:

**"When He ascended on high...(He) gave gifts to men...And He Himself gave some to be APOSTLES, some PROPHETS, some EVANGELISTS, and some PASTORS and TEACHERS..."
Eph. 4:8-11**

However, it is quite obvious that the Holy Spirit has recorded that this is a ministry given to "some" but not to all! It is also quite clear that this ministry given to some has a distinct purpose in mind:

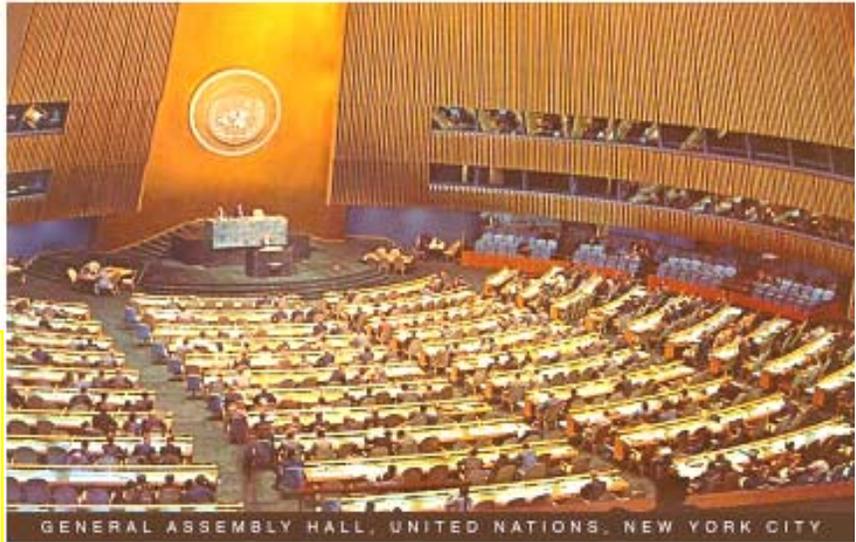
**"When He ascended on high...(He) gave gifts to men...And He Himself gave some to be APOSTLES, some PROPHETS, some EVANGELISTS, and some PASTORS and TEACHERS, for THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS for THE WORK OF MINISTRY..."
Eph. 4:8-12**

The fivefold ministry gifts of Christ given to "some" were imparted so that the saints of God would be enabled to become thoroughly equipped for the work of their own ministry, which is "the ministry of reconciliation" performed by the believer's high calling as an "Ambassador for Christ." The unique calling of the apostle, the prophet, the evangelist, the pastor and the teacher was given by Christ so that each of these unique gifts could be used to prepare God's ambassadors, the body of Christ, to be equipped for their ministry to unbelievers. This is what is meant by the prerequisite statement of Paul in saying:

**"BUT TO EACH ONE OF US GRACE WAS GIVEN
ACCORDING TO THE MEASURE OF CHRIST'S GIFT."
Eph. 4:7**

Every believer receives of the various aspects of God's grace given to those in the fivefold ministry so that they can be properly equipped for their ministry as ambassadors. The apostle imparts certain aspects of his God-given knowledge to equip the saints. The prophet imparts his God-given visionary knowledge of things to come to equip the saints for their ministry. The evangelist imparts to the believer a burden for winning souls. The pastor and the teacher likewise give of their doctrinal expertise to prepare God's people for the work of their ministry. Ignore God's various gifts of grace given to the fivefold ministry, and the believer will be ill-equipped for his/her own ministry as "ministers of reconciliation" and as "Ambassadors for Christ." Not everyone is called to the fivefold ministry, but everyone indeed is called to be an ambassador for Christ in a Christless world! It is the fivefold ministry given to some that prepares the whole body of Christ for the work of their ministry.

There are hundreds of hand-picked ambassadors meeting in this room in the United Nations building. They represent nearly every nation and kingdom on earth, with one exception; namely, "The Kingdom of God." That special ambassadorship has been awarded to every member and subject of the Kingdom of God via the new birth.



"NOW ALL THINGS ARE OF GOD, WHO HAS RECONCILED US TO HIMSELF THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, AND HAS GIVEN US THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION. THAT IS, THAT GOD WAS IN CHRIST RECONCILING THE WORLD TO HIMSELF, NOT IMPUTING THEIR TRESPASSES TO THEM, AND HAS COMMITTED TO US THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION. THEREFORE WE ARE AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST, AS THOUGH GOD WERE PLEADING THROUGH US: WE IMPLORER YOU ON CHRIST'S BEHALF, BE RECONCILED TO GOD. FOR HE MADE HIM WHO KNEW NO SIN TO BE SIN FOR US, THAT WE MIGHT BECOME THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM. WE THEN, AS WORKERS TOGETHER WITH HIM ALSO PLEAD WITH YOU NOT TO RECEIVE THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN....BEHOLD NOW IS THE ACCEPTED TIME; BEHOLD, NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION. WE GIVE NO OFFENSE IN ANYTHING, THAT OUR MINISTRY MAY NOT BE BLAMED"

2 Cor. 5:18-6-3

The last sentence above is worth repeating. Every ambassador of Christ must direct his/her steps in such a manner that:

"WE GIVE NO OFFENSE IN ANYTHING, THAT OUR MINISTRY MAY NOT BE BLAMED"



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

2 Cor. 2:17

This picture of Obama's pastor, Rev. Wright, during the 2008 election campaigns reminds us how a wrong representation can be conveyed by a professing ambassador of God. How much his distorted racial ranting hurt Barack Obama's presidential bid is not the real issue at stake for politics is not God's commission on earth for His people. The real issue at stake is what Rev. Wright has conveyed to unsaved people about God by means of his race-biased, self-justifying, religiously-coated hate message that prevents the unsaved from being reconciled to God. Rev. Wright will be judged for his ambassadorship just as I will be as a pastor/teacher of God's Word. Paul states these words pertaining to his own careful and guarded ambassadorship before unbelievers:

"THEREFORE SINCE WE HAVE THIS MINISTRY... WE HAVE RENOUNCED THE HIDDEN THINGS OF SHAME, NOT WALKING IN CRAFTINESS NOR HANDLING THE WORD OF GOD DECEITFULLY, BUT BY MANIFESTATION OF THE TRUTH, COMMENDING OURSELVES TO EVERY MAN'S CONSCIENCE IN THE SIGHT OF GOD."

2 Cor. 4:1-2

**"GOD... HAS GIVEN US
THE MINISTRY OF
RECONCILIATION...
AND HAS COMMITTED TO US
THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION."
2 Cor. 5:18-19**

**"I therefore (says Paul)...
Beseech you to
HAVE A WALK WORTHY
OF THE CALLING
WITH WHICH
YOU WERE CALLED..."
Eph. 4:1**



**"THEREFORE
WE ARE AMBASSADORS
FOR CHRIST,
AS THOUGH GOD WERE
PLEADING THROUGH US..."
2 Cor. 5:20**

**"Therefore
DO NOT BE ASHAMED
OF THE TESTIMONY
OF OUR LORD...
who has SAVED US and CALLED
US WITH A HOLY CALLING..."
2 Tim. 1:8-9**

Scriptures like these two

will take on a whole new perspective when we, as Christians, understand the universal high calling of God upon His people to be Ambassadors for Christ. This is the "holy calling" of which Paul speaks which is bestowed upon every follower of Christ.

"HAVE A WALK WORTHY OF THE CALLING WITH WHICH YOU WERE CALLED"

There are lessons to be learned by considering the results of behavior of earthly ambassadors:

Ambassador recalled for unbecoming conduct

JERUSALEM Mar 12, 2007 (Reuters) - Israel has recalled its ambassador in El Salvador after he was found drunk and naked ...in the yard of his official residence... "The ministry sees his behavior as unbecoming of a diplomat," the spokeswoman said.

Kenyan Ambassador Recalled Following Sex Allegations September 20, 2005- The Kenyan ambassador to the United States was recalled after allegations surfaced that he sexually assaulted a fellow Kenyan diplomat, according to a diplomat posted at the United Nations...

US Ambassador to Armenia Recalled Due to Statement on Armenian Genocide 07 March, 2006 US Ambassador to Armenia is recalled to Washington... His statement on the Armenian Genocide in Ottoman Turkey in 1915 was the cause of the recall of the American Ambassador. "I used the word "genocide", which reflected my personal point of view - that of John Evans and not a politician. However, it was inappropriate," the Ambassador stated...

Three examples are given above of earthly ambassadors being "recalled" by their governments. There are some parallels we can make to the calling of God's ambassadors, but remember this principle:

"FOR THE GIFTS AND CALLINGS OF GOD ARE IRREVOCABLE"

Rom. 11:29

The moral to the three stories above is, mess up as an ambassador of an earthly kingdom and you will quickly face an embarrassing "recall" such as depicted above. However God does not do that with His wayward ambassadors in this life. Behave like a bad Ambassador for Christ and it will appear like you will suffer no reproof for your actions. However, this is erroneous thinking for it will come in the afterlife at "The judgment Seat of Christ":

**"...WE MAKE IT OUR AIM... TO BE WELL PLEASING TO HIM,
FOR WE MUST ALL APPEAR BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST,
THAT EACH ONE MAY RECEIVE THE THINGS DONE IN THE BODY,
ACCORDING TO WHAT HE HAS DONE, WHETHER GOOD OR BAD.
KNOWING THEREFORE THE TERROR OF THE LORD, WE PERSUADE MEN..."**

2 Cor. 5:9-11

What we can learn from the first two examples above is that, due to immoral behavior, the office of an ambassador can easily bring disgrace upon the sovereignty it represents. The Israeli ambassador was removed for "behavior unbecoming of a diplomat." When we tell the unbelieving world that we represent King Jesus and His Kingdom of righteousness, we personally need to have behavior that does not bring disgrace upon the Sovereignty that we claim to represent. The ill-chosen actions of behavior can quickly nullify the message we proclaim with our mouth. The world, along with God, rejects a hypocrite!

US Ambassador to Armenia Recalled Due to Statement on Armenian Genocide 07 March, 2006

US Ambassador to Armenia is recalled to Washington... His statement on the Armenian Genocide in Ottoman Turkey in 1915 was the cause of the recall of the American Ambassador. "I used the word "genocide", which reflected my personal point of view - that of John Evans and not a politician. However, it was inappropriate," the Ambassador stated...

The third example I listed is to illustrate the need to stick to the message we were given to deliver on behalf of the Sovereignty we represent. Personal opinions and "personal points of view" are not the work of an ambassador. Often an ambassador is given a specific declaration by his government or king to be delivered to another nation's head of state. Nothing is to be added to that message, and certainly nothing is to be taken away from it. The ambassador is to deliver what he/she was given. The object lesson is plain: We, as Ambassadors of Christ, have been given a specific declaration pertaining to how we are to administer God's desire to "reconcile the world to Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). God's written Word is that declaration. Having been given "the ministry of reconciliation", we are not to water-down the specified message with "personal points of view." When the gospel says, "Repent," (Matt. 3:2, 4:17, Luke 13:3-5, Luke 24:47, Acts 26:20), we are not authorized to change the emphasis from repentance to "just believe and receive," or "Smile! God loves you," or "God has a plan for your life." These are private interpretations-personal points of view.

Neither are we authorized to remove "the Kingdom of God" from the message of the new birth (Jn. 3:3,5). Christians in America are trying to seize the government of America for God because the message of the new birth has indeed been divorced from its counterpart, "the Kingdom of God." The result is an earth-bound form of Christianity rooted in political solutions for spiritual problems. Mankind is to repent **BECAUSE** "the Kingdom of God is at hand." This was the clear teaching of John the Baptist and Jesus Himself (Matt. 3:2, 4:17). The gospel of the Kingdom of God has been replaced with the subtle substitute of "One Nation Under God."

We should not only act and speak like an ambassador, but we should strive to look like one as well. Have you ever seen the Queen of England in public in hair curlers or blue-jeans? No, simply because she is well aware that she represents her kingdom.

Most Americans (and even Christians) are walking billboards. Even Christians advertise for the merchants of the earth a whole host of things which have nothing to do with the Kingdom of which they are Ambassadors.

A POSITION OF DIGNITY AND HONOR

"AMBASSADOR"



AN AMBASSADOR IS A DIPLOMATIC OFFICIAL ACCREDITED TO A FOREIGN SOVEREIGN OR GOVERNMENT... TO SERVE AS THE OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS OR HER OWN COUNTRY... AMBASSADORS ARE MINISTERS OF THE HIGHEST RANK, WITH AUTHORITY TO REPRESENT THEIR HEAD OF STATE.

All this is fine for the unbelievers, but is this what a believer should wear in public? Should we be an endorsement for the idols of this world? Jesus warns:

"FOR WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE YOUR HEART WILL BE ALSO."

Matt. 6:21

Pastor Randy Shupe





THE PRIORITY OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE BELIEVER

**"YOU HAVE REDEEMED US TO GOD BY YOUR BLOOD...
AND HAVE MADE US KINGS AND PRIESTS TO OUR GOD..."**

Rev. 5: 9-10

**"COMING TO HIM...CHOSEN BY GOD AND PRECIOUS,
YOU ALSO, AS LIVING STONES ARE BEING BUILT UP
A SPIRITUAL HOUSE, A HOLY PRIESTHOOD,
TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE TO GOD
THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."**

1 Pet. 2:4-5

**"YOU ARE A CHOSEN GENERATION,
A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD,
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;
WHO ONCE WERE NOT A PEOPLE
BUT NOW ARE THE PEOPLE OF GOD,
WHO HAD NOT OBTAINED MERCY
BUT NOW HAVE OBTAINED MERCY."**

1 Pet. 2:9-10

Ponder well the above passages written to New Testament believers. This is how God sees every follower of Jesus Christ:

"As a holy priesthood...a royal priesthood"

Catholicism selects a few to be priests in its erroneous concept of Christianity, but this is not so according to the Scriptures. This is a universal calling upon every born-again believer!

This newsletter is dedicated to unfolding how the believer is to function in this high and holy calling of God.



Let us begin our examination of the priesthood of the believer by making a comparison between the calling of Israel's priesthood and that of the Church:

ISRAEL

CHURCH

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

**"THE LORD
HAS CHOSEN
YOU...
A KINGDOM
OF PRIESTS...
A HOLY
NATION...
A PEOPLE FOR
HIMSELF..."**
Ex. 19:5-6
Deut. 7:6

**"JESUS CHRIST
IS THE SAME
YESTERDAY, TODAY
AND FOREVER."**
Heb. 13:8

**"YOU ARE
A CHOSEN
GENERATION,
A ROYAL
PRIESTHOOD,
A HOLY
NATION,
HIS OWN
SPECIAL
PEOPLE..."**
1 Pet. 2:9

The unchanging God has repeated nearly the same words to the Church as He originally spoke to Israel. The difference between these two priesthoods centers upon the type of sacrifices they offered to God. Israel offered physical sacrifices that were acceptable to God, but the Church is to offer spiritual ones:

**"...A HOLY PRIESTHOOD,
TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES
ACCEPTABLE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."**

1 Pet. 2:-5

Notice that these spiritual sacrifices are offered to God the Father "through Jesus Christ." The present ministry of Jesus Christ is that of High Priest:

**"NOW THIS IS THE MAIN POINT
OF THE THINGS WE ARE SAYING:
WE HAVE SUCH A HIGH PRIEST,
WHO IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE THRONE OF
THE MAJESTY IN THE HEAVENS, A MINISTER OF THE SANCTUARY
AND OF THE TRUE TABERNACLE WHICH THE LORD ERECTED, AND
NOT MAN. FOR EVERY HIGH PRIEST IS APPOINTED TO OFFER BOTH
GIFTS AND SACRIFICES. THEREFORE IT IS NECESSARY THAT THIS
ONE ALSO HAVE SOMETHING TO OFFER...BUT NOW HE HAS
OBTAINED A MORE EXCELLENT MINISTRY, INASMUCH AS HE IS
MEDIATOR OF A BETTER COVENANT, WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED ON
BETTER PROMISES."** Heb. 8:1-6 excerpts



What has happened to the apostle Paul's "main point" that Jesus Christ is presently the High Priest of the Church, to those believers who have inherited "a better covenant established on better promises"? If Paul were to attend our modern-day churches, wouldn't he brand what is presented about Jesus as "another gospel"? When was the last time you heard Jesus presented as "our High Priest"?

The absence of this emphasis in modern-day preaching does not change the fact that He is the High Priest of the Church, and that, as such, He is expecting His people

**"...TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES
ACCEPTABLE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."**

1 Pet. 2:-5

“EVERY HIGH PRIEST IS APPOINTED TO OFFER BOTH GIFTS AND SACRIFICES. THEREFORE IT IS NECESSARY THAT THIS ONE(OUR HIGH PRIEST) ALSO HAVE SOMETHING TO OFFER.”
 Hebrews 8:3

It is the “royal, holy priesthood” of believers on earth that are to offer to “our High Priest,” Jesus Christ, spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God the Father. As the “Mediator of the better covenant established on better promises,” Jesus Christ will receive “both gifts and sacrifices” from His people and pass them on to God the Father. Does this sound like the brand of Christianity widely accepted and practiced by the Church? More than likely, to speak in such terms would be branded as Old Testament legalism because of the ignorance most Christians have of the priesthood of the believer!



1	_____
2	_____
3	_____
4	_____
5	_____
6	_____
7	_____
8	_____

“LET’S SEE, THERE IS THE SACRIFICE OF...??”



Let us now consider what is spelled out in Scripture as spiritual sacrifices. There are eight mentioned, here is the first:

1. OFFER UP TO GOD THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE

“...A HOLY PRIESTHOOD, TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.”
 1 PETER 2:5

“THEREFORE BY HIM LET US CONTINUALLY OFFER THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE TO GOD, THAT IS, THE FRUIT OF OUR LIPS, GIVING THANKS TO HIS NAME.”
 Hebrews 13:15

For most New Covenant believers, it would be hard to list from rote memory what are the specific sacrifices listed in Scripture that are acceptable to God. I therefore strongly encourage you to commit them to memory. How else will we be able to fulfill what is required of us in our God-given role as a priest unto our High Priest if we don’t even know what those sacrifices are?

Let me state that by the word “sacrifice” we are not talking about doing something for God that is not in our heart such as, “I don’t really feel like it, but here is a sacrifice of praise.” That kind of attitude would constitute a blemished sacrifice as depicted in Mal. 1:6-8. Sacrifices that are acceptable to God must flow from a heart of gratitude, not dutiful reluctance.

Of the majority of God’s first covenant people (Israel), the Scriptures record that they “murmured in their tents” against God (Psm.106:25, 1 Cor. 10:10), Far too often, God gets blame from the lips of His people instead of praise. This stems out of a lack of knowledge of the character and nature of God as revealed in His Word. The highest revelation of God is that He is “A Righteous Judge.” That implies that He cannot and will not do anything unrighteous toward His people. And yet, I hear people express how mad they are at God. If you know the God of the Bible, you could never be mad at Him. What kind of words do you express toward God? Are they words of murmuring against God or words of praise to God?

Church services are a great opportunity to offer verbal praise to God. Wonderful songs have been penned that express the level of one’s love for God. However, at times the words of a devotional song contain expressions that are beyond what is in the believer’s heart. I suggest that you do not sing words to God that are not in harmony with your walk with Him. A silent prayer over these words to God as a desire for your walk is more in order. Why do I say that? Because Jesus warns:

“THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME, AND IN VAIN THEY WORSHIP ME...” Mark 7:6

I have not sought to place these eight sacrifices in any form of chronological order or level of importance, for I am not sure there is a proper order. Certainly an argument can be made that some sacrifices are more important than others. Perhaps this second spiritual sacrifice should have been listed first, because I am convinced that people who find it difficult to praise God with their lips lack thanksgiving in their heart. A favorite teacher of mine, Derek Prince, made a distinction between praise and thanksgiving in this manner:

"WE PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS AND WE THANK GOD FOR WHAT HE DOES"

If a believer does not know who God is in all His fullness, then the level of praise will be lowered. If a believer does not recognize what God does for him/her, then the level of thanksgiving will be greatly lacking.

Thanksgiving is an attitude. So is un-thankfulness. It should be well-noted that much of what is in the world today that is ungodly stems out of the sin of being unthankful:

**"...ALTHOUGH THEY KNEW GOD,
THEY DID NOT GLORIFY HIM AS GOD,
NOR WERE THEY THANKFUL...
THEREFORE GOD GAVE THEM UP TO VILE PASSIONS..."**
Rom. 1:21,26

Sober words, especially when you see that these were a people like us, "they knew God."

What are we to be thankful for? My answer is "everything!" Be thankful for where you were born, you could be living in a land of spiritual darkness such as in the Asian 10-40 window, much of which has yet to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. Be thankful for the ability to walk, see, hear, speak and think! Be thankful for health and wealth (the poorest in this land is rich!). Be thankful for water at your fingertips (hot and cold). Be thankful for God's protection as spelled out in Psalm 91 (do your part and God will do His). Be thankful for the abundance of food available in this land for most of the world goes to bed hungry (many are starving). Be thankful for freedoms that much of the world does not experience. Be thankful for God's amazing grace and mercy in not rewarding you according to your sins! Be thankful for the power God has given us by means of the Holy Spirit to enable us to live a victorious life over sin and sickness! The word "thankful" only appears twice in the New Testament. Once as stated above, "Nor were they thankful" (Rom. 1:21). The second place it appears is Col. 3:15 in which it says, "Be thankful." The choice is ours.

The third spiritual sacrifice God wants His holy, royal priesthood to offer to Him is the sacrifice of "joy." Biblical joy is not the same as the world's "happiness." Philip Keller in his book, *The Fruit of the Spirit*, makes this distinction between the two:

"JOY IS NOT HAPPINESS. HAPPINESS IS CONDITIONED BY PEOPLE AROUND ME, IT'S CONDITIONED BY EVENTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES THAT ARE TAKING PLACE IN MY LIFE. HAPPINESS DEPENDS ON WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME... JOY HAS TO DO WITH MY RELATIONSHIP TO GOD. JOY FUNCTIONS IN MY LIFE INDEPENDENTLY OF ANYTHING OR ANYONE OR ANY CIRCUMSTANCE THAT'S HAPPENING AROUND ME. JOY IS NOT DEPENDENT IN ANY WAY ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING OUTSIDE ME. IT DEPENDS UPON WHAT HAS OR IS HAPPENING WITHIN ME."

Only the Bible can define for us what is true joy. Here are a few examples: "God is our exceeding joy" (Psm. 43:4). "The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh. 8:10). "The fruit of the Spirit is joy" (Gal. 5:22). "In Your presence is fullness of joy" (Psm. 16:11). "I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Hab.3:18).

We are to express joy even in the midst of hardships, persecution and trials (Rom. 5:3-4, Jm. 1:2-4, 1 Pet. 1:6-7). Why so? Because it is by means of such that we are perfected and conformed into the image of Jesus, who also was "perfected by the things He suffered" (Heb. 5:8).

2. OFFER UP TO GOD THE SACRIFICE OF

THANKSGIVING

"WHAT SHALL I RENDER TO THE LORD FOR ALL HIS BENEFITS TOWARD ME? I WILL OFFER TO YOU THE SACRIFICE OF THANKSGIVING."
Psalm 116:12,17

"...A HOLY PRIESTHOOD, TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."
1 PETER 2:5



3. OFFER UP TO GOD THE SACRIFICE OF

JOY

"THEREFORE I WILL OFFER SACRIFICES OF JOY IN HIS TABERNACLE."
Psalm 27:6

"...A HOLY PRIESTHOOD, TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."
1 PETER 2:5



The fourth spiritual sacrifice God wants on an ongoing basis is the sacrifice of repentance. We tend to think of repentance as a one-time act that we performed at the new birth. Repentance is a way of life, not a one-time event. The Bible tells us not to sin (1 Jn.2:1), but if we do sin then we are to "confess our sins" (1 Jn. 1:9). Although we find forgiveness through confession, we still need to offer to God the sacrifice of repentance. Most people think repentance is being sorry for your sin. Not true! Godly Sorrow leads to repentance:

"NOW I REJOICE, NOT THAT YOU WERE MADE SORRY, BUT THAT YOUR SORROW LED TO REPENTANCE...GODLY SORROW PRODUCES REPENTANCE TO SALVATION, NOT TO BE REGRETTED." 2 Cor. 7:9-10

What then is repentance if it is not sorrow for sin? Repentance is turning away from sin:

"I ENTREATED YOUR FAVOR WITH MY WHOLE HEART; BE MERCIFUL TO ME ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD. I THOUGHT ABOUT MY WAYS, AND TURNED MY FEET TO YOUR TESTIMONIES. I MADE HASTE, AND DID NOT DELAY TO KEEP YOUR COMMANDMENTS."

Psalm 119:58-60

Jesus came not only to forgive our iniquity, but also to turn us away from all iniquity:

"GOD, HAVING RAISED UP HIS SERVANT JESUS, SENT HIM TO BLESS YOU, IN TURNING AWAY EVERY ONE OF YOU FROM YOUR INIQUITIES."

Acts 3:26

Much of Christianity gives emphasis only to the forgiveness of sins. However, the other half of the truth cannot be ignored:

"HE WHO COVERS HIS SINS WILL NOT PROSPER. BUT HE WHO CONFESSES AND FORSAKES THEM WILL HAVE MERCY."

Prov. 28:13

The fifth spiritual sacrifice God wants His people to offer up to Him as an acceptable sacrifice is the sacrifice of righteousness. Here again, I find Christianity lacks a full understanding of the doctrine of righteousness. It is well-versed in the imputed righteousness the believer receives from the sacrifice of Christ:

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

2 Cor. 5:21

However, this cannot be construed as being the "sacrifice of righteousness" that we, as a holy and royal priesthood, are to offer up to God. We cannot offer to God the sacrifice Christ has already offered by the sacrifice of Himself!

What God wants from us are acts, works and fruits of righteousness-righteous living before God! Ponder these Scriptures as depicting another kind of righteousness that is acceptable in God's sight:

"THAT YOU MAY APPROVE THE THINGS THAT ARE EXCELLENT, THAT YOU MAY BE SINCERE AND WITHOUT OFFENSE TILL THE DAY OF CHRIST, BEING FILLED WITH THE FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH ARE BY CHRIST JESUS, TO THE GLORY AND PRAISE OF GOD." Phil. 1:10-11

"...DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY AND GODLY IN THIS PRESENT AGE..." Titus 2:12

"THE LORD REWARDED ME ACCORDING TO MY RIGHTEOUSNESS; ACCORDING TO THE CLEANNESS OF MY HANDS HE HAS RECOMPENSED ME. FOR I HAVE KEPT THE WAYS OF THE LORD, AND HAVE NOT WICKEDLY DEPARTED FROM MY GOD....I DID NOT PUT AWAY HIS STATUTES FROM ME. I WAS ALSO BLAMELESS BEFORE HIM, I KEPT MYSELF FROM MY INIQUITY. THEREFORE THE LORD HAS RECOMPENSED ME ACCORDING TO MY RIGHTEOUSNESS, ACCORDING TO THE CLEANNESS OF MY HANDS IN HIS SIGHT." Psalm 18:20-24

4. OFFER UP TO GOD THE SACRIFICE OF

REPENTANCE

"THE SACRIFICES OF GOD ARE A BROKEN SPIRIT, A BROKEN AND A CONTRITE HEART. THESE O GOD YOU WILL NOT DESPISE."

Psalm 51:17

"...A HOLY PRIESTHOOD, TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."

1 PETER 2:5



5. OFFER UP TO GOD THE SACRIFICE OF

RIGHTEOUSNESS

"OFFER THE SACRIFICE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS..."

Psalm 4:5

"...A HOLY PRIESTHOOD, TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."

1 PETER 2:5



Do not allow anyone to tell you that, as a believer, "all our righteous acts are like filthy rags." Yes, the Bible does say that in Isaiah 64:6. However, you only need to read the verse above it to see that in context it is talking about a people who "need to be saved" (Isa. 64:5). It is the righteousness of the unsaved that are as filthy rags to God, but not the righteous acts of the believer! To prove the point, look at this prophetic depiction of the Bride of Christ clothed in "fine linen, clean and bright":

**"...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 LINE CLEAN AND BRIGHT,
FOR THE FINE LINEN IS THE RIGHTEOUS ACTS OF THE SAINTS**

(Amplified: "THE UPRIGHT, JUST, AND GODLY LIVING, DEEDS AND CONDUCT OF THE SAINTS") Rev. 19:7-8

That does not sound like "filthy rags righteousness" to me!

The sixth spiritual sacrifice spelled out in Scripture as an acceptable sacrifice to God deals with our tithes and offerings to God. Paul, in this passage from Philippians, conveys that our money can be a "sweet-smelling aroma" that is "well-pleasing to God." However, in order to be so it must be given with a right motive. Consider Paul's words in 2 Corinthians:

**"SO LET EACH ONE GIVE
AS HE PURPOSES IN HIS HEART,
NOT GRUDGINGLY OR OF NECESSITY;
FOR GOD LOVES
A CHEERFUL GIVER."** 2 Cor. 9:7

This verse stresses the importance of a proper attitude in our giving. We are not to give with a reluctant heart, not out of peer pressure, but with a joyful obedience that flows from the heart.

Modern-day Christianity in this country does not lack for an emphasis upon giving. However, it does lack for a proper emphasis upon why we are to give. God is not to be viewed as better interest than the First National Bank—we are not to give to get a hundred-fold return. We are to give to honor God:

"HONOR THE LORD WITH YOUR POSSESSIONS, AND WITH THE FIRSTFRUITS OF ALL YOUR INCREASE..." Prov. 3:9

We are to give so that God's house is provided for:

"BRING ALL THE TITHES INTO THE STOREHOUSE, THAT THERE MAY BE FOOD IN MY HOUSE..." Mal. 3:10

**"...BRING A TENTH..TO THE HOUSE OF OUR GOD, TO THE ROOMS OF THE STOREHOUSE...
WE WILL NOT NEGLECT THE HOUSE OF OUR GOD."** Neh. 10:38-39

The seventh area that constitutes a spiritual sacrifice that is acceptable to God deals with the believer's physical body. Note the oxymoronic concept: "our bodies presented as a living sacrifice." Old Testament sacrifices were always dead (animal) bodies offered to God. Here is a New Testament twist: "a living (human) sacrifice." There is a reason why God wants our bodies willingly offered to Him—it belongs to Him:

**"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

Many of God's people live in their body as if they are free to do with it whatever they please. We are now "renters" of God's purchased possession—our bodies. You cannot do as you please with someone else's property. We are not "free" to kill the body with drugs, smoke, alcohol or junk food! Glorify God in your body by taking good care of it for God, respecting the fact that it is now the temple of the Holy Spirit!

**6. OFFER UP
TO GOD THE
SACRIFICE OF
TITHES
AND
OFFERINGS**

**"CONCERNING GIVING...
(IT IS) A SWEET-SMELLING AROMA,
AND ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE,
WELL PLEASING TO GOD."
Philippians 4:15-18**

**"...A HOLY
PRIESTHOOD,
TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL
SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE
TO GOD THROUGH
JESUS CHRIST."
1 PETER 2:5**



**7. OFFER UP
TO GOD THE
SACRIFICE OF
YOUR
BODY**

**"...PRESENT YOUR BODIES
A LIVING SACRIFICE,
HOLY,
ACCEPTABLE TO GOD,
WHICH IS
YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE."
Romans 12:1**

**"...A HOLY
PRIESTHOOD,
TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL
SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE
TO GOD THROUGH
JESUS CHRIST."
1 PETER 2:5**



The temple of God (our body) is not for sexual immorality. Please note that the apostle Paul singles out sexual immorality as a sin above all other sins:

"NOW THE BODY IS NOT FOR SEXUAL IMMORALITY BUT FOR THE LORD, AND THE LORD FOR THE BODY...FLEE SEXUAL IMMORALITY. EVERY SIN THAT A MAN DOES IS OUTSIDE THE BODY, BUT HE WHO COMMITS SEXUAL IMMORALITY SINS AGAINST HIS OWN BODY. OR DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT...?" 1 Cor. 6:13,18-19

"MARRIAGE IS HONORABLE AMONG ALL, AND THE BED UNDEFILED; BUT FORNICATORS AND ADULTERERS GOD WILL JUDGE." Heb. 13:4

The eighth and final sacrifice God desires for His people to offer up to Him as an acceptable sacrifice is this aspect of "doing good." Scripture not only exhorts us to "not forget to do good" but also "let us not grow weary while doing good" (Gal. 6:9). I believe this implies that we will not always be recognized for the good we do, but rather, we must keep on doing good as Galatians goes on to tell us, "...we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Gal. 6:9). The next verse in Galatians gives us the first category of people to whom we are to "do good":

"THEREFORE, AS WE HAVE OPPORTUNITY, LET US DO GOOD TO ALL, ESPECIALLY TO THOSE WHO ARE OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH." Gal. 6:10

8. OFFER UP TO GOD THE SACRIFICE OF

DOING GOOD AND TO SHARE

"DO NOT FORGET TO DO GOOD AND TO SHARE, FOR WITH SUCH SACRIFICES GOD IS WELL PLEASSED."
Hebrews 13:16

"...A HOLY PRIESTHOOD, TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."
1 PETER 2:5



Certainly we don't mind helping out a brother or sister in the Lord that is in need. However, this is not the only category of people that the Scriptures instruct us to "do good" unto:

"BUT I SAY UNTO YOU WHO HEAR; LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO HATE YOU... LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, DO GOOD, LEND, HOPING FOR NOTHING IN RETURN..." Luke. 6:27,35

Then we might add a third class of people to whom we are to "do good" and be "willing to share":

"HE HAS DISPERSED ABROAD, HE HAS GIVEN TO THE POOR..." Psm. 112:9

"HE WHO HAS PITY ON THE POOR LENDS TO THE LORD, AND HE WILL PAY BACK WHAT HE HAS GIVEN" Prov. 19:17

"AND GOD IS ABLE TO MAKE ALL GRACE ABOUND TOWARD YOU, THAT YOU, ALWAYS HAVING ALL SUFFICIENCY IN ALL THINGS, HAVE AN ABUNDANCE FOR EVERY GOOD WORK." 2 Cor. 9:8

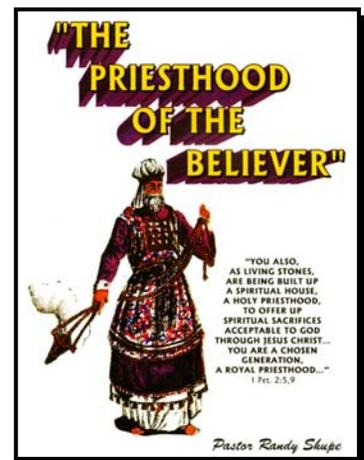
God has blessed His people in America with great abundance. He has a purpose for doing so, "...that you...have an abundance for every good work." The poor live in far away places. Many of those places fill our nightly news with stories of great need due to cyclones, earthquakes, famines, floods, wars and such like. We are commanded to "remember the poor" (Gal. 2:10). Take a look at Gospel For Asia's website (GFA.com). There are many things they are doing that are worthy of our God-given abundance.

This newsletter has only laid out as a challenge, the barest expression of these spiritual sacrifices. For a more in-depth teaching on the subject, I highly recommend this DVD series which I taught some time ago in our congregation.



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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
DARK PLACE,
UNTIL THE DAY DAWNS
AND
THE MORNING STAR
RISES IN YOUR HEARTS..."**

2 Pet. 1:19



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