

THE PROPHETIC WORD

**NEWSLETTER
ARCHIVE
2009**



Pastor Randy Shupe



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LEARNING SPIRITUAL GOALS FROM THE PHYSICAL REALM AROUND US:



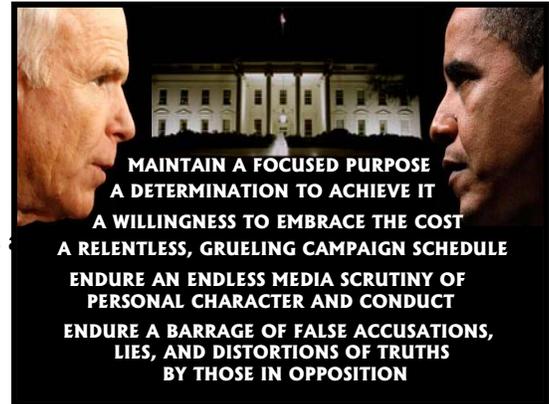
"THE RACE for THE PRIZE"

The presidential race for the coveted prize of occupying the White House is a grueling adventure. Ask Hilary Clinton. Ask John McCain. Ask the most recent victor over the both of them, Barack Obama. All what these presidential candidates endured in choosing to run such a race, they considered to be worthy of the cost. At stake is the possibility of winning the prize of the White House, the highest and most prestigious position of honor and power to be bestowed upon the victorious recipient.

As Christians, we can learn from such earthly examples of sacrifice and endurance what it will take to run the spiritual race for the everlasting prize that is set before us; ruling and reigning as joint-heirs with Christ over His whole creation-for all eternity.

Two aspects of this political campaign are worthy of considering as examples to the Christian who also has “a race to run and a prize to be won.” First we must consider the dedication and sacrifice of the candidates themselves. Whether you look at Hillary Clinton, John McCain or Barack Obama, you find the same pattern:

All the candidates maintained a focused purpose and a determination to achieve it. Their eyes were fixed on the prize. This is a vital key to embracing all that it takes to endure the grueling pace of the race. If the prize is not continually held up before the mind’s eye, there can be no heart, no vision for embracing the cost of the race. Just think about John McCain maintaining such a rigorous campaign schedule at the age of 72! Toward the end of the race I noted that he was speaking five times a day in three different states! That takes sacrifice and commitment that can only come from maintaining a vision of the prize. Then there is the intense scrutiny of the candidates by not only the media looking for a news scoop, but also the barrage of false accusations, distortions of truths and even lies that surface from those in opposition to a given candidate.



The second aspect that is worthy of consideration as examples of what it takes to run a race for the prize, is to look at the fervency of those laboring as willing volunteers to see that their preferred candidate achieves the goal of the White House.



You have seen volumes of images like these over the last two years as this campaign progressed. Tireless laborers working the phone lines, standing on street corners, going door to door, seeking support for their candidate.



My wife and I were in Ohio on election night visiting our sister church. There were perhaps three hours left until the polls closed, and yet we saw a team of workers going door to door, clipboard in hand, looking for voters who had not yet been to the polls. Saints of God, we have been given the commission by Christ to be His ambassadors on earth (2 Cor. 5:19-20). I believe these political campaign volunteers put us to shame with their selfless dedication and hard work towards an earthly cause.

While in Ohio, we were taken to a local restaurant which turned out to be owned by a zealous and radical supporter of Barack Obama. As we entered the eatery, we were confronted by a life-sized statue of Obama dressed in campaign paraphernalia. The owner was offering champagne to any Democrats (or Republicans) who voted for Obama. This is radical commitment to a belief that could even harm her business, but she did not care for her cause was above the cost! Great object lesson for the Christian! On the evening news there was the story of a gas station owner who spent \$70,000 dollars to change the name of his station to “Obama Gas.”

And what about those rallies? What a radical, fanatical bunch of people standing in droves for hours waiting to see a glimpse of their beloved candidate!



Keeping in mind the self-sacrificing pattern of this earthly presidential race for the prize of the White House, let us now consider a different "race to be run, and a prize to be won" that is set before every born-again follower of Christ:



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

1 Cor. 9:24-27

Paul uses the depiction of the Greek games of his day as an illustration of a higher race and a higher prize set before the believer:

"NOW THEY DO IT TO OBTAIN A PERISHABLE CROWN, BUT WE FOR AN IMPERISHABLE CROWN."

This same principle can (and should) be applied to the presidential race for the prize of the White House. The prize is temporary, perhaps as much as eight years and then the process begins all over again for this "perishable crown." Then all the tireless, zealous workers and volunteers must align themselves once more behind a new candidate of choice in pursuit of yet another "perishable crown."

All of this is fine for citizens of an earthly kingdom such as America, but Jesus tells His followers:

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

Paul, who was a Roman citizen by natural birth, places his citizenship

in Heaven by means of the new birth: **"FOR OUR CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN..."** Phil. 3:20



This is an important concept to consider, for we too have earthly citizenship in America by means of natural birth; but also have a heavenly citizenship by means of the new birth. Why are we not declaring the heavenly citizenship above the earthly one? Why do so many Christians become obsessed with the race that determines who ends up in the White House? This is not the race or the prize Paul is setting before the believer! Let us consider another "house" which should be a fanatical obsession for the people of God:

"THUS SAYS THE LORD: TO THE EUNUCHS WHO KEEP MY SABBATHS, AND CHOOSE WHAT PLEASURES ME, AND HOLD FAST MY COVENANT, EVEN TO THEM I WILL GIVE IN MY HOUSE AND WITHIN MY WALLS A PLACE AND A NAME BETTER THAN THAT OF SONS AND DAUGHTERS; I WILL GIVE THEM AN EVERLASTING NAME THAT SHALL NOT BE CUT OFF."

Isaiah 56:4-5



**THE
WHITE HOUSE**

"PERISHABLE CROWN"

The perishable prize of who gets in the White House is a subtle substitute for the imperishable prize of a special place in the House of God!

We all become "sons and daughters" by means of the new birth.

God is offering something higher:



"IMPERISHABLE CROWN"

"...I WILL GIVE IN MY HOUSE AND WITHIN MY WALLS A PLACE AND A NAME BETTER THAN THAT OF SONS AND DAUGHTERS..."

We only need to look to Jesus' words in Revelation to see this amplified for us:

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

HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES." Rev. 3:12-13

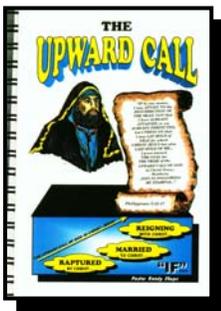
The Christian's priorities in life should not be like those of citizens in an earthly kingdom. The issue for us is not to be a Democrat or a Republican fervently trying to get our man (or woman) into the White House! This is not our race, nor is it our prize! If you are sad or mad because of who won this last earthly race and prize, then you are following the wrong race for the wrong prize! Politics is a substitute for what God is offering His people!

We are going to take a brief look at what the Bible presents as the race and the prize. It has nothing to do with eternal life. It has everything to do with eternal rewards. A prize is not a gift. Eternal life is a gift. God has made us to be His sons and daughters by the free gift of eternal life. Do you want what is higher than what you already have? Then hear what the Spirit says to the churches(sons and daughters):

**“...I WILL GIVE IN MY HOUSE AND WITHIN MY WALLS A PLACE
AND A NAME BETTER THAN THAT OF SONS AND DAUGHTERS...”**

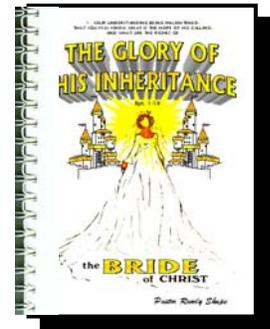
The name God offers to every member of the Body of Christ is that of the Bride of Christ. The Bride of Christ will be formed out of the members of the Body of Christ in the same manner as was Adam's bride (Eve) formed out of Adam's body while he slept. The Last Adam, Jesus (1 Cor. 15:45), will have His bride formed out of a part of His Body (sons and daughters) while it is in a deep spiritual sleep pertaining to the real goals and purposes God has set before us. We need to awake to what is the race and the prize God has offered to His people. Far too many of God's people are immersed into an earthly political race for an earthly political prize. Focus on the real prize and it will cease to matter who is in the White House! Read the Book of Acts. The early church turned the world upside down while Nero sat on the throne of the Roman Empire. Why do we need a Christian President over this modern-day version of the Roman Empire?

The set of Scriptures below requires thoughtful contemplation for they speak of the nature of the race and the magnitude of the prize God has set before every born-again Christian. I cannot elaborate upon them in this brief newsletter. I have written several books which do so:



This booklet examines what Paul reveals as the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. This great apostle talks of a goal and a prize set before every believer. It is the call to be raptured by Christ, to be married to Christ and to reign with Christ. None of these are byproducts of having been born again, but rather are future rewards set before us.

Sadly, I must say, the true message of the Bride of Christ remains a “great mystery” to most of God's people today with the erroneous “I got it all when I got saved” theology that permeates most of Christianity. The Bride is a prize, not a gift!



How do these Scriptures fit into your theology?

“DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT THOSE WHO RUN IN A RACE ALL RUN, BUT ONE RECEIVES THE PRIZE? RUN IN SUCH A WAY THAT YOU MAY OBTAIN IT. AND EVERYONE WHO COMPETES FOR THE PRIZE IS TEMPERATE IN ALL THINGS. NOW THEY DO IT TO OBTAIN A PERISHABLE CROWN, BUT WE FOR AN IMPERISHABLE CROWN. THEREFORE I RUN THUS: NOT WITH UNCERTAINTY. THUS I FIGHT: NOT AS ONE WHO BEATS THE AIR. BUT I DISCIPLINE MY BODY AND BRING IT INTO SUBJECTION, LEST, WHEN I HAVE PREACHED TO OTHERS, I MYSELF SHOULD BECOME DISQUALIFIED.” 1 Cor. 9:24-27

**“THUS SAYS THE LORD:
TO THE EUNUCHS WHO
KEEP MY SABBATHS,
AND CHOOSE
WHAT PLEASURES ME,
AND HOLD FAST
MY COVENANT,
EVEN TO THEM I WILL GIVE
IN MY HOUSE AND WITHIN
MY WALLS A PLACE AND A
NAME BETTER THAN THAT OF
SONS AND DAUGHTERS;
I WILL GIVE THEM AN
EVERLASTING NAME THAT
SHALL NOT BE CUT OFF.”**
Isaiah 56:4-5



“IMPERISHABLE CROWN”

**“...LET US LAY ASIDE EVERY
WEIGHT, AND THE SIN
WHICH SO EASILY ENSNARES
US, AND LET US RUN WITH
ENDURANCE THE RACE
THAT IS SET BEFORE US,
LOOKING UNTO JESUS,
THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER
OF OUR FAITH... CONSIDER
HIM WHO ENDURED SUCH
HOSTILITY FROM SINNERS
AGAINST HIMSELF, LEST
YOU BECOME WEARY AND
DISCOURAGED IN YOUR
SOULS...”**
Heb. 12:1-3

**“...I PRESS ON, THAT I MAY LAY HOLD OF THAT FOR WHICH CHRIST JESUS
HAS ALSO LAID HOLD OF ME... ONE THING I DO, FORGETTING THOSE
THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND AND REACHING FORWARD TO THOSE THINGS
WHICH ARE AHEAD, I PRESS TOWARD THE GOAL FOR THE PRIZE OF THE
UPWARD CALL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS... LET US, AS MANY AS ARE
MATURE, HAVE THIS MIND...” Phil. 3:12-15**

DEFINING THE RACE



**"I HAVE FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT,
I HAVE FINISHED THE RACE,
I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH.
FINALLY, THERE IS LAID UP FOR ME
THE CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,
WHICH THE LORD, THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE,
WILL GIVE TO ME ON THAT DAY,
AND NOT TO ME ONLY, BUT ALSO TO ALL WHO
HAVE LOVED HIS APPEARING."** 2 Tim. 4:7-8

DEFINING THE RACE



**"...SIN LIES AT
THE DOOR,
AND ITS DESIRE
IS FOR YOU,
BUT YOU
SHOULD RULE
OVER IT."**
Gen. 4:7

**"DO NOT LET
SIN REIGN IN
YOUR MORTAL
BODY,
THAT YOU
SHOULD OBEY IT
IN ITS LUSTS."**
Rom. 6:12

DEFINING THE RACE



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



DEFINING THE RACE



**"AND DO THIS, KNOWING THE TIME,
THAT NOW IT IS HIGH TIME TO AWAKE
OUT OF SLEEP; FOR NOW OUR SALVATION
IS NEARER THAN WHEN WE FIRST BELIEVED...
LET US CAST OFF THE WORKS OF DARKNESS AND
PUT ON THE ARMOR OF LIGHT. LET US WALK
PROPERLY...PUT ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,
AND MAKE NO PROVISION FOR THE FLESH,
TO FULFILL ITS LUSTS."** Rom. 13:11-14

Having identified the prize as a name (the Bride of Christ) and a place in God's House (New Jerusalem) that is better than sons and daughters, let us now look at the criteria that defines the race we must run in order to win the prize. Paul spells out three things which he himself did in order to lay hold of an imperishable crown: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith", and so must we. Our fight is with a three-fold enemy: the world, the flesh and the devil. Paul establishes himself as a pattern to be followed (Phil 3:17, 1 Cor. 4:16). No one will be crowned unless they run by the rules of the race (2 Tim. 2:5). Notice the mandate, "I kept the faith." This is important in light of Paul's prediction that "...in the latter times, some will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons" (1 Tim. 4:1).



The second criteria for running the race is that of dealing thoroughly with sin. A. W. Tozer stated it this way:

**"DEAL THOROUGHLY WITH THE ISSUE OF SIN,
OR THE ISSUE OF SIN
WILL DEAL THOROUGHLY WITH YOU."**

These two passages, one from the Old Testament and one from the New, convey clearly that God intends for His people to reign over sin in their lives. Grace covers sin, but was never meant to be a license to continue in sin:

**"SHALL WE CONTINUE IN SIN THAT GRACE
MAY ABOUND? CERTAINLY NOT!"** Rom. 6:1

**"THOSE WHO ARE CHRIST'S HAVE CRUCIFIED THE FLESH
WITH ITS PASSIONS AND DESIRES."** Gal. 5:24

The third criteria for running the race for the prize centers upon our ongoing warfare with this present world. "Conformed or transformed" is the issue at stake. The world seeks to conform us to its mold, but the Word can transform our mind to think differently about the world. The world lies under the sway of the Wicked One (1 Jn. 5:19). The direction of this world is according to the Prince and Power of the Air, Satan (Eph. 2:2). All the philosophy that is in this present world (the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life) is stated as not being of God. Also, the Word tells us that whoever loves this present world does not really love God (1 Jn. 2:15-17). The apostle James tells us that if we are a friend of the world, then we make ourselves the enemy of God (Jm. 4:4).

The fourth criteria for running the race deals with the issue of laziness and indifference. Paul tells believers it is high time to awake out of sleep since our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. Nearly two thousand years have elapsed since Paul gave this warning. How much nearer do you suppose is our salvation today?

Paul charges the believer with the responsibility of "knowing the time." God commended:

**"THE SONS OF ISSACHAR WHO HAD UNDERSTANDING OF THE
TIMES, TO KNOW WHAT ISRAEL OUGHT TO DO..."** 1 Chron. 12:32

Paul tells us here in Romans 13 exactly what the church ought to be doing in light of the time in which we live.

The fifth criteria that defines for us what is the race set before us is this call to spiritual warfare, the necessity to take up all the armor of God. I stress the need for ALL the armor of God if you are going to be able to withstand in the evil day. Too many of God's people are "spiritual streakers" wearing only the helmet of salvation and their feet covered with the gospel of peace. They are naked of armor in between. Leonard Ravenhill pungently charged Christians with this portion of Paul's words, "For we do not wrestle" (Eph. 6:12). James tells us the complete package is, "Submit unto God and resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Jm. 4:7). Some of us are quite good at submitting to God but quite negligent at resisting the devil. As Leonard said, "we wrestle not."

The sixth criteria spelled out as part of running the race deals with the doctrine of sanctification (the means by which I am set apart unto God). Most of God's people are only taught the doctrine of justification (the means by which I am made righteous and innocent) The apostle Peter taught both:

"...REST YOUR HOPE FULLY UPON THE GRACE OF GOD THAT IS BROUGHT TO YOU AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST; AS OBEDIENT CHILDREN, NOT CONFORMING YOURSELVES TO YOUR FORMER LUSTS, AS IN YOUR IGNORANCE; BUT AS HE WHO CALLED YOU IS HOLY, YOU ALSO BE HOLY IN ALL YOUR CONDUCT."

1 Pet. 1:13-15

Note that the call is to, "Come out from among them and be separate..." The word "Church" means "the called-out ones." It is also worthy to note the ongoing call to perfect holiness ("Hagamos-Sanctification") in the fear of God. We did not get it all when we got saved!

The seventh criteria necessary for running the race deals with the subject of change. This word became a buzz word in the political race. However, it isn't Washington D.C. that needs to be changed, it is God's people. Political philosophy is to change the government while the people remain unchanged. God, who says of Himself, "I am the Lord, I do not change" (Mal. 3:6) calls His people to change while embracing a perfect government (the Kingdom of God) that needs no change. See how the thrust of politics is always in opposition to God's real Kingdom? The Christian is to be changed into the image of their everlasting "President" – Jesus Christ! Unto this ongoing path of change God's people are predestined:

"FOR WHOM HE FOREKNEW, HE ALSO PREDESTINED TO BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON, THAT HE MIGHT BE THE FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN." Rom. 8:29

Today's theology has changed God's plan of predestination into one of being predestined to be saved instead of being changed after one becomes saved.

This last chart is a summarization of the highlighted points of defining the race. Look them over carefully. This is what God defines as the requirements for running the race for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. This is what it will take to be among those who God says:

"...I WILL GIVE IN MY HOUSE AND WITHIN MY WALLS A PLACE AND A NAME BETTER THAN THAT OF SONS AND DAUGHTERS..."

DEFINING THE RACE



"...BE STRONG IN THE LORD AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT. PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO STAND AGAINST THE WILES OF THE DEVIL... THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO WITHSTAND IN THE EVIL DAY, AND HAVING DONE ALL, TO STAND."

Eph. 6:10-13

DEFINING THE RACE



"COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM AND BE SEPARATE, SAYS THE LORD. DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN... LET US CLEANSE OURSELVES FROM ALL FILTHINESS OF THE FLESH AND SPIRIT, PERFECTING HOLINESS IN THE FEAR OF GOD."

2 Cor. 6:17, 7:1

DEFINING THE RACE



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

2 Cor. 3:18

DEFINING THE RACE



**FIGHT THE FIGHT, FINISH THE RACE, KEEP THE FAITH REIGN OVER SIN
NON-CONFORMITY TO THE WORLD
AWAKE OUT OF SLEEP-WALK PROPERLY, MAKE NO PROVISION FOR THE FLESH
PUT ON THE ARMOR OF GOD IN ORDER TO STAND IN THE EVIL DAY
BE TRANSFORMED INTO THE IMAGE OF THE LORD
COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM-BE SEPARATE-
PERFECT HOLINESS IN THE FEAR OF THE LORD**

DEFINING THE RACE



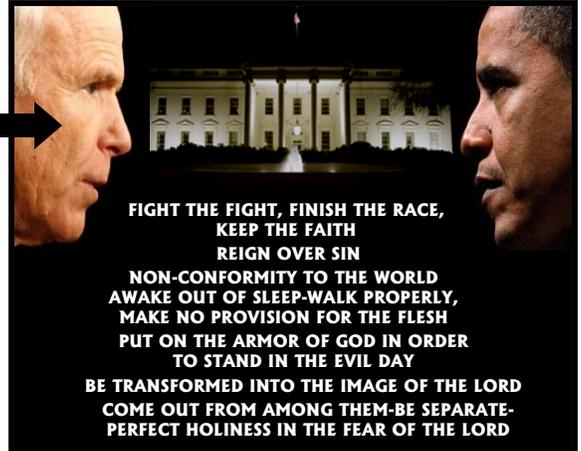
**FIGHT THE FIGHT, FINISH THE RACE,
KEEP THE FAITH
REIGN OVER SIN**

**NON-CONFORMITY TO THE WORLD
AWAKE OUT OF SLEEP-WALK PROPERLY,
MAKE NO PROVISION FOR THE FLESH
PUT ON THE ARMOR OF GOD IN ORDER
TO STAND IN THE EVIL DAY**

**BE TRANSFORMED INTO THE IMAGE OF THE LORD
COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM-BE SEPARATE-
PERFECT HOLINESS IN THE FEAR OF THE LORD**

Let me now overlay the summary of what constitutes the spiritual race upon the physical political race for the White House.

Absurd, is it not?



Can either John McCain or Barack Obama's presence in the White House impact ANY of the specified criteria for running our race? If John McCain had won the White House as so desired by the Religious Right segment of the Republican Party, how would his presence in the White House have helped any of us to obtain any of the necessary conditions for running the true race set before us in God's Word? The answer is obvious; he could not. We are at the end of eight years of a Christian President in the White House. He did not help the believer run his spiritual race either. Why is that so? Because these are men with specified values that are established by the confines of the U.S. Constitution, not the Bible. God endorses the separation of church and state. The stated principles of the Kingdom of God are not "Inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Rather, they are "Righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17). Those verses go on to stress that, "For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God..." (Rom. 14:18).

The problem lies in the fact that the spiritual race for the spiritual prize has been replaced in the hearts of God's people with an earthly, political race for a political prize. The problem is that God's people are just as obsessed with the inalienable rights to pursue life liberty and happiness as are the unbelievers in this country. The fault lies in the likes of the Rush Limbaughs and James Dobsons who incite God's people to focus upon this earthly kingdom as constituting the race and the prize. The fault lies in pulpits that fail to set before God's people the true Kingdom of God in its present manifestation of abiding in the heart of every born-again believer.

Christendom has been fed a steady diet of the importance of family values dominating and emanating from the White House. We have been taught that the ultimate goal is for a Christian President to choose judges for the Supreme Court who will overthrow Wade vs. Roe. We have been pressed to prevent gay marriages from becoming law. What we really want is the same thing the Puritans wanted, a physical manifestation of the Kingdom of God (God's New Israel) on earth prior to the return of Jesus Christ to the earth. It can't and won't happen, for it is not God's will to physically manifest an earthly Kingdom such as the Puritans espoused. Such goals are not in harmony with God's Word, and God will never violate what He has written in His Word.

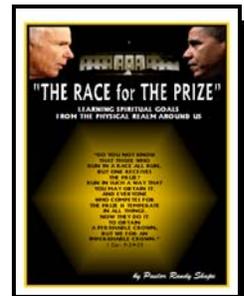
The purpose of this newsletter has been simply to cause all of us to look at the level of our fervency and commitment to the true race and prize that has been set before us. If we are neglecting it in favor of the political race and prize, then we need to realize that we have embraced a subtle substitute, the perishable for the imperishable.

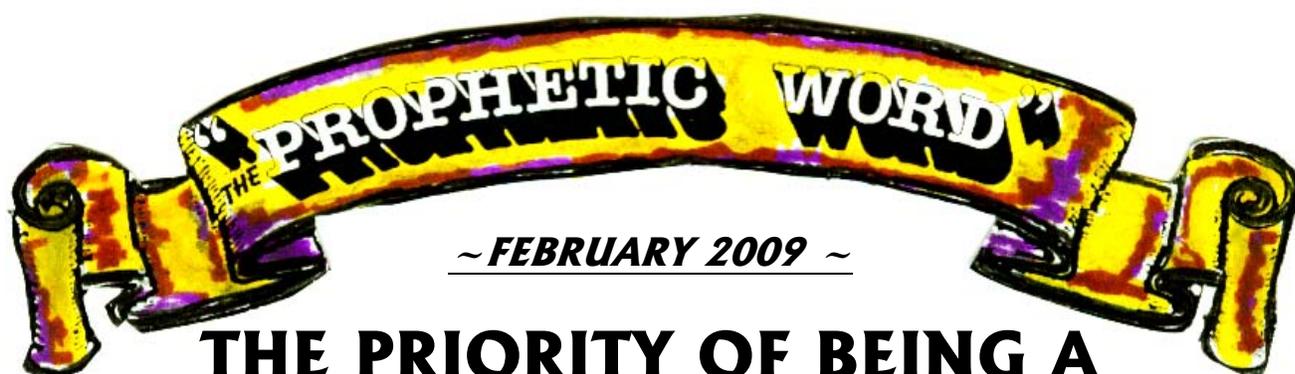
Pastor Randy Shape



AVAILABLE IN DVD

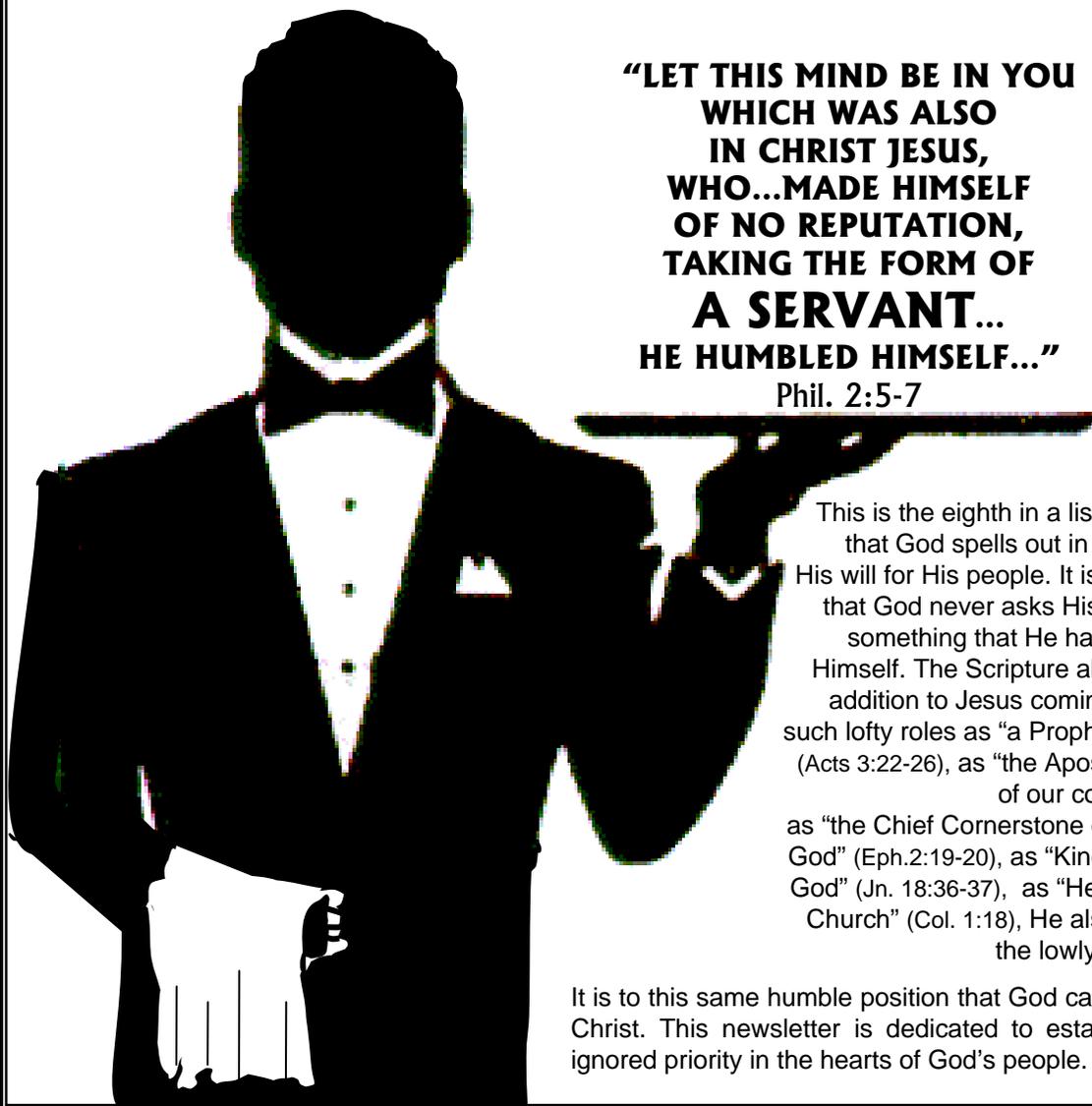
The subject matter of this month's newsletter is also available in DVD format. I taught this subject recently in our congregation here in Denver as well as in our extended church in Ohio. You can order this 50-minute teaching from our ministry for \$10.00 plus \$2.00 shipping and handling.





~ FEBRUARY 2009 ~

THE PRIORITY OF BEING A
SERVANT
 OF THE MOST HIGH GOD

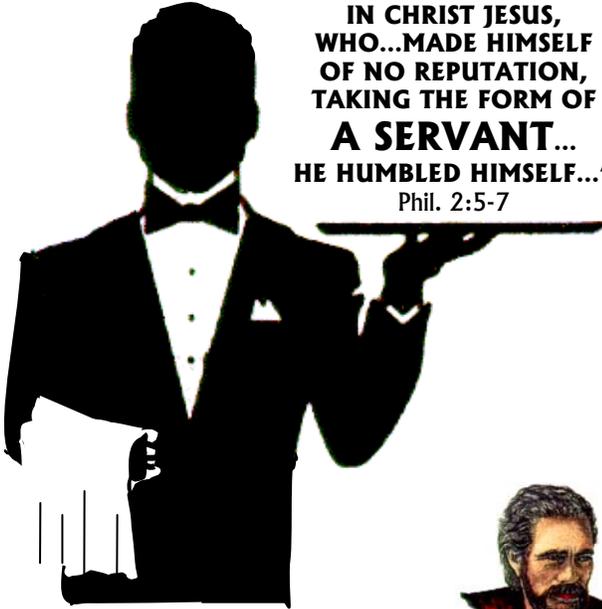


**“LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU
 WHICH WAS ALSO
 IN CHRIST JESUS,
 WHO...MADE HIMSELF
 OF NO REPUTATION,
 TAKING THE FORM OF
 A SERVANT...
 HE HUMBLD HIMSELF...”**

Phil. 2:5-7

This is the eighth in a list of twelve priorities that God spells out in His Word as being His will for His people. It is important to grasp that God never asks His people to do or be something that He has not demonstrated Himself. The Scripture above reveals that in addition to Jesus coming to earth to inherit such lofty roles as “a Prophet like unto Moses” (Acts 3:22-26), as “the Apostle and High Priest of our confession” (Heb.3:1), as “the Chief Cornerstone of the Household of God” (Eph.2:19-20), as “King of the Kingdom of God” (Jn. 18:36-37), as “Head of the Body, the Church” (Col. 1:18), He also came to assume the lowly office of a servant.

It is to this same humble position that God calls every believer in Christ. This newsletter is dedicated to establishing this often-ignored priority in the hearts of God’s people.



"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 HUMBLLED HIMSELF..."
Phil. 2:5-7

Jesus must have taught His disciples well this principle of servanthood. Look carefully at how five of the New Testament writers identify themselves as they open their epistles.

Although three of the five were definitely holding the highest office in the government of God's church, that of an Apostle, (Jude and Timothy are debatable) they listed themselves first and foremost as servants of Jesus Christ:



"PETER, A SERVANT AND APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST..."
2 Pet. 1:1



"JUDE, A SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST..."
Jude 1



"JAMES, A SERVANT OF GOD AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST..."
James 1:1



"PAUL AND TIMOTHY, SERVANTS OF JESUS CHRIST..."
Phil. 1:1

Segments of today's church leaders seem to cherish being introduced with lofty titles. Pastors place in front of their names the preferred title "Reverend" when only God is worthy of reverence. Television personalities flash on the screen,

"Apostle such and such" or "Prophet so and so." Not that these governmental gifts are not for today, but I don't believe they should be blatantly printed in large print on business cards or seminar brochures. If one is truly an Apostle or Prophet in God's church today, the people will know and recognize those gifts without personal promotion. I pastor a local church and have a calling to teach God's Word. I reluctantly accept the use of these titles (pastor and teacher) because they state what functions I do for God's Kingdom. However, I prefer to be known best as "a servant of the Most High God." It is very interesting to note that this phrase, "servants of the Most High God," appears twice in Scripture, once in the Old Testament and once in the New Testament. It is most noteworthy that both of these references were spoken by the mouth of pagan unbelievers who recognized true servants of God when they saw them:

"THEN NEBUCHADNEZZAR WENT NEAR THE MOUTH OF THE BURNING FIERY FURNACE AND SPOKE, SAYING, 'SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABED-NEGO, SERVANTS OF THE MOST HIGH GOD, COME OUT, AND COME HERE.'" Dan. 3:26

"SERVANTS OF THE MOST HIGH GOD"

Acts 16:16-17

"...A CERTAIN SLAVE GIRL POSSESSED WITH A SPIRIT OF DIVINATION... FOLLOWED PAUL AND US, AND CRIED OUT, SAYING, 'THESE MEN ARE THE SERVANTS OF THE MOST HIGH GOD, WHO PROCLAIM TO US THE WAY OF SALVATION.'" "

These two testimonies remind me of a similar story of the seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who attempted to cast out demons "in the name of Jesus that Paul preached." The demons replied, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" (Acts 19:14). Jesus and Paul were servants of God, these men were not.

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



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

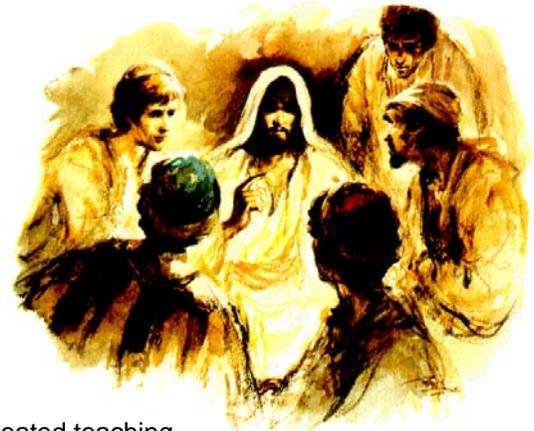
1 Cor. 4:8-10

Some of today's hype that is put forth as God's will for His people stands in direct opposition to Paul's words above. God does promise His overcoming saints that they shall have "power over the nations" and "rule them with a rod of iron" (Rev. 2:26-27), but not now! Reigning is reserved for the Millennial Kingdom to come. Serving in God's present internal Kingdom is the key for the future. Serve now-reign later! Reign now-serve later! This is the clear teaching of Christ.

Two of Jesus' disciples were having a discussion with Jesus about their desire to sit on His right hand and on His left in the Kingdom to come. Jesus gave this principle to them that will govern who will and will not reign in the coming Kingdom:

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

Mark 10:42-45



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



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

Luke 12:43-44

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

Matt. 25:23

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

There are several governing principles we need to ponder that will determine whether God will indeed say to each of us, "Well done good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25:23). What is the criteria that determines whether our servanthood will be deemed (1) "good" and (2) "faithful" in God's estimation?

Let me suggest seven for your consideration:



1. HUMILITY

THE MARK OF A SERVANT

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

Phil.2:3-8 excerpts

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

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

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

Romans 12:16



2. SINCERITY OF HEART

THE MARK OF A SERVANT

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

Eph. 6:5-8

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

Col. 3:22-25

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

3.



USEFUL TO THE MASTER

**THE MARK OF
A SERVANT**

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

2 Tim.2:20-21

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

When God had a message to impart which “in other ages was not made known to the sons of men”, He entrusted it to His holy apostles and prophets (Eph. 3:5). When the early church had need of men even to wait on tables, God wanted men chosen with the criteria of being “of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6:2-3). One of those men, Stephen, would go from the lowly task of waiting on tables to being “full of faith and power, doing great wonders and signs among the people” (Acts 6:8). It could be said of Stephen “he who was faithful in what is least is faithful also in much...” (Luke 16:10). The U. S. Marine Corps is always advertising for a few good men, and so is God looking for a few good vessels of honor to carry out His good works. A good servant is one that is useful to the Master.

4.



FAITHFUL TO THE MASTER

**THE MARK OF
A SERVANT**

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

1 Cor. 4:1

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

Heb.3:5

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

“...WHO CAN FIND A FAITHFUL MAN?”

Proverbs 20:6

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

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

5.



**THE MARK OF
A SERVANT**

**GRACE,
REVERENCE
AND
GODLY FEAR**

**“...LET US HAVE GRACE,
BY WHICH WE MAY
SERVE GOD ACCEPTABLY
WITH REVERENCE AND GODLY FEAR.”** Heb. 12:28

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**“FOR WHEN YOUR JUDGMENTS ARE IN THE EARTH, THE INHABITANTS OF THE
WORLD WILL LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS. LET GRACE BE SHOWN TO THE WICKED;
YET HE WILL NOT LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS...”** Isa. 26:9-10

6.



**THE MARK OF
A SERVANT**

**HIS LABORS
ARE HIS
REASONABLE
SERVICE**

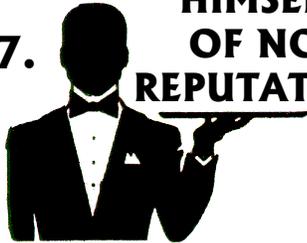
**“...WHEN YOU HAVE DONE ALL THOSE THINGS
WHICH YOU WERE COMMANDED,
SAY, WE ARE UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS.
WE HAVE DONE WHAT WAS OUR DUTY TO DO.”**
Luke 17:10

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

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

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

7.



**THE MARK OF
A SERVANT**

**MAKES
HIMSELF
OF NO
REPUTATION**

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

Phil. 2:5-8

It is one thing to serve to be seen, but quite another to serve behind the scenes. An example of what I mean could be seen in the fact that many men would prefer to preach than to pray. One is visible to men, but the other invisible. Jesus condemned the Pharisees who "loved to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men" (Matt. 6:5). However, God commended those who would "go into your room, shut the door, and pray to your father in secret." (Matt. 6:6).

To pray in public may earn us the reputation before men as a man of prayer. However, when we pray in secret our reputation will only be known by God. If we will do one in public, but not the other in private, then we must weigh what our motives are. Are we, like the Pharisees, seeking a reputation before men? That is pride. The servant is to make himself of no reputation. I believe it would require that we do far more behind the scenes than we do when we can be seen. Jesus taught this secret principle concerning not only praying, but in giving, and in fasting (Matt. 6:1-18). It is a difficult and delicate mandate to carry out. Paul said, "...we make it our aim...to be well-pleasing to Him"(2Cor.5:9). In another place he said, "...circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit...whose praise is not from men but from God" (Rom.2:29). John the Baptist summarizes the needed mentality that we must cultivate, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (Jn. 3:30).

A SERVANT IS TO BE HUMBLE:
"Let this mind (ATTITUDE) be in you which was also in CHRIST JESUS, who, being in the FORM OF GOD, MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION, taking the FORM OF A SERVANT...HE HUMBLED HIMSELF..." Phil.2:5-8

A SERVANT DOES GOD'S WILL:
"But as SERVANTS OF CHRIST, doing the WILL OF GOD FROM THE HEART." Eph.6:6

A SERVANT IS A VESSEL OF HONOR:
"But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for HONOR and some for DISHONOR. Therefore if anyone CLEANSSES HIMSELF from the LATTER, he will be A VESSEL FOR HONOR, SANCTIFIED and USEFUL FOR THE MASTER, PREPARED for every GOOD WORK." 2 Tim.2:20-25

A SERVANT WILL BE FAITHFUL:
*"Moreover IT IS REQUIRED in SERVANTS that one BE FOUND FAITHFUL." 1 Cor.4:2
 MOSES indeed was FAITHFUL in all his house AS A SERVANT, for a TESTIMONY..." Heb.3:5*

A SERVANT WILL SERVE GOD WITH REVERENCE and FEAR:
"LET US...SERVE GOD ACCEPTABLY with REVERENCE and GODLY FEAR." Heb.12:28

A SERVANT WILL SEEK TO PLEASE HIS MASTER:
"Therefore we MAKE IT OUR AIM...to be WELL PLEASING TO HIM." 2 Cor.5:9

"WHAT ARE MY PRIORITIES? ARE THEY GOD'S PRIORITIES FOR MY LIFE, OR AM I DOING MY OWN THING?"



"EXAMINE AND TEST AND EVALUATE YOUR OWN SELVES TO SEE WHETHER YOU ARE HOLDING TO YOUR FAITH AND SHOWING THE PROPER FRUITS OF IT."

2 Cor. 13:5 Amplified



~ MARCH 2009 ~

CORPORATE PRIORITY: BEING BUILT TOGETHER INTO GOD'S

SPIRITUAL HOUSE

**"YOU ALSO, AS LIVING STONES
ARE BEING BUILT UP A SPIRITUAL HOUSE..."**

1 Pet. 2:5

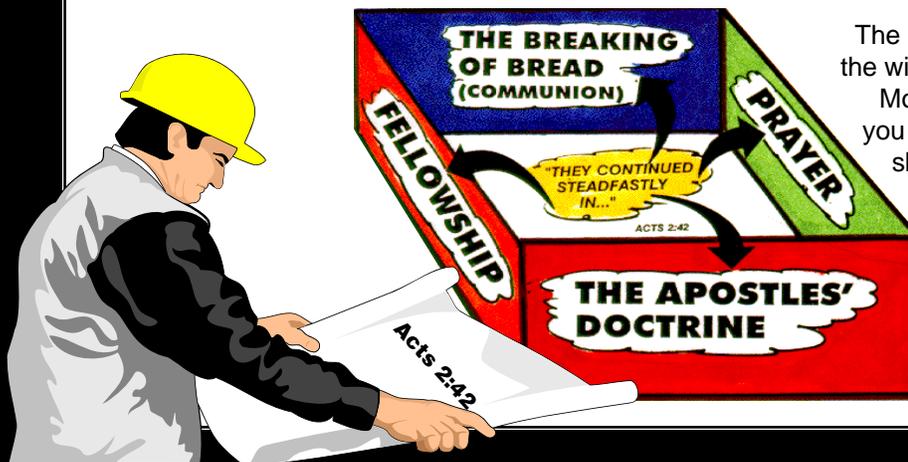
**"BUT CHRIST AS A SON OVER HIS OWN HOUSE,
WHOSE HOUSE WE ARE..."**

Heb. 3:6

**"NOW THEREFORE, YOU ARE NO LONGER STRANGERS AND FOREIGNERS,
BUT FELLOW CITIZENS WITH THE SAINTS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD.
HAVING BEEN BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND THE PROPHETS,
JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE, IN WHOM THE WHOLE BUILDING,
BEING JOINED TOGETHER, GROWS INTO A HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD, IN WHOM YOU
ALSO ARE BEING BUILT TOGETHER FOR A HABITATION OF GOD IN THE SPIRIT."**

Eph. 2:18-22

In our on-going study of God's (12) biblical priorities for His people, we have come to the last four which are corporate identities: (1) "Christ's Spiritual House, (2) the Church of Jesus Christ, (3) the Body of Jesus Christ, and (4) the Espoused Bride of Christ." By corporate identities I make a distinction between the first eight priorities that were individually achievable and these last four areas which require our involvement with other believers. Look again at the above passage from Ephesians Chapter Two, and note the mandate of "being joined together" and "being built together." Peter also conveys this plurality of involvement in referring to us as "living stones...being built up a spiritual house" (1 Pet. 2:5). It takes more than one stone to built a house.



The physical house God required of Israel in the wilderness had a building plan as given to Moses with the specific warning, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown to you on the mountain" (Heb. 8:5).

The spiritual house of Jesus Christ also has a specified building plan that was given to the early church.

This newsletter is dedicated to revealing what I believe are the four walls of God's spiritual house as delineated in Acts 2:42.

Before we look at what constitutes the spiritual house of Christ, let us ponder the building principles Jesus Himself set down as needful for a house that will be able to withstand the onslaught of Satan's opposition. Consider these words of Jesus found in Matthew Chapter Seven:



“UNLESS THE LORD BUILDS THE HOUSE, THEY LABOR IN VAIN WHO BUILD IT.”
Psm. 127:1

The above parable stresses the importance of building upon a solid foundation. The “sayings of Jesus” is the bedrock upon which the house is enabled to withstand all the forms of pressure Satan brings upon it. Our spiritual house also has a specified foundation upon which it is to be built:

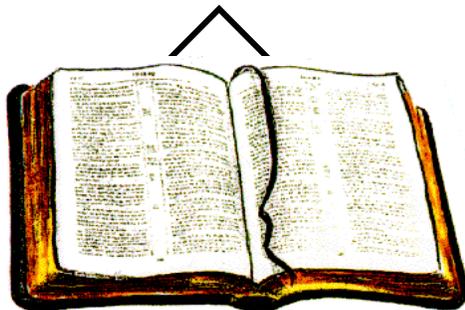
“NOW THEREFORE, YOU ARE NO LONGER STRANGERS AND FOREIGNERS, BUT FELLOW CITIZENS WITH THE SAINTS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD.

HAVING BEEN BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND THE PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE,

IN WHOM THE WHOLE BUILDING, BEING JOINED TOGETHER, GROWS INTO A HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD, IN WHOM YOU ALSO ARE BEING BUILT TOGETHER FOR A HABITATION OF GOD IN THE SPIRIT.” Eph. 2:18-22

In Matthew's account the foundation is limited to the sayings of Jesus. Paul's account of the spiritual house which Christ is building speaks of the foundation to include the sayings of the apostles and the prophets along with Jesus' sayings as the “Chief Cornerstone.” When Peter warned of mockers that would come in the last days, he gave this reminder pertaining to the importance of the sayings of the apostles and the prophets:

JESUS CHRIST, THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE



THE HOLY PROPHETS

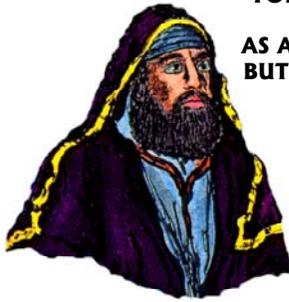
THE HOLY APOSTLES



“...I STIR UP YOUR PURE MINDS BY WAY OF REMINDER, THAT YOU MAY BE MINDFUL OF THE WORDS WHICH WERE SPOKEN BEFORE BY THE HOLY PROPHETS, AND OF THE COMMANDMENTS OF US THE APOSTLES OF THE LORD AND SAVIOR...”
2 Pet. 3:1-2

The foundation for this spiritual house is clearly defined. It is the sayings of Christ, the sayings of the prophets and the sayings of the apostles. In essence, it is the contents of the Word of God upon which this spiritual house is to be built.

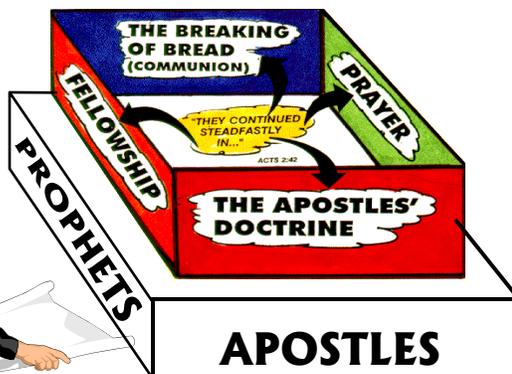
Paul the apostle gives us yet another vitally important picture of this spiritual house:



“FOR WE ARE GOD’S FELLOW WORKERS; YOU ARE GOD’S FIELD, YOU ARE GOD’S BUILDING. ACCORDING TO THE GRACE OF GOD WHICH WAS GIVEN TO ME, AS A WISE MASTER BUILDER I HAVE LAID THE FOUNDATION, AND ANOTHER BUILDS ON IT. BUT LET EACH ONE TAKE HEED HOW HE BUILDS ON IT. FOR NO OTHER FOUNDATION CAN ANYONE LAY THAN THAT WHICH IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST. NOW IF ANYONE BUILDS ON THIS FOUNDATION WITH (1) GOLD, SILVER, PRECIOUS STONES, (OR 2) WOOD, HAY STRAW, EACH ONE’S WORK WILL BECOME MANIFEST; FOR THE DAY WILL DECLARE IT, BECAUSE IT WILL BE REVEALED BY FIRE; AND THE FIRE WILL TEST EACH ONE’S WORK, OF WHAT SORT IT IS (“GOLD,SILVER,PRECIOUS STONES, OR WOOD,HAY, STRAW”) . IF ANYONE’S WORK WHICH HE HAS BUILT ON IT ENDURES (THE TEST OF FIRE) HE WILL RECEIVE A REWARD. IF ANY ONE’S WORK IS BURNED, HE WILL SUFFER LOSS (OF REWARD); BUT HE HIMSELF WILL BE SAVED, YET SO AS THROUGH FIRE.” 1 Cor. 3:9-15

We are God’s building. Paul laid the foundation for this building-it is Jesus Christ. No other foundation will work. The building which is to be erected on this foundation consists of the work/labor of the believer. Two choices of building materials are given: (1) “gold, silver and precious stones” or (2) “wood, hay and straw.” It is obvious which category will survive the test of fire being applied to it. You cannot destroy “gold, silver or precious stones” by fire, but “wood, hay and straw” will quickly be consumed. The moral to the story is this: One category of building materials is very costly to obtain as it must be dug out of the ground at great expense and labor while the other material is cheap and easily obtained on the surface of the ground.

Let me show you the very costly building that God wants you to build, the one that will pass the test of fire and ultimately, provide for you great rewards in heaven for your hard labors:



“...AND THAT DAY ABOUT THREE THOUSAND SOULS WERE ADDED TO THEM. AND THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY IN THE APOSTLES DOCTRINE AND FELLOWSHIP, IN THE BREAKING OF BREAD, AND IN PRAYERS.”
Acts 2:41-42

Paul gives us the revelation of the foundation of this spiritual house as well as the house itself in Ephesians 2:18-22 above. The foundation is based upon the teachings of Jesus Christ as the Chief Cornerstone and the commandments (doctrine) of the apostles and prophets.

The building itself consists of believers interacting with other believers for the purpose of being “joined together and “built together” into God’s spiritual house. The passage in Acts 2:42 shows us the four building-block principles that the Holy Spirit singled out which constitute the structural walls of this spiritual house. It is unto the construction of these four walls that believers, as “living stones” (1 Pet. 2:5), are to submit to God’s stated objective of becoming “joined together” and “built together” into a “holy temple in the Lord” for the “habitation of God in the Spirit.”

No born-again believer is exempt from this God-given corporate mandate. Churches are not perfect, but this is the source where other believers are to be found with whom we are to be “joined together” and “built together.” It is within imperfect churches that God perfects His people as they painfully learn to “continue steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread (communion), and in (corporate) prayers” as Acts 2:42 so states. You can’t achieve these corporate goals as a solo-Lone Ranger-type of Christian. If you are a Christian, hear the Word of the Lord concerning the need for public assembly with other believers:

“...AND LET US CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER IN ORDER TO STIR UP LOVE AND GOOD WORKS, NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER, AS IS THE MANNER OF SOME, BUT EXHORTING ONE ANOTHER, AND SO MUCH THE MORE AS YOU SEE THE DAY APPROACHING.”

Heb. 10:24-25

"...AND THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY IN THE APOSTLES DOCTRINE..." Acts 2:41-42

The Bible speaks of several types of doctrine. There is sound doctrine, unsound doctrine, false doctrine, and more specifically, "the apostles doctrine." What is "the apostles doctrine?" Below I have assembled for your consideration a collection of the apostles doctrine on how believers are to interact with "one another." We have instruction from eight different epistles and four different apostles. Take the time to prayerfully meditate on this display of some of the commandments from our holy apostles that we are to obey (2 Pet. 3:2). Think of your personal interaction with other believers from your local congregation, and you will know to what degree you are "continuing steadfastly in the apostles doctrine":



Did you give yourself a passing or a failing grade? We are called to:

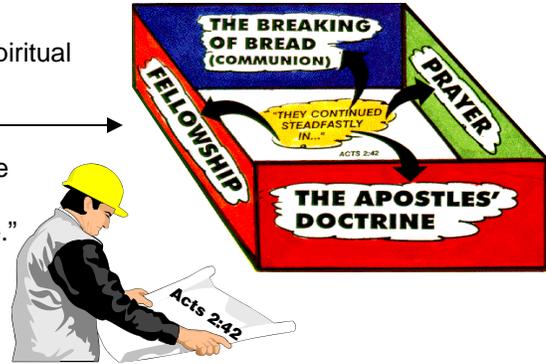
"EXAMINE AND TEST AND EVALUATE YOUR OWN SELVES TO SEE WHETHER YOU ARE HOLDING TO YOUR FAITH AND SHOWING THE PROPER FRUITS OF IT. TEST AND PROVE YOURSELVES..." 2 Cor. 13:5 Amplified

Certainly there is more to “the apostles doctrine” than what is presented on the previous page. However, it is a good sampling of the CORPORATE emphasis that the apostles placed upon the church of being joined together with other believers. When Paul spoke of the Body of Christ, he stressed “The body is not one member but many...there are many members, yet one body” (1 Cor. 12:14,20). To the Ephesian church he stated, “...the whole body, joined and knit together...according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” (Eph. 4:16). Once your eyes are opened to the corporate emphasis contained within the apostles doctrinal teachings, the Word of God will take on a new perspective which places responsibility on every believer to work toward these corporate objectives. I am firmly convinced that a great part of the Judgment Seat of Christ (Rom. 14:10-13, 2 Cor.5:9-11) will judge the level of corporate involvement of God’s people. For instance Paul stated, “...that each one may receive the things done in the body...whether good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10). I believe Paul is referring to the corporate body of Christ in these verses. What kind of corporate things have we done in the body of Christ-good or bad? Are you building or tearing down?

Let us look now at the second costly building block of this spiritual house:

“...AND THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY IN...”

Fellowship is different than relationship. I am related to the whole body of Christ by means of the blood of Christ. Webster defines relationship as “united by blood—a blood relative.” I have relationship to all brothers and sisters who are in Christ via the new birth through faith in His blood. However, I do not, and cannot, have fellowship with all my spiritual brothers and sisters in Christ. Relationship is universal, but the ability to have fellowship is limited generally to a physical location. The definition of this word will tell us why this is true. Webster defines fellowship



as: **FELLOWSHIP: “THE COMPANIONSHIP OF PERSONS ON EQUAL AND FRIENDLY TERMS... THE STATE OF BEING TOGETHER OR SHARING...MUTUAL PARTICIPATION, COMMON INTEREST, OR EXPERIENCE...”** Webster

The Greek word translated as “fellowship” in the New Testament literally means, “Partaker—one of a pair.” Consider a fuller rendering of this word in Strong’s Concordance:

“KOINONIA” GR. “PARTICIPATION, SOCIAL INTERCOURSE... TO COMMUNICATE, TO HAVE COMMUNION... ROOT: SHARER, PARTAKER, PARTNER.”

Eph 2:21	whole building, being fitted together, grows into a
Eph 2:22	you also are being built together for a dwelling
Eph 4:16	body, joined and knit together by what every joint
Phil 1:27	with one mind striving together for the faith of the
Col 2:2	be encouraged, being knit together in love, and
Col 2:13	your flesh, He has made alive together with Him,
Col 2:19	the body, nourished and knit together by joints and
Heb 10:25	assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner

This sampling of passages using the word “together” conveys to us what is a commitment to fellowship with one another within a locally assembled group of believers in which we spend quality time together. It is far more than relationship to other Christians. It is a commitment to become “joined together...knit together...built up together.” It is to become a body of believers that are one in unity and purpose.

**“...THAT YOU MAY HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH US;
AND TRULY OUR FELLOWSHIP IS WITH THE FATHER AND WITH HIS SON JESUS CHRIST.
AND THESE THINGS WE WRITE TO YOU THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL.”**

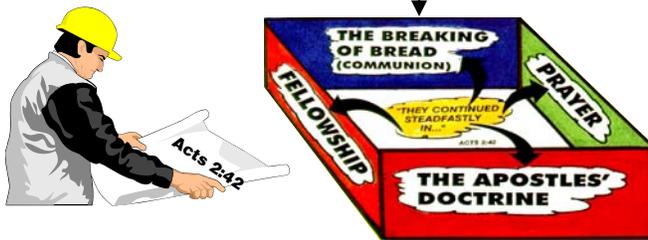
1 Jn. 1:3-4

**“...HAVE A WALK WORTHY OF THE CALLING WITH WHICH YOU WERE CALLED,
WITH ALL LOWLINESS AND GENTLENESS, WITH LONGSUFFERING, BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER
IN LOVE, ENDEAVORING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE.”**

Eph. 4:1-3

Let us look now at the third costly building block of this spiritual house:

“...AND THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY IN...



“THIS CUP OF BLESSING WHICH WE BLESS, IS IT NOT THE COMMUNION OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST? THE BREAD WHICH WE BREAK, IS IT NOT THE COMMUNION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST?”

1 Cor. 10:16

The above verse from the apostle Paul proves that “the breaking of bread” speaks of the act of partaking of the sacrament of communion. It is not speaking of just sharing a meal together with brethren, but is rather tied to the common-union we have with the blood of Christ.

Paul goes on to remind us that it was Jesus Himself who instituted the partaking of the ritual practice of communion in which bread and wine represents the sacrificial work of Christ in instituting the New Covenant by means of His body and His blood:

“FOR I RECEIVED FROM THE LORD THAT WHICH I ALSO DELIVERED TO YOU: THAT THE LORD JESUS...TOOK BREAD; AND WHEN HE HAD GIVEN THANKS, HE BROKE IT AND SAID, ‘TAKE EAT; THIS IS MY BODY WHICH IS BROKEN FOR YOU; DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.’ IN THE SAME MANNER HE ALSO TOOK THE CUP AFTER SUPPER, SAYING, ‘THIS CUP IS THE NEW COVENANT IN MY BLOOD. THIS DO, AS OFTEN AS YOU DRINK IT, IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.’ FOR AS OFTEN AS YOU EAT THIS BREAD AND DRINK THIS CUP, YOU PROCLAIM THE LORD’S DEATH TILL HE COMES.” 1 Cor. 11:24-26

The power of tradition continues to make the Word of God of no effect (Mk. 7:13). For the most part, both Christians and many churches tend to place more emphasis upon celebrating the birth of Christ rather than His death! A recent survey of protestant Christians revealed that less than two percent of those surveyed partook of communion on a regular basis. Either it isn’t offered by some churches or when it is, the people do not bother to show up for it. This is certainly not the pattern we see of the early church in the book of Acts:

“NOW ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, WHEN THE DISCIPLES CAME TOGETHER TO BREAK BREAD... THERE WERE MANY LAMPS IN THE UPPER ROOM WHERE THEY WERE GATHERED TOGETHER.” Acts 20:7-8

Communion in the early church was not a “once every six weeks for ten minutes during the Sunday morning service.” They gathered together on the first day of the week—every week to break bread together. Communion was important to the early church because it maintained right relationships between them and their God and between themselves and the rest of the brethren. Communion was a time of reconciliation with God and with men. Communion was instituted so that those in Covenant relationship with God and one another could deal thoroughly with sin—sin against God and sin against one another. The modern-day doctrinal position of “every sin I ever have committed or ever will commit is already under the blood” is heresy. The Scriptures say:

“IF WE SAY THAT WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM, AND WALK IN DARKNESS, WE LIE AND DO NOT PRACTICE THE TRUTH. BUT IF WE WALK IN THE LIGHT AS HE IS IN THE LIGHT, WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER, AND THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST HIS SON CLEANSSES US FROM ALL SIN. IF WE SAY THAT WE HAVE NO SIN, WE DECEIVE OURSELVES, AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN US. IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS, HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST TO FORGIVE US OUR SINS AND TO CLEANSE US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.” 1 Jn. 1:6-9

Paul was careful to give the Corinthians the whole counsel of God pertaining to communion. Although it was to be a “cup of blessing” (1 Cor. 10:16), Paul warned believers about taking communion in an unworthy manner:

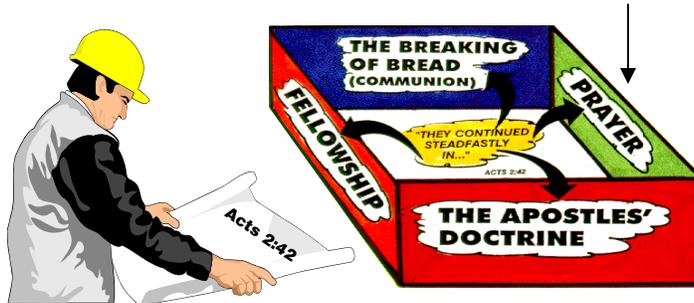
“THEREFORE WHOEVER EATS THIS BREAD OR DRINKS THIS CUP OF THE LORD IN AN UNWORTHY MANNER WILL BE GUILTY OF THE BODY AND THE BLOOD OF THE LORD. BUT LET A MAN EXAMINE HIMSELF, AND SO LET HIM EAT OF THAT BREAD AND DRINK OF THAT CUP. FOR HE WHO EATS AND DRINKS IN AN UNWORTHY MANNER EATS AND DRINKS JUDGMENT TO HIMSELF, NOT DISCERNING THE LORD’S BODY. FOR THIS REASON MANY ARE WEAK AND SICK AMONG YOU, AND MANY SLEEP (died).”

1 Cor. 11:27-30

The “unworthy manner” Paul refers to is “not discerning the Lord’s body.” By that he means the body of believers in Christ! It is possible to take communion asking God to forgive our sins while at the same time we hold unforgiveness against another member of the body of Christ—our brethren! By this double standard of forgiveness, many a Christian has become weak, sick or even have died due to their unforgiving heart towards a brother or sister! Communion is where we are forgiven of our sins and where we forgive others! It is an important wall in the building of a spiritual house!

Last, but certainly not least,
let us examine the fourth wall of this spiritual house:

"...AND THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY IN..."



**"PETER WAS THEREFORE KEPT IN PRISON,
BUT CONSTANT PRAYER WAS OFFERED TO GOD
FOR HIM BY THE CHURCH."**

Acts 12:5

**"PRAYING ALWAYS WITH ALL PRAYER AND
SUPPLICATION IN THE SPIRIT, BEING WATCHFUL
TO THIS END WITH ALL PERSEVERANCE AND
SUPPLICATION FOR ALL THE SAINTS..."**

Eph. 6:18

**"CONTINUE EARNESTLY IN PRAYER, BEING
VIGILANT IN IT WITH THANKSGIVING...
PRAYING ALSO FOR US..."**

Col. 4:2-3

How important is prayer in the building of this spiritual house. We can answer that by these words of Jesus:

**"THEN HE TAUGHT, SAYING TO THEM,
'IS IT NOT WRITTEN,
'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED**

A HOUSE OF PRAYER

FOR ALL NATIONS?"

Mark 11:17



Jesus' house is not called "a house of doctrine." It is not to be known as "a house of fellowship." Neither is it to be called "a house of communion." Jesus' house is to be called "a house of prayer." Even beyond that it is a house of prayer "for all nations." As important as is "the apostles doctrine, fellowship and the breaking of bread (communion)", the wall of prayer is given a preeminence as this spiritual house bears the God-appointed title of "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations."

Paul reminds us as believers:

**"HE WHO BUILT THE HOUSE HAS MORE HONOR THAN THE HOUSE. FOR EVERY HOUSE IS BUILT
BY SOMEONE, BUT HE WHO BUILT ALL THINGS IS GOD...
BUT CHRIST AS A SON OVER HIS OWN HOUSE, WHOSE HOUSE WE ARE..."**

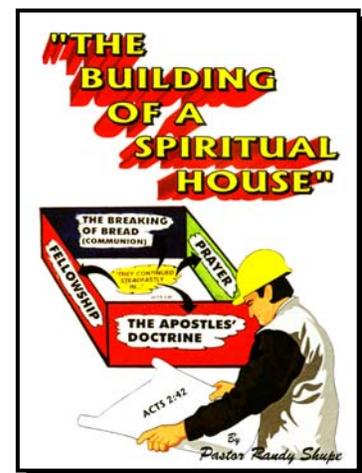
Heb. 3:3-6

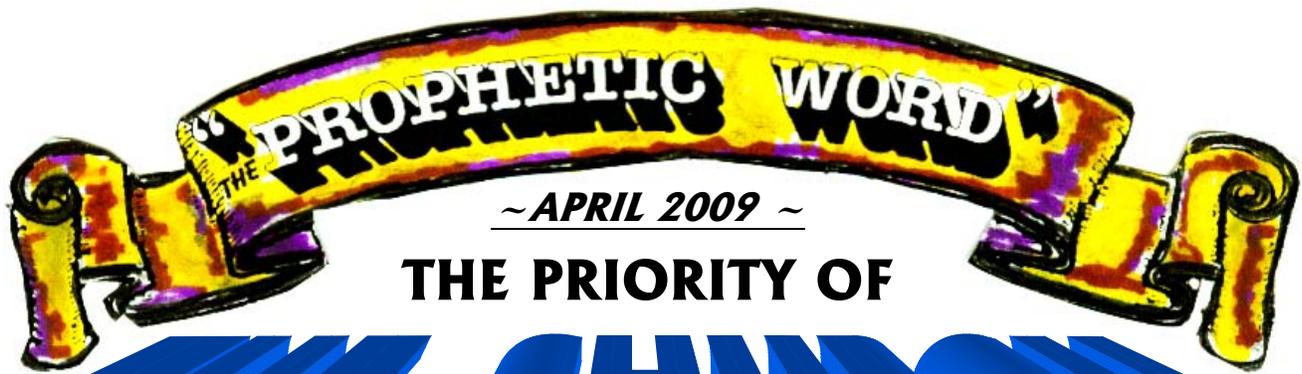
The spiritual house is a high priority in God's Word. To help you grasp its significance, I want to recommend this DVD series that I taught some years back on this subject:

**"THE BUILDING OF
A SPIRITUAL HOUSE"
14 HOURS OF ILLUSTRATED TEACHINGS
ON 4 DVD DISCS IN ONE ALBUM**

This DVD series is committed to examining the construction of those spiritual walls in the life of the believer, God's "living stones." To build a good solid house you need a blueprint. Acts 2:42 is the blueprint for the house of God to be constructed out of "living stones." The four walls of the early church were "the Apostle's doctrine, fellowship, the breaking of bread (communion) and prayer" (Acts 2:42).

**Album \$25.00
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~ APRIL 2009 ~

THE PRIORITY OF

THE CHURCH

OF JESUS CHRIST



"JESUS...ASKED HIS DISCIPLES, SAYING, 'WHO DO MEN SAY THAT I, THE SON OF MAN, AM?' SO THEY SAID, 'SOME SAY JOHN THE BAPTIST, SOME ELIJAH, AND OTHERS JEREMIAH OR ONE OF THE PROPHETS.' HE SAID TO THEM, 'BUT WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?' AND SIMON PETER ANSWERED AND SAID, 'YOU ARE THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.' JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID TO HIM, 'BLESSED ARE YOU, SIMON BAR-JONAH, FOR FLESH AND BLOOD HAS NOT REVEALED THIS TO YOU, BUT MY FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN. AND I ALSO SAY TO YOU THAT YOU ARE PETER, AND ON THIS ROCK, I WILL BUILD *MY CHURCH*, AND THE GATES OF HADES SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT AND I GIVE YOU THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, AND WHATEVER YOU BIND ON EARTH WILL BE BOUND IN HEAVEN, AND WHATEVER YOU LOOSE ON EARTH WILL BE LOOSED IN HEAVEN." Matt. 16:13-19

"MOREOVER IF YOUR BROTHER SINS AGAINST YOU, GO AND TELL HIM HIS FAULT BETWEEN YOU AND HIM ALONE. IF HE HEARS YOU, YOU HAVE GAINED YOUR BROTHER. BUT IF HE WILL NOT HEAR YOU..TELL IT TO *THE CHURCH*. BUT IF HE REFUSES TO HEAR *THE CHURCH*, LET HIM BE TO YOU LIKE A HEATHEN AND A TAX COLLECTOR. ASSUREDLY, I SAY TO YOU, WHATEVER YOU BIND ON EARTH WILL BE BOUND IN HEAVEN, AND WHATEVER YOU LOOSE ON EARTH WILL BE LOOSED IN HEAVEN, AGAIN I SAY TO YOU THAT IF TWO OF YOU AGREE ON EARTH CONCERNING ANYTHING THAT THEY ASK, IT SHALL BE DONE FOR THEM BY MY FATHER IN HEAVEN. FOR WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED TOGETHER IN MY NAME, I AM THERE IN THE MIDST OF THEM." Matt. 18:15-20

Jesus spoke of His church in the gospels only three times. Those three uses of the word "church" are in the verses above. Take the time to consider the context in which Jesus mentions the responsibility and function of His church on earth. There is a contextual common denominator that links these verses of Matthew 16 and Matthew 18 together. It is the commissioning of the church with heavenly-based, delegated authority to use the "keys of the Kingdom of Heaven" to bind and to loosen as needed both satanic powers ("the gates of Hades"), as well as rebellious brethren who will not submit to the authority of the church to govern itself. Professing brethren who will not submit to God's delegated authority established within the church are to eventually be branded by church leadership as being no different than unsaved "heathen and tax collectors." Heavy stuff!

Jesus' message in Matthew 16:13-19 centers upon the Divine revelation that Jesus is more than a mere man, or a prophet of God, but rather is "The Christ, the Son of the living God." This is "the rock" upon which the church is to be built. It is not the pompous, erroneous "revelation" of Catholicism that "Peter is the rock upon which Christ would build His church." The gates of Hades cannot withstand the Divine revelation that Jesus is the Christ-the Son of God! This message is to be the central theme of the church and it is to use the "keys of the Kingdom" to defend the purity of this revelation against the likes of Catholicism, Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses who are satanically seeking to warp who Jesus really is.

Jesus' message in Matthew 18:15-20 centers upon the Divine commissioning of the church to keep itself cleansed from the danger of rebellion within; namely, rebellious brethren who will not submit to the authority of the church to settle matters of division and strife among its members.

How would you evaluate the success of the church in achieving these two mandates from Matthew 16 and 18?

Forty years after Jesus spoke of His church in the gospels (Mat. 16 and 18), He spoke of its spiritual condition in John's day in the seven letters to His churches (Rev.1 through 3). Here is a brief summarization of the spiritual condition of five of those seven churches:

Think about it:

These were existing conditions in the church just forty years after the commissioning given in Matthew 16 and 18.

However, we must keep in mind that these are prophetic letters describing the spiritual condition of His churches right up to His coming at the rapture. We know that because Jesus said to the faithful, "Hold fast what you have till I come" (Rev. 2:25).

There is a lot of negativity spoken by Jesus toward these five expressions of His church. It could be overwhelmingly discouraging except for the two remaining churches in which Jesus finds no fault. These are prophetic descriptions of Jesus' churches right up to His coming. Both have promised crowns (Rev. 2:10 and Rev. 3:11). Philadelphia is specifically given the promise of being raptured by Christ prior to the "hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world" (Rev. 3:10).

Recently, a man contacted me through my website with an urgent plea to me as a teacher of God's Word whom he respected. However his request was most unscriptural. He wanted me to read (and endorse) a certain book that he got hold of which portrayed the church of Jesus Christ as "an apostate church" and as constituting "Mystery Babylon, the Great Harlot." The premise of the book was a call to all born-again believers to "Come out of her My people..." (Rev. 18:4). I refused his request simply because God's Word does not convey that His church universal is in an apostate condition. There may indeed be apostates within a church, but the church itself is never labeled by God as apostate, nor does Jesus ever say to His church, "come out of her my people." What He said was "Repent."

The church has problems-many problems such as are enumerated in the seven letters to the churches. Jesus calls five of those churches to repent, but He does not call any of His people to abandon the church as having become apostate. The church of Jesus Christ is not "Mystery Babylon the Great Harlot" as this man's book stated. Mystery Babylon is the modern-day, pagan-based Roman Empire, not the church of Jesus Christ. I will qualify that statement by stating that Roman Catholicism and its pagan popery is the religious leg of Mystery Babylon. Catholicism is not biblical Christianity. It is not the true church of Jesus Christ as they claim any more than is Mormonism "Christian." These are counterfeit "Christian" religions. We do indeed need to "come out of her-Mystery Babylon", the modern-day pagan-based Roman empire, but we are not to come out of God's church!

As you can plainly see throughout the seven letters to the seven churches, God has faithful saints in the midst of some very corrupted churches. Jesus said to Sardis, "You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy" (Rev. 3:4). To some of those in Thyatira Jesus said, "But to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine...I will put on you no other burden" (Rev. 2:24).



In prophetically describing what His church would look like right up to His coming for it at the rapture, Jesus said it would contain a mixture such as described in these two parables:

THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS

Matt. 25:1-13

"THEN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN SHALL BE LIKENED TO TEN VIRGINS WHO TOOK THEIR LAMPS AND WENT OUT TO MEET THE BRIDEGROOM. NOW FIVE OF THEM WERE WISE, AND FIVE WERE FOOLISH. THOSE WHO WERE FOOLISH TOOK THEIR LAMPS AND TOOK NO OIL WITH THEM, BUT THE WISE TOOK OIL IN THEIR VESSELS WITH THEIR LAMPS. BUT WHILE THE BRIDEGROOM WAS DELAYED, THEY ALL SLUMBERED AND SLEPT. "AND AT MIDNIGHT A CRY WAS HEARD: 'BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM IS COMING; GO OUT TO MEET HIM!' THEN ALL THOSE VIRGINS AROSE AND TRIMMED THEIR LAMPS. AND THE FOOLISH SAID TO THE WISE, 'GIVE US SOME OF YOUR OIL, FOR OUR LAMPS ARE GOING OUT.' BUT THE WISE ANSWERED, SAYING, 'NO, LEST THERE SHOULD NOT BE ENOUGH FOR US AND YOU; BUT GO RATHER TO THOSE WHO SELL, AND BUY FOR YOURSELVES.' AND WHILE THEY WENT TO BUY, THE BRIDEGROOM CAME, AND THOSE WHO WERE READY WENT IN WITH HIM TO THE WEDDING; AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT. "AFTERWARD THE OTHER VIRGINS CAME ALSO, SAYING, 'LORD, LORD, OPEN TO US!' BUT HE ANSWERED AND SAID, 'ASSUREDLY, I SAY TO YOU, I DO NOT KNOW YOU.' "WATCH THEREFORE, FOR YOU KNOW NEITHER THE DAY NOR THE HOUR IN WHICH THE SON OF MAN IS COMING."



In the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, Jesus describes the Kingdom of Heaven as consisting of ten virgins. Half of them were wise and the other half were foolish. When Jesus came as a "thief in the night", He took the wise virgins in with Him, but left the foolish ones behind for the world that they loved. This is how Jesus depicts that the church age will end. As much as half of the professing Christians on earth will be left behind due to their foolish (rebellious) behavior. Get used to the mixture within the church. It will not go away prior to His coming, and neither should you because of it!

I have seen and heard of so many of God's saints sitting at home in disgust because of what they have seen in the churches. In reality, they have seen exactly what Jesus prophetically said they would, a church that would continue to be comprised of wise and foolish virgins right up until the coming of Christ at the rapture. They have seen a church comprised of wheat and tares, true and false believers. A church with people in it who actually have been planted by Satan to bring reproach upon the name of Christ through division and strife, and why so? Because Satan knows very well the principle that:

**"EVERY KINGDOM DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF IS BROUGHT TO DESOLATION,
AND EVERY CITY OR HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF WILL NOT STAND"**

Matt. 12:25

Should the "wise wheat" bail out of the church because of the presence of the foolish and the tares?

THE WHEAT AND THE TARES

Matt. 13:24-30

"ANOTHER PARABLE HE PUT FORTH TO THEM, SAYING: "THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A MAN WHO SOWED GOOD SEED IN HIS FIELD; BUT WHILE MEN SLEPT, HIS ENEMY CAME AND SOWED TARES AMONG THE WHEAT AND WENT HIS WAY. BUT WHEN THE GRAIN HAD SPROUTED AND PRODUCED A CROP, THEN THE TARES ALSO APPEARED. SO THE SERVANTS OF THE OWNER CAME AND SAID TO HIM, 'SIR, DID YOU NOT SOW GOOD SEED IN YOUR FIELD? HOW THEN DOES IT HAVE TARES?' HE SAID TO THEM, 'AN ENEMY HAS DONE THIS.' THE SERVANTS SAID TO HIM, 'DO YOU WANT US THEN TO GO AND GATHER THEM UP?' BUT HE SAID, 'NO, LEST WHILE YOU GATHER UP THE TARES YOU ALSO UPROOT THE WHEAT WITH THEM. LET BOTH GROW TOGETHER UNTIL THE HARVEST, AND AT THE TIME OF HARVEST I WILL SAY TO THE REAPERS, "FIRST GATHER TOGETHER THE TARES AND BIND THEM IN BUNDLES TO BURN THEM, BUT GATHER THE WHEAT INTO MY BARN.""

In the parable of the wheat and the tares, Jesus describes the Kingdom of Heaven as consisting of good seed which He planted (wheat) and the counterfeit seed the devil planted within the kingdom of God on the earth. Jesus said they would grow up together until He sends forth His angels to "gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend and those who practice lawlessness" (vs. 41). Not everything (or person) that comes in the name of the Lord is from God. Some, as Satan's emissaries, are disguised as wheat (Christians). Get used to the mixture within the church. It will not go away, and neither should you because of it!



Then of course, we also have the clear statement of Jesus pertaining to those who "hear the word of the Kingdom" (Matt. 13:19), that only one in four people will have a right heart condition to bring forth the fruit of the Kingdom of God in their lives:



HEART OF UNBELIEF



OFFENDED HEART



ENSNARED HEART



GOOD HEART

"THEREFORE HEAR THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER: WHEN ANYONE HEARS THE WORD OF THE KINGDOM, AND DOES NOT UNDERSTAND IT, THEN THE WICKED ONE COMES AND SNATCHES AWAY WHAT WAS SOWN IN HIS HEART. THIS IS HE WHO RECEIVED SEED BY THE WAYSIDE. BUT HE WHO RECEIVED THE SEED ON STONY PLACES, THIS IS HE WHO HEARS THE WORD AND IMMEDIATELY RECEIVES IT WITH JOY; YET HE HAS NO ROOT IN HIMSELF, BUT ENDURES ONLY FOR A WHILE. FOR WHEN TRIBULATION OR PERSECUTION ARISES BECAUSE OF THE WORD, IMMEDIATELY HE STUMBLES. NOW HE WHO RECEIVED SEED AMONG THE THORNS IS HE WHO HEARS THE WORD, AND THE CARES OF THIS WORLD AND THE DECEITFULNESS OF RICHES CHOKES THE WORD, AND HE BECOMES UNFRUITFUL. BUT HE WHO RECEIVED SEED ON THE GOOD GROUND IS HE WHO HEARS THE WORD AND UNDERSTANDS IT, WHO INDEED BEARS FRUIT AND PRODUCES: SOME A HUNDREDFOLD, SOME SIXTY, SOME THIRTY." Matt. 13:18-23

This parable is not limited to the initial act of salvation, but rather is a principle that is always at work among "saved" people. Jesus is merely stating that fruit-bearing Christians will be in the minority in spite of the expressed will of God:

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

John 15:8



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

John 15:16

Is the "good heart" Christian to abandon the church because it is filled with saved people whose hearts are filled with unbelief, offense or ensnarement with things other than God? Is the answer to not assemble with such a mixture? Specifically Paul warns the believer not to follow such a pattern:

"LET US CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER IN ORDER TO STIR UP LOVE AND GOOD WORKS, NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER AS IS THE MANNER OF SOME, BUT EXHORTING ONE ANOTHER, AND SO MUCH THE MORE AS YOU SEE THE DAY APPROACHING."

Heb. 10:24-25

As we see what "day" approaching? The day in which Jesus Christ will separate the wise from the foolish virgins. The day in which Jesus will send forth His angels to "gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend and those who practice lawlessness", namely, Satan's tares. As this day approaches, the good heart, fruit-bearing Christians are to NOT "forsake the assembling of themselves together, as is the manner of some." We tend to think that those not assembling are just the backsliders in heart. Many of them are backsliders, but this is an exhortation to those capable of "stirring up (backsliders) to love and good works! Jude exhorts the believer to:

"KEEP YOURSELVES IN THE LOVE OF GOD, LOOKING FOR THE MERCY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST UNTO ETERNAL LIFE. AND ON SOME HAVE COMPASSION, MAKING A DISTINCTION; BUT OTHERS SAVE WITH FEAR, PULLING THEM OUT OF THE FIRE, HATING EVEN THE GARMENT DEFILED BY THE FLESH."

Jude 21-22

If all of the problems previously stated among the brethren are not enough, then we might also consider that the plight of the church is worsened all the more in this prophetic depiction by Jesus, as well as several of the apostles, pertaining to the corruption that will take place among the leadership within the church:



JESUS

“BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS, WHO COME TO YOU IN SHEEP’S CLOTHING, BUT INWARDLY THEY ARE RAVENOUS WOLVES...”
Matt. 7:15

“FOR I KNOW THIS, THAT AFTER MY DEPARTURE SAVAGE WOLVES WILL COME IN AMONG YOU, NOT SPARING THE FLOCK. ALSO FROM AMONG YOURSELVES MEN WILL RISE UP SPEAKING PERVERSE THINGS, TO DRAW AWAY THE DISCIPLES AFTER THEMSELVES.”
Acts 20:29-30



PAUL

“FOR SUCH ARE FALSE APOSTLES, DECEITFUL WORKERS, TRANSFORMING THEMSELVES INTO APOSTLES OF CHRIST. AND NO WONDER! FOR SATAN HIMSELF TRANSFORMS HIMSELF INTO AN ANGEL OF LIGHT. THEREFORE IT IS NO GREAT THING IF HIS MINISTERS ALSO TRANSFORM THEMSELVES INTO MINISTERS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS...” 2 Cor. 11:13-14



PETER

“BUT THERE WERE ALSO FALSE PROPHETS AMONG THE PEOPLE, EVEN AS THERE WILL BE FALSE TEACHERS AMONG YOU, WHO WILL SECRETLY BRING IN DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES...AND MANY WILL FOLLOW THEIR DESTRUCTIVE WAYS, BECAUSE OF WHOM THE WAY OF TRUTH WILL BE BLASPHEMED. BY COVETOUSNESS THEY WILL EXPLOIT YOU WITH DECEPTIVE WORDS...”
2 Pet. 2:1-3

“...I FOUND IT NECESSARY TO WRITE TO YOU CONCERNING OUR COMMON SALVATION...FOR CERTAIN MEN HAVE CREPT IN...UNGODLY MEN, WHO TURN THE GRACE OF OUR GOD INTO LICENTIOUSNESS...THESE ARE SPOTS IN YOUR LOVE FEASTS, WHILE THEY FEAST WITH YOU WITHOUT FEAR, SERVING ONLY THEMSELVES...AND THEY MOUTH GREAT SWELLING WORDS, FLATTERING PEOPLE TO GAIN ADVANTAGE...”

Jude 3-16 excerpts



JUDE

As I write this miserable prophetic depiction of the church, I find myself feeling depressed, perhaps as much as you are in reading it. But, dear brethren, God wants us to know what we are going to experience within the confines of the church, both in the pulpit as well as in the pew! These are prophetic warnings given with the intent to prevent us from being weary and discouraged in our souls. Even the world knows, “To be forewarned is to be forearmed.” Why else did Paul say such things as :

“AND LET US NOT GROW WEARY WHILE DOING GOOD, FOR IN DUE SEASON WE SHALL REAP IF WE DO NOT LOSE HEART.” Gal. 6:9

“FOR GOD IS NOT UNJUST TO FORGET YOUR WORK AND LABOR OF LOVE WHICH YOU HAVE SHOWN TOWARD HIS NAME, IN THAT YOU HAVE MINISTERED TO THE SAINTS, AND DO MINISTER.” Heb. 6:10

My experiences in God’s church reminds me of an old secular movie entitled, “Great Expectations.” When I first entered the ministry nearly 30 years ago, I had “great expectations” for the church of Jesus Christ until I became illuminated to such truths as I have shared with you in this newsletter. I am not discouraged, but I am forearmed against utopia theology for the church that stands in opposition to what is recorded in the Word. Multitudes of preachers are feeding God’s people a steady diet of “great expectations” of corporate revival coming to the church. However, prophecy is devoid of such promise apart from usurping the promises God has made to Israel in the last days (Joel 2). The prophetic description of Philadelphia as the model of the raptured church stresses the point that this church has only “a little strength” (Dunamis-dynamite power-signs/wonders), but is rather taken for other stated reasons than miraculous power:

**“...I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR...FOR YOU HAVE A LITTLE STRENGTH (“POWER” Amp.), HAVE KEPT MY WORD, AND HAVE NOT DENIED MY NAME...BECAUSE YOU HAVE KEPT MY COMMAND TO PERSEVERE, I ALSO WILL KEEP YOU FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL WHICH SHALL COME UPON THE WHOLE WORLD TO TEST THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH. BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY!
HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE THAT NO ONE MAY TAKE YOUR CROWN ”** Rev. 3:8-10

The majority of the church will continue to be plagued with foolish virgins, tares planted by Satan, and the majority (3 out of 4) of believers failing to bear in their lives the fruit of the Kingdom due to yielding to Satan's temptations of unbelief, offense and ensnarement in earthly alternatives. The leadership of the church will continue to have its share of false apostles, false teachers and wolves in sheep's clothing. However, in the midst of all this we have the Philadelphian church, (the church of "brotherly love") which will continue to keep God's Word, not deny His name, and keep the commandment to persevere. This church will be taken out of this chaotic world prior to God releasing upon the earth a great time of tribulation to test the unfaithful that are left behind. Jesus' counsel to all members of His church is to:

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

Luke 21:34-36

Let me set before you what the Word of God reveals are God's priorities for this segment of His church who desire to be "counted worthy to escape" :



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



"BELOVED, LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER, FOR LOVE IS OF GOD; AND EVERYONE WHO LOVES IS BORN OF GOD AND KNOWS GOD. HE WHO DOES NOT LOVE DOES NOT KNOW GOD, FOR GOD IS LOVE." 1 Jn.4:7-8

Loveless Christianity is an oxymoron. Paul enumerates in 1 Corinthians Chapter 13 a whole host of things we can do for God, as Christians, that will be considered as nothing if we do not have love. Included in that list is great faith and great sacrifice—even martyrdom! All will profit nothing if divorced from the motivation of love. We are to love even our enemies (Matt. 5:44). Impossible you say? Not when we realize that love is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22) which is produced in us as we "Walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16), "Hear what the Spirit says to the churches (Rev. 3:22), "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God" (Eph. 4:30) and be continually "Filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18).

The second thing we must do as members of the church that desires to be counted worthy to escape is to be a lover and defender of truth. Consider how Paul describes the church:



"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 Tim. 3:15

God's people have always had trouble standing for the truth. Jeremiah the prophet described a segment of Israel as:

"MY PEOPLE...THEY ARE NOT VALIANT FOR THE TRUTH ON THE EARTH...AND WILL NOT SPEAK THE TRUTH...TRUTH HAS PERISHED AND HAS BEEN CUT OFF FROM THEIR MOUTH..." (Jer. 9:3-5, 7:28)

Jesus is called "the truth" (Jn.14:6). The Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of truth" (Jn. 14:17). God's Word "is truth" (Jn. 17:17). The church is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). Jesus gave two purposes for truth: One is to "make you free" (Jn.8:32), and the other is "to sanctify them by your truth" (Jn. 17:19). Half-truths will not set us free from the bondages of sin and tradition, nor will they sanctify (set apart) the believer. We need the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

The purpose of the rapture is to remove the truth from the earth and allow it to be replaced with a lie. This is God's judgment on a world who does not love the truth (2 Thess. 2:9-12).

The third thing we must do, as members of the church that desires to be counted worthy to escape, is to embrace the call by God to demonstrate a life lived for God before Satan's principalities and powers regardless of the cost:

**"TO THE INTENT THAT NOW THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD MIGHT BE MADE KNOWN
BY THE CHURCH TO THE PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES..."**

Eph. 3:10

God has chosen the faithful in His church to make a public demonstration of unswerving allegiance to God before Satan's rebellious kingdom of principalities and powers. This was done before by a man called Job of whom God testified him to be:

**"...NONE LIKE HIM ON THE EARTH, A BLAMELESS AND UPRIGHT MAN,
ONE WHO FEARS GOD AND SHUNS EVIL."** Job. 1:8

This is to be the testimony of the church as well. Unfortunately, as we have seen prophesied, much of the professing church will fall short of that testimony. Even so, like the Marines, God is looking for a few good men like Job so that God can work through them as He did through Job:

**"FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD RUN TO AND FRO THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH,
TO SHOW HIMSELF STRONG ON BEHALF OF THOSE WHOSE HEART IS LOYAL TO HIM."**

2 Chron 16:9

Job faced immense hardship, to say the least. Through his trials he bore the testimony, "In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong" (Job 1:22). Job proved that he did not serve God just for the blessings or for the protection from Satan's evil oppression. He indeed fulfilled Eph. 3:10 to the letter even before it was written. Job is a type of the church that God is looking for throughout the whole earth.

Lastly, the church is called to embrace the higher calling God has placed upon it other than the act of salvation:



**"CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH
AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR HER,
THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE HER
WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD,
THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT HER TO HIMSELF
A GLORIOUS CHURCH,
NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE OR ANY SUCH THING,
BUT THAT SHE SHOULD BE HOLY
AND WITHOUT BLEMISH....
THIS IS A GREAT MYSTERY,
BUT I SPEAK CONCERNING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH."**

Eph 5:25-33



Ultimately, Jesus is after a bride. She will come from the segment of the church described above and below:

Ultimately, Jesus is after a bride. She will come from the segment of the church described above and below:

**"LET US BE GLAD AND REJOICE AND GIVE HIM GLORY, FOR THE MARRIAGE
OF THE LAMB HAS COME, AND HIS WIFE HAS MADE HERSELF READY."
AND TO HER IT WAS GRANTED TO BE ARRAYED IN FINE LINEN,
CLEAN AND BRIGHT,
FOR THE FINE LINEN IS THE RIGHTEOUS ACTS
(“UPRIGHT, JUST, AND GODLY LIVING, (DEED, CONDUCT) OF THE SAINTS” Amp.)
OF THE SAINTS.**

**THEN HE SAID TO ME, "WRITE:
'BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE CALLED TO
THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB!'"
AND HE SAID TO ME,
"THESE ARE THE TRUE SAYINGS OF GOD."**

Rev 19:7-10

“PROPHETIC WORD”

~MAY 2009~

THE PRIORITIES OF

THE BODY OF CHRIST



THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

“FOR AS THE BODY IS ONE AND HAS MANY MEMBERS, BUT ALL THE MEMBERS OF THAT ONE BODY, BEING MANY, ARE ONE BODY, SO ALSO IS CHRIST. FOR BY ONE SPIRIT WE WERE ALL BAPTIZED INTO ONE BODY -- WHETHER JEWS OR GREEKS, WHETHER SLAVES OR FREE -- AND HAVE ALL BEEN MADE TO DRINK INTO ONE SPIRIT. FOR IN FACT THE BODY IS NOT ONE MEMBER BUT MANY.. .BUT NOW GOD HAS SET THE MEMBERS, EACH ONE OF THEM, IN THE BODY JUST AS HE PLEASED. AND IF THEY WERE ALL ONE MEMBER, WHERE WOULD THE BODY BE? BUT NOW INDEED THERE ARE MANY MEMBERS, YET ONE BODY. AND THE EYE CANNOT SAY TO THE HAND, "I HAVE NO NEED OF YOU"; NOR AGAIN THE HEAD TO THE FEET, "I HAVE NO NEED OF YOU."...BUT GOD COMPOSED THE BODY, HAVING GIVEN GREATER HONOR TO THAT PART WHICH LACKS IT, THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO SCHISM IN THE BODY, BUT THAT THE MEMBERS SHOULD HAVE THE SAME CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER. AND IF ONE MEMBER SUFFERS, ALL THE MEMBERS SUFFER WITH IT; OR IF ONE MEMBER IS HONORED, ALL THE MEMBERS REJOICE WITH IT. NOW YOU ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST, AND MEMBERS INDIVIDUALLY.”

1 Cor.12:12-37 excerpts

“ FOR I AM JEALOUS FOR YOU WITH GODLY JEALOUSY. FOR I HAVE BETROTHED YOU TO ONE HUSBAND, THAT I MAY PRESENT YOU AS A CHASTE VIRGIN TO CHRIST. BUT I FEAR, LEST SOMEHOW, AS THE SERPENT DECEIVED EVE BY HIS CRAFTINESS, SO YOUR MINDS MAY BE CORRUPTED FROM THE SIMPLICITY THAT IS IN CHRIST. FOR IF HE WHO COMES PREACHES ANOTHER JESUS WHOM WE HAVE NOT PREACHED, OR IF YOU RECEIVE A DIFFERENT SPIRIT WHICH YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED, OR A DIFFERENT GOSPEL WHICH YOU HAVE NOT ACCEPTED -- YOU MAY WELL PUT UP WITH IT!” 2 Cor. 11:2-4

“...CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR HER, THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE HER WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD, THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT HER TO HIMSELF A GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE OR ANY SUCH THING, BUT THAT SHE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH...FOR WE ARE MEMBERS OF HIS BODY, OF HIS FLESH AND OF HIS BONES... THIS IS A GREAT MYSTERY, BUT I SPEAK CONCERNING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.”

Eph 5:25-32

The Body of Christ and the Bride of Christ. These are the last two of the twelve priorities of God we have been examining. We shall consider them together because one (the Bride) is formed out of the other (the Body). We become members of the Body of Christ by means of the new birth, “For by one Spirit we were baptized into one body...” (1 Cor. 12:13). As members of that body, we become betrothed to Christ as Paul explains above. However, Paul also expresses a fear of corruption of the espoused Bride by the craftiness of Satan through the presentation of “another Jesus...a different spirit...a different gospel.” This newsletter is dedicated to alerting the members of the Body of Christ to the present satanic deception by which members of the Body of Christ may forfeit their right to be part of the Bride of Christ for all eternity! The Bride is a reward, not a guarantee!

THE BODY**OF CHRIST**

"FOR AS THE BODY IS ONE AND HAS MANY MEMBERS, BUT ALL THE MEMBERS OF THAT ONE BODY, BEING MANY, ARE ONE BODY, SO ALSO IS CHRIST. FOR BY ONE SPIRIT WE WERE ALL BAPTIZED INTO ONE BODY -- WHETHER JEWS OR GREEKS, WHETHER SLAVES OR FREE -- AND HAVE ALL BEEN MADE TO DRINK INTO ONE SPIRIT. FOR IN FACT THE BODY IS NOT ONE MEMBER BUT MANY... BUT NOW GOD HAS SET THE MEMBERS, EACH ONE OF THEM, IN THE BODY JUST AS HE PLEASSED. IF THE FOOT SHOULD SAY, "BECAUSE I AM NOT A HAND, I AM NOT OF THE BODY," IS IT THEREFORE NOT OF THE BODY? AND IF THE EAR SHOULD SAY, "BECAUSE I AM NOT AN EYE, I AM NOT OF THE BODY," IS IT THEREFORE NOT OF THE BODY? IF THE WHOLE BODY WERE AN EYE, WHERE WOULD BE THE HEARING? IF THE WHOLE WERE HEARING, WHERE WOULD BE THE SMELLING? AND IF THEY WERE ALL ONE MEMBER, WHERE WOULD THE BODY BE? BUT NOW INDEED THERE ARE MANY MEMBERS, YET ONE BODY. AND THE EYE CANNOT SAY TO THE HAND, "I HAVE NO NEED OF YOU"; NOR AGAIN THE HEAD TO THE FEET, "I HAVE NO NEED OF YOU."...BUT GOD COMPOSED THE BODY, HAVING GIVEN GREATER HONOR TO THAT PART WHICH LACKS IT, THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO SCHISM IN THE BODY, BUT THAT THE MEMBERS SHOULD HAVE THE SAME CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER. AND IF ONE MEMBER SUFFERS, ALL THE MEMBERS SUFFER WITH IT; OR IF ONE MEMBER IS HONORED, ALL THE MEMBERS REJOICE WITH IT.

NOW YOU ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST, AND MEMBERS INDIVIDUALLY." 1 Cor.12:12-37 excerpts

"FOR I SAY, THROUGH THE GRACE GIVEN TO ME, TO EVERYONE WHO IS AMONG YOU, NOT TO THINK OF HIMSELF MORE HIGHLY THAN HE OUGHT TO THINK, BUT TO THINK SOBERLY, AS GOD HAS DEALT TO EACH ONE A MEASURE OF FAITH. FOR AS WE HAVE MANY MEMBERS IN ONE BODY, BUT ALL THE MEMBERS DO NOT HAVE THE SAME FUNCTION, SO WE, BEING MANY, ARE ONE BODY IN CHRIST, AND INDIVIDUALLY MEMBERS OF ONE ANOTHER. HAVING THEN GIFTS DIFFERING ACCORDING TO THE GRACE THAT IS GIVEN TO US, LET US USE THEM: IF PROPHECY, LET US PROPHECY IN PROPORTION TO OUR FAITH; OR MINISTRY, LET US USE IT IN OUR MINISTERING; HE WHO TEACHES, IN TEACHING; HE WHO EXHORTS, IN EXHORTATION; HE WHO GIVES, WITH LIBERALITY; HE WHO LEADS, WITH DILIGENCE; HE WHO SHOWS MERCY, WITH CHEERFULNESS." Rom. 12:3-8

"I, THEREFORE, THE PRISONER OF THE LORD, BESEECH YOU TO WALK WORTHY OF THE CALLING WITH WHICH YOU WERE CALLED, WITH ALL LOWLINESS AND GENTLENESS, WITH LONGSUFFERING, BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE, ENDEAVORING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE. THERE IS ONE BODY..." Eph. 4:1-4

"THEREFORE, AS THE ELECT OF GOD, HOLY AND BELOVED, PUT ON TENDER MERCIES, KINDNESS, HUMILITY, MEEKNESS, LONGSUFFERING; BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER, AND FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER, IF ANYONE HAS A COMPLAINT AGAINST ANOTHER; EVEN AS CHRIST FORGAVE YOU, SO YOU ALSO MUST DO. BUT ABOVE ALL THESE THINGS PUT ON LOVE, WHICH IS THE BOND OF PERFECTION. AND LET THE PEACE OF GOD RULE IN YOUR HEARTS, TO WHICH ALSO YOU WERE CALLED IN ONE BODY..." Col. 3:12-15

"...BUT, SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE, (the believer) MAY GROW UP IN ALL THINGS INTO HIM WHO IS THE HEAD -- CHRIST -- FROM WHOM THE WHOLE BODY, JOINED AND KNIT TOGETHER BY WHAT EVERY JOINT SUPPLIES, ACCORDING TO THE EFFECTIVE WORKING BY WHICH EVERY PART DOES ITS SHARE, CAUSES GROWTH OF THE BODY FOR THE EDIFYING OF ITSELF IN LOVE." Eph 4:15-16

"...HOLDING FAST TO THE HEAD, FROM WHOM THE WHOLE BODY, NOURISHED AND KNIT TOGETHER BY JOINTS AND LIGAMENTS, GROWS WITH THE INCREASE WHICH IS FROM GOD." Col. 2:19

The above verses contain nearly all of Paul's teaching, admonishment, and exhortation to Christians as members of the Body of Christ, which includes you and me. Therefore, I advise that you don't lightly skim read these verses, but rather ponder the contents carefully, for every member of the Body of Christ will be judged by the standards contained within it:

" 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 5:10-11

"...BUT NOW GOD HAS SET THE MEMBERS, EACH ONE OF THEM, IN THE BODY JUST AS HE PLEASED. IF THE FOOT SHOULD SAY, "BECAUSE I AM NOT A HAND, I AM NOT OF THE BODY," IS IT THEREFORE NOT OF THE BODY? AND IF THE EAR SHOULD SAY, "BECAUSE I AM NOT AN EYE, I AM NOT OF THE BODY," IS IT THEREFORE NOT OF THE BODY? IF THE WHOLE BODY WERE AN EYE, WHERE WOULD BE THE HEARING? IF THE WHOLE WERE HEARING, WHERE WOULD BE THE SMELLING? AND IF THEY WERE ALL ONE MEMBER, WHERE WOULD THE BODY BE? BUT NOW INDEED THERE ARE MANY MEMBERS, YET ONE BODY. AND THE EYE CANNOT SAY TO THE HAND, "I HAVE NO NEED OF YOU"; NOR AGAIN THE HEAD TO THE FEET, "I HAVE NO NEED OF YOU."...BUT GOD COMPOSED THE BODY, HAVING GIVEN GREATER HONOR TO THAT PART WHICH LACKS IT, THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO SCHISM IN THE BODY, BUT THAT THE MEMBERS SHOULD HAVE THE SAME CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER. AND IF ONE MEMBER SUFFERS, ALL THE MEMBERS SUFFER WITH IT; OR IF ONE MEMBER IS HONORED, ALL THE MEMBERS REJOICE WITH IT.

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Using the illustration of the physical body's inter-dependency upon its various members, Paul likens it to the spiritual Body of Christ which also has many members that comprise a unified, single body.

What good is an eye without a hand? The illustration is that the eye helps the hand to do what it needs to do. What does the ear do, but direct what the eye is to focus upon? What good are feet apart from a brain to direct their movement?

Which is the most important part of the physical body? The answer is none apart from the other parts of the body aiding it. There is to be "no schism" or sectarian division among the members of the Body of Christ. No elitist attitude allowed!

The members of the Body of Christ are not to be self-centered or self-willed, but rather to focus upon what is best for the whole body. The whole body is to compassionately experience sorrows, sufferings, and rejoicings together! This is Paul's message, this is God's will!

Spiritual gifts have the tendency to puff up the individual who has them as though they are "special" in the sight of God. Paul emphasizes that all spiritual gifts are just that-gifts that are given by the grace of God, not the merit of the individual:

"...THAT YOU MAY LEARN IN US NOT TO THINK BEYOND WHAT IS WRITTEN, THAT NONE OF YOU MAY BE PUFFED UP ON BEHALF OF ONE AGAINST THE OTHER.FOR WHAT MAKES YOU DIFFER FROM ANOTHER? AND WHAT DO YOU HAVE THAT YOU DID NOT RECEIVE? NOW IF YOU DID RECEIVE IT, WHY DO YOU GLORY AS IF YOU HAD NOT RECEIVED IT?"

1 Cor. 4:6-7

God's gifts are given to individuals for the overall benefit of equipping the whole body.

Unity is what God wants for His people. It takes a conscious "endeavoring" (concentrated effort, hard work) to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond (glue) of peace. It takes "super-glue" to do the work, namely, the fruit of the Spirit of Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, gentleness (goodness) faithfulness, meekness and self-control.

The greatest hindrance to the unity of the Spirit is the "spirit" of unforgiveness at work among members of the body:

"PURSUE PEACE WITH ALL MEN...LOOKING DILIGENTLY LEST ANYONE FALL SHORT OF THE GRACE OF GOD; LEST ANY ROOT OF BITTERNESS SPRINGING UP CAUSE TROUBLE, AND BY THIS MANY BECOME DEFILED." Heb.12:14-15

God's objective for the Body of Christ is to "grow up" into, and remain under, the headship of Christ. This is not a "headless body" that God has created:

"AND HE IS THE HEAD OF THE BODY, THE CHURCH... THAT IN ALL THINGS HE MAY HAVE THE PREEMINENCE..."

Col. 1:18

"...HOLDING FAST TO THE HEAD, FROM WHOM THE WHOLE BODY, NOURISHED AND KNIT TOGETHER BY JOINTS AND LIGAMENTS, GROWS WITH THE INCREASE WHICH IS FROM GOD."

Col. 2:19

THE BRIDE

"...CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR HER, THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE HER WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD, THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT HER TO HIMSELF A GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE OR ANY SUCH THING, BUT THAT SHE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH... FOR WE ARE MEMBERS OF HIS BODY, OF HIS FLESH AND OF HIS BONES... THIS IS A GREAT MYSTERY, BUT I SPEAK CONCERNING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH."

Eph 5:25-32



OF CHRIST

"LET US BE GLAD AND REJOICE AND GIVE HIM GLORY, FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB HAS COME, AND HIS WIFE HAS MADE HERSELF READY. AND TO HER IT WAS GRANTED TO BE ARRAYED IN FINE LINEN, CLEAN AND BRIGHT, FOR THE FINE LINEN IS THE RIGHTEOUS ACTS OF THE SAINTS. THEN HE SAID TO ME, 'WRITE: BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE CALLED TO THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB!' AND HE SAID TO ME, 'THESE ARE THE TRUE SAYINGS OF GOD.'"

Rev 19:7-9

" FOR I AM JEALOUS FOR YOU WITH GODLY JEALOUSY. FOR I HAVE BETROTHED YOU TO ONE HUSBAND, THAT I MAY PRESENT YOU AS A CHASTE VIRGIN TO CHRIST. BUT I FEAR, LEST SOMEHOW, AS THE SERPENT DECEIVED EVE BY HIS CRAFTINESS, SO YOUR MINDS MAY BE CORRUPTED FROM THE SIMPLICITY THAT IS IN CHRIST. FOR IF HE WHO COMES PREACHES ANOTHER JESUS WHOM WE HAVE NOT PREACHED, OR IF YOU RECEIVE A DIFFERENT SPIRIT WHICH YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED, OR A DIFFERENT GOSPEL WHICH YOU HAVE NOT ACCEPTED, YOU MAY WELL PUT UP WITH IT!"

2 Cor. 11:2-4

"...AT MIDNIGHT A CRY WAS HEARD, 'BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM IS COMING; GO OUT TO MEET HIM!' ...THE BRIDEGROOM CAME, AND THOSE WHO WERE READY WENT IN WITH HIM TO THE WEDDING; AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT."

Matt. 25:6,10

"I KNOW YOUR WORKS. SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR, AND NO ONE CAN SHUT IT; FOR YOU HAVE A LITTLE STRENGTH, HAVE KEPT MY WORD, AND HAVE NOT DENIED MY NAME...BECAUSE YOU HAVE KEPT MY COMMAND TO PERSEVERE, I ALSO WILL KEEP YOU FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL WHICH SHALL COME UPON THE WHOLE WORLD, TO TEST THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH. BEHOLD, I AM COMING QUICKLY! HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE, THAT NO ONE MAY TAKE YOUR CROWN. HE WHO OVERCOMES, I WILL MAKE HIM A PILLAR IN THE TEMPLE OF MY GOD, AND HE SHALL GO OUT NO MORE. I WILL WRITE ON HIM THE NAME OF MY GOD AND THE NAME OF THE CITY OF MY GOD, THE NEW JERUSALEM, WHICH COMES DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM MY GOD. AND I WILL WRITE ON HIM MY NEW NAME."

Rev 3:8-12

"THEN I, JOHN, SAW THE HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM, COMING DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD, PREPARED AS A BRIDE ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND..." (Rev 21:2) "COME, I WILL SHOW YOU THE BRIDE, THE LAMB'S WIFE. AND HE CARRIED ME AWAY IN THE SPIRIT TO A GREAT AND HIGH MOUNTAIN, AND SHOWED ME THE GREAT CITY, THE HOLY JERUSALEM, DESCENDING OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD, HAVING THE GLORY OF GOD." (Rev 21:9-11)

" LISTEN, O DAUGHTER, CONSIDER AND INCLINE YOUR EAR; FORGET YOUR OWN PEOPLE ALSO, AND YOUR FATHER'S HOUSE; SO THE KING WILL GREATLY DESIRE YOUR BEAUTY; BECAUSE HE IS YOUR LORD, WORSHIP HIM... THE ROYAL DAUGHTER IS ALL GLORIOUS WITHIN THE PALACE; HER CLOTHING IS WOVEN WITH GOLD. SHE SHALL BE BROUGHT TO THE KING IN ROBES OF MANY COLORS; THE VIRGINS, HER COMPANIONS WHO FOLLOW HER, SHALL BE BROUGHT TO YOU. WITH GLADNESS AND REJOICING THEY SHALL BE BROUGHT; THEY SHALL ENTER THE KING'S PALACE." Ps 45:10-15

"WHO CAN FIND A VIRTUOUS WIFE? FOR HER WORTH IS FAR ABOVE RUBIES. THE HEART OF HER HUSBAND SAFELY TRUSTS HER...MANY DAUGHTERS HAVE DONE WELL, BUT YOU EXCEL THEM ALL. CHARM IS DECEITFUL AND BEAUTY IS PASSING, BUT A WOMAN WHO FEARS THE LORD, SHE SHALL BE PRAISED. GIVE HER OF THE FRUIT OF HER HANDS, AND LET HER OWN WORKS PRAISE HER IN THE GATES."

Prov 31:10-31 excerpts

The above passages of Scripture contain the revelation of the Bride of Christ which Paul depicts as "a great mystery ("hidden truth"). These too, like the passages we considered on the Body of Christ, are worthy of our careful scrutiny. These Scriptures cannot be read without concluding that the believer has a great part in laying hold of the inheritance of the Bride of Christ. Although espoused to Christ by means of the new birth, it is evident that a new life of righteous conduct and deeds is needed to secure a place in the Bride.

Let us now consider these passages individually:



“...CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR HER, THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE HER WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD, THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT HER TO HIMSELF A GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE OR ANY SUCH THING, BUT THAT SHE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH... FOR WE ARE MEMBERS OF HIS BODY, OF HIS FLESH AND OF HIS BONES... THIS IS A GREAT MYSTERY, BUT I SPEAK CONCERNING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.”

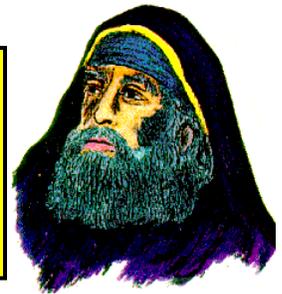
Eph 5:25-32

We have been well taught that “Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her.” However, we have not been as well taught pertaining to why He did so. The two uses of “that”, above, tell us what are Christ’s higher purposes in giving Himself for the church. The first reason is that He wants a sanctified church that is washed not only in the Blood of Christ, but also one that is continually washing in the sanctifying and cleansing water of the Word!

Secondly, Christ gave Himself for the church in order that He might present this glorious sanctified church that is without spot, blemish, wrinkle or any such thing, to Himself as His Bride. Let us add another revelation of the apostle Paul to the above concept:

“ FOR I AM JEALOUS FOR YOU WITH GODLY JEALOUSY. FOR I HAVE BETROTHED YOU TO ONE HUSBAND, THAT I MAY PRESENT YOU AS A CHASTE VIRGIN TO CHRIST. BUT I FEAR, LEST SOMEHOW, AS THE SERPENT DECEIVED EVE BY HIS CRAFTINESS, SO YOUR MINDS MAY BE CORRUPTED FROM THE SIMPLICITY THAT IS IN CHRIST. FOR IF HE WHO COMES PREACHES ANOTHER JESUS WHOM WE HAVE NOT PREACHED, OR IF YOU RECEIVE A DIFFERENT SPIRIT WHICH YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED, OR A DIFFERENT GOSPEL WHICH YOU HAVE NOT ACCEPTED, YOU MAY WELL PUT UP WITH IT!”

2 Cor. 11:2-4



Paul intends, so to speak, to “walk the bride down the aisle,” to present her to Christ as a “chaste virgin.” However, he does not present this as an absolute guarantee even though the church is betrothed to Christ. Rather, he expresses a fear of corruption by Satan such as he pulled on the original Eve in the garden. This is an important comparison that Paul makes. Satan went after the first Adam’s bride with doctrinal delusion, and Paul is fearful that he will do so with the last Adam’s Bride, the church! (Paul refers to Jesus Christ as “the last Adam” in 1 Cor. 15:45.) Perhaps Paul had another thought in the back of his mind in likening the church to the deception of Eve in the garden (2 Cor. 11:2-4). God put the first Adam to sleep and then formed Eve, his bride, from a part of Adam’s body. It is likely that while the Body of Christ sleeps, God will form the Last Adam’s Bride out of a part of that sleeping church. Paul’s expressed fear for the members of the Body of Christ (the church) is that their minds would be corrupted once again with doctrinal delusion such as the presentation of “another Jesus, a different Spirit or a different gospel” than what he has taught the church. Such delusion would disqualify them as “chaste virgins” (“not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish”- Eph. 5:27). Jesus prophetically predicted that such corruption would indeed plague His “virgins” when He comes as the Bridegroom for His Bride:

“...THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN SHALL BE LIKENED TO TEN VIRGINS...NOW FIVE OF THEM WERE WISE, AND FIVE WERE FOOLISH...AT MIDNIGHT A CRY WAS HEARD, ‘BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM IS COMING; GO OUT TO MEET HIM!’...THE BRIDEGROOM CAME, AND THOSE WHO WERE READY WENT IN WITH HIM TO THE WEDDING, AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT. AFTERWARD THE OTHER VIRGINS CAME ALSO SAYING, ‘LORD, LORD, OPEN TO US!’ BUT HE ANSWERED AND SAID, ‘ASSUREDLY, I SAY TO YOU, ‘I DO NOT KNOW YOU.’

Matt. 25:1-13 excerpts

We cannot claim the promise of being betrothed to Christ as His Bride-to-be chaste virgins (2 Cor.11:1-3) and then reject the parable in which Jesus comes as the Bridegroom for His virgins (Matt. 25:1-13) as not being applicable to the church. Many do not want to claim this parable as applicable because of the rejection of the foolish virgins by Christ. Only half the virgins are taken, the others are left behind. Only “those who were ready” went in with Christ to the wedding. Is this not the very scenario Paul was expressing fear that would happen? Because of the presentation of “another Jesus, a different Spirit, and a different gospel”, as much as half of the espoused virgins to Christ are found not ready when the Bridegroom comes due to a watered-down, half-truth presentation of the contents of the gospel message. What is missing? Washing in the water of the Word so that we end up with “a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish...”



"TO.. THE CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA... I KNOW YOUR WORKS. SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR, AND NO ONE CAN SHUT IT; FOR YOU HAVE A LITTLE STRENGTH, HAVE KEPT MY WORD, AND HAVE NOT DENIED MY NAME...BECAUSE YOU HAVE KEPT MY COMMAND TO PERSEVERE, I ALSO WILL KEEP YOU FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL WHICH SHALL COME UPON THE WHOLE WORLD, TO TEST THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH. BEHOLD, I AM COMING QUICKLY! HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE, THAT NO ONE MAY TAKE YOUR CROWN. HE WHO OVERCOMES, I WILL MAKE HIM A PILLAR IN THE TEMPLE OF MY GOD, AND HE SHALL GO OUT NO MORE. I WILL WRITE ON HIM THE NAME OF MY GOD AND THE NAME OF THE CITY OF MY GOD, THE NEW JERUSALEM, WHICH COMES DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM MY GOD. AND I WILL WRITE ON HIM MY NEW NAME."

Rev 3:8-12

Of the seven letters Jesus wrote to His churches forty years after its inception, only this church at Philadelphia ("brotherly love") receives not only the promise for the rapture prior to the hour of testing (the tribulation), but also the promise for the Bride of Christ. She is promised, The name of My God (the Father), the name of the city of My God-New Jerusalem, and My new name." That sounds like wedding bells to me, especially when you see that New Jerusalem is the Bride of Christ:

"THEN I, JOHN, SAW THE HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM, COMING DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD, PREPARED AS A BRIDE ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND..." (Rev 21:2) "COME, I WILL SHOW YOU THE BRIDE, THE LAMB'S WIFE." AND HE CARRIED ME AWAY IN THE SPIRIT TO A GREAT AND HIGH MOUNTAIN, AND SHOWED ME THE GREAT CITY, THE HOLY JERUSALEM, DESCENDING OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD, HAVING THE GLORY OF GOD." (Rev 21:9-11)

We are also told why Philadelphia is given this dual promise of being raptured by Christ and married to Christ: Because you have kept My Word, and have not denied My name, and have kept My command to persevere. Both the rapture and the Bride are rewards for service rendered. They are not gifts of grace received by means of the new birth. All seven churches Jesus writes to are born-again believers. Five of them He calls to "repent or else..." Only to Philadelphia is the Bride of Christ promised.

We have further illumination on the Bride of Christ by means of this prophetic glimpse into the future:

"AND I HEARD, AS IT WERE, THE VOICE OF A GREAT MULTITUDE ...SAYING... 'LET US BE GLAD AND REJOICE AND GIVE HIM GLORY, FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB HAS COME, AND HIS WIFE HAS MADE HERSELF READY.'" AND TO HER IT WAS GRANTED TO BE ARRAYED IN FINE LINEN, CLEAN AND BRIGHT, FOR THE FINE LINEN IS THE RIGHTEOUS ACTS OF THE SAINTS.' THEN HE SAID TO ME, 'WRITE: BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE CALLED TO THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB!' AND HE SAID TO ME, 'THESE ARE THE TRUE SAYINGS OF GOD. ' "

Rev 19:7-9

Notice it is the "great multitude" in heaven that announces the wedding of the Bride to Christ with the saying, "Let us (the great multitude) be glad and rejoice for...His wife has made herself ready." How was she made ready? By "the righteous acts of the saints." The Amplified Bible is even more blunt, "(the upright, just, and godly living, deeds and conduct...) of the saints."

It is important to note that the Scriptures reveal two different garments for believers. One is the "garments of salvation-robos of righteousness" (Isa. 61:10). This garment covers members of the Body of Christ. It is received by washing in the blood of Christ for forgiveness of sins (new birth). However, the second garment is a wedding gown of fine linen which is the righteous acts (the upright, just, and godly living, deeds and conduct...) of the saints. This garment clothes the Bride of Christ and comes only by washing in the water of God's Word in order to be found a chaste virgin who becomes part of "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish..."

Another prophetic glimpse into eternity shows us a distinction between "those who are saved" (the Body of Christ) and the Bride of Christ as New Jerusalem:

"AND THE NATIONS OF THOSE WHO ARE SAVED SHALL WALK IN ITS LIGHT...AND THEY SHALL BRING THE GLORY AND THE HONOR OF THE NATIONS INTO IT...BUT THERE SHALL BY NO MEANS ENTER IT ANYTHING THAT DEFILES...BUT ONLY THOSE WHO ARE WRITTEN IN THE LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE."

Rev. 21:24-27 excerpts

"WHO CAN FIND A VIRTUOUS WIFE? FOR HER WORTH IS FAR ABOVE RUBIES. THE HEART OF HER HUSBAND SAFELY TRUSTS HER...MANY DAUGHTERS HAVE DONE WELL, BUT YOU EXCEL THEM ALL." CHARM IS DECEITFUL AND BEAUTY IS PASSING, BUT A WOMAN WHO FEARS THE LORD, SHE SHALL BE PRAISED. GIVE HER OF THE FRUIT OF HER HANDS, AND LET HER OWN WORKS PRAISE HER IN THE GATES."

Prov 31:10-31 excerpts

"O LISTEN, O DAUGHTER, CONSIDER AND INCLINE YOUR EAR; FORGET YOUR OWN PEOPLE ALSO, AND YOUR FATHER'S HOUSE; SO THE KING WILL GREATLY DESIRE YOUR BEAUTY; BECAUSE HE IS YOUR LORD, WORSHIP HIM... THE ROYAL DAUGHTER IS ALL GLORIOUS WITHIN THE PALACE; HER CLOTHING IS WOVEN WITH GOLD. SHE SHALL BE BROUGHT TO THE KING IN ROBES OF MANY COLORS; THE VIRGINS, HER COMPANIONS WHO FOLLOW HER, SHALL BE BROUGHT TO YOU. WITH GLADNESS AND REJOICING THEY SHALL BE BROUGHT; THEY SHALL ENTER THE KING'S PALACE."

Ps 45:10-17

As Proverbs 31 states, "Many daughters have done well," but this virtuous wife "excels them all." Psalm 45 reveals that this "royal daughter" will be accompanied by a host of virgins. At the rapture all wise virgins will be taken. Out of the host of wise virgins, Christ will call His Bride.

Psalm 45 shows that the Bride of Christ will be at center stage in eternity. Plan to be part of it. The Holy Spirit is presently working with the Bride to invite all believers to "come":

"I, JESUS, HAVE SENT MY ANGEL TO TESTIFY TO YOU THESE THINGS IN THE CHURCHES...AND THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE SAY, 'COME!' AND LET HIM WHO HEARS SAY, 'COME!' AND LET HIM WHO THIRSTS COME..." Rev.22:16-17

Pastor Randy Shupe

As a further study on this subject, you might consider ordering a copy of a book I wrote entitled,

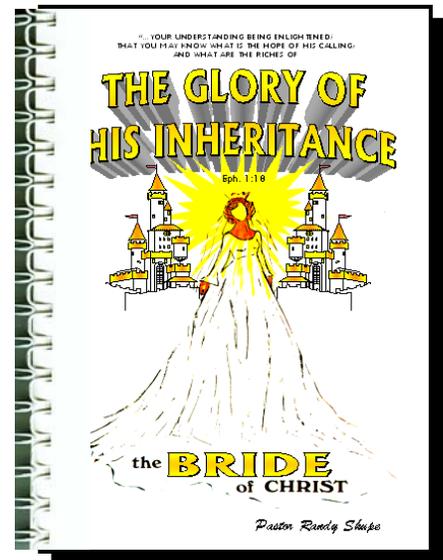
This book was first published in 1986. It was my first, and is the largest book that the Lord has inspired me to write. It is still among my favorites. After many years of being out of print, I have decided to reprint it in its original format rather than allowing it to no longer be in circulation. Sadly, I must say, the true message of the Bride of Christ remains a "great mystery" to most of God's people today (Eph. 5:32). With the erroneous "I got it all when I got saved" theology that permeates most of Christianity, the need to pursue after Paul's "goal and prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-15) has been theologically rendered null and void.



"...I PRESS ON, THAT I MAY LAY HOLD OF THAT FOR WHICH CHRIST JESUS HAS ALSO LAID HOLD OF ME... I PRESS TOWARD THE GOAL FOR THE PRIZE OF THE UPWARD CALL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS... AS MANY AS ARE MATURE, HAVE THIS MIND..."

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

Phil. 3:12-17



**FREE PDF Download
Available**

In spite of the apostle Paul's admonition to all believers to "join in following my example" and "you have us for a pattern", we do not see his example and pattern being presented to the saints in today's modern-day theology.

If indeed Paul is to be our example and pattern, why then are we not being taught the meaning of the goal and prize of which he speaks? This book sets before the believer the "great mystery" of the Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:25-32) as being the goal and prize of "the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."



~ JUNE 2009 ~

~ PROPHECY ~

THE STAMP OF GOD'S AUTHENTICITY

**"BELIEVE IN THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND YOU SHALL BE ESTABLISHED;
BELIEVE HIS PROPHETS, AND YOU SHALL PROSPER."**

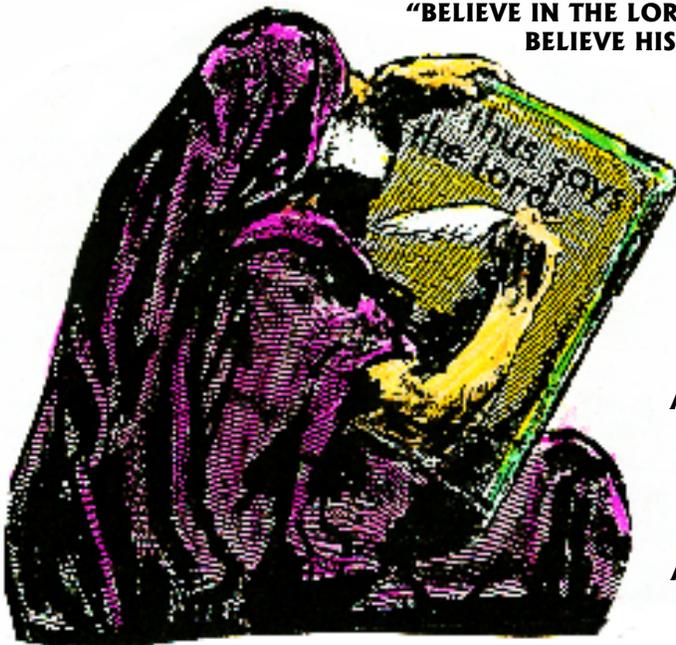
2Chron. 20:20

**"SURELY THE LORD GOD DOES NOTHING,
UNLESS HE REVEALS HIS SECRET
TO HIS SERVANTS THE PROPHETS...
THE LORD HAS SPOKEN!
WHO CAN BUT PROPHECY?"**

Amos 3:7-8

**"WE HAVE THE PROPHETIC WORD
MADE MORE SURE,
WHICH YOU DO WELL TO HEED
AS A LIGHT THAT SHINES IN A DARK PLACE...
NO PROPHECY OF SCRIPTURE
IS OF ANY PRIVATE INTERPRETATION.
FOR PROPHECY NEVER CAME
BY THE WILL OF MAN,
BUT HOLY MEN OF GOD SPOKE
AS THEY WERE MOVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT."**

2 Pet. 1:19-21



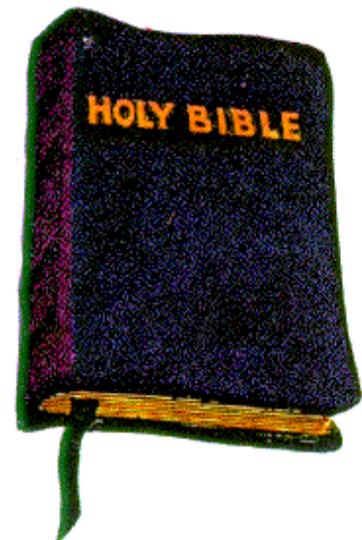
What propels the authenticity of the Bible above all other religious books?
It is the prophecy that it contains:

**"The Bible contains 1,817 individual predictions concerning
737 separate subjects found in 8,352 verses. These numerous
predictions comprise 27 percent of the 31,124 verses in the
whole of the Scriptures.**

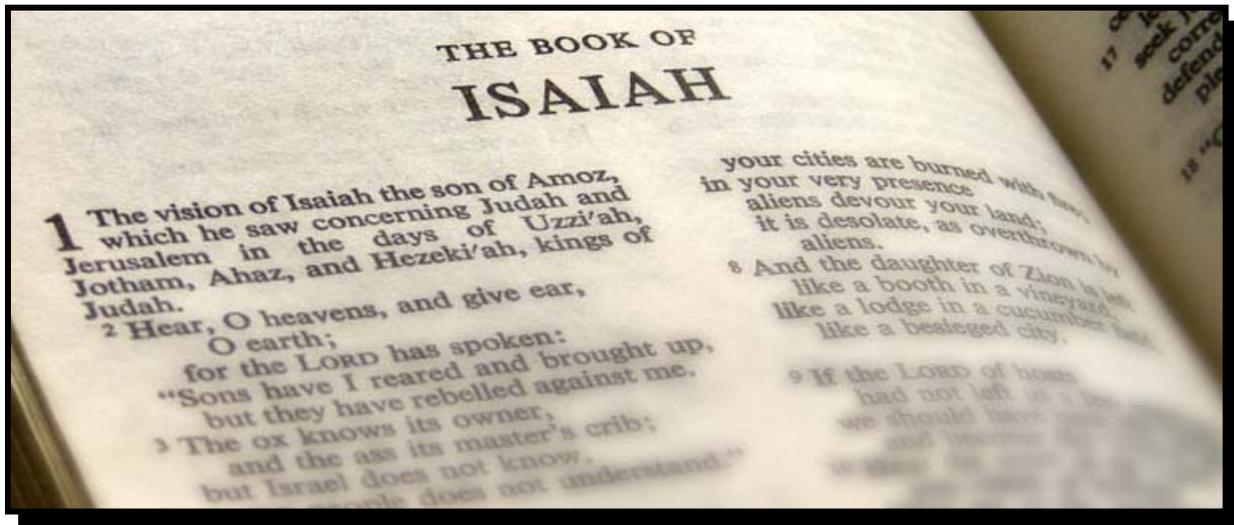
(Grant Jeffrey's *"The Signature of God"*)

Simply put, the Bible is nearly one-third prophecy. No other religious writings contain such detailed accounts of what lies ahead in the future for mankind. God has singled out prophecy as the stamp of authenticity to His claim to be the one and only true God. All other religions are labeled by God Himself as false due to their inability to foretell in detail future events.

This newsletter is dedicated to elaborating upon that claim.



We need only to look to the words of the prophet Isaiah to establish that God Himself uses the contents of prophecy as His stamp of authenticity as the one and only true God:



“ ‘PRESENT YOUR CASE,’ SAYS THE LORD, ‘BRING FORTH YOUR STRONG REASONS,’ SAYS THE KING OF JACOB. LET THEM BRING FORTH AND SHOW US WHAT WILL HAPPEN; LET THEM SHOW THE FORMER THINGS, WHAT THEY WERE, THAT WE MAY CONSIDER THEM, AND KNOW THE LATTER END OF THEM; OR DECLARE TO US THE THINGS THAT ARE TO COME. SHOW THE THINGS THAT ARE TO COME HEREAFTER, THAT WE MAY KNOW THAT YOU ARE GODS...INDEED YOU ARE NOTHING, AND YOUR WORK IS NOTHING; HE WHO CHOOSES YOU IS AN ABOMINATION...WHO HAS DECLARED FROM THE BEGINNING, THAT WE MAY KNOW?...SURELY THERE IS NO ONE WHO SHOWS, SURELY THERE IS NO ONE WHO DECLARES...”

Isaiah 41:21-26 excerpts

“I AM THE LORD, THAT IS MY NAME; AND MY GLORY I WILL NOT GIVE TO ANOTHER, NOR MY PRAISE TO GRAVEN IMAGES. BEHOLD THE FORMER THINGS HAVE COME TO PASS, AND NEW THINGS I DECLARE; BEFORE THEY SPRING FORTH I TELL YOU OF THEM.”

Isaiah 42:8-9

“LET ALL THE NATIONS BE GATHERED TOGETHER, AND LET THE PEOPLE BE ASSEMBLED. WHO AMONG YOU CAN DECLARE THIS, AND SHOW US FORMER THINGS? LET THEM BRING OUT THEIR WITNESSES, THAT THEY MAY BE JUSTIFIED...BEFORE ME THERE WAS NO GOD FORMED, NOR SHALL THERE BE AFTER ME. I, EVEN I, AM THE LORD, AND BESIDES ME THERE IS NO SAVIOR. I HAVE DECLARED AND SAVED. I HAVE PROCLAIMED, AND THERE WAS NO FOREIGN GOD AMONG YOU. THEREFORE YOU ARE MY WITNESSES,’ SAYS THE LORD, ‘THAT I AM GOD.’”

Isaiah 43:9-12 excerpts

“THUS SAYS THE LORD, THE KING OF ISRAEL, AND HIS REDEEMER, THE LORD OF HOSTS; ‘I AM THE FIRST AND I AM THE LAST; BESIDES ME THERE IS NO GOD. AND WHO CAN PROCLAIM AS I DO? THEN LET HIM DECLARE IT AND SET IT IN ORDER FOR ME, SINCE I APPOINTED THE ANCIENT PEOPLE, AND THE THINGS THAT ARE COMING AND SHALL COME...HAVE I NOT TOLD YOU FROM THAT TIME, AND DECLARE IT? YOU ARE MY WITNESSES. IS THERE ANY GOD BESIDES ME? INDEED THERE IS NO OTHER ROCK; I KNOW NOT ONE.”

Isaiah 44:6-8

“TELL AND BRING FORTH YOUR CASE; YES, LET THEM TAKE COUNSEL TOGETHER. WHO HAS DECLARED THIS FROM ANCIENT TIME? WHO HAS TOLD IT FROM THAT TIME? HAVE NOT I, THE LORD? AND THERE IS NO OTHER GOD BESIDES ME...”

Isaiah 45:21

“ ...I AM GOD THERE IS NO OTHER; I AM GOD, AND THERE IS NONE LIKE ME, DECLARING THE END FROM THE BEGINNING, AND FROM ANCIENT TIMES THINGS THAT ARE NOT YET DONE...INDEED I HAVE SPOKEN IT; I WILL ALSO BRING IT TO PASS. I HAVE PURPOSED IT; I WILL ALSO DO IT.”

Isaiah 46:9-11

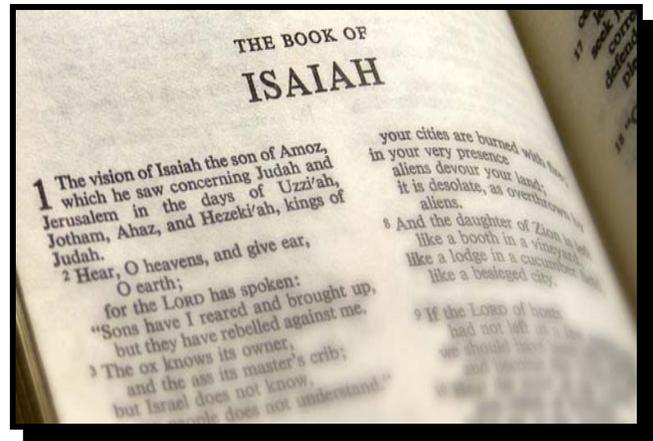
From the likes of these passages in Isaiah, the question arises as to whether God merely knows in advance what is going to happen (divine foreknowledge) and therefore accurately declares it, or whether He is actually causing all future events to happen (divine intervention). I believe the right answer is a delicate and proper balance of both. The Scriptures do state that God has foreknowledge:

“ELECT, ACCORDING TO THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD THE FATHER...”

1 Pet. 1:2

“FOR WHOM HE FOREKNEW, HE ALSO PREDESTINED TO BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON...”

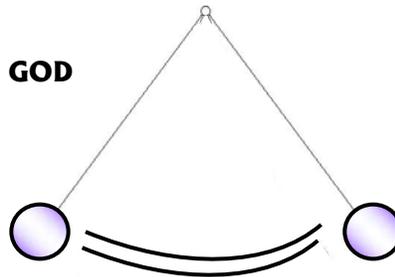
Rom. 8:29



Although the Scriptures clearly state that “election” and “predestination” are the results of God’s foreknowledge, man has swung the theological pendulum to embrace two extreme views:

FAR LEFT PENDULUM SWING:

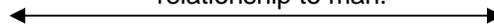
THE CALVINIST VIEW IS THAT GOD CAUSES ALL EVENTS (GOOD OR BAD) TO HAPPEN TO MAN. THE WILL OF GOD ALWAYS PREVAILS OVER THE WILL OF MAN.



FAR RIGHT PENDULUM SWING:

THE DEISTS VIEW IS THAT GOD CREATED MAN, BUT MAKES NO FURTHER INTERVENTION IN HIS LIFE. THE WILL OF MAN ALWAYS PREVAILS OVER THE WILL OF GOD.

Neither of these two extreme pendulum swings properly represents God’s relationship to man.



“**Calvinism** stresses the sovereignty or rule of God in all things — not only in salvation, but also in all of life...

Calvinism is a an approach to the Christian life that emphasizes the sovereign rule of God over all things...

The doctrine asserts that, since God is sovereign and His will cannot be frustrated by humans or anything else, those whom God has called to salvation will continue in faith until the end. Those who apparently fall away either never had true faith to begin with or will return to God... According to this viewpoint, the plan of God is worked out in every event of life. God as Creator sovereignly rules over all things...”

(Wikipedia encyclopedia)

The majority of the founding fathers of America were Deists, and that is why the Declaration of Independence is filled with statements elevating man’s reasoning to “self-evident truths...inalienable rights...to alter or abolish government...to amend such as to them shall seem most likely...” Democracy has its foundational roots in the principles of Deism rather than divine governing principles written in God’s Word.

Likewise, Calvinism is an outright character assassination of the God of the Bible. The highest revelation of God in His Word is not His absolute sovereignty over man, but rather is the fact that God is the Righteous Judge who deals with man according to his/her choices in life.

Prophecy is not solely the by-product of God’s sovereign intervention in man’s affairs. Prophecy also contains God’s foreknowledge of the choices man will make. We will not understand prophecy properly unless we hold a delicate and proper view of who God is and how He functions.

“**Deism** is the belief that a supreme God exists and created the physical universe, and that religious truths can be arrived at by the application of reason alone, without dependence on revelation. Deists typically reject most supernatural events (prophecy, miracles) and tend to assert that God has a plan for the universe, which he does not alter by intervening in the affairs of human life nor by suspending the natural laws of the universe. What organized religions see as divine religion and holy books, most deists see as interpretations made by other humans, rather than as authoritative sources. Deists believe that God’s greatest gift to humanity is not religion, but the ability to reason.”

(Wikipedia encyclopedia)

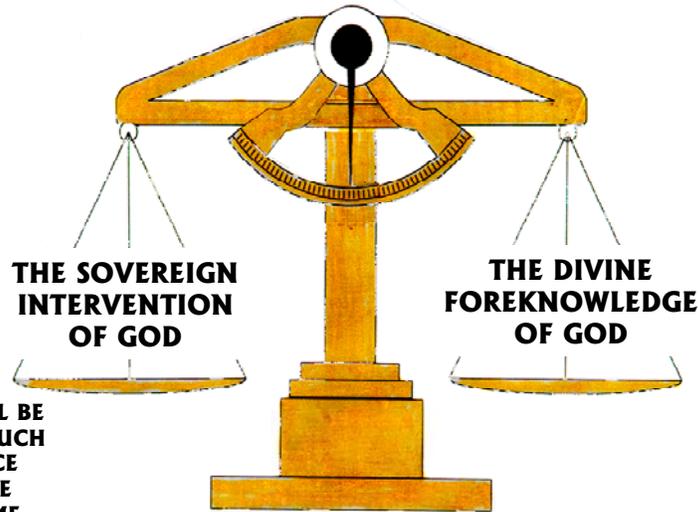
"...BECAUSE THEY DID NOT RECEIVE THE LOVE OF THE TRUTH, THAT THEY MIGHT BE SAVED. AND FOR THIS REASON GOD WILL SEND THEM STRONG DELUSION, THAT THEY SHOULD BELIEVE THE LIE, THAT THEY MAY ALL BE CONDEMNED WHO DID NOT BELIEVE THE TRUTH BUT HAD PLEASURE IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS."

2Thess. 2:10-12

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

Matt. 24:21-22

Here are some examples of the underlying cause of prophecy flowing from these two different aspects of God:



PROPHECY

When approaching God's prophetic word, it is imperative that we correctly place those words under the proper category if we are to represent God's character properly.

Here is the point I want to make from the illustrations above and on the previous page: Some parts of God's prophetic word belong under the banner of His absolute sovereignty to intervene in the affairs of men as He sees fit. Other parts of the prophetic word belong under the banner of God's divine ability of possessing foreknowledge of future events. It is important to understand that God does not cause all prophetic things to happen. Such is the illustration above pertaining to the destruction of two-thirds of the Jews. It is not His sovereign will that they be destroyed, but by His foreknowledge He knows that they will perish as unrepentant Zionists that remain alienated from their own Messiah. Conversely, the rise of Antichrist is the sovereign release of a delusional lie sent from God's hand on a segment of the unsaved (the wicked who "had pleasure in unrighteousness") who will be condemned. God help us to carefully analyze prophecy and properly place it under God's character as revealed in God's Word. The Calvinist view that God causes all things to happen is extreme, and so likewise is the Deist view that God does not intervene in the affairs of men at all. Keep the theological pendulum in balance!

It is important for God's people to study prophecy. This point cannot be over-emphasized. Consider once more the importance God Himself places on prophecy:

**"WE HAVE THE PROPHETIC WORD MADE MORE SURE,
WHICH YOU DO WELL TO HEED AS A LIGHT THAT SHINES IN A DARK PLACE...
NO PROPHECY OF SCRIPTURE IS OF ANY PRIVATE INTERPRETATION.
FOR PROPHECY NEVER CAME BY THE WILL OF MAN,
BUT HOLY MEN OF GOD SPOKE AS THEY WERE MOVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT."**

2 Pet. 1:19-21

**"BELIEVE IN THE LORD YOUR GOD,
AND YOU SHALL BE ESTABLISHED;
BELIEVE HIS PROPHETS,
AND YOU SHALL PROSPER."**

2Chron. 20:20

PROPHECY

**"SURELY THE LORD GOD DOES NOTHING,
UNLESS HE REVEALS HIS SECRET TO HIS SERVANTS THE PROPHETS...
THE LORD HAS SPOKEN!
WHO CAN BUT PROPHECY?"**

Amos 3:7-8

"AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS IN ALL THE LAND, 'SAYS THE LORD, 'THAT TWO-THIRDS IN IT SHALL BE CUT OFF AND DIE, BUT ONE THIRD SHALL BE LEFT IN IT; I WILL BRING THE ONE THIRD THROUGH THE FIRE, WILL REFINE THEM AS SILVER IS REFINED, AND TEST THEM AS GOLD IS TESTED. THEY WILL CALL ON MY NAME, AND I WILL ANSWER THEM, I WILL SAY, 'THIS IS MY PEOPLE'; AND EACH ONE WILL SAY, 'THE LORD IS MY GOD.' "

Zech. 13:8-9

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

Dan. 12:2-3

**"WE HAVE THE PROPHETIC WORD MADE MORE SURE,
WHICH YOU DO WELL TO HEED AS A LIGHT THAT SHINES IN A DARK PLACE...
NO PROPHECY OF SCRIPTURE IS OF ANY PRIVATE INTERPRETATION.
FOR PROPHECY NEVER CAME BY THE WILL OF MAN,
BUT HOLY MEN OF GOD SPOKE AS THEY WERE MOVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT."**

2 Pet. 1:19-21

THE COMPOUND PROBABILITY OF FULFILLING PROPHECY

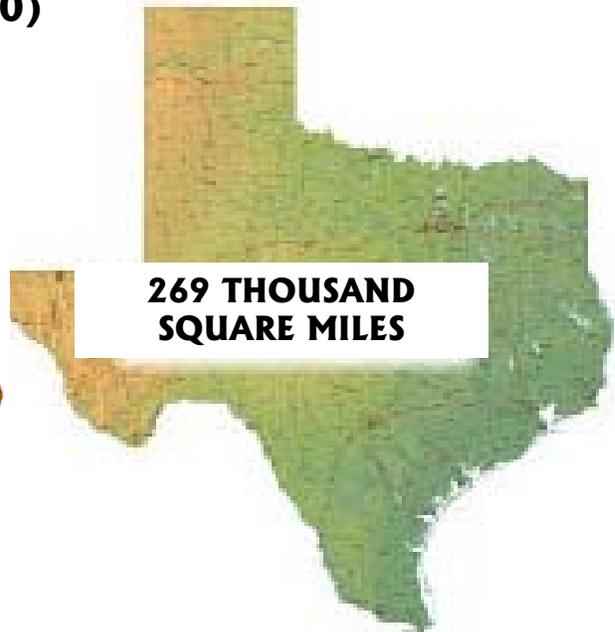
There exists a mathematical principle called "the Law of Compound Probability." This mathematical law can be used to calculate the odds that are against a happenstance fulfillment of prophetic predictions. By this method, we are able to rule out completely factors of coincidence, chance, or even human manipulation in the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. When compounded by a specific set of conditions, requirements, or qualifications, the probability of one individual who could precisely fulfill only eight of the three hundred prophecies relating to Christ places the odds at 1 in 10 (18th power). For us non-mathematical geniuses, that is the same as 1 followed by 18 zeros.

(1,000,000,000,000,000,000)

To help understand even that enormous figure, it is equivalent to covering the entire state of Texas 2 feet deep in silver dollars, specially marking one of them, and instructing a blindfolded man to pick the right silver dollar on the first try.

That kind of illustration I can understand!

Let us remember that we are only dealing with eight of the three-hundred prophecies pertaining to the life of Christ.



The more details you add to a prophetic event, the more complex it becomes to fulfill it. For instance let us say that you predict that the Denver Broncos football team will beat the Cleveland Browns. Your odds are 50-50 to be right. However let us add that the score will be 24 to 21. Your odds have just sky-rocketed because of this specific detail. Let us add the fact that a field-goal won the game. Odds again sky-rocket beyond comprehension. Let us add that the winning field goal was in overtime. Odds sky-rocket again. Let us predict that a bad call by the ref cost Cleveland a touch-down. Up go the odds again! Let us say that bad call took place during the overtime period. The odds sky-rocket again. Let us predict that a big fight took place on the field over that bad call. The odds increase dramatically! Let us predict that one of the players for Cleveland was so seriously injured that he was lost for the season. Up go the odds again.

Now we have the scenario of a detailed "prophecy" whose odds are

(1,000,000,000,000,000,000) to 1 against fulfillment

The bulk of all prophecy contained in God's Word centers upon these three categories:



These three areas constitute what are now past, present, and future aspects of prophecy. The prophetic events concerning the first coming of Christ are now historical events, things of the past. Many of the prophetic events pertaining to the nation of Israel have taken place and are continuing to take place in our lifetime. The prophetic events pertaining to the second coming of Christ lay ahead of us, perhaps also to be fulfilled in our lifetime.

Look at the diagram below pertaining to eight prophesied events recorded about the life of Christ at His first coming:

**WHERE HE WOULD BE BORN...
HOW HE WOULD DIE...
WHERE HE WOULD BE BURIED...
SOLD FOR 30 PIECES OF SILVER...
GAMBLE FOR HIS CLOTHING...
NO BONES WOULD BE BROKEN...
PIERCE HIS HANDS AND FEET...
RAISE FROM THE DEAD IN 3 DAYS...**

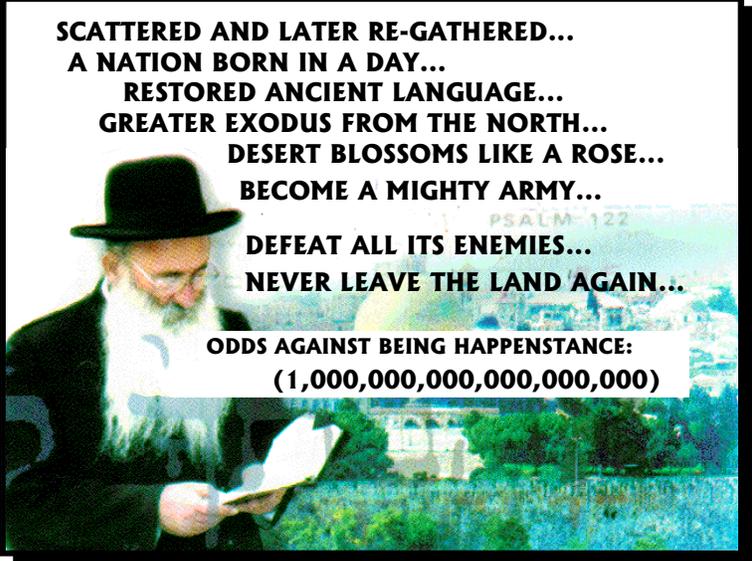


**ODDS AGAINST BEING HAPPENSTANCE:
(1,000,000,000,000,000)**

How many of these events were under the control of Christ Himself? The answer is none. Could He have manipulated any of these prophesied events to make them come true? Could He control where He was to be born? Could He have controlled the details of His death? Could He have controlled where He would have been buried, namely in a rich man's tomb? How about the fact that no bones were broken in His body when the tradition was to break the legs of the crucified victim as death drew near. They broke the legs of those crucified on either side of Him, but not so with Jesus.

An amazing amount of detail is recorded about Jesus' first coming that defies the odds of being happenstance or mere coincidence.

The present prophetic focus is upon the nation of Israel. Listed below are eight statements prophesied about the Jewish people:

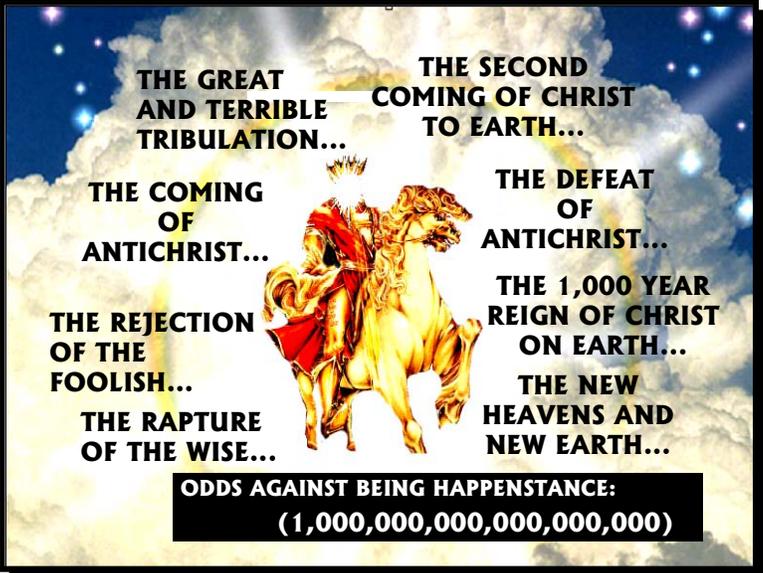


**SCATTERED AND LATER RE-GATHERED...
A NATION BORN IN A DAY...
RESTORED ANCIENT LANGUAGE...
GREATER EXODUS FROM THE NORTH...
DESERT BLOSSOMS LIKE A ROSE...
BECOME A MIGHTY ARMY...
DEFEAT ALL ITS ENEMIES...
NEVER LEAVE THE LAND AGAIN...**

**ODDS AGAINST BEING HAPPENSTANCE:
(1,000,000,000,000,000)**

One can see a timeline in these statements which began in 1948 with the re-birth of Israel as a nation. Jews have migrated back to Israel from all over the world and especially from the North country of Russia. Israel has turned the deserts into fertile land by means of converting sea water into fresh. Who gave them that technology? It was God. Today they export roses grown in these revitalized deserts with daily flights to Florida. Have they become a mighty army? They are the third most powerful military force on the planet although being among the tiniest of nations. Right now (2009) Israel is engaged in battles with its enemies. They will defeat them! Don't worry about idle threats such as Iran makes against them. They will never leave the land again and nor will it be blown off the face of the earth by their enemies.

Israel is what God is doing prophetically today. What lies ahead is yet another prophetic list:



THE GREAT AND TERRIBLE TRIBULATION... THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST TO EARTH...

THE COMING OF ANTICHRIST... THE DEFEAT OF ANTICHRIST...

THE REJECTION OF THE FOOLISH... THE 1,000 YEAR REIGN OF CHRIST ON EARTH...

THE RAPTURE OF THE WISE... THE NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH...

**ODDS AGAINST BEING HAPPENSTANCE:
(1,000,000,000,000,000)**

The book of Daniel and the book of Revelation prophesy about the things that lie ahead for this world. Jesus said of the coming tribulation, "For then there will be great tribulation such as has not been seen since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt.24:21).

Prophecy is God's light shining into these terrible days that lie ahead. I pray that this newsletter has stimulated your interest enough that you become a student of the prophetic word.



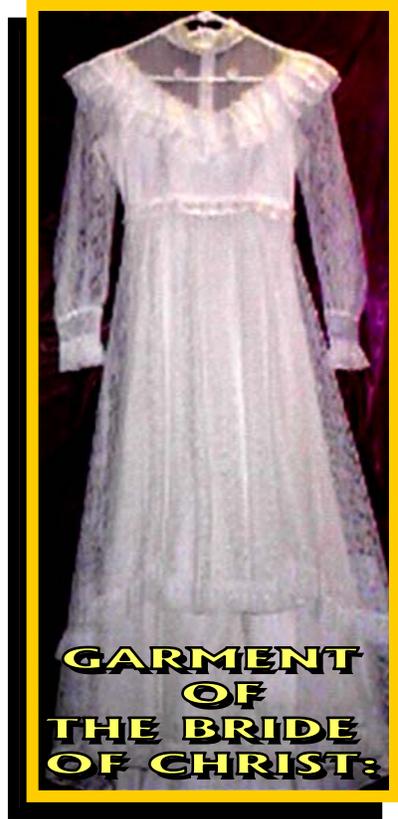
THE TWO GARMENTS OF THE BELIEVER



**GARMENT
OF
THE BODY
OF CHRIST:**

**“WRITE
THE VISION
AND
MAKE IT PLAIN
ON TABLETS,
THAT
HE MAY RUN
WHO READS IT”**
Habakkuk 2:2

**“WHERE
THERE IS
NO REVELATION
(PROPHETIC VISION),
THE PEOPLE
CAST OFF
RESTRAINT”**
Proverbs 29:18



**GARMENT
OF
THE BRIDE
OF CHRIST:**

**“I WILL GREATLY REJOICE IN THE LORD,
MY SOUL SHALL BE JOYFUL IN MY GOD;
FOR HE HAS CLOTHED ME WITH
THE GARMENTS OF SALVATION, HE HAS
COVERED ME WITH THE ROBE OF
RIGHTEOUSNESS...”**
Isa. 61:10

**“LET US BE GLAD AND REJOICE...
FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB HAS COME,
AND HIS WIFE HAS MADE HERSELF READY. AND TO
HER IT WAS GRANTED TO BE ARRAYED IN FINE
LINEN, CLEAN AND BRIGHT, FOR THE FINE LINEN IS
THE RIGHTEOUS ACTS OF THE SAINTS”**
Rev. 19:7-8

God's people need to expand their vision when it comes to spiritual garments. There are two described in Scripture as portrayed above. One is the product of the new birth covering the members of the Body of Christ. The other is a product of a new life lived for Christ . This second garment clothes the Bride of Christ. The first garment is a gift of God's saving grace. The second is a reward inherited by God's enabling grace to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil.

THE BODY OF CHRIST:

"I WILL GREATLY REJOICE IN THE LORD, MY SOUL SHALL BE JOYFUL IN MY GOD; FOR HE HAS CLOTHED ME WITH THE GARMENTS OF SALVATION, HE HAS COVERED ME WITH THE ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS..."

Isa. 61:10



THE BRIDE OF CHRIST:

"LET US BE GLAD AND REJOICE... FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB HAS COME, AND HIS WIFE HAS MADE HERSELF READY. AND TO HER IT WAS GRANTED TO BE ARRAYED IN FINE LINEN, CLEAN AND BRIGHT, FOR THE FINE LINEN IS THE RIGHTEOUS ACTS OF THE SAINTS"

Rev. 19:7-8

Speaking of marriage, Jesus warned, "what God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matt. 19:6). Concerning the diagram above, I would like to suggest that we also need to beware of joining together what God has separated. I am using this play on words to emphasize the point that we all are called to "rightly divide the Word of truth". If we fail to do so, we are in danger of being found "ashamed before God" (2 Tim. 2:15). The two garments above must not be considered as one and the same. It is true that both deal with the subject of righteousness. However, one is the justifying righteousness of Christ while the other is the sanctifying righteous acts of the saints. The Amplified makes it even more clear:

**"SHE HAS BEEN PERMITTED TO DRESS IN FINE (RADIANT) LINEN, DAZZLING AND WHITE-
-FOR THE FINE LINEN IS (SIGNIFIES, REPRESENTS) THE RIGHTEOUSNESS (THE UPRIGHT, JUST, AND GODLY LIVING, DEEDS, AND CONDUCT, AND RIGHT STANDING WITH GOD)
OF THE SAINTS (GOD'S HOLY PEOPLE)." Rev. 19:8 Amp.**

We must not join together what God has separated in His Word. Isaiah's garment of salvation is not the garment in which the Bride of Christ will be arrayed on her wedding day. We need to think carefully about that statement. We are specifically told that the Bride of Christ will be arrayed in fine linen consisting of her own righteous deeds as a follower of Christ. Perhaps that is why we do not find an "Amen" at the close of the Book of Acts as we do in the epistles. I believe it is because the righteous acts of the saints are still being recorded by God. They will be of significance in eternity for it is such righteous acts that will clothe the Bride of Christ. There will be a great multitude in heaven that are clothed with what Isaiah depicts as "robes of righteousness, garments of salvation", but these are not the garments that represent The Bride of Christ.

In using this illustration of two different garments, I am seeking to make a distinction between the act of justification ("new birth"), and the on-going acts of sanctification ("new life") that are to permeate the life of the believer. These two garments represent the UNMERITED favor of God and the MERITED favor of God. Although the Bible clearly presents both, many of God's people are only being fed half of the truth. Listen to Jesus Himself emphasize the importance of works of merit before God:

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

Rev 22:12 Amp.

The two garments shown above also represent the difference between grace and works. We have been well taught that we are "not saved BY works" (Eph. 2:8-9). However, the context of these verses go on to state that we were "saved FOR good works" (Eph. 2:10). We must stop theologically "throwing out the baby with the bath water" when it comes to grace vs. works. Jesus is measuring our works (Rev. 3:2). I am suggesting to you that rightly dividing the Word of truth pertaining to these two garments will properly prepare those who are presently in the Body of Christ for the Bride of Christ which is to come in the after-life. Unto this purpose is this month's newsletter dedicated.

A simplistic, but very practical, method I use for rightly dividing the Word of truth is to take verses that are in context and divide them into Column A and Column B. Often I find that what is in Column B builds upon the truth placed in Column A. Below are seven such contextual passages that illustrate this point. The Scriptures I selected show that God is calling us to higher levels of truths, than what is stated in Column A. If we allow Column B to be divorced from column A we will only have half the truth God intends for His people to embrace. These passages make a distinction between the Body and the Bride of Christ.

COLUMN A

(produces THE BODY of Christ)



COLUMN B

(produces THE BRIDE of Christ)

"...YOU HAVE KNOWN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES WHICH ARE ABLE TO MAKE YOU WISE FOR SALVATION THROUGH FAITH WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS."
2 Tim. 3:15

"ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN... FOR DOCTRINE, FOR REPROOF, FOR CORRECTION, FOR INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE COMPLETE, THOROUGHLY EQUIPPED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK" 2 Tim. 3:16

"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

"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

"THEREFORE GIRD UP THE LOINS OF YOUR MIND, BE SOBER, AND REST YOUR HOPE FULLY UPON THE GRACE THAT IS TO BE BROUGHT TO YOU AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST."
1 Pet. 1:13

"AS OBEDIENT CHILDREN, NOT CONFORMING YOURSELVES TO THE FORMER LUSTS... BUT AS HE WHO CALLED YOU IS HOLY, YOU ALSO BE HOLY IN ALL YOUR CONDUCT."
1 Pet. 1:14-15

"BUT WHEN THE KINDNESS AND THE LOVE OF GOD OUR SAVIOR TOWARD MAN APPEARED, NOT BY WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH WE HAVE DONE, BUT ACCORDING TO HIS MERCY HE SAVED US...THAT HAVING BEEN JUSTIFIED BY HIS GRACE WE SHOULD BECOME HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE."
Titus 3:4-7

"...THESE THINGS I WANT YOU TO AFFIRM CONSTANTLY, THAT THOSE WHO HAVE BELIEVED IN GOD SHOULD BE CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS. THESE THINGS ARE GOOD AND PROFITABLE TO MEN...AND LET OUR PEOPLE ALSO LEARN TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS... THAT THEY MAY NOT BE UNFRUITFUL."
Titus 3:8,14

"THEREFORE HAVING BEEN JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THROUGH WHOM ALSO WE HAVE ACCESS BY FAITH INTO THIS GRACE BY WHICH WE STAND, AND REJOICE IN HOPE OF THE GLORY OF GOD." Rom. 5:1-2

"AND NOT ONLY THAT, BUT WE ALSO GLORY IN TRIBULATIONS, KNOWING THAT TRIBULATION PRODUCES PERSEVERANCE; AND PERSEVERANCE (PRODUCES) CHARACTER; AND CHARACTER (PRODUCES) HOPE."
Rom. 5:3-4

"...YOU RECEIVED THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION BY WHOM WE CRY OUT "ABBA, FATHER". THE SPIRIT HIMSELF BEARS WITNESS WITH OUR SPIRIT THAT WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD, AND IF CHILDREN, THEN HEIRS-HEIRS OF GOD ..."
Rom. 8:15-17a

"AND JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST IF WE SUFFER WITH HIM, THAT WE MAY ALSO BE GLORIFIED TOGETHER. FOR I CONSIDER THAT THE SUFFERINGS OF THIS PRESENT TIME ARE NOT WORTHY TO BE COMPARED WITH THE GLORY WHICH SHALL BE REVEALED IN US."
Rom. 8:17b-18

"...ADORN THE DOCTRINE OF GOD OUR SAVIOR IN ALL THINGS. FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN..." Titus 2:10-11

"TEACHING US THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY AND GODLY IN THIS PRESENT AGE..." Titus 2:12

For the sake of impact, let me highlight for you the key words and phrases from each column:

COLUMN A
(produces **THE BODY** of Christ)

**SAVED BY GRACE-NOT OF WORKS...
FAITH...GIFT OF GOD...
LOVE OF GOD...HIS MERCY...
JUSTIFIED BY HIS GRACE...
HEIRS OF ETERNAL LIFE...
ACCESS BY FAITH...
GRACE IN WHICH WE STAND...
SPIRIT OF ADOPTION...
CHILDREN OF GOD...
GOD OUR SAVIOR...**

COLUMN B
(produces **THE BRIDE** of Christ)

**WALK IN GOOD WORKS...
OBEDIENT CHILDREN...
HOLY IN CONDUCT...
MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS...
NOT UNFRUITFUL...TRIBULATIONS...
PERSEVERANCE...CHARACTER...
JOINT HEIRS...SUFFER WITH CHRIST...
GLORIFIED TOGETHER...
DENYING UNGODLINESS,
WORLDLY LUSTS...LIVING SOBERLY,
RIGHTEOUSLY, GODLY...**

COLUMN A:

Those things that pertain to
THE BODY OF CHRIST



The
Garment of SALVATION

To rightly divide the Word of truth, we took seven different Scriptures in their contextual setting and literally divided them into two columns. In context, the authors were careful to present to God's people more than the basic concept of salvation. The verse that followed each initial point contained higher truths that God expects His people to embrace. Has not for the most part the whole counsel of God in these contextual passages been reduced to a presentation of only what is in Column A? Is it not true that only half the message is being preached to God's people even though all of the passages were written to His people?

COLUMN B:

Those things that pertain to
THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

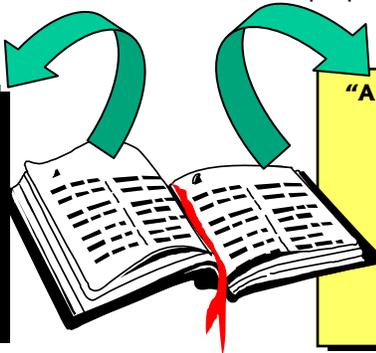


The
Righteous ACTS of the Saints

What is in Column B is established by merely considering the very next verse following the truth that Column A contains. Therefore, such limited teaching that is being set before God's people today cannot be the result of being overlooked or of ignorance, but rather we must conclude that the higher truths are purposefully being left out. Let us single out just one of the Scriptures from the previous page. Let us consider what God recorded as the ultimate purpose He has for His Word in the life of the believer:

INITIAL PURPOSE:

**"...YOU HAVE KNOWN
THE
HOLY SCRIPTURES
WHICH ARE ABLE
TO MAKE YOU
WISE FOR SALVATION
THROUGH FAITH
WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS."
2 Tim. 3:15**



HIGHER PURPOSE:

**"ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION
OF GOD AND IS PROFITABLE
FOR DOCTRINE, FOR REPROOF,
FOR CORRECTION,
FOR INSTRUCTION
IN RIGHTEOUSNESS,
THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY
BE COMPLETE,
THOROUGHLY EQUIPPED FOR EVERY
GOOD WORK" 2 Tim. 3:16**

Note that there is a twofold purpose for God's Word for the believer. Initially it was given to make us wise for salvation. However, we see above that God is after a saved people that are thoroughly equipped for good works. That is why works always follow the message of grace as we have seen in both Ephesians 2:8-10 and in Titus 3:4-8. If the presentation of the Scriptures is being limited to the message of salvation and does not go on to prepare us for good works, then we are not receiving the whole counsel of God. God's ultimate purpose for the Scriptures is to thoroughly equip His people for good works. Why is this so? It is because the Bride of Christ will be wearing a garment that is comprised of the righteous acts of the saints! (Rev. 19:7-8). The things that are in Column A make us wise for salvation (become members of the Body of Christ). The things that are in Column B are the righteous acts (good works) that will form the Bride of Christ in eternity!

“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

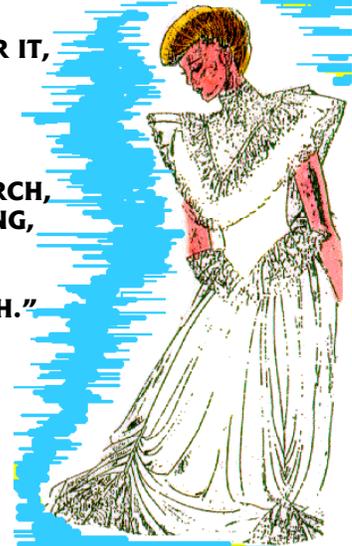
There are verses like the one above which, in one flowing sentence, takes us from the grace of God to a people that become zealous for good works. Passages like these are scattered throughout the Word of God to convey the whole counsel of God in a manner that prevents any misunderstanding as to what God's full intentions are for His people. God's brand of grace prepares His people for good works because of the fact that God wants those in the Body of Christ to qualify for the Bride of Christ!

There are many mysteries (hidden truths) in the Bible. Among the twelve found in the New Testament, the Bride of Christ is singled out as “a great mystery.” Paul writes:



“HUSBANDS, LOVE YOUR WIVES, JUST AS CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT, THAT (“IN ORDER THAT”) HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE IT WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD, THAT (“IN ORDER THAT”) HE MIGHT PRESENT IT TO HIMSELF A GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE OR ANY SUCH THING, BUT THAT IT SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH....THIS IS A GREAT MYSTERY, BUT I SPEAK CONCERNING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.”

Eph. 5:25-27, 32



Here again in verses 25-27 we have one long flowing sentence filled with revelation about the Bride of Christ. First of all we are told the well-known fact that “Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it”. But the passage goes right into two higher truths revealing why He gave Himself for it:

THAT (“IN ORDER THAT”) HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE IT WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD,

THAT (“IN ORDER THAT”) HE MIGHT PRESENT IT TO HIMSELF A GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE OR ANY SUCH THING, BUT THAT IT SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH.”

Paul's subject is the Bride of Christ and he is writing to members of the Body of Christ. Note that Jesus intends to sanctify the church by means of “washing it in the water of the Word.”

He is writing to a people who have been “washed in the Blood of Christ”. Look at this comparison:

“TO HIM WHO LOVED US AND WASHED US FROM OUR SINS IN HIS OWN BLOOD”

Rev. 1: 5

“CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY... IT WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD.” Eph. 5:25-26

Those whom Christ has washed in His Blood He now seeks to wash in the water of the Word. Washing in blood produces justification (forgiveness of sins), but washing in water produces sanctification (holy in conduct). God's ultimate will for us is sanctification in our spirit, in our soul, and in our body (see 1 Thess. 4:3, 5:23). All that we have looked at in Column A deals with justification. The things we find in Column B deal with sanctification. If, as a blood-washed member of the Body of Christ, you intend to become the Bride of Christ, you will need to pay attention to Column B's theology. Jesus wants a sanctified Bride that is willing to wash in the water of His Word as well as in His Blood!



Paul has another great revelation pertaining to the Bride of Christ. This time it is a prophetic revelation of what is going to happen in the Body of Christ:

"...I AM JEALOUS FOR YOU WITH GODLY JEALOUSY. FOR I HAVE BETROTHED YOU TO ONE HUSBAND, THAT I MAY PRESENT YOU AS A CHASTE VIRGIN TO CHRIST.

BUT I FEAR, LEST SOMEHOW, AS THE SERPENT DECEIVED EVE BY HIS CRAFTINESS, SO YOUR MINDS MAY BE CORRUPTED FROM THE SIMPLICITY THAT IS IN CHRIST. ("CORRUPTED AND SEDUCED FROM WHOLEHEARTED AND SINCERE AND PURE DEVOTION TO CHRIST" AMP.) FOR IF HE WHO COMES PREACHES ANOTHER JESUS WHOM WE HAVE NOT PREACHED, OR IF YOU RECEIVE A DIFFERENT SPIRIT WHICH YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED, OR A DIFFERENT GOSPEL WHICH YOU HAVE NOT ACCEPTED (I FEAR) YOU MAY WELL PUT UP WITH IT! 2ND Cor. 11:1-4



Paul reveals that the Body of Christ is betrothed or engaged to Christ. However, he goes on to express a genuine fear that Satan might deceive and corrupt the espoused Bride by the preaching of "another Jesus...a different Spirit...a different gospel." I think it is important to realize that Paul believed it was possible for those who were betrothed to Christ to be found other than as chaste virgins. Much of our modern-day grace theology denies that this possibility exists. The "once-saved-always saved" and the "I got it all when I got saved" theologies permeate the Body of Christ with delusion. We indeed suffer from the preaching of another Jesus, a different Spirit and a different gospel than what Paul presented.

Let us consider yet another of Paul's doctrinal exhortations that has become lost theology over the centuries:



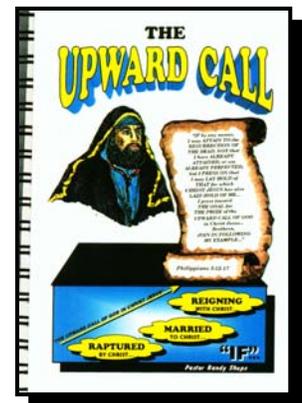
"...THAT I MAY KNOW HIM AND THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION, AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS, BEING CONFORMED TO HIS DEATH, IF, BY ANY MEANS, I MAY ATTAIN TO THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD. NOT THAT I HAVE ALREADY ATTAINED, OR AM ALREADY PERFECTED; BUT I PRESS ON, THAT I MAY LAY HOLD OF THAT FOR WHICH CHRIST JESUS HAS ALSO LAID HOLD OF ME. BRETHREN, I DO NOT COUNT MYSELF TO HAVE APPREHENDED; BUT ONE THING I DO, FORGETTING THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND AND REACHING FORWARD TO THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE AHEAD, I PRESS TOWARD THE GOAL FOR THE PRIZE OF THE UPWARD CALL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.

THEREFORE LET US, AS MANY AS ARE MATURE, HAVE THIS MIND; AND IF IN ANYTHING YOU THINK OTHERWISE, GOD WILL REVEAL EVEN THIS TO YOU. NEVERTHELESS, TO THE DEGREE THAT WE HAVE ALREADY ATTAINED, LET US WALK BY THE SAME RULE, LET US BE OF THE SAME MIND. BRETHREN, JOIN IN FOLLOWING MY EXAMPLE, AND NOTE THOSE WHO SO WALK, AS YOU HAVE US FOR A PATTERN. FOR MANY WALK, OF WHOM I HAVE TOLD YOU OFTEN, AND NOW TELL YOU EVEN WEEPING, THAT THEY ARE THE ENEMIES OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST: WHOSE END IS DESTRUCTION, WHOSE GOD IS THEIR BELLY, AND WHOSE GLORY IS IN THEIR SHAME -- WHO SET THEIR MIND ON EARTHLY THINGS. FOR OUR CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN, FROM WHICH WE ALSO EAGERLY WAIT FOR THE SAVIOR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST..."

Phil 3:10-20

What Paul sets as a pattern for all believers is missing in today's presentation of the gospel. The above teaching of Paul stands in opposition to the "I got it all when I got saved" way of thinking. Paul states that he has not already attained, nor is already perfected. He states that there is a prize set before the believer which he calls the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Lacking space to elaborate, I would like to recommend this little booklet that I wrote on this subject. →

We need to answer the question as to what is the "that" for which Christ Jesus has laid hold of us. It is my conviction that ultimately it is the Bride. Paul laments over the carnal believers in his day who were enemies of the cross of Jesus, whose god was their belly, and who set their mind on earthly things.



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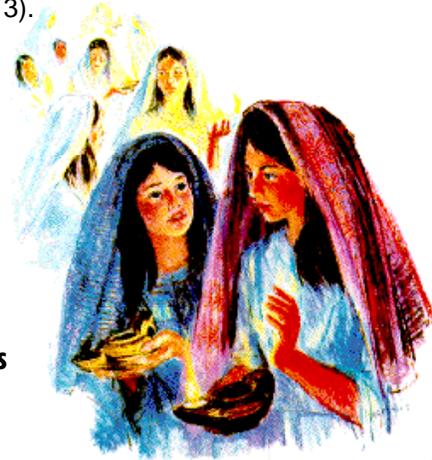
In Matthew 22 Jesus opened a parable with the statement "...A CERTAIN KING ARRANGED A MARRIAGE FOR HIS SON" (vs.2). He closes the parable with the statement "MANY ARE CALLED, BUT FEW ARE CHOSEN" (vs.14). Inbetween He states that many were "NOT WILLING TO COME...THEY MADE LIGHT OF IT...THEY WENT THEIR OWN WAYS...TO THEIR FARMS AND BUSINESSES" (vs.3-5).

The whole Body of Christ is betrothed to become His Bride. However, parables like the above and the one below foretell us that not all will end up as the Bride. I do not believe that the problem for God's people is one of attainability, but rather it is a lack of availability. Satan seeks to corrupt the espoused Bride through perverted doctrines as Paul prophesied, but also by means of his subtle substitutes such as are listed in the parable of the Sower (see Mark 4, Luke 8, Mat.13).



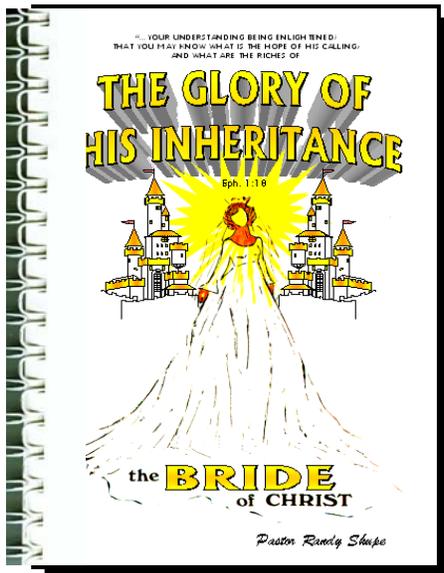
Here is how Jesus predicted the status of His espoused Bride at the coming of The Bridegroom:

"THEN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN SHALL BE LIKENED TO TEN VIRGINS WHO TOOK THEIR LAMPS AND WENT OUT TO MEET THE BRIDEGROOM. NOW FIVE OF THEM WERE WISE, AND FIVE WERE FOOLISH. THOSE WHO WERE FOOLISH TOOK THEIR LAMPS AND TOOK NO OIL WITH THEM, BUT THE WISE TOOK OIL IN THEIR VESSELS WITH THEIR LAMPS. BUT WHILE THE BRIDEGROOM WAS DELAYED, THEY ALL SLUMBERED AND SLEPT.



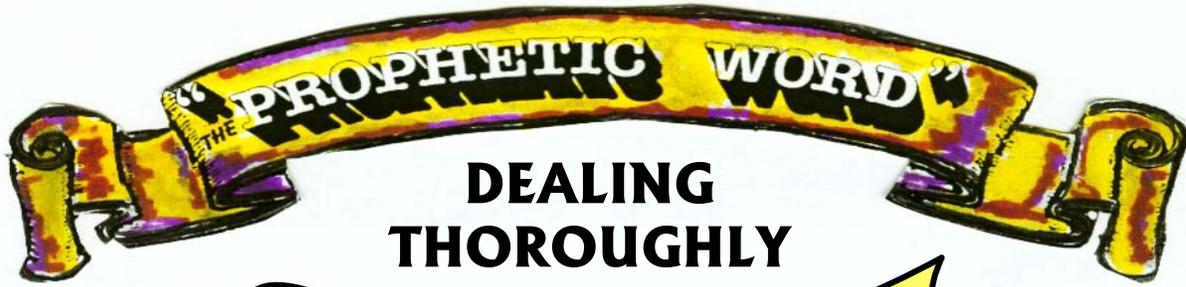
"AND AT MIDNIGHT A CRY WAS HEARD: 'BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM IS COMING; GO OUT TO MEET HIM!' THEN ALL THOSE VIRGINS AROSE AND TRIMMED THEIR LAMPS. AND THE FOOLISH SAID TO THE WISE, 'GIVE US SOME OF YOUR OIL, FOR OUR LAMPS ARE GOING OUT.' BUT THE WISE ANSWERED, SAYING, 'NO, LEST THERE SHOULD NOT BE ENOUGH FOR US AND YOU; BUT GO RATHER TO THOSE WHO SELL, AND BUY FOR YOURSELVES.' AND WHILE THEY WENT TO BUY, THE BRIDEGROOM CAME, AND THOSE WHO WERE READY WENT IN WITH HIM TO THE WEDDING; AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT. AFTERWARD THE OTHER VIRGINS CAME ALSO, SAYING, 'LORD, LORD, OPEN TO US!' BUT HE ANSWERED AND SAID, 'ASSUREDLY, I SAY TO YOU, I DO NOT KNOW YOU.'

**WATCH THEREFORE,
FOR YOU KNOW NEITHER THE DAY NOR THE HOUR IN WHICH THE SON OF MAN IS COMING. "**
Matt. 25:1-13



In closing, let me suggest you consider an in-depth teaching I did many years ago on the subject of the Bride of Christ.

This book was first published in 1986. It was my first and is still the largest book that the Lord has inspired me to write. It is still among my favorites. After many years of being out of print, I have decided to reprint it in its original format rather than allowing it to no longer be in circulation. Sadly, I must say, the true message of the Bride of Christ remains a "great mystery" to most of God's people today (Eph. 5:32). With the erroneous "I got it all when I got saved" theology that permeates most of Christianity, the need to pursue after Paul's "goal and prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-15) has been theologically rendered null and void. The result is that the Body of Christ has no vision for obtaining the Bride of Christ. It is considered a done-deal via the new birth!



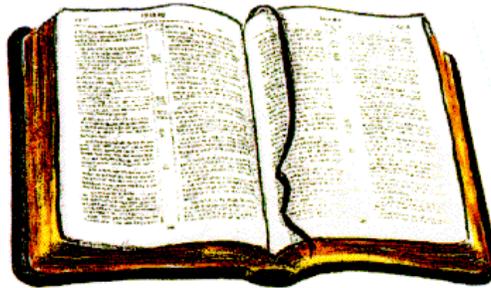
DEALING THOROUGHLY WITH

SIN

IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER

"...SIN LIES AT THE DOOR. AND ITS DESIRE IS FOR YOU, BUT YOU SHOULD RULE OVER IT."

Gen. 4:7



"THEREFORE DO NOT LET SIN REIGN IN YOUR MORTAL BODY, THAT YOU SHOULD OBEY IT IN ITS LUSTS."

Rom. 6:12

In the above passages, one from the Old and one from the New Testament, we can see that God's will is unchanging pertaining to dealing with the issue of sin in the life of His followers. We are to rule and reign over it.

If you look carefully at these two passages, you will see that sin is not just a innate word describing what we do that is displeasing to God, but rather that sin is an evil force that "lies at the door" (of our heart) and "its desire is for you", not just that you at times struggle with desire for it (Gen. 4:7).

Paul confirms this truth about sin in stating that sin has its own lusts (Rom. 6:12).

We are to deal thoroughly with the issue of sin in our lives.

A. W. Tozer pungently stated it this way:



"DEAR CHRISTIAN, EITHER YOU DEAL THOROUGHLY WITH THE ISSUE OF SIN IN YOUR LIFE, OR SIN WILL DEAL THOROUGHLY WITH YOU."

A.W. Tozer

Theologians like the late A. W. Tozer are rapidly disappearing in modern-day Christendom. They are being replaced with what Tozer used to call "paper-back theologians" who promote half-truths, watered-down, distorted teachings about sin's relationship to the grace of God. Such distortions are lulling God's people to sleep pertaining to the issue of sin. Paul warns all believers:

"AWAKE TO RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND DO NOT SIN; FOR SOME DO NOT HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. I SPEAK THIS TO YOUR SHAME."

1 Cor. 15:34



**"AWAKE TO RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND DO NOT SIN;
FOR SOME DO NOT HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. I SPEAK THIS TO YOUR SHAME."**
1 Cor. 15:34

In making such a statement, Paul is not preaching sinless perfection.
In another place he said:

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

However, in holding a balanced perspective between law and grace, we must also take note that Paul explicitly states that God's grace is not to become a spiritual license to continue to practice sin as a believer:

**"WHAT SHALL I SAY THEN? SHALL WE CONTINUE IN SIN THAT GRACE MAY ABOUND? CERTAINLY NOT!
HOW SHALL WE WHO DIED TO SIN LIVE ANY LONGER IN IT... FOR SIN SHALL NOT HAVE DOMINION
OVER YOU, FOR YOU ARE NOT UNDER LAW BUT UNDER GRACE."**
Rom. 6:1-2, 6:14

As a minister for nearly 30 years, I have observed two classes of extreme teachers who tend to abuse the boundaries God has placed around certain popular doctrines in His Word. Those two classes of teachers are:

1. **FAITH
TEACHERS**

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

AND

2. **GRACE
TEACHERS**

As these two passages of prophetic Scriptures reveal, this is not a new problem in the Body of Christ. There were abuses in the doctrines of faith and grace in Peter's day as well as in Jude's. What the Body of Christ has suffered in the 80's and 90's through the "Faith For Prosperity Gospel" is presently happening in the first decade of the 2000's with the abuse of the doctrine of grace in its relationship to sin in the life of the believer.

**"...I FOUND IT NECESSARY TO
WRITE TO YOU EXHORTING
YOU TO CONTEND
EARNESTLY
FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS
ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO
THE SAINTS.
FOR CERTAIN MEN HAVE
CREPT IN UNNOTICED...
WHO TURN
THE GRACE OF OUR GOD
INTO LICENTIOUSNESS..."**
Jude 3-4

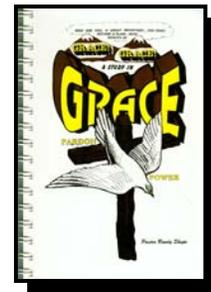
I personally have heard certain grace teachers on the radio presenting concepts about grace and its relationship to sin that are diametrically opposed to Paul's concepts as stated above. Through the unbiblical concept of "pre-forgiveness of sin" ("every sin I ever will commit is already forgiven under the Blood of Jesus"), the message of grace is subtly being presented as a theological license to continue in sin. If my sins are pre-forgiven, then it doesn't really matter if I do continue to sin. This is a grave error!

In light of today's often abuse in the teaching of God's grace, I want to take this opportunity to highly recommend to you two different teachings I have done on this subject. One is in book form and the other in an extensive DVD series. God's people must hold a proper balance between what the Scripture presents as saving grace and enabling grace. Sadly, only half the truth is being emphasized about God's grace.



**DVD series:
\$25.00 ea
(13 hours of teachings
on four DVD discs)**

**Book:
\$8.95 ea
(164 pages,
Highly
Illustrated)**



Below are four direct quotes from various popular grace teachers that will prove to you that they are preaching “pre-forgiveness of sins,” not only past (which is biblical), but also sins of the future (unbiblical). Who is preaching this perversion of grace is not the issue. We will avoid naming names of such modern-day teachers in case they repent of abusing the true grace message. This is a widespread error being taught to God’s people. Believe this kind of unsound doctrine and you will never “deal thoroughly with sin” as A. W. Tozer warns us to do. Consider these quotes:

“...I FOUND IT NECESSARY TO WRITE TO YOU EXHORTING YOU TO CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS. FOR CERTAIN MEN HAVE CREPT IN UNNOTICED

... WHO TURN THE GRACE OF OUR GOD INTO LICENTIOUSNESS...”
Jude 3-4



“Do you realize that when God forgives you, he forgives your past, your present and your future sin? Some people struggle with that terribly. They think that God only forgives them of all the sin they committed until they were converted. I had a lady tell me one day, she said, “You know, I know my sins were forgiven when I accepted Christ, but I’ve done a lot of other sin. How am I forgiven for that?” Well, you were already forgiven.”

“Positional” forgiveness is that which is obtained by every believer in Christ. In our position as members of the Body of Christ, we have been forgiven of every sin we have ever committed or ever will commit. The price paid by Christ on the cross has satisfied God’s wrath against sin, and no further sacrifice or payment is necessary. When Jesus said, “It is finished,” He meant it. Our positional forgiveness was obtained then and there.”



“...and for those that are already saved, your sins have already been forgiven, past, present and future (note, this is not a license to sin, but even if we were to totally walk away from God and indulge in reprobate lifestyles, we will still be saved.”

“When God forgives, He draws the mark through every sin which the believer ever has committed, or ever will commit,. . . and when God’s love covers the big sins it covers the little ones, and they are all gone at once! When God forgives, He not only forgives all, but once for all. . . . By one sacrifice there is a full remission of all sin that ever was against a believer, or that ever will be against him . . . not a single sin shall ever stand against you, nor shall you ever be punished for a single sin; for every sin is forgiven, fully forgiven, so that not even part of the punishment shall be executed against you.”

Perhaps it may surprise you, but this last quote was not made by a modern-day grace teacher, but rather is a quote from the late Charles Spurgeon. Although best known for his great oratory skills and mastery of the English language, Spurgeon was also guilty of promoting this false doctrine of “pre-forgiveness of sins.”



Charles Spurgeon

“...A BRITISH BAPTIST PREACHER. PEOPLE STILL KNOW HIM AS “THE PRINCE OF PREACHERS.” SPURGEON WOULD OFTEN PREACH 10 TIMES A WEEK AT DIFFERENT PLACES. HIS SERMONS HAVE BEEN TRANSLATED INTO MANY LANGUAGES. TODAY, THERE ARE MORE WRITINGS AND BOOKS BY SPURGEON THAN BY ANY OTHER CHRISTIAN WRITER.” Wikipedia Enc.

That last statement is significant: “Today, there are more writings and books by Spurgeon than by any other Christian writer.” Perhaps this literary phenomena accounts for why Christianity is so inundated today with so many grace teachers espousing the same extreme doctrine of grace that Spurgeon embraced. They are direct protégées of Spurgeon’s theology. It is not coincidence that most of the modern-day teachers of pre-forgiveness of sins are Baptist, as was Spurgeon. The Baptists are staunch defenders of the theology of Calvinism. Here are Spurgeon’s own words about the importance of the theology of Calvinism:

“I suppose there are some persons whose minds naturally incline towards the doctrine of free-will. I can only say that mine inclines as naturally towards the doctrines of sovereign grace...I have my own private opinion that there is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified, unless we preach what nowadays is called Calvinism. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else. I do not believe we can preach the gospel, if we do not preach justification by faith, without works; nor unless we preach the sovereignty of God in His dispensation of grace...” <http://www.spurgeon.org/calvinis.htm>

Sounds good, but God's Word never ties His sovereignty to His grace. God's Grace is offered to “whosoever will.” In fact, the word “sovereignty” appears ONCE in the Bible (NKJ), and that reference is to the sovereignty of King Saul over Israel (1 Sam. 14:47). God is sovereign in many areas, but He does not exalt His sovereignty as do the Calvinists. The sovereignty of God's will is not the foundation of salvation, but rather, as the apostle Peter states, “The elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father...” (1 Pet. 1:2) It is the free-will choice of man-ALL mankind, that the Scriptures exalt above the sovereignty of God's will. God is “pro-choice.” Man will live or die by his choices:

“SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU TODAY LIFE AND GOOD, DEATH AND EVIL...I CALL HEAVEN AND EARTH AS WITNESSES AGAINST YOU, THAT I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU LIFE AND DEATH, BLESSING AND CURSING; THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE, THAT BOTH YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS MAY LIVE.” Deut. 30:15,19

Because of his staunch belief in Calvinism, Spurgeon could not believe that Christ died for ALL mankind, but rather only for those predestined to salvation by the sovereignty of God's will. Calvinism teaches predestined, selective salvation to some of mankind solely by the sovereignty of God's will-not man's free-will to choose. Calvinists do not believe in the free will of man as an active agent in salvation. The popularity of Calvinism today is simply because it places all responsibility of choice upon God and nothing upon man. Salvation, according to Calvinism, is by the sovereignty of God's will to whoever God chooses to be saved. According to Calvinism, the rest of mankind is sovereignly doomed, not because they refused to choose the saving grace of the gospel, but rather because God's sovereign will did not predestine them to be saved, but rather to be “vessels of wrath.” Such perverted theology is a character assassination of God. The highest revelation of God in the Scripture is not His sovereignty, but rather that He is the Righteous Judge of all mankind. God cannot be considered to be a Righteous Judge if by His sovereignty alone He condemns some to hell and others to salvation. This evil perversion of truth has produced today's popular Calvinistic-based doctrines of “Once saved, always saved,” and “Unconditional Eternal Security.” Again, no responsibility upon man for his choices, it is all the sovereignty of God's choice. These modern-day doctrines fervently promote Spurgeon's idea that God pre-forgives every sin a believer will ever commit. There is not one shred of evidence in all of Scripture to support this fantasy. Rather, it finds its foundation in twisting the intended meaning of the Scriptures. Peter prophetically warned of such abuse to the message of salvation:

“AND ACCOUNT THAT THE LONGSUFFERING OF OUR LORD IS SALVATION- AS OUR BELOVED BROTHER PAUL, ACCORDING TO THE WISDOM GIVEN TO HIM, HAS WRITTEN TO YOU, AS ALSO IN ALL HIS EPISTLES, SPEAKING IN THEM OF THESE THINGS, IN WHICH ARE SOME HARD TO UNDERSTAND, WHICH THOSE WHO ARE UNTAUGHT AND UNSTABLE TWIST TO THEIR OWN DESTRUCTION, AS THEY DO ALSO THE REST OF THE SCRIPTURES. YOU THEREFORE, BELOVED, SINCE YOU KNOW THESE THINGS BEFOREHAND, BEWARE LEST YOU ALSO FALL FROM YOUR OWN STEADFASTNESS, BEING LED AWAY WITH THE ERROR OF THE WICKED...” 2 Pet.3:15-17



Instead of following the way of the wicked who twist the Scriptures to their own destruction, we are admonished by Paul to take this approach to the Scriptures:



“REMINDE THEM OF THESE THINGS, CHARGING THEM BEFORE THE LORD NOT TO STRIVE ABOUT WORDS TO NO PROFIT, TO THE RUIN OF THE HEARERS. BE DILIGENT TO PRESENT YOURSELF APPROVED TO GOD, A WORKER WHO DOES NOT NEED TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH. BUT SHUN PROFANE AND VAIN BABBLINGS, FOR THEY WILL INCREASE TO MORE UNGODLINESS. AND THEIR MESSAGE WILL SPREAD LIKE CANCER...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 2:14-19

Notice that Paul does not present the solid foundation of God to be based upon the likes of Spurgeon's logic of “pre-forgiveness of sins” or his modern-day disciples who espouse not only pre-forgiveness of sins but also the added concepts of “Once Saved Always Saved,” and “Unconditional Eternal Security.” Rather Paul gives two solid foundational seals upon which salvation stands:

“...‘THE LORD KNOWS THOSE WHO ARE HIS,’ AND, ‘LET EVERYONE WHO NAMES THE NAME OF CHRIST DEPART FROM INIQUITY.’ ”

Notice the latter solid foundation of God requires that the believer does something in his/her life pertaining to the issue of sin (iniquity). The believer is called to actively depart from iniquity, not rest in the false supposition that “every sin I will ever commit is already under the Blood of Jesus.”

Most people who preach the pre-forgiveness of sins are protégées of Spurgeon's Calvinistic theology. Calvinism is a wide-spread theology in Christendom today as it was in Spurgeon's day. It is a false premise, a "twisting of Scriptures" as aforementioned. Pre-forgiveness of sins is a deduction of Calvinistic reasoning of what is meant by the "Once For All" passages of Scripture:

"...FOR THIS HE DID ONCE FOR ALL WHEN HE OFFERED UP HIMSELF." Heb. 7:27

"...WITH HIS OWN BLOOD HE ENTERED THE MOST HOLY PLACE ONCE FOR ALL, HAVING OBTAINED ETERNAL REDEMPTION." Heb. 9:12

"...BUT NOW, ONCE AT THE END OF THE AGES, HE HAS APPEARED TO PUT AWAY SIN BY THE SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF." Heb. 9:26

"...WE HAVE BEEN SANCTIFIED THROUGH THE OFFERING OF THE BODY OF JESUS CHRIST ONCE FOR ALL." Heb. 10:10

"FOR THE DEATH THAT HE DIED, HE DIED TO SIN ONCE FOR ALL..." Rom. 6:10

These passages do not convey that "once for all" God has removed our sins past, present and future. Such a concept is unsupported in Scripture and is at odds with multitudes of other biblical principles. Because of his belief in Calvinism, Spurgeon could not believe that Christ died for ALL mankind, but rather only for those predestined to salvation by the sovereignty of God's will. What these passages convey that is in harmony with all of Scripture is that Jesus died one time for all of mankind. One sacrifice of Himself is sufficient to provide the divine Blood-basis by which God can forgive all of mankind's sins. Try this illustration: If I am sick with a cold I reach into the medicine cabinet and take a dose of cold remedy medicine, it will help cure the cold I have, but the one application does not forever remove from me the the potential of getting another cold. Down the road I may need to take the medicine again. It is always available to me as it sits waiting in my medicine cabinet for any crisis to come. The same is true with the "sickness" of sin. When I became born again, the Blood of Jesus thoroughly removed from me all my sins which produced my spiritual sickness. However, should I sin again and need another dose of the Blood of Jesus to cleanse me once again, His Blood shed once for all, is always available if needed. However, like the cold medicine, it must be once more applied to the problem. Through the sincere process of remorse for sin, confession of sin and repentance (turning away) from sin, I can avail once more of the shed Blood of Jesus Christ which is always available.

If pre-forgiveness of sin such as Charles Spurgeon and others describe is a valid doctrine, then the epistles would be devoid of any instruction pertaining to further need to deal with sin on an ongoing basis in the life of a believer. However, this is far from the case as we shall see. The Scriptures abound with instruction to believers as to how to deal thoroughly with sin on an ongoing basis by means of the Blood of Jesus. There is not one passage of Scripture that states God has already forgiven sins not yet committed. The record is quite the opposite which is proof-positive that pre-forgiveness of sin is a false doctrine that is to be shunned. Deal thoroughly with sin, or sin, as A. W. Tozer has said, will deal thoroughly with you! The Christian is in a life-long battle with sin, and is to have dominion over it by means of God's enabling grace. I have heard one popular grace teacher telling God's people not to be sin conscious as this attitude is an affront to God's grace and is a sign of unbelief that God has already forgiven all the sins you will ever commit. Let us now examine whether the apostles of Jesus taught God's people to be conscious of sin or not:



THE APOSTLE PAUL

THE APOSTLE PAUL ON THE BELIEVER'S RELATIONSHIP TO SIN:

"LIKEWISE YOU ALSO, RECKON YOURSELVES TO BE DEAD INDEED UNTO SIN, BUT ALIVE TO GOD IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD. THEREFORE DO NOT LET SIN REIGN IN YOUR MORTAL BODY THAT YOU SHOULD OBEY IT IN ITS LUSTS. AND DO NOT PRESENT YOUR MEMBERS AS INSTRUMENTS OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS TO SIN...FOR SIN SHALL NOT HAVE DOMINION OVER YOU, FOR YOU ARE NOT UNDER LAW BUT UNDER GRACE. WHAT THEN? SHALL WE SIN BECAUSE WE ARE NOT UNDER LAW BUT UNDER GRACE? CERTAINLY NOT!" Rom. 6:11-15

Paul sure has a heavy concentration on the subject of sin in the life of the believer in this chapter from Romans! He uses the word "sin" 20 times (NKJ). I believe we are safe to conclude that he is very "sin conscious" in talking to believers about not allowing sin in the life of the believer as well as what is to be the believer's relationship to God's grace when it comes to the subject of sin! No hint of "pre-forgiveness of sin" is found in these words of Paul, but rather a strong exhortation of responsibility for the believer not to let sin reign in their mortal body or to obey sin with its lusts. Through God's enabling grace they are exhorted to choose to have dominion over sin.

Paul's next Scripture about the believer's relationship to sin and God's grace shows that when a believer becomes justified by God's grace by means of the new birth, it is only sins that were previously committed that are forgiven, not sins of the future:

"BEING JUSTIFIED FREELY BY HIS GRACE THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS, WHOM GOD SET FORTH TO BE PROPITIATION ("MERCY SEAT") BY HIS BLOOD THROUGH FAITH, TO DEMONSTRATE HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, BECAUSE IN HIS FORBEARANCE GOD HAS PASSED OVER THE SINS THAT WERE PREVIOUSLY COMMITTED." Rom. 3:24-25

It is very important to note Paul's reference to the Blood of Christ being a propitiation, or "mercy seat" (alternate reading) by which our sins of the past were forgiven. Look now at the apostle John's use of this same word pertaining to sinning in the present as a believer:

"MY LITTLE CHILDREN, THESE THINGS I WRITE TO YOU, THAT YOU MAY NOT SIN. AND IF ANYONE SINS, WE HAVE AN ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER, JESUS CHRIST THE RIGHTEOUS. AND HE HIMSELF IS THE PROPITIATION ("MERCY SEAT") FOR OUR SINS, AND NOT ONLY FOR OURS BUT ALSO FOR THE WHOLE WORLD." 1John 2:1-2



THE APOSTLE JOHN

John's "little children" are blood-washed believers. He tells them not to sin, but if they do, then the same mercy seat Paul mentions above is available once more to forgive these new sins. Notice there is no hint of those sins already being "under the Blood" as many espouse. John has already stated in the previous Chapter what a believer must do when he/she sins after having been cleansed initially. Consider the abundance of conditional "IF's" in John's counsel:

**"BUT IF WE WALK IN THE LIGHT AS HE IS IN THE LIGHT, WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER, AND THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST HIS SON CLEANSSES US FROM ALL SIN.
IF WE SAY THAT WE HAVE NO SIN, WE DECEIVE OURSELVES, AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN US.
IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS, HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST TO FORGIVE OUR SINS AND TO CLEANSSE US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.
IF WE SAY THAT WE HAVE NOT SINNED, WE MAKE HIM A LIAR, AND HIS WORD IS NOT IN US. MY LITTLE CHILDREN, THESE THINGS I WRITE TO YOU, THAT YOU MAY NOT SIN. AND IF ANYONE SINS, WE HAVE AN ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER..."** 1John 1:7-10, 2:1

How does Charles Spurgeon and his modern-day progeny theologians stack up against these words from the apostle John? Are we to confess we have no sin because of God's supposed "pre-forgiveness of sin", or are we to confess our sins in order that the Blood of Christ may CONTINUE to "cleanse us from all unrighteousness?" Is John advising God's people to be very conscious of sin or unconscious of sin as some modern-day grace teachers advise? How is it that God's people could say, "I have no sin" other than by means of a false doctrine like the pre-forgiveness of sin?

Let us now add the apostle James thoughts about sin in the life of a believer to those of the apostle Paul and the apostle John:



THE APOSTLE JAMES

"IS ANY AMONG YOU SICK? LET HIM CALL FOR THE ELDERS OF THE CHURCH, AND LET THEM PRAY OVER HIM...AND THE LORD WILL RAISE HIM UP. AND IF HE HAS COMMITTED SINS, HE WILL BE FORGIVEN." Jam. 5:13-15 excerpts

Notice James teaches that if a believer has committed sins, "...he WILL be forgiven," and not "already has been forgiven." James does not state "every sin a believer will ever commit is already under the Blood of Jesus." The implication in these verses is that this sinning believer may be sick because he is in a sinful state.

Paul taught that principle as well:

"FOR THIS REASON MANY ARE WEAK AND SICK AMONG YOU AND MANY SLEEP (ARE DEAD). FOR IF WE WOULD JUDGE OURSELVES, WE WOULD NOT BE JUDGED." 1 Cor. 11:30-31

James has more to say about the believer's relationship to sin that will repudiate the false doctrine of pre-forgiveness of sin:

"BRETHREN, IF ANYONE AMONG YOU WANDERS FROM THE TRUTH, AND SOMEONE TURNS HIM BACK, LET HIM KNOW THAT HE WHO TURNS A SINNER FROM THE ERROR OF HIS WAY WILL SAVE A SOUL FROM DEATH AND COVER A MULTITUDE OF SINS." James 5:19-20

Clearly James is addressing the brethren. If any among the brethren wonders from the truth and another brother turns him back, he will be turning a SINNER from the error of his way and will cover a multitude of sins. Notice that James does not consider the sins of this erring brother to be already forgiven. How will they be forgiven? By turning him away from his sin. It is worth mentioning again that such a turning away from sin is the true seal of the solid foundation of salvation:

"...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 2:14-19

Over the centuries, a proper emphasis upon turning away from sin has been lost. Consider how the Book of Acts describes the blessing which Jesus came to bestow:

"TO YOU FIRST, 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

It is the desire of this teacher of God's Word to also persuade you to deal thoroughly with sin in your life as it occurs. We need to confess our sin to God and to turn away from it as clearly stated in the Psalms and in Proverbs:

"FOR I WILL DECLARE MY INIQUITY; I WILL BE IN ANGUISH OVER MY SIN." Psm. 38:18

"HE WHO COVERS HIS SINS WILL NOT PROSPER, BUT WHOEVER CONFESSES AND FORSAKES THEM WILL HAVE MERCY." Prov. 28:13

Spurgeon was eloquent with words. However they were the words of men and not in harmony with the Word of God. Spurgeon's fluency of words often reminds me of Job's three friends. They too were eloquent in their long dissertations about God (Chapters 5-25). However, God recorded of them this charge:

"...THE LORD SAID TO ELIPHAZ THE TEMANITE, 'MY WRATH IS AROUSED AGAINST YOU AND YOUR TWO FRIENDS, FOR YOU HAVE NOT SPOKEN OF ME WHAT IS RIGHT, AS MY SERVANT JOB...LEST I DEAL WITH YOU ACCORDING TO YOUR FOLLY; BECAUSE YOU HAVE NOT SPOKEN OF ME WHAT IS RIGHT, AS MY SERVANT JOB HAS.'" Job 42:7-8

Spurgeon and his modern-day, fellow Calvinistic protégées are also guilty of not speaking what is right about God as God's servants the apostles did.

We have only looked at a few examples of the teachings of the apostles pertaining to sin in the life of the believer. Which is going to judge us in the last day? Spurgeon has said:

"When God forgives He draws the mark through every sin which the believer ever has committed, or ever will commit, ...When God forgives, He not only forgives all, but once for all. . . . By one sacrifice there is a full remission of all sin that ever was against a believer, or that ever will be against him...not a single sin shall ever stand against you, nor shall you ever be punished for a single sin; for every sin is forgiven, fully forgiven, so that not even part of the punishment shall be executed against you"



God's Word paints a different scenario as God's people face the Righteous Judge on Judgment Day:

"THEREFORE 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

Let us be a people who, in this life, deal thoroughly with the issue of sin! In our next newsletter, we shall further examine the false gospel known as Calvinism.



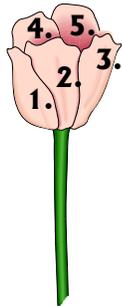
CALVINISM!

AN ASSASSINATION OF THE CHARACTER OF GOD

CALVINISM EXALTS GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY ABOVE HIS CLAIM OF BEING A RIGHTEOUS JUDGE. THIS IS NOT ONLY DOCTRINAL ERROR, BUT ALSO CONSTITUTES CHARACTER ASSASSINATION UPON MANY, IF NOT ALL, OF GOD'S ATTRIBUTES. THIS NEWSLETTER IS DEDICATED TO EXPOSING THE ERRONEOUS TEACHINGS OF CALVINISM WHICH IS RAMPANT IN TODAY'S CHURCH.

"...THE LORD SAID TO ELIPHAZ THE TEMANITE, 'MY WRATH IS AROUSED AGAINST YOU AND YOUR TWO FRIENDS, FOR YOU HAVE NOT SPOKEN OF ME WHAT IS RIGHT, AS MY SERVANT JOB...LEST I DEAL WITH YOU ACCORDING TO YOUR FOLLY; BECAUSE YOU HAVE NOT SPOKEN OF ME WHAT IS RIGHT, AS MY SERVANT JOB HAS.'"
Job 42:7-8

Like Job's three friends, today's teachers of the five points of Calvinism are guilty of not speaking of God what is right. These basic tenets of Calvinism portray God's character opposite of what is stated in His Word. They constitute a character assassination of God. Strong words, but needful to say as a forewarning to all who embrace this erroneous picture of God.



TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF FALLEN MAN
UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION OF MAN BY GOD
LIMITED ATONEMENT OF MAN BY GOD
IRRRESISTIBLE GRACE UPON MAN BY GOD
PERSEVERANCE (PRESERVATION) OF THE SAINTS BY GOD

This theology is widely embraced in Christianity, and there is a reason why it is so. Calvinism places all responsibility upon God and no responsibility upon the unbeliever or the saved believer. It is a cross-less, costless brand of Christianity that hides behind an undue exaltation of the sovereignty of God's will as being the sole agent at work in salvation. Not the salvation of all mankind that is offered to "whoever will" choose what God offers, but rather a brand of salvation offered only to those who God, by His sovereignty, chooses to be saved. The rest of mankind is doomed, not by their own choice in rejecting God's saving grace, but rather because of the "limited atonement" of the God of Calvinism. This is not the God that the Bible portrays. This newsletter is dedicated to proving that statement.

**THE HIGHEST VIEW OF GOD
ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE:**

“GOD’S JUDGMENTS ARE RIGHTEOUS”

(what the Scriptures say)

**“THE
JUDGMENTS
OF
THE LORD
ARE TRUE
AND
RIGHTEOUS
ALTOGETHER.”**

Psalm 19:9

**“THE LORD
IS RIGHTEOUS
IN ALL
HIS WAYS,
GRACIOUS
IN ALL
HIS WORKS...”**

Psalm 145:17

**“RIGHTEOUSNESS
AND JUSTICE
ARE THE
FOUNDATION
OF YOUR
THRONE...”**

Psalm 89:14

**“HE HAS
PREPARED
HIS THRONE
FOR JUDGMENT,
HE SHALL
JUDGE
THE WORLD IN
RIGHTEOUSNESS...”**

Psalm 9:7

**THE HIGHEST VIEW OF GOD
ACCORDING TO CALVINISM:**

“GOD’S JUDGMENTS ARE SOVEREIGN”

(what the Scriptures DO NOT say)

**THE
JUDGMENTS
OF
THE LORD
ARE
“SOVEREIGN”
ALTOGETHER**

**THE LORD
IS “SOVEREIGN”
IN ALL
HIS WAYS,
“SOVEREIGN”
IN ALL
HIS WORKS**

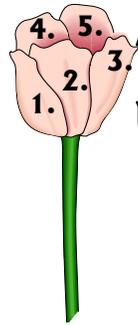
**“SOVEREIGN”
JUSTICE
IS THE
FOUNDATION
OF YOUR
THRONE**

**HE HAS
PREPARED
HIS THRONE
FOR JUDGMENT,
HE SHALL
JUDGE
THE WORLD IN
“SOVEREIGNTY”**

Calvinism’s pivotal point is the supreme concept of the sovereignty of God. It is true that God is sovereign for there is no higher authority. He is the “Supreme Court” personified. However, God’s sovereignty is governed by His righteousness. Take a look in a concordance and see for yourself how many references there are about His character trait of righteousness. There are many. Do you find verses where He reminds His people that He is sovereign? The answer is not even one. The word “sovereignty” appears once in the Bible and that verse speaks of the sovereignty of King Saul over Israel (1 Sam. 14:47 NKJ). The point is simple; we need to exalt only what God says about Himself (see Jer. 9:24). Oh yes, there are principles and examples of His sovereignty in the Word, but not of God speaking of Himself as being sovereign such as He speaks of Himself being righteous. I believe that it is so simply because sovereignty is not a character trait at all, but rather a statement of supreme authority. For example, Saddam Hussein was a sovereign ruler over his kingdom. However his character traits were all evil. His sovereign rule, therefore, stemmed out of his evil character traits! He did whatever he felt like doing to the people under his domain. He would kill people for no reason at all. It is well documented that he killed one of his own generals because he refused to let Saddam dance with his wife. Gang rapes of innocent women snatched off the streets were common forms of entertainment. He was a ruler void of justice and immune to laws, for he was a law unto himself. He was sovereign, evilly sovereign, and controlled by the multitude of evil character traits he developed and nurtured. His evil character dictated his sovereign rule.

Let us apply the same example toward God. We know that God is not evil but is a righteous God who rules by, and therefore is ruled by, His own character trait of righteousness. Any sovereign act that He does must be based upon His righteousness because “righteousness and justice are the foundations throne” as stated above. The foundation of His throne is not based on His sovereignty! Any judgment that God administers either to the saved or the unsaved must be controlled by His claim to be “The Righteous Judge.” He cannot make a judgment that is unrighteous. If He were to overrule righteousness by an act of sovereignty, then He could not be The Righteous Judge who “judges the world in righteousness.” Clearly stated is the fact that “The Lord is righteous in all His ways” (Psm. 145:17). Therefore, no unsaved person will be able to stand before the Great White Throne Judgment and accuse God of condemning him or her unrighteously. The Righteous Judge will make His judgment of the sinner based on righteousness, not on His right of sovereignty. Herein lies the great error of Calvinism. Its tenets present God as foreordaining some to heaven and some to hell based on His sovereign right to do so. If it were true, then God would not qualify as a Righteous Judge, would He? Let us examine now the erroneous tenets of Calvinism that take away the righteousness of God and replace it with an unbiblical emphasis upon God’s sovereignty.

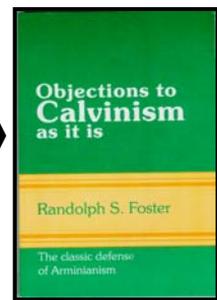
This illustration is how Calvinists are taught to remember the five main points of their theology. They have other points, but it will suffice for us just to consider the five that they single out as best representing the God of the Bible and how He relates to mankind, both to the saved and to the lost.



TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF FALLEN MAN
UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION OF MAN BY GOD
LIMITED ATONEMENT OF MAN BY GOD
IRRISISTIBLE GRACE UPON MAN BY GOD
PERSEVERANCE (PRESERVATION) OF THE SAINTS BY GOD

The main point I want to get across is that the five points of Calvinism are pointing people to an image of God that does not exist in the Bible. These are man-made doctrines that will not stand up to the concept that God is The Righteous Judge who judges every man according to his works (Rev. 20:12-13, 22:11-12).

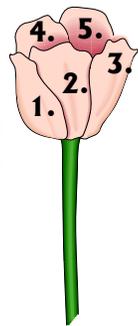
Obviously, in the limited space we have in this newsletter we are not going to be able to go into great depth with each of these five points, although I believe it will be sufficient to cast serious doubt on the validity of all five points. Therefore, I would like to recommend this old classic work from the turn of the century that is sufficient to dispel Calvinism's distortion of the character of God. You can order it from the publisher or from this website:



<http://www.evangelicaloutreach.org>

Published by Schmul Publishing Co.
 PO Box 716 Salem, Ohio 44460
 ISBN 0-88019-374-3

Calvinism's five points attempt to convey the story of how God has dealt with man from the fall in the garden to the restoration and preservation of those chosen unto salvation by the sovereign choice of God. Also we find revealed what God has foreordained for those whom He did not choose to inherit eternal life.



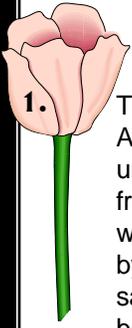
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Every single step in this "tulip" process, according to Calvinist theology, is the by-product of the sovereignty of God. When the Bible speaks of predestination (and it does) the Calvinist believes that God predestines solely by His sovereign will and not because God has the attribute of foreknowledge that is able to see future events before they happen. The Calvinist position is that God has foreordained all things that will happen; all things without exception are under His sovereign direction and control. He knows the future because He is the originator of everything that will take place. According to Calvinist theology, God does not have the ability to foresee all future things, but rather He is creating and controlling all future things foreordained by His sovereign will:

"EVERY ACTION AND MOTION OF EVERY CREATURE IS GOVERNED BY THE HIDDEN COUNSEL OF GOD, SO THAT NOTHING CAN COME TO PASS, BUT WAS ORDAINED OF HIM. ALL THINGS COME TO PASS BY HIS ORDINATION AND DECREE"

(Confessions of Calvinistic Faith, Rev. R. Shaw, quoted from pg.19 of above mentioned book)

Take the above premise to its ultimate conclusions and we have some serious conflicts with what is written in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. God puts the blame solely upon mankind for the judgments that are coming upon the earth, but Calvinism attributes it all to the sovereign will and control of God. We can get the truth by looking at the error of the five points of Calvinism. If the five points of Calvinism make God to appear unrighteous in His deeds, then we know where the problem lies.



TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF FALLEN MAN

1. The Calvinistic view of “total depravity” teaches that the un-regenerated man, being a descendant of Adam’s fallen nature, is totally incapable of making right moral choices. Calvinism teaches that the unregenerated can only choose evil due to their sin nature but cannot choose to obey that which is from God even if they would desire to do so. Calvinism denies that the unregenerate has a free moral will to choose between good and evil or between life and death because their will is hopelessly bound by the sin nature. Calvinism denies that the unregenerate can take the initiative to repent and be saved. Let us begin by looking at the fall of man. Romans Chapter Five presents a comparison between the work of the first Adam and Jesus the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45):

**“...THROUGH ONE MAN SIN ENTERED THE WORLD, AND DEATH THROUGH SIN, AND THUS DEATH SPREAD TO ALL MEN, BECAUSE ALL MEN SINNED.” Rom. 5:12
FOR AS BY ONE MAN’S DISOBEDIENCE MANY WERE MADE SINNERS,
SO ALSO BY ONE MAN’S OBEDIENCE MANY WILL BE MADE RIGHTEOUS.” Rom.5:19**

Adam opened the door to sin and brought not only sin but death into the world. Note well the statement that “all men sinned” as did Adam. Paul states, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Why do all men sin? It is due to the sin nature received from Adam. It is a misnomer to teach that mankind is made in the image of God as was Adam. Look at the distinction the Scriptures make:

IMAGE OF MAN BEFORE THE FALL:

**“SO GOD CREATED MAN
IN HIS OWN IMAGE,
IN THE IMAGE OF GOD HE CREATED HIM;
MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM.” Gen. 1:27**

IMAGE OF MAN AFTER THE FALL:

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

Adam brought forth sons created in his own likeness and in his own image, not in the image of God! This is a fallen image with a sin nature that Adam brought into the world. It passes down to all mankind, and therefore all men have sinned because of it, no exceptions! This is why Jesus had to have been born of virgin birth, and why the new birth is a vital necessity for every man as it restores to man a new sinless nature born of God (Col. 3:10, Eph. 4:24). Redeemed man is now restored to the image of God. Our study here is fallen man. No question he is capable of sin for he has received a sin nature from the image of Adam. However, does that mean, as the Calvinist’s teach, that man is “totally depraved” and cannot help but sin? To answer that let us look at what God told Cain, the son of Adam, who was plotting the murder of his brother:

**“WHY ARE YOU ANGRY? AND WHY HAS YOUR COUNTENANCE FALLEN?
IF YOU DO WELL, WILL YOU NOT BE ACCEPTED? AND IF YOU DO NOT DO WELL,
SIN LIES AT YOUR DOOR. AND ITS DESIRE IS FOR YOU, BUT YOU SHOULD RULE OVER IT.” Gen. 4:6-7**

Does God think that Cain, who has the fallen nature of Adam (like us), can “do well” or “not do well”? Is that not a free will choice God is setting before this one who has the sin nature inherited from Adam? Does God expect him to just fatalistically fall to sin simply because he has inherited a fallen nature? Absolutely not! Rather we find that God forewarns him that “sin is at your door and its desire is for you.” However, God totally expects that Cain should rule over sin! If he was incapable of doing so, then God would not have told him he was able to make the choice. This is inescapable evidence that although man does have a fallen sin nature and is capable of yielding to sin, that God expects him to make a moral choice to do well rather than to not do well. God expected Cain to rule over the sin that abided in his heart toward his brother. We all know that, in spite of the warning from God, Cain went out and killed his brother and then lied to God about it. The fact that he lied implies that he could discern that he did something morally wrong and knew within himself that he would be accountable to God for his deed, so he lied about it. Man is not “totally depraved” as Calvinism seeks to portray. Just as God held Cain accountable he holds all unregenerate men accountable to repent:

**“...(GOD) NOW COMMANDS ALL MEN EVERYWHERE TO REPENT,
BECAUSE HE HAS APPOINTED A DAY ON WHICH HE WILL JUDGE THE WORLD IN
RIGHTEOUSNESS BY THE MAN WHOM HE HAS ORDAINED.” Acts 17:30-31**

God the Righteous Judge, who will judge the world in righteousness, commands all men everywhere to repent. If they could not repent due to their hopeless state of “total depravity” as Calvinism states, then God would not be righteous in commanding that they do what they are totally incapable of doing.

"...(GOD) NOW COMMANDS ALL MEN EVERYWHERE TO REPENT, BECAUSE HE HAS APPOINTED A DAY ON WHICH HE WILL JUDGE THE WORLD IN RIGHTEOUSNESS BY THE MAN WHOM HE HAS ORDAINED." Acts 17:30-31

We have great need to speak of God's all inclusive commandment for "all men everywhere to repent", and He tells us why. It is because of the coming judgment of The Righteous Judge who shall judge the world in righteousness (not in "sovereignty"). Calvinism does not believe that man is capable of repenting prior to conversion due to their erroneous conclusion that man is "totally depraved", which we have established is not according to the Scriptures. It was not so for Cain and it is not so for all of the "Cains" in the world today. God's Word places repentance as a prerequisite to the New Birth, "Repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19). Both John the Baptist and Jesus, as well as Peter give the order to "repent and believe in the gospel (see Mat. 3:2, 4:17, Mk. 1:15, Acts 2:38 3:19, Heb. 6:1). However, Calvinism places repentance after the conversion experience, after having faith to believe. Let us consider now what is "the order of salvation" according to Calvinism:

We could spend a lot of time questioning much of the validity of the chronological order of this list as it compares to the sequence of these events in the Bible. Just note where repentance is located. →

It is placed after regeneration and the new birth, after conversion. According to Calvinism, after God grants the faith to believe to the "totally depraved", then God grants him the ability to repent. Dear friends, Calvinism is removing any and all responsibility, accountability and capability of the sinner to respond to moral issues until they have been saved by God's sovereign election. This is an unbiblical sequence of events.

The (Calvinistic) Order of Salvation

- 1. Election (God's choice of people to be saved)**
- 2. The gospel call (proclaiming the gospel message)**
- 3. Regeneration (being born again)**
- 4. Conversion (faith and repentance)**
- 5. Justification (right legal standing)**
- 6. Adoption (membership in God's family)**
- 7. Sanctification (right conduct of life)**
- 8. Perseverance (remaining a Christian)**
- 9. Death (going to be with the Lord)**
- 10. Glorification (receiving a resurrection body)**

(Bible Doctrine page 281-283 by Wayne Grudem, professor of biblical and systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School)

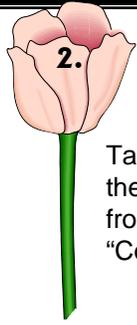
In addition to the verses I stated above showing that repentance is a prerequisite to salvation (Mat. 3:2, 4:17, Mk. 1:15, Acts 2:38, 3:19, Heb. 6:1), consider this plain declaration through the prophet Ezekiel of how God states the wicked are able to come to salvation. Calvinism is not in harmony with this view:

"WHEN A WICKED MAN TURNS AWAY FROM HIS WICKEDNESS WHICH HE COMMITTED, AND DOES WHAT IS LAWFUL AND RIGHT, HE PRESERVES HIMSELF ALIVE. BECAUSE HE CONSIDERS AND TURNS AWAY FROM ALL THE TRANSGRESSIONS WHICH HE COMMITTED, HE SHALL SURELY LIVE; HE SHALL NOT DIE...REPENT, AND TURN FROM ALL YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS, SO THAT INIQUITY WILL NOT BE YOUR RUIN. CAST AWAY FROM YOU ALL THE TRANSGRESSIONS WHICH YOU HAVE COMMITTED, AND GET YOURSELVES A NEW HEART AND A NEW SPIRIT...THEREFORE TURN AND LIVE!" Ezk. 18:27-32 excerpts

God thinks that the wicked, unregenerated man is capable of both (1) "considering and turning from his transgressions which he has committed", and (2) "doing what is lawful and right". God places the call to "repent and turn" prior to the receiving of a "new heart and a new spirit". Compare that to the "order of salvation" of Calvinism and you must conclude that we have what Paul would label "a different gospel". We need to make the point that it is true that God grants the ability to repent (Acts 11:18, 2 Tim. 2:25). However, consider what causes God to grant to the sinner the ability to repent:

"NOW I REJOICE, NOT THAT YOU WERE MADE SORRY, BUT THAT YOUR SORROW LED TO REPENTANCE. FOR YOU WERE MADE SORRY IN A GODLY MANNER... FOR GODLY SORROW PRODUCES REPENTANCE TO SALVATION, NOT TO BE REGRETTED; BUT THE SORROW OF THE WORLD PRODUCES DEATH." 2 Cor. 7:9-11

What is the prerequisite to repentance? It is godly sorrow for "godly sorrow leads to repentance." God looks for a sinner who has godly sorrow rather than worldly sorrow. Worldly sorrow is being sorry for (1) being caught and exposed, and (2) for finding oneself in a difficult and humiliating mess. Judas had such worldly sorrow and it led him to kill himself ("worldly sorrow leads to death"). Esau had worldly sorrow and could not find repentance although he sought it with tears (Heb. 12:17). Why so? Because he did not have godly sorrow, he was only sorry to have lost the blessings of his birth right, so God did not grant him the ability to repent. God places the responsibility squarely upon the unregenerated sinner to seek His face with true godly sorrow. When He sees such, He will grant the ability to repent, and that will lead to the receiving of "a new heart" and "a new spirit", being born again! Calvinism denies this Biblical order of salvation and seeks to take away from man all responsibility, capability, and accountability. Unregenerate man is not "totally depraved" to the point that he is unable to express godly sorrow that leads to repentance. He can be convicted of sin and God expects Him to respond with godly sorrow!!



2. Take time to carefully read these three sections of belief from Calvinism's theological "Confessions of Faith".

As I stated in our introductory pages, Calvinism exalts the sovereignty of God to heights that disqualify God from being The Righteous Judge.

God is certainly sovereign. However, the Scriptures teach that God judges in righteousness, not in sovereignty. Note section 5 of this creed says that the election of those that are to be saved is "without any foresight of faith, or good works, or perseverance in them, or any other thing in the creature as conditions or causing Him" (to elect the individuals unto salvation).

In other words, God has sovereignly ordained that only some are to be chosen as "the elect", and the basis of that decision is not by His supernatural ability of foreknowledge of man's actions or deeds. However, Section 6 and 7 clearly says "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ" and that God has sovereignly chosen to condemn the rest to dishonor and wrath FOR their sins. This is a serious contradiction in face of the fact that the Scriptures say of God's judgments that, "There is no respect of persons with God" (Rom. 2:11 KJV). The above declarations (5-7) of Calvinism make God to be a respecter of persons in judgment and therefore an unrighteous judge:

**SECTION FIVE
proclaims that God chooses the elect
before the foundation of the world
unto salvation without any respect to
foreseeing in them faith, good works
or anything worthy within them.**

**SECTION SIX-SEVEN
proclaims that God rejects all
others before the foundation of
the world but ordains them to
dishonor and wrath
for their sins.**

If God rejects some to dishonor and wrath for their sins, how is it that He accepts the others without any faith, good works, perseverance or any condition in them? This is a double standard for they too have sinned. Why not condemn them also for their sins? Righteous judgment requires that either all are condemned for their sins or all have the opportunity to be saved from their sins. What Calvinism states in Section 7 is not "glorious justice", it is horrible injustice! There has to be a righteous basis for accepting some and rejecting others, and it is not the sovereignty of God! The problem which creates this double standard lies in Calvinism's rejection of God's supernatural capability of FOREKNOWLEDGE. How is it that God knows the beginning from the end? Calvinism says it is because by His sovereignty He is controlling all things on the earth, every creature, including you and me. We saw that statement earlier:

**"EVERY ACTION AND MOTION OF EVERY CREATURE IS GOVERNED BY THE HIDDEN COUNSEL OF GOD,
SO THAT NOTHING CAN COME TO PASS, BUT WAS ORDAINED OF HIM.
ALL THINGS COME TO PASS BY HIS ORDINATION AND DECREE"**

(Confessions of Calvinistic Faith, Rev. R. Shaw, quoted from pg.19 of above mentioned book)

Either God is able to foresee all events of the future or He is causing all events of the future, but if the latter is true as Calvinism says it is, then God would be the author even of sin! Think it through saints! Is God able to see into the future all things that are going to happen, or is He sovereignly preordaining and then manipulating, causing and controlling all things to happen?

WHAT CALVINISM BELIEVES ABOUT ELECTION:

Section 5. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature as conditions or causes moving him thereto, and all to the praise of his glorious grace.

Section 6. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore, they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ—are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season—are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. *Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, but the elect only.*

Section 7. The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his will whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by and to ordain *them to dishonor and wrath* for their sins, to the praise of his glorious justice. "Objections to Calvinism as it is" by R. S. Foster, pg 46.

"TO THE...ELECT, ACCORDING TO THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD THE FATHER, IN SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT, FOR OBEDIENCE AND SPRINKLING OF THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST." 1 Pet. 1:1-2

Election, or predestination, is a biblical doctrine. The question is whether it functions by the sovereignty of God, as Calvinism states, or by the foreknowledge of God. The above Scripture says precisely that it is by God's foreknowledge. God the Father has foreknowledge according to Peter. Calvinism says He does not. Peter says the elect are chosen by God's foreknowledge but Calvinism denies that position. What does Calvinism do with the above plain statement? It dismisses it by stating that God only "knew" us personally before the world began, that this verse only describes a personal intimate "knowing" of us, but "knowing" is not the word that is used, it is "foreknowledge". Isn't this reasoning in conflict with the all inclusive concept of Calvinism we have previously considered? Here it is again:

"EVERY ACTION AND MOTION OF EVERY CREATURE IS GOVERNED BY THE HIDDEN COUNSEL OF GOD, SO THAT NOTHING CAN COME TO PASS, BUT WAS ORDAINED OF HIM. ALL THINGS COME TO PASS BY HIS ORDINATION AND DECREE"

(Confessions of Calvinistic Faith, Rev. R. Shaw, quoted from pg.19 of above mentioned book)

The truth is that God is not ordaining and controlling my deeds and actions but rather He foreknows what I will think, what I will do and what I will become before it happens! David states that God foreknew precisely all about him, even what he was thinking:

"O LORD, YOU HAVE SEARCHED ME AND KNOWN ME, YOU KNOW MY SITTING DOWN AND MY RISING UP; YOU UNDERSTAND MY THOUGHT AFAR OFF. YOU COMPREHEND MY PATH AND MY LYING DOWN, YOU ARE ACQUAINTED WITH ALL MY WAYS. FOR THERE IS NOT A WORD ON MY TONGUE, BUT BEHOLD, O LORD, YOU KNOW IT ALTOGETHER...SUCH KNOWLEDGE IS TOO WONDERFUL FOR ME; IT IS HIGH, I CANNOT ATTAIN IT. Psalm 139:1-6

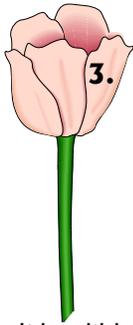
Foreknowledge is indeed too high of a knowledge for finite man to grasp, the finite trying to comprehend the infinite; but that is exactly the kind of mind-boggling ability that makes God to be God! It is by such foreknowledge that God is able to righteously decide to "save some and condemn others". Saints, which position do you think makes God a Righteous Judge? Did He, after creating Adam in His image, then by His sovereignty make Adam to fall in sin or did He by His foreknowledge know in advance, before He created Adam, that he would sin? When He made Lucifer, did He by His sovereign will create him as the highest created being in heaven and then ordain him to fall, or did He by His foreknowledge already know that Lucifer would be lifted up by pride and seek to overthrow heaven itself? If it was ordained by God's sovereignty, then why is God putting all the blame directly on Lucifer for his own actions?:

"YOU WERE THE ANOINTED CHERUB...I ESTABLISHED YOU...YOU WERE PERFECT IN YOUR WAYS FROM THE DAY YOU WERE CREATED, TILL INIQUITY WAS FOUND IN YOU...YOU BECAME FILLED WITH VIOLENCE WITHIN, AND YOU SINNED; THEREFORE I CAST YOU AS A PROFANE THING OUT OF THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD; AND I DESTROYED YOU...YOUR HEART WAS LIFTED UP BECAUSE OF YOUR BEAUTY ; YOU CORRUPTED YOUR WISDOM FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR SPLENDOR; I CAST YOU TO THE GROUND... YOU DEFILED YOUR SANCTUARIES BY THE MULTITUDE OF YOUR INIQUITIES, BY THE INIQUITY OF YOUR TRADING...YOU HAVE BECOME A HORROR..." Ezk. 28:14-18

"HOW YOU ARE FALLEN FROM HEAVEN, O LUCIFER...FOR YOU SAID IN YOUR HEART: I WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN, I WILL EXALT MY THRONE ABOVE THE STARS OF GOD; I WILL SIT ON THE MOUNT OF THE CONGREGATION,...I WILL ASCEND...I WILL BE LIKE THE MOST HIGH" YET YOU SHALL BE BROUGHT DOWN TO SHEOL, TO THE LOWEST DEPTHS OF THE PIT..." Isa. 14:12-14

The Righteous Judge knew exactly what Lucifer was plotting in his mind, just as he knew what David thought or spoke, and just as He knows what each one of us thinks because God has foreknowledge of what is in the heart of man (see Jn. 2:23-24), He can righteously prejudge every person! Such Divine foreknowledge is the key to any and all judgments that the righteous Judge has made from "before the foundations of the world". Jesus was "the Lamb slain before the foundations of the world" (1 Pet. 1:20, Rev. 13:8, Heb. 9:26), and "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world...and predestined us to adoption as sons..." (Eph.1:4-5). What is the basis, the righteous basis, upon which God has predestined some to eternal life and some to eternal damnation (like Lucifer)? It is His foreknowledge. Peter said so (1 Pet. 1:1-2) and Paul confirms it as well:

"ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THOSE WHO LOVE GOD, TO THOSE WHO ARE THE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE. FOR WHOM HE FOREKNEW, HE ALSO PREDESTINED TO BE CONFORMED INTO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON...WHOM HE PREDESTINED, THESE HE ALSO CALLED, WHOM HE CALLED, THESE HE JUSTIFIED..." Rom. 8:28-30



LIMITED ATONEMENT OF MAN BY GOD

WHAT CALVINISM BELIEVES ABOUT ATONEMENT:

"The Lord Jesus Christ made atonement to God by His death only for the sins of those to whom, in the sovereign good pleasure of the Almighty, the benefits of His death shall finally be applied. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ but the elect only. Christ died exclusively for the elect and purchased redemption for them alone; Christ made atonement only for the elect and in no sense did He die for the rest of the race."

"Objections to Calvinism as it is" by R. S. Foster, pg 88

It is within the confines of this unbelievable statement of Calvinistic theology that we can see the pride of elitism swelling up. Jesus did not die for the sins of the whole world, but rather just for the sins of those whom God has sovereignly chosen to be saved. I will quote extensively from Robert Foster's book so that you may be stimulated to purchase it for yourself and read about the errors of this false theology:

The doctrine of a limited atonement is not taught in the Scriptures-anywhere! Rather we find an all inclusive gospel:

"...GOD OUR SAVIOR, WHO DESIRES ALL MEN TO BE SAVED...WHO GAVE HIMSELF A RANSOM FOR ALL..." 1 Tim. 2:3-6

"...WE TRUST IN THE LIVING GOD, WHO IS THE SAVIOR OF ALL MEN, ESPECIALLY OF THOSE WHO BELIEVE." 1 Tim. 4:10

"...WE JUDGE THIS: IF ONE DIED FOR ALL, THEN ALL DIED; AND HE DIED FOR ALL..." 2 Cor. 5:14-15

"NOW GOD COMMANDS ALL MEN EVERYWHERE TO REPENT..." Acts 17:30

"FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION HAS APPEARED TO ALL MEN" Titus 2:11

"I BRING YOU GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY WHICH SHALL BE TO ALL PEOPLE. FOR THERE IS BORN TO YOU THIS DAY...A SAVIOR, WHO IS CHRIST THE LORD." Luke 2:10-11

"...REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS SHOULD BE PREACHED IN HIS NAME TO ALL NATIONS, BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM." Luke 24:47

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

"WHOEVER CALLS UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED." Rom. 10:13

"...WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE." John 3:15-16

"BEHOLD! THE LAMB OF GOD WHO TAKES AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD!" (not just the elect) John 1:29

"...CHRIST DIED FOR THE UNGODLY..." (not just the elect) Rom. 5:6

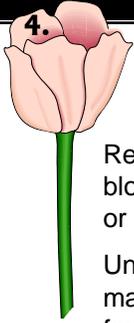
4. I object that not only is not the doctrine of a limited atonement nowhere taught in the Scriptures, and not only is it diametrically contrary to the whole tenor of revelation and many express passages thereof, but it is also adversative to all our conceptions of the character of God as the universal parent. In the light, or rather in the darkness of its consequences, we are compelled to change all our views of his character and nature. Shorn of all his glorious perfections of infinite benevolence, and impartiality, and truth, and sincerity, he is presented to us as a hideous compound of cruelty, and caprice, and duplicity, and falsehood. I know these are severe charges; and it is their indisputable truth, as everyone who will be at the pains of a faithful examination will be compelled to admit, that makes them severe.

Can any man believe God is impartial when he, by a sovereign act, takes some men to heaven and consigns others to hell, when there was no difference between them whatever, but some were chosen and others rejected for his pleasure alone? No partiality—no caprice here!

Can any man believe in the truth and sincerity of God when he proclaims himself ready to save all and not willing any should perish—when he goes to all with invitations, and promises, and exhortations, and yet the truth is that many of those thus invited he has damned for his own pleasure before they had an existence? Is this in your idea of sincerity?

5. I object further: if it is true that Christ did not die for those who shall finally be lost, then there never was a possibility of their salvation. Either this must be admitted, or it must be assumed that a soul might be saved for whom Christ did not die. There is no other alternative; and our Calvinistic brethren may select either horn of the dilemma. If they select the latter, then they will do away with the necessity of the death of Christ and find some other name or means whereby to be saved. If they admit the former, then they damn the sinner when it was eternally impossible for him to escape damnation; and this his damnation is for a cause with which he never had any consenting connection.

But if it was eternally impossible for the sinner to escape damnation, then he is in no way to blame; nor can he in any sense reflect upon himself for being lost, seeing it was eternally impossible for him to be saved. He cannot blame himself—no man, no angel, not God can blame him. It is no fault of his that he is damned, for *he could not* be saved. Let it not be said he brought himself into this miserable condition from which there is no reprieve, *for the truth is, he had nothing whatever to do with it unless he personally acted before he had an existence. For his damnation was fixed before he had an existence, and the pretended causes were engendered with him in the womb.* Look at the facts, stripped of all mysticism. There stands a man for whom Christ did not die. Now, that man must be lost! But why? Because when he was conceived, he became a partaker of a corrupt nature which, if not regenerated, must eventuate in his damnation. But Christ never died for him, and so his nature cannot be regenerated. And he must, therefore, necessarily be damned eternally for that which was given to him with his existence. In Calvin's words, "Yea, and very infants themselves bring their own damnation with them from their mother's womb."



I RRESISTIBLE GRACE UPON MAN BY GOD

Read this fourth statement of Calvinism and perhaps you can see what is becoming an underlying block-building theme behind Calvinism: "Man is incapable of making choices, of being responsible or even accountable for his actions."

Under "**T**otal depravity", man cannot cease from sin for he has no power to do so.

Under "**U**nconditional election", only the elect that God chooses are to be unconditionally saved. Man has no part in that election.

Under "**L**imited atonement", only the elitist elect are saved, the rest of mankind are doomed since Christ did not die for them.

Under "**I**rresistible grace", what God does for the elect cannot be resisted. The elect will become what God has foreordained them to be whether they want to or not.

CALVINISM ON THE GRACE OF GOD:

"The power of God, exerted in regeneration and conversion of sinners is invincible. Those who speak of irresistible grace, mean that it cannot finally be resisted; that it will overcome all the efforts of corrupt nature to counteract its design; and that it will ultimately render sinners obedient to the faith. Men must submit in the end to the power of God; and this will be more evident if we consider that His power is not only sufficient to compel the most refractory to yield, although with greatest reluctance, but that it can take away the spirit of opposition, and so influence the hearts of men, that this submission shall be voluntary. Were we to say that the grace of God is not invincible, we should be under the necessity of adopting the opinion, which we have already proved to be unscriptural, that there is in man a power to comply or not to comply with the call of the Gospel. We should take the work of conversion out of the hand of God, and commit it to man himself..."

"Objections to Calvinism as it is" by R. S. Foster, pg 118

How does this concept of "Irresistible grace" compare with the New Testament epistles?
What do they say pertaining to the idea that grace is "irresistible"?

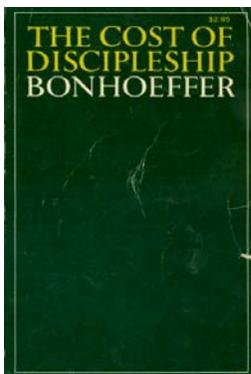
A believer can receive the grace of God in vain:
"WE THEN, AS WORKERS TOGETHER WITH HIM ALSO PLEAD WITH YOU NOT TO RECEIVE THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN." 2 Cor. 6:1

A believer can believe in vain:
"MOREOVER, BRETHREN, I DECLARE TO YOU THE GOSPEL WHICH I PREACHED TO YOU, WHICH ALSO YOU RECEIVED AND IN WHICH YOU STAND, BY WHICH ALSO YOU ARE SAVED, IF YOU HOLD FAST THAT WORD WHICH I PREACHED TO YOU- UNLESS YOU BELIEVED IN VAIN." 1 Cor. 15:1-2

Believers who by their willful acts of sinning would be guilty of
"...TRAMPLING UNDER FOOT THE SON OF GOD, AND WHO HAS CONSIDERED THE COVENANT BLOOD BY WHICH HE WAS CONSECRATED COMMON AND UNHALLOWED, THUS PROFANING IT AND INSULTING AND OUTRAGING THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO IMPARTS GRACE-THE UNMERITED FAVOR AND BLESSING OF GOD?"
Heb. 10:29 Amplified

A believer can fall from grace:
"YOU HAVE BECOME ESTRANGED FROM CHRIST...YOU HAVE FALLEN FROM GRACE"
2 Cor. 5:4

The abuse of grace as a doctrine:
"CONTENT EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH... MEN HAVE CREPT IN ...WHO TURN THE GRACE OF OUR GOD INTO LICENTIOUSNESS..."
Jude 4

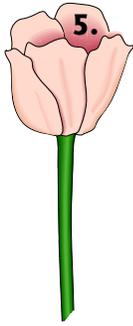


We have but little place left to comment on the error of Calvin's view of grace.

Let me highly recommend a book to you which greatly contrasts such "cheap grace" with biblical "costly grace". Dietrich Bonhoeffer said:

"It is terrifying to realize what can be made of a genuine evangelical doctrine (the doctrine of grace) The misuse of the formula leads to the complete destruction of its very essence...The only man who has the right to say that he is justified by grace alone is the man who has left all to follow Christ. Such a man knows that the call to discipleship is the gift of grace, and that the call is inseparable from the grace."

(The Cost of Discipleship, page 55)



PERSEVERANCE (PRESERVATION) OF THE SAINTS BY GOD

Calvinism calls this final point the "perseverance" of the saints, but that is a misleading statement. This Calvinistic principle is not referring to the true biblical concept of the saints "persevering" to the end ("he who endures to the end shall be saved"-Mat. 24:13), but rather it is a concept that God, in His sovereignty, absolutely guarantees the "preservation" or ultimate salvation of the saints in spite of how they walk or the choices they make. It is this fifth Calvinistic principle that is indorsed widespread in the Body of Christ, even by denominations who would say they are not Calvinistic. This is the doctrine coined with the popular cliché's

"ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED" and "UNCONDITIONAL SECURITY"

The good news is that there is such a doctrine as "eternal security", but the bad news (for bad people) is that it is not "unconditional" eternal security that God offers to His saints. The promises of eternal security are for the eternally minded saints-not for the worldly or fleshly minded. Again, due to the limited space we have to expound on this subject, I want to suggest that you order this book that I wrote on this subject. It will convince you that all of God's "exceedingly great and precious promises" (2 Pet. 1:4), always have conditions attached to them. Nothing comes from God that is unconditional, even salvation itself begins with conditional words such as "IF you confess and IF you believe..." (Rom.10:9), "IF you hold fast..." (1 Cor. 15:2).

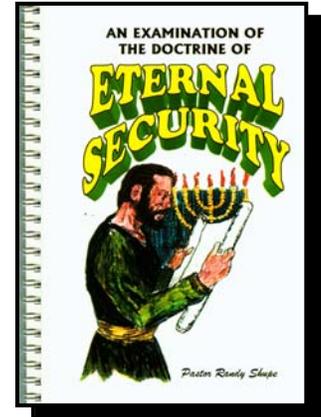
Calvinism, as we have seen, portrays the total inability of man to make choices. It is God that does it all for us whether we want to obey or not! The one who has been chosen unto salvation can only follow along with God's "irresistible grace". Calvinism teaches that God will do for us what He would not even do for Adam, namely protect him from his free will choice!

You need to think about what Calvinism is teaching in light of what happened in the Garden of Eden. Adam was created in the image of God. He was therefore righteous. Did he have a free will to make choices? God thought so or He would not have placed the forbidden Tree of The Knowledge of Good and Evil along side the Tree of Life. Friends, that is choice! Not only did God place two choices before Adam, but He also allowed evil in the Garden in the person of Satan the Tempter to test Adam. If the unchanging God is "Calvinistic" minded then how is it that Adam fell at all? Why didn't God apply point five of Calvinism to protect Adam from a wrong choice? How is it that point four of Calvinism's "irresistible grace" didn't keep Adam from yielding to this deadly sin? Saints, Adam was eating from the Tree of Life which was the source of eternal life! Let us be sure that we understand that God knew if Adam had eaten from the Tree of Life after he sinned, that He would have lived eternally in a sinful state:

"THEN THE LORD GOD SAID, "BEHOLD, THE MAN HAS BECOME LIKE ONE OF US, TO KNOW GOOD AND EVIL. AND NOW, LEST HE PUT OUT HIS HAND AND TAKE ALSO OF THE TREE OF LIFE, AND EAT, AND LIVE FOREVER-THEREFORE THE LORD GOD SENT HIM OUT OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN...HE DROVE OUT THE MAN; AND HE PLACED CHERUBIM AT THE EAST OF THE GARDEN, AND A FLAMING SWORD WHICH TURNED EVERY WAY, TO GUARD THE WAY TO THE TREE OF LIFE"

Gen. 3:22-24

In light of what God allowed Adam to be subjected to, let us consider that here we are, not in the Garden of Eden, but worse, in Satan's backyard so to speak, in a world that lies under his sway (1 Jn. 5:19). Here we are, as the righteous of God who have been restored by the new birth into the image of God, with choices set before us between good and evil just as they were set before Adam. Satan is still very much present and active to tempt us to make wrong choices just as he did Adam, but are we to believe that this fifth point of Calvinism is going to protect us from doing what Adam did, and even if we do sin like Adam, it will not be a matter of eternal life as it was for Adam? Calvinism believes God will still provide a state of eternal life! Dear saints, in light of the fact that God is an unchanging God, doesn't this dual standard bother you like it does me? Will the unchanging God do for us today what He wouldn't do for Adam?



(\$ 7.95 plus postage)

There is a valid concept of “perseverance of the saints”. However, it’s emphasis is not placed upon God becoming an absolute guarantor to the believer apart from the labors of the believer. The Scriptures reveal that God and man are “co-laborers together” (1st Cor. 3:9). In our final thoughts, let us consider a few passages where we find this truth expressed:

“...WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING; FOR IT IS GOD WHO WORKS IN YOU BOTH TO WILL AND TO DO FOR HIS GOOD PLEASURE.” Phil. 2:12

Notice the dual mandate (1) you “work out” your salvation and (2) God will “work in” you His salvation. We are co-laborers with God.

“...YOU WERE SEALED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT OF PROMISE, WHO IS THE GUARANTEE OF OUR INHERITANCE UNTIL THE DAY OF REDEMPTION OF THE PURCHASED POSSESSION...AND DO NOT GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD, BY WHOM YOU WERE SEALED FOR THE DAY OF REDEMPTION.”
Eph. 1:14 and Eph. 4:30

How often has the emphasis been placed on half of what God recorded pertaining to the “sealing of the Holy Spirit”? It is also possible to grieve the Holy Spirit of God by our conduct. Read on in Eph. 4:31 for Paul has a whole list of “do’s and do not’s” to prevent the grieving of the Holy Spirit by the believer. We are co-laborers with God.

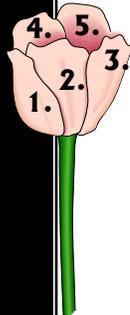
“...AND YOU WHO ONCE WERE ALIENATED AND ENEMIES IN YOUR MIND BY WICKED WORKS, YET NOW HAS HE RECONCILED IN THE BODY OF HIS FLESH THROUGH DEATH, TO PRESENT YOU HOLY AND BLAMELESS, AND IRREPROACHABLE IN HIS SIGHT-IF INDEED YOU CONTINUE IN THE FAITH, GROUNDED AND STEADFAST, AND ARE NOT MOVED AWAY FROM THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL...”
Col. 1:21-23

Are we still “irreproachable in his sight” if we do not continue in the faith, but are rather moved away from the hope of the gospel by either our own fleshly lusts or by the pull of this present world?
We are co-laborers with God.

“CHRIST AS A SON OVER HIS OWN HOUSE, WHOSE HOUSE WE ARE, IF WE HOLD FAST THE CONFIDENCE AND THE REJOICING OF THE HOPE FIRM TO THE END....BEWARE BRETHREN, LEST THERE BE IN ANY OF YOU AN EVIL HEART OF UNBELIEF IN DEPARTING FROM THE LIVING GOD...LEST YOU BE HARDENED THROUGH THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN, FOR WE ARE PARTAKERS OF CHRIST IF WE HOLD THE BEGINNING OF OUR CONFIDENCE STEADFAST TO THE END.”
Heb. 3:6-14 excerpts

These types of in-depth portrayals of the Christian life should dispel the errors of Calvinism totally. Why would the apostle Paul give such warnings if there was such a thing as “irresistible grace”? Can a believer “depart from the living God by the deceitfulness of sin”? Paul thinks so. What is the cure? It is the perseverance of the saints in “holding fast the beginning to the end.”
We are co-laborers with God.

How do we judge the Calvinistic view of God in light of The Righteous Judge?
Is this the Gospel Paul preached?



- 4. **T**OTAL DEPRAVITY OF FALLEN MAN
- 5. **U**NCONDITIONAL ELECTION OF MAN BY GOD
- 3. **L**IMITED ATONEMENT OF MAN BY GOD
- 2. **I**RRÉSISTIBLE GRACE UPON MAN BY GOD
- 1. **P**ERSEVERANCE (PRESERVATION) OF THE SAINTS BY GOD

It is the conviction of this teacher that the tulip of Calvinism does not represent either the Righteous Judge of the Bible or the Gospel which God gave to save fallen man. It certainly does not represent the pathway of discipleship in which we are to “take up our cross daily, deny self, and follow Christ.”

Under “**T**otal depravity”, man cannot cease from sin for he has no power to do so.

Under “**U**nconditional election”, only the elect that God chooses are to be unconditionally saved. Man has no part in that election.

Under “**L**imited atonement”, only the elitist elect are saved, the rest of mankind is doomed since Christ did not die for them.

Under “**I**rrésistible grace”, what God does for the elect cannot be resisted. The elect will become what God has foreordained them to be whether they want to or not.

Under “**P**erseverance of the saints”, God will protect the believer from himself. He can never fall away because God will not permit him to do so. It is “once saved, always saved” and “unconditional eternal security.”



THE PROPHETIC WORD

THE
THREE FACES
OF
EVE

**A PROPHETIC LOOK AT SATAN'S ATTEMPT
TO CORRUPT THE ESPOUSED BRIDE OF CHRIST**

"The Three faces of Eve" is the title of a book and movie based on a true story of a neurotic (perhaps demon-possessed) woman whose life was tremendously traumatized by the manifestation of triple personalities. I have merely borrowed the title of this famous story to pungently dramatize the point that the Scriptures portray Satan and his demonic hordes, by means of a threefold deceptive onslaught, are presently seeking to corrupt the mind of the modern-day "Eve", the church, the espoused Bride of the "last Adam", Jesus Christ.

That is a mouthful of a statement, so let us begin to establish its validity.

Paul the apostle sets the stage for this scenario with these two profound revelational statements from his first and second epistles to the Church of Corinth:



**"AND SO IT IS WRITTEN, 'THE FIRST MAN ADAM BECAME A LIVING BEING.'
THE LAST ADAM BECAME A LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT."** 1 Cor. 15:45

**"FOR I AM JEALOUS FOR YOU WITH GODLY JEALOUSY. FOR I HAVE BETROTHED
YOU TO ONE HUSBAND, THAT I MAY PRESENT YOU AS A CHASTE VIRGIN TO
CHRIST. BUT I FEAR, LEST SOMEHOW, AS THE SERPENT DECEIVED EVE BY HIS
CRAFTINESS, SO YOUR MINDS MAY BE CORRUPTED FROM THE SIMPLICITY
("SEDUCED FROM WHOLEHEARTED AND SINCERE AND PURE DEVOTION")
THAT IS IN CHRIST."** 2 Cor. 11:1-3

In the first statement, we find Paul comparing Christ to the original Adam. In the second statement, he compares the Church to the deception of the original Eve. We know from the story in Genesis that Eve, Adam's wife, was formed by God out of a part of Adam's body while he slept (Gen. 2:21-22). We also know that the Church is the Body of Christ on earth (Col. 1:18). Is there a prophetic parallel here that while the Church, as the Body of Christ on earth is "asleep", in a spiritual sense, that God is forming the Bride of Christ out of a portion of the Body of Christ?

A common understanding in Christianity is that the whole church is automatically the Bride of Christ because they are members of the Body of Christ. No doubt that the Church is BETROTHED to Christ as Paul states above. However, he expresses a concerning fear that this latter-day Eve might be deceived by Satan as was her early counterpart. Paul's fear is that the Church might not be found as a "Chaste Virgin" when it becomes time to be presented to Christ. If this was not a valid possibility, then Paul would have been in error to express such a concern. However, we also know that when the Bridegroom comes for His Bride, He will find half of them to be ready as wise virgins, but the other half will be left behind as foolish virgins (Matt. 25:1-13). Paul's expressed fear for the Church is a valid one.

When we add the next verse of Paul's stated fear of corruption by Satan of the betrothed Bride (the Church), we are given the threefold method by which that deceptive corruption can occur:

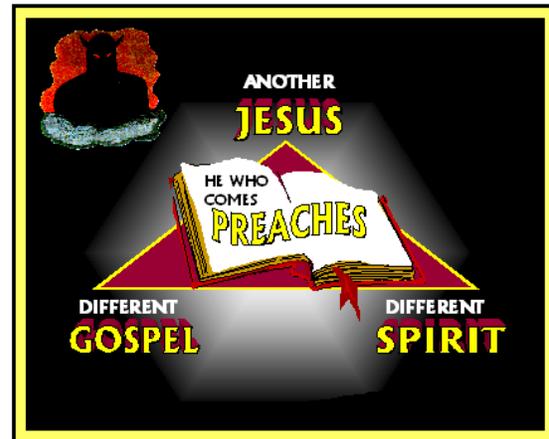


"FOR I AM JEALOUS FOR YOU WITH GODLY JEALOUSY. FOR I HAVE BETROTHED YOU TO ONE HUSBAND, THAT I MAY PRESENT YOU AS A CHASTE VIRGIN TO CHRIST. BUT I FEAR, LEST SOMEHOW, AS THE SERPENT DECEIVED EVE BY HIS CRAFTINESS, SO YOUR MINDS MAY BE CORRUPTED FROM THE SIMPLICITY ("SEDUCED FROM WHOLEHEARTED AND SINCERE AND PURE DEVOTION") TO CHRIST.

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

2 Cor. 11:1-4

Notice this threefold plan of deception that Satan designed against the betrothed Bride of Christ to corrupt her from qualifying as a chaste virgin to Christ comes through the act of preaching. They that come will preach Jesus, but it will be "another Jesus" than the one Paul preached. They will come preaching a message about the gospel, but it will be "a different gospel" than the one Paul presented. They will come preaching the Spirit, but it will be "a different spirit" than the one Paul presented to the Church in his day.



How effective will this plan of Satan be against Jesus' betrothed Bride? Let Jesus tell us Himself:

...THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN SHALL BE LIKENED TO TEN VIRGINS...



...NOW FIVE OF THEM WERE WISE,



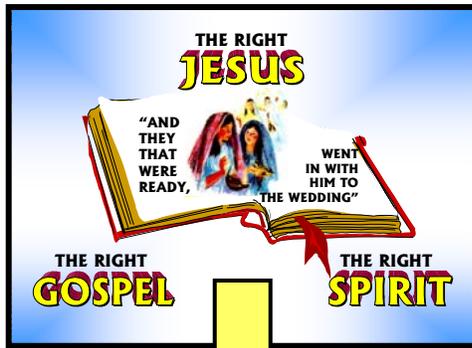
AND FIVE WERE FOOLISH...

THEY THAT WERE READY WENT IN WITH HIM TO THE WEDDING..."

Matt. 25:1-13

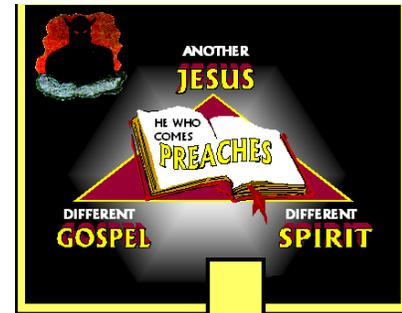
When Jesus returns as the Bridegroom (Matt. 25:10), He will find only HALF of His betrothed Bride in a state of readiness. The other half will be left behind at His coming. Why so? They had become foolish virgins. How so? Because they were corrupted by Satan with the preaching of "another Jesus... a different gospel... a different Spirit." I am not talking about the perverted message of the Mormons or the Jehovah Witnesses! I am talking about true, born-again, blood-washed believers whose lifestyles are found unacceptable by Christ at His coming. They will not be raptured, but rather left behind!

It has been well said, "You are what you eat." It is also true to say, "You are what you believe." Our doctrines dictate our deeds. Satan's plan is to corrupt the virgins by means of preaching doctrines that cause God's people to be comfortable with lifestyles of sin. The "once saved, always saved" gospel, the "unconditional eternal security of the believer", and the automatic, pre-forgiveness of future sins by Christ on the cross, will produce a deceived people that are comfortable living in sin.



PRODUCES
WISE VIRGINS

**OUR
DOCTRINES
DICTATE
OUR
DEEDS**



PRODUCES
FOOLISH VIRGINS

The parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matt. 25:1-13) states that the difference between the wise virgins that are taken and the foolish virgins that are left behind is the possession of oil vs. the lack of oil in their lamps. It is important to note that both groups of virgins have lamps. What are the lamps? They represent the possession of the Word of God:

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

Although both the wise and the foolish virgins have lamps to light their way to meet the Bridegroom, only the wise virgins have oil for their lamps. I believe there is sufficient evidence in the Scriptures to conclude that the oil in this parable represents the Holy Spirit who authored the Word of God. He alone gives illumination to the lamp by His anointing and understanding of what is written in the Word of God. That is why Scripture states:

**"HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR
WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES."**
Rev. 3:22



"WE ALSO HAVE THE PROPHETIC WORD MADE MORE SURE, WHICH YOU DO WELL TO HEED AS A LIGHT THAT SHINES IN A DARK PLACE...KNOWING THIS FIRST, THAT NO PROPHECY OF SCRIPTURE IS OF ANY PRIVATE INTERPRETATION, FOR PROPHECY NEVER CAME BY THE WILL OF MAN, BUT HOLY MEN OF GOD SPOKE AS THEY WERE MOVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT."
2 Pet. 1:19-21

It is quite possible to read the Word of God selectively or intellectually, and thereby not allowing the Holy Spirit to illuminate its true meaning. We are warned:

"NOW WE HAVE RECEIVED, NOT THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD, BUT THE SPIRIT WHO IS FROM GOD, THAT WE MIGHT KNOW THE THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN FREELY GIVEN TO US BY GOD. THESE THINGS WE SPEAK, NOT IN WORDS WHICH MAN'S WISDOM TEACHES BUT WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT TEACHES, COMPARING SPIRITUAL THINGS WITH SPIRITUAL. NOW THE NATURAL MAN DOES NOT RECEIVE THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD, FOR THEY ARE FOOLISHNESS TO HIM; NOR CAN HE KNOW THEM, BECAUSE THEY ARE SPIRITUALLY DISCERNED."
1 Cor. 2:12-14

"BELOVED, DO NOT BELIEVE EVERY SPIRIT, BUT TEST THE SPIRITS, WHETHER THEY ARE OF GOD; BECAUSE MANY FALSE PROPHETS HAVE GONE OUT INTO THE WORLD... WE ARE OF GOD. HE WHO KNOWS GOD HEARS US; HE WHO IS NOT OF GOD DOES NOT HEAR US. BY THIS WE KNOW THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH AND THE SPIRIT OF ERROR."
1 Jn. 4:1,6

Why are the foolish virgins left behind? They have no oil (Holy Spirit) in their lamps (the Word of God). It is my conviction that they have been seduced with the presentation of "another Jesus, a different gospel and a different Spirit." Let us now look at these three stated means by which Satan seeks to deceive "Eve", the espoused Bride of Christ: _____→

"BUT I FEAR, LEST SOMEHOW, AS THE SERPENT DECEIVED EVE BY HIS CRAFTINESS, SO YOUR MINDS MAY BE CORRUPTED FROM THE SIMPLICITY ("WHOLE-HEARTED AND PURE DEVOTION") THAT IS IN CHRIST. FOR IF HE WHO COMES PREACHES..."

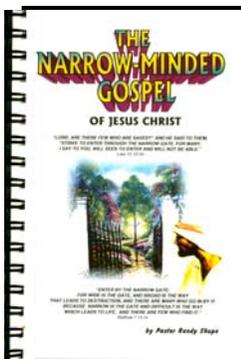


...FOR SUCH ARE FALSE APOSTLES, DECEITFUL WORKERS, TRANSFORMING THEMSELVES INTO APOSTLES OF CHRIST. AND NO WONDER! FOR SATAN HIMSELF TRANSFORMS HIMSELF INTO AN ANGEL OF LIGHT. THEREFORE IT IS NOT GREAT THING IF HIS MINISTERS ALSO TRANSFORM THEMSELVES INTO MINISTERS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHOSE END WILL BE ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS." 2 Cor. 11:3-4, 13-15

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

What Paul expressed as a concern for "another gospel" being preached to the Corinthian church became a reality among the Galatians. Paul is quick to pronounce a binding curse upon those who preached any other gospel than what he had previously presented. So much for the modern-day theory that there are many ways to present the gospel to reach the lost. Lest we think Paul is prophetically speaking of the likes of the Mormon gospel which was to come, he clarifies that he is speaking of people who would pervert (distort) the true gospel of Christ. Jesus also give a similar prophetic warning of what would happen to the message of the gospel that He presented:

"ENTER BY THE NARROW GATE; FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE WAY THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND THERE ARE MANY WHO GO IN BY IT. BECAUSE NARROW IS THE GATE AND DIFFICULT IS THE WAY WHICH LEADS TO LIFE, AND THERE ARE FEW WHO FIND IT. BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS WHO COME TO YOU IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING, BUT INWARDLY THEY ARE RAVENOUS WOLVES." Mat. 7:13-15



The perverted (distorted) gospel would be a subtle substitute that would turn what Jesus taught as being a narrow and difficult way of salvation into a path that is broad and easy so that many would readily accept it. I am going to recommend one of my recent books to you as an in-depth study of what constitutes "another gospel" that is wide-spread in Christianity today. Two vital truths have been removed from our modern-day gospel. The prerequisite to salvation that makes it narrow and difficult is the message of repentance that has been removed. Today's message is "believe and receive." The call to repent is missing which paves the way for a broad and easy decision that is costless and crossless. Secondly, the real "good news" (gospel) message of the Kingdom of God has been removed from the gospel of Paul and Jesus. The good news of the gospel has become the forgiveness of sins by means of the new birth. Jesus did preach the need to be born again. However, it was a means to an end, not the end itself:

"MOST ASSUREDLY, I SAY TO YOU, UNLESS ONE IS BORN AGAIN, HE CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD...UNLESS ONE IS BORN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT, HE CANNOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD... DO NOT MARVEL THAT I SAY UNTO YOU, YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN." John 3:3-7 excerpts

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

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

The true gospel preaches an exchange of kingdoms. That means we have King Jesus as our Lord ruling and reigning over His subjects in His Kingdom that presently abides in the heart (Luke 17:21). Jesus has not changed His mind that "My Kingdom is not of this world" (Jn. 18:36). Christianity in America erroneously seeks after an earthly kingdom believing it was divinely chosen to become "One Nation Under God." That is Israel's sovereign destiny yet to be fulfilled. God's people pursue earthly kingdoms because the "good news" (gospel) no longer preaches the present manifestation of the Kingdom of God and its priorities!

"BUT I FEAR, LEST SOMEHOW, AS THE SERPENT DECEIVED EVE BY HIS CRAFTINESS, SO YOUR MINDS MAY BE CORRUPTED FROM THE SIMPLICITY ("WHOLE-HEARTED AND PURE DEVOTION") THAT IS IN CHRIST. FOR IF HE WHO COMES PREACHES...



...FOR SUCH ARE FALSE APOSTLES, DECEITFUL WORKERS, TRANSFORMING THEMSELVES INTO APOSTLES OF CHRIST. AND NO WONDER! FOR SATAN HIMSELF TRANSFORMS HIMSELF INTO AN ANGEL OF LIGHT. THEREFORE IT IS NOT GREAT THING IF HIS MINISTERS ALSO TRANSFORM THEMSELVES INTO MINISTERS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHOSE END WILL BE ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS." 2 Cor. 11:3-4, 13-15

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

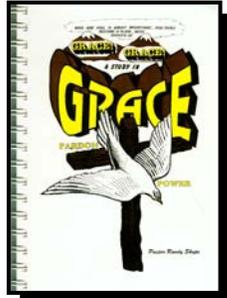
"BUT AS HE WHO CALLED YOU IS HOLY, YOU ALSO BE HOLY IN ALL YOUR CONDUCT, BECAUSE IT IS WRITTEN, 'BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.'" (1 Pet. 1:15-16) "FOR GOD DID NOT CALL US TO UNCLEANNES, BUT IN HOLINESS. THEREFORE HE WHO REJECTS THIS DOES NOT REJECT MAN, BUT GOD, WHO HAS ALSO GIVEN US HIS HOLY SPIRIT." (1 Thess. 4:7-8) "DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT YOU ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD AND THAT THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELLS IN YOU? IF ANYONE DEFILES THE TEMPLE OF GOD, GOD WILL DESTROY HIM. FOR THE TEMPLE OF GOD IS HOLY, WHICH TEMPLE YOU ARE." (1 Cor. 3:16-17) "OR DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO IS IN YOU, WHOM YOU HAVE FROM GOD, AND YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN?" 1 Cor. 6:19

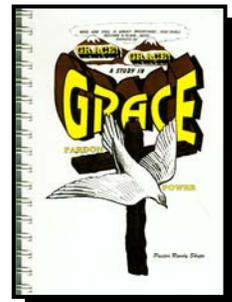
Is the above emphasis being placed on the ministry of the Holy Spirit today? No it is not. It is more on the fact that the Holy Spirit is "the Comforter" (Jn. 14:16). There is more emphasis placed on the believer having eternal security because of having been "sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise" and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

"...HAVING BELIEVED, YOU WERE SEALED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT OF PROMISE, WHO IS THE GUARANTEE OF OUR INHERITANCE UNTIL THE REDEMPTION OF THE PURCHASED POSSESSION..."
 (Eph. 1:13-14) **"AND DO NOT GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD, BY WHOM YOU WERE SEALED FOR THE DAY OF REDEMPTION. LET ALL BITTERNESS, WRATH, ANGER, CLAMOR, AND EVIL SPEAKING BE PUT AWAY FROM YOU, WITH ALL MALICE. AND BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER, TENDERHEARTED, FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER, JUST AS GOD IN CHRIST ALSO FORGAVE YOU." (Eph. 4:30-32)**

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

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

When was the last time you heard a message about God's people "insulting and outraging the Holy Spirit who imparts grace?" We have a lot of "grace" teaching today, but not this negative aspect. Why? Because it is a confronting picture of the Holy Spirit rather than a comforting one. It is "a different spirit." Seven times Jesus says to His own blood-washed churches, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev. 3:22). Paul in Hebrews twice warns the brethren, "Therefore the Holy Spirit says: 'Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts...'" (Heb. 3:7,15). If you want to see the rest of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, then I recommend this book that I wrote on that subject: 



"BUT I FEAR, LEST SOMEHOW, AS THE SERPENT DECEIVED EVE BY HIS CRAFTINESS, SO YOUR MINDS MAY BE CORRUPTED FROM THE SIMPLICITY ("WHOLE-HEARTED AND PURE DEVOTION") TO CHRIST. FOR IF HE WHO COMES PREACHES...



...FOR SUCH ARE FALSE APOSTLES, DECEITFUL WORKERS, TRANSFORMING THEMSELVES INTO APOSTLES OF CHRIST. AND NO WONDER! FOR SATAN HIMSELF TRANSFORMS HIMSELF INTO AN ANGEL OF LIGHT. THEREFORE IT IS NOT GREAT THING IF HIS MINISTERS ALSO TRANSFORM THEMSELVES INTO MINISTERS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHOSE END WILL BE ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS." 2 Cor. 11:3-4, 13-15

Are you putting up with the preaching of a Jesus other than the one Paul preached? This is the question that we must all consider. We are told by the apostle John, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God..." (1 Jn. 4:1). Paul likewise told believers that they should "...received the Word with all readiness, and search the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things are so" (Acts 17:11). Simply put, we must compare the image of Jesus that is being presented to us today with the image of Him found in the Scriptures, not just considering carefully selected passages presented to us by men, but rather "...as the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:13). What I am saying to you is that we must not endorse only half of what the Scriptures reveal about Jesus. If we allow such a limited picture to be presented to us as the whole, then we may end up embracing "another Jesus" that leads to the corruption of God's people by Satan from a life of "...wholehearted and pure devotion to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3 Amplified). Remember, these are satanic corruptive deceptions that come by means of preaching!

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

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



The word "Lord" means "Master, controller, ruler." You can call Jesus Lord and yet not allow Him to be the Master, controller, and ruler of your life. In fact Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Mat. 7:21). In another place, Jesus challenges His followers with the words, "But why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). It is quite possible to belong to Jesus and yet be as ignorant as pagan Pharaoh who said to Moses, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?...I do not know the Lord..." (Ex. 5:2). We do not lack for a proper emphasis of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures. Rather, we are lacking for a preaching of who Jesus Christ is. He is Lord! (Judge, Lawgiver, King, Savior). Cling to the favored partial images of God and ignore the rest of what is written, and we can end up with "another Jesus." Paul warned believers to hold a balanced perspective of God:

"THEREFORE CONSIDER THE GOODNESS AND THE SEVERITY OF GOD; ON THOSE WHO FELL, SEVERITY; BUT TOWARD YOU, GOODNESS, IF YOU CONTINUE IN HIS GOODNESS. OTHERWISE YOU ALSO WILL BE CUT OFF." Rom. 11:22

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

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

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

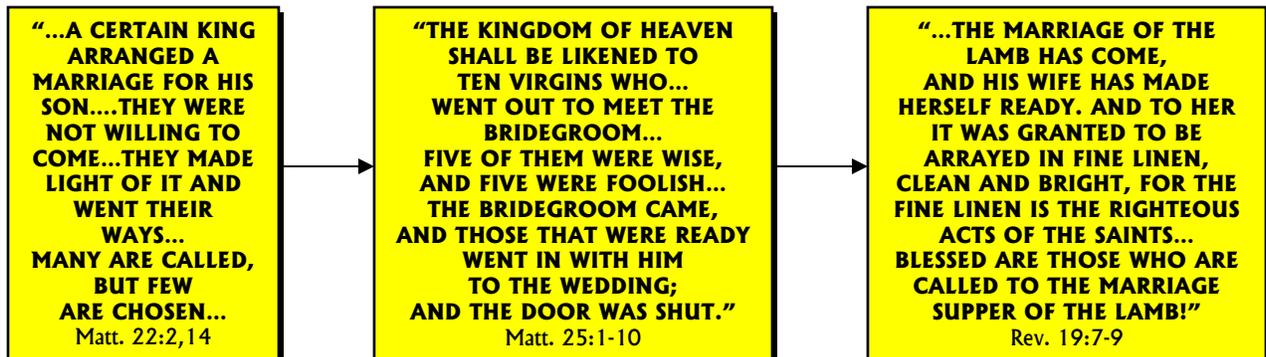
Worldly deception can be just as deadly as spiritual deception. In fact, when Jesus told the parable of the Marriage Supper, it was such worldly deception that sidetracked those that God had invited to the marriage of His Son:

“THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A CERTAIN KING WHO ARRANGED A MARRIAGE FOR HIS SON AND SENT OUT HIS SERVANTS TO CALL THOSE WHO WERE INVITED TO THE WEDDING; AND THEY WERE NOT WILLING TO COME...THEY MADE LIGHT OF IT AND WENT THEIR OWN WAYS, ONE TO HIS OWN FARM, ANOTHER TO HIS BUSINESS...MANY ARE CALLED, BUT FEW ARE CHOSEN” Matt. 22:2-14 excerpts

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

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

Perhaps it would help to vividly see the prophetic time line of events that the Scriptures reveal pertaining to the making of the Bride of Christ:



Paul has given the beautiful higher revelation of why Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it:

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

Eph. 5:25-32 excerpts

However, as we have been considering, Paul also gave us the great warning of the attempt Satan would make on God’s espoused Bride (the Church) to divert her away from the stated objective above:

“FOR I AM JEALOUS FOR YOU WITH GODLY JEALOUSY. FOR I HAVE BETROTHED YOU TO ONE HUSBAND, THAT I MAY PRESENT YOU AS A CHASTE VIRGIN TO CHRIST. BUT I FEAR, LEST SOMEHOW, AS THE SERPENT DECEIVED EVE BY HIS CRAFTINESS, SO YOUR MINDS MAY BE CORRUPTED FROM THE SIMPLICITY (PURITY) THAT IS IN CHRIST. FOR IF HE WHO COMES PREACHES ANOTHER JESUS WHOM WE HAVE NOT PREACHED, OR IF YOU RECEIVE A DIFFERENT SPIRIT WHICH YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED, OR A DIFFERENT GOSPEL WHICH YOU HAVE NOT ACCEPTED, (I FEAR) YOU MAY WELL PUT UP WITH IT.”

2 Cor. 11: 1-4



LORD,
TEACH US
TO



PRAY



**“AND IT CAME TO PASS, AS HE WAS PRAYING IN A CERTAIN PLACE,
WHEN HE CEASED, THAT ONE OF HIS DISCIPLES SAID TO HIM,
‘LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY, AS JOHN ALSO TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES.’
SO HE SAID TO THEM, ‘WHEN YOU PRAY, SAY:**

**OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN:
HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME,
YOUR KINGDOM COME,
YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH
AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.**

**GIVE US DAY BY DAY OUR DAILY BREAD,
AND FORGIVE US OUR SINS,
FOR WE ALSO FORGIVE EVERYONE WHO IS INDEBTED TO US.
AND DO NOT LEAD US INTO TEMPTATION,
BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE.’ ”**

Luke 11:1-4 NKJ

Nearly every sincere believer in Christ has committed this prayer to memory. It is often invoked at solemn gatherings of believers and is often traditionally quoted in unison at funerals. However, this is not a prayer by which we are to die, but rather is a prayer by which we are to live out our lives as Christians. The Lord’s prayer was given in response to the disciple’s request, “Lord, teach us to pray...” In the Matthew 6 account of The Lord’s Prayer, Jesus said, “In this manner, therefore pray...” (Matt. 6:9).

The danger with simplistic rote memorization of this prayer is that it tends to breed familiarity to the point that the true meaning and purpose of its contents become greatly diminished. Jesus is teaching His disciples HOW to effectively pray, not merely WHAT words to say. To truly be effective against the forces of evil, this prayer must be viewed as a pattern for how to pray as believers while living out our lives on an earth that is under the sway of the wicked one (Eph. 2:2), who is guiding the present course of this evil age (1 Jn. 5:18-19).

**“...THE EFFECTIVE, FERVENT PRAYER
OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN AVAILS MUCH”**

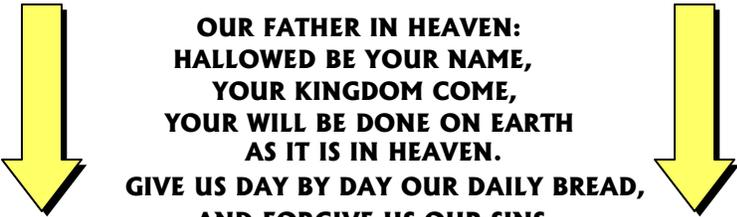
James 5:16



**“...HE WHO HAS BEEN BORN OF GOD
KEEPS (GUARDS) HIMSELF,
AND THE WICKED ONE DOES NOT TOUCH HIM.
WE KNOW THAT WE ARE OF GOD,
AND THE WHOLE WORLD LIES UNDER
THE SWAY OF THE WICKED ONE.”**

1 Jn. 5:18-19

The order in which this prayer reads is not how it works. It reads as a prayer of descent from the highest principle to the lowest:



**OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN:
 HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME,
 YOUR KINGDOM COME,
 YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH
 AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.
 GIVE US DAY BY DAY OUR DAILY BREAD,
 AND FORGIVE US OUR SINS,
 FOR WE ALSO FORGIVE EVERYONE WHO IS INDEBTED TO US.
 AND DO NOT LEAD US INTO TEMPTATION,
 BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE.' "**

Luke 11:1-4 NKJ

I would like to suggest to you that in practical application, the seven stated principles contained within this prayer are ASCENDING truths rather than DESCENDING ones. By that statement, I simply mean that the prayer is to be viewed as working from the bottom to the top rather than from the top to the bottom.

This is not unusual in God's Word. Often the highest truth is stated first but is not how it is practically worked out in our lives. Consider another pyramid of truth that although listed from the top to the bottom, it too works from the bottom to the top:



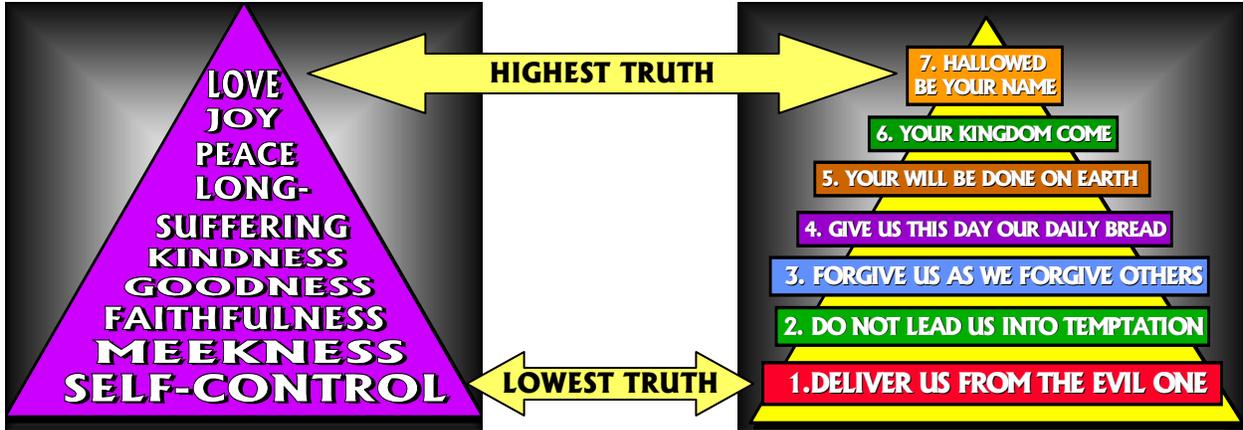
"...THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS



Gal. 5:22-23

Love is certainly the greatest attribute a believer can manifest (1 Cor. 13:13). It is singled out as "...the bond of perfection" that is to be put on by the believer (Col. 3:14).

However, in considering this list of the fruit of God's Spirit at work in the life of the believer, the first thing God must impart to the new convert is the need for self-control over his flesh nature. The believer who lacks self-control in his or her relationships cannot possibly manifest the capstone truth of love which "...bears all things...endures all things (and) never fails" (1 Cor. 13:7-8).



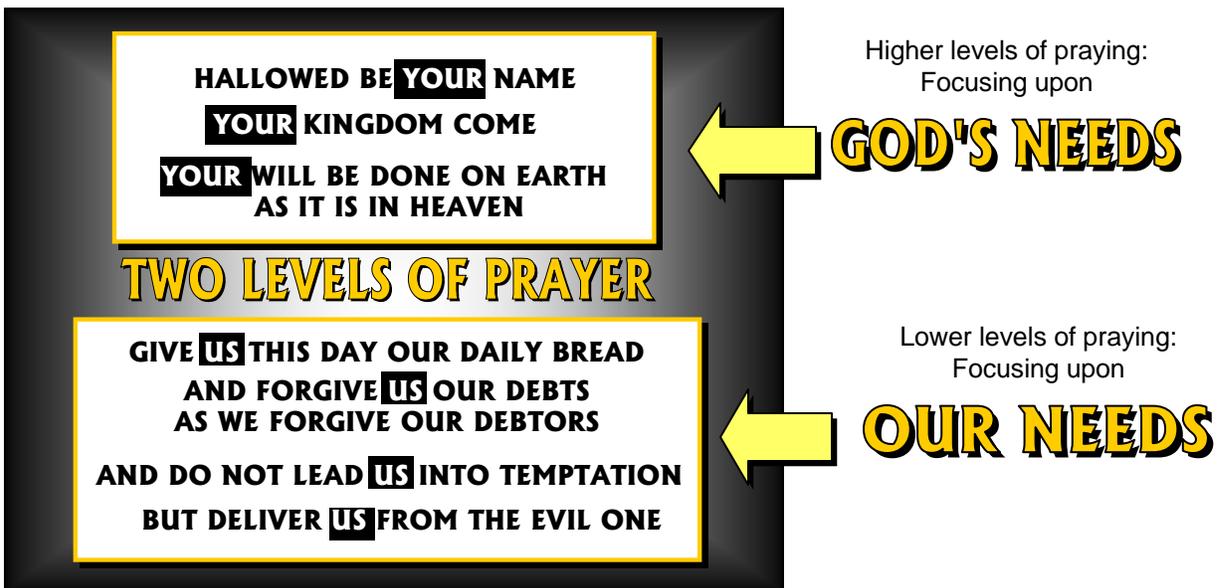
The Christian who never develops the fruit of self-control will never manifest the ultimate bond of perfection of love in his/her life. The believer who lacks the evidence of the fruit of the Spirit of self-control will often look like, act like, and even speak like the unregenerated of the world. They will profess to like Christ, but do not become Christ-like in behavior before unbelievers.

ON WHAT LEVEL DO YOU WANT TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE?

Likewise, the Christian who never learns to guard himself from the evil one will not manifest a life that "hallows" (brings honor to) the name of Christ which he/she bears. The commandment not to take the name of the Lord in vain is not dealing with the subject of profanity, but rather is describing a believer whose life does not bring honor to the name he/she bears; Christian in name, but not Christ-like in behavior.

Understanding the stated principles above, let us see if we can shed light on what The Lord's Prayer is all about. Let us begin by simply dividing this prayer in half with four statements on the bottom and three on the top. You can see the dramatic difference between the two groups simply by noticing that the bottom four statements place the emphasis of the prayer expressions upon "us" as believers while the top three place the emphasis upon God with the use of the word "Your."

We now have prayer on two different levels. One is a lower world-centered expression while the other is a higher God-centered form of prayer:



Another way to view the distinction between the two is:



If we are consumed with only “us” praying in a survival mode, then we will know little of the higher level of sacrificial praying for God’s name to be hallowed, His kingdom to come, or His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. I think you can begin to see that more is required of the believer than merely memorizing or quoting the words contained within The Lord’s Prayer. Get victory in the lower levels by avoiding these pitfalls of Satan designed to ensnare us, and we can begin to focus upon higher things for God!



Look at this incredible statement Jesus makes about Satan:

“...THE PRINCE (EVIL GENIUS, RULER) OF THE WORLD IS COMING. AND HE HAS NO CLAIM ON ME. [HE HAS NOTHING IN COMMON WITH ME; THERE IS NOTHING IN ME THAT BELONGS TO HIM, AND HE HAS NO POWER OVER ME.]”

Jn. 14:30 Amp.



If Satan can keep the believer in a constant state where he/she is not ever delivered from the power and influence of the evil one, and is constantly tormented with falling into the same temptations, or being ensnared in a state of unwillingness to forgive others as we have been forgiven, or being in a state in which God does not supply us with our “daily bread” (needs), then we cannot get beyond “survival praying.”

What Jesus stated above is a proclamation pertaining to His practical relationship to the devil. It is to become the believer’s ongoing relationship to Satan as well. When Jesus says, “he has no claim on me...he has nothing in common with me...there is nothing in me that belongs to him...he has no power over me”, it relates to things such as contained within The Lord’s Prayer. We must guard ourselves in such a way that we are truly delivered from being under the influence of the evil one. We must deal so thoroughly with sin in our lives that Satan has little in his arsenal that is capable of leading us astray with temptation. We must so guard against the sin of unforgiveness lest we be ensnared to the point that we become turned over to the torturers until we forgive (see Matt. 18:35). We need to handle our finances in such a way that we honor God with the firstfruits of our increase (tithes) lest God cause us to lack even for daily bread (see Prov. 3:9, Hag. 1:3-11, 2 Cor. 9:6-10).

Break the principles that govern these areas in our lives, and we can pray The Lord’s Prayer until we are blue in the face to no avail! We may indeed pray The Lord’s Prayer by means of rote memorization, but are we working out these things in a practical manner so that the contents of The Lord’s Prayer become proclamations of what is active in our daily lives? As an example, often I hear God’s people dealing rather tritely with the putting on of the armor of God (Ephesians Chapter 6) in such a mystical way that it really has no practical application or significant meaning. The armor of God is not to be applied in some mystical fashion of faith by merely repeating what is stated as the seven pieces of the armor of God, but rather these seven pieces of armor are statements of practical application! They sum up things that are to be active ingredients in our lives, not mere words spoken in mystical faith. So likewise with the contents of The Lord’s Prayer! Is what we say a present outworking in our lives, or do we merely say the words to God apart from doing the things that enable them to take place?

There are reasons why God calls us to survival praying as stated by the four "us" statements of, "Deliver us...Lead us... Forgive us... Give us." There is a direct correlation that can be made to the four titles Satan bears pertaining to the believer:



Let us consider the first two together as they are the primary ways that Satan attacks the brethren:

"...I SENT TO KNOW YOUR FAITH, LEST BY SOME MEANS THE TEMPTER HAS TEMPTED YOU, AND OUR LABOR MIGHT BE IN VAIN."
1 Thess. 3:5



"...BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT; BECAUSE YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL... SEEKS WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR. RESIST HIM, STEADFAST IN THE FAITH..."
1 Pet. 5:8-9

Note very well that what Satan is seeking to destroy in both of these roles of his is the faith of the believer.

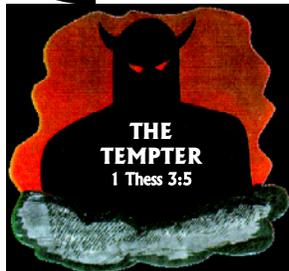
We all know the emphasis that the Scriptures place upon God's people living a life of faith:

"NOW THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; BUT IF ANYONE DRAWS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM. BUT WE ARE NOT OF THOSE WHO DRAW BACK TO PERDITION, BUT OF THOSE WHO BELIEVE TO THE SAVING OF THE SOUL."
Heb. 10:38-39

Compare these two passages closely. One is how Satan causes God's people to DRAW BACK from God, (as the Tempter) and the other is how he seeks to prevent them from COMING TO GOD (as your Adversary) to prevent a closer walk of faith with God.

"BUT WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM, FOR HE WHO COMES TO GOD MUST BELIEVE THAT HE IS, AND THAT HE IS A REWARDER OF THOSE WHO DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM."
Heb. 11:6

As the Tempter, Satan lurks behind the believer seeking to draw him/her back into a life of sin. He knows what worked on us in our "BC" days, so he knows what bait to put on his hook.



As the Adversary of the believer, Satan is always in front of God's people to hinder any attempt that would draw them close to God. Paul said of his tactics:

"...WE WANTED TO COME TO YOU-EVEN I, PAUL, TIME AND AGAIN-BUT SATAN HINDERED US."
1 Thess. 2:18

"...I MADE IT MY AIM TO PREACH THE GOSPEL... FOR THIS REASON I ALSO HAVE BEEN MUCH HINDERED FROM COMING TO YOU."
Rom. 15:20,22





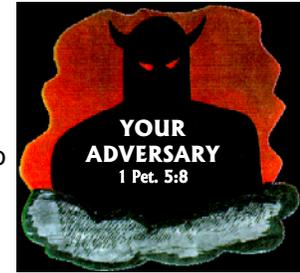
“LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION...”

“...DO NOT SIN...NOR GIVE PLACE TO THE DEVIL.”
Eph. 4:26-27

“...LEST SATAN SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF US, FOR WE ARE NOT IGNORANT OF HIS DEVICES.”
2 Cor. 2:11

The point needful to grasp is that the devil is going to be in your life one way or the other. We are to shut him down in our lives when it comes to his ability to tempt us to sin. However, seek to draw near to God and he will be in your face as your Adversary.

← And so we must pray: →



“ AND DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE.”

Perhaps you think it strange that we are to pray to God, “lead us not into temptation” when it is the devil who is the Tempter. Temptation is only effective when there are desires in our heart that would make Satan’s temptation effective. James reminds us:

“LET NO ONE SAY WHEN HE IS TEMPTED, ‘I AM TEMPTED BY GOD’, FOR GOD CANNOT BE TEMPTED BY EVIL, NOT DOES HE HIMSELF TEMPT ANYONE. BUT EACH ONE IS TEMPTED WHEN HE IS DRAWN AWAY BY HIS OWN DESIRES AND ENTICED. THEN, WHEN DESIRE HAS CONCEIVED, IT GIVES BIRTH TO SIN...”
James 1:13-15

The Tempter is only effective where we have pockets of enticing desires still abiding in our heart. What Jesus means by telling us to pray, “lead us not into temptation”, is best understood as, “Lord, let there not be in me anything that would allow the devil to draw me astray.” God does not CAUSE temptation but he certainly will ALLOW temptation to confront un-yielded areas of the flesh nature that still abide in our heart. Temptation is Satan’s invitation to sin. James reveals that it becomes sin when we are “drawn away by (one’s) own desires and enticed.” The act of temptation can also prove that we love God, and for this reason God will allow temptation in the life of any believer:

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

Perhaps you are thinking that I am spending too much time on the subject of temptation. This emphasis is because temptation is the main area in which Satan seeks to entrap the people of God. If he can keep us in bondage to our flesh nature through his role as the Tempter, then there is little need for him to function in the role of our Adversary. Failing repeatedly the test of temptation will keep a believer from drawing near to God.

Think about Jesus’ interaction with Satan. The first opportunity Satan had at Jesus was in the wilderness in which, as “the Tempter” (Matt. 4:3) he tempted Jesus forty days and forty nights seeking to cause Him to sin. The Scriptures record that Jesus was “...in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15).

Jesus’ victory over temptation is because of this truth:



“...THE PRINCE, (EVIL GENIUS, RULER) OF THE WORLD IS COMING. AND HE HAS NO CLAIM ON ME. ... HE HAS NOTHING IN COMMON WITH ME; THERE IS NOTHING IN ME THAT BELONGS TO HIM, ...HE HAS NO POWER OVER ME”
John 14:30 Amplified



As long as God’s people have things within their heart that is in common with Satan, he will have claim on them and he will have power over them. As long as there are things abiding in the believer’s heart that do belong to Satan, there will be the basis for common ground to exist between Satan and God’s people. Temptation reveals the areas in which we must gird up the walls of our soul so that our confession can be the same as our master as stated above. Therefore we must pray to God continually, “...and lead us not into temptation.”

**"...GIVE US
...OUR DAILY BREAD..."**

Matt. 6:11

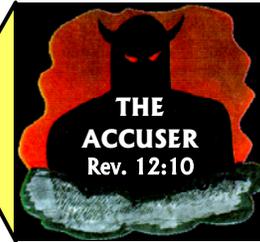
**"...AND I WILL REBUKE
THE DEVOURER
FOR YOUR SAKES,
SO THAT
HE
WILL NOT DESTROY
THE FRUIT OF
YOUR GROUND..."**
Mal. 3:11



**"...FORGIVE US
...AS WE FORGIVE..."**

Matt. 6:12

**"...THE ACCUSER
OF
OUR BRETHREN,
WHO ACCUSED THEM
BEFORE
OUR GOD
DAY AND NIGHT..."**
Rev. 12:10



**"...GIVE US
...OUR DAILY BREAD..."**

More is required of the believer than merely quoting this aspect of the Lord's prayer to have God perform this request to supply their daily bread on a consistent basis. We must give consistently to be consistently given unto. Jesus Himself said:

**"GIVE, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU;
GOOD MEASURE, PRESSED DOWN, SHAKEN TOGETHER,
AND RUNNING OVER WILL BE PUT INTO YOUR
BOSOM. FOR WITH THE MEASURE THAT YOU USE,
IT WILL BE MEASURED BACK TO YOU."** Luke 6:38

The apostle Paul likewise stated the same principle:

**"BUT THIS I SAY: HE WHO SOWS SPARINGLY WILL ALSO
REAP SPARINGLY, AND HE WHO SOWS BOUNTIFULLY
WILL ALSO REAP BOUNTIFULLY...GOD IS ABLE TO
MAKE ALL GRACE ABOUND TOWARD YOU, THAT YOU,
ALWAYS HAVING ALL SUFFICIENCY IN ALL THINGS,
HAVE AN ABUNDANCE FOR EVERY GOOD WORK. AS IT
IS WRITTEN: 'HE HAS DISPERSED ABROAD,
HE HAS GIVEN TO THE POOR...' "** 2 Cor. 9:6-9

The psalmist stated that he had never seen the righteous forsaken or begging bread (Psm. 37:25). As a pastor for over 28 years I have seen some of God's people living as if they were forsaken by God and were indeed begging for bread (handouts) simply because they did not follow principles such as stated above. In the Book of Haggai the prophet warns God's people of the reason why God does not provide for them:

**"CONSIDER YOUR WAYS! ...HE WHO EARNS WAGES, EARNS
WAGES TO PUT INTO A BAG WITH HOLES...YOU LOOKED FOR
MUCH, BUT INDEED IT CAME TO LITTLE; AND WHEN YOU
BROUGHT IT HOME, I BLEW IT AWAY. WHY? BECAUSE OF MY
HOUSE THAT IS IN RUINS, WHILE EVERY ONE OF YOU RUNS
TO HIS OWN HOUSE."**

Hag. 1:6-10



Lord willing,
in our next newsletter
we will look at a
higher form of praying:



Pastor Randy Shupe



**"...FORGIVE US
...AS WE FORGIVE..."**



God's forgiveness is conditional. Ever heard that before? Perhaps not in light of the perverted slant which proclaims God forgives our sins past, present, and future under the cliché "Every sin I ever will commit is already under the blood." False doctrine! Sins that are past are forgiven (Rom.3:25). Sins that are present are forgiven IF we confess them (1 Jn.1:7-9, 2:1-2). God does not pre-forgive future sins. There is not a verse anywhere to support that notion. Neither is God's forgiveness of our sins "unconditional" as popularly taught. The reason Jesus taught us to pray in the Lord's Prayer, " And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12) is because the Scriptures state plainly that forgiveness depends upon forgiving:

**"FOR IF YOU FORGIVE MEN THEIR TRESPASSES, YOUR
HEAVENLY FATHER WILL ALSO FORGIVE YOU. BUT IF
YOU DO NOT FORGIVE MEN THEIR TRESPASSES,
NEITHER WILL YOUR FATHER FORGIVE YOUR
TRESPASSES."** Matt. 6:14-15

**"...FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER, IF ANYONE HAS A
COMPLAINT AGAINST ANOTHER, EVEN AS CHRIST FORGAVE
YOU, SO YOU ALSO MUST DO."** Col. 3:13

Satan is "the Accuser of the brethren." Read the story in Zechariah 3:1-10! He does this before God's throne against the brethren "night and day" (Rev.12:10). Usually his accusations are groundless, false accusations. However, if you are a believer, you better believe that your forgiveness before God's throne depends on you also forgiving others! Do take the time to read what Jesus told Peter would happen to those who would not forgive! (Matt. 18:21-35).

THE "PROPHETIC WORD"

PART TWO:

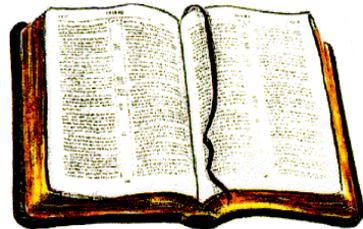
AN EXAMINATION OF

THE LORD'S PRAYER

"AND IT CAME TO PASS, AS HE WAS PRAYING IN A CERTAIN PLACE,
 WHEN HE CEASED, THAT ONE OF HIS DISCIPLES SAID TO HIM,
 'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY, AS JOHN ALSO TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES.'
 SO HE SAID TO THEM, 'WHEN YOU PRAY, SAY:
 OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN:



HALLOWED BE **YOUR** NAME
YOUR KINGDOM COME
YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH
 AS IT IS IN HEAVEN



GIVE **US** DAY BY DAY OUR DAILY BREAD
 AND FORGIVE **US** OUR SINS,
 FOR WE ALSO FORGIVE EVERYONE...

AND DO NOT LEAD **US** INTO TEMPTATION
 BUT DELIVER **US** FROM THE EVIL ONE ' " .

Luke 11:1-4

From the above graphic emphasis I have highlighted, it is easy to see that this special prayer Christ gave to His Church is plainly divided into two separate trains of thought:

1. Things pertaining to "US" as believers on earth...
2. Things pertaining to "YOUR" (God's) name, Kingdom and will...

In the November 2009 Newsletter, "Lord, Teach Us To Pray", we examined the four statements which pertain to "US" as believers on earth. In this month's newsletter, we want to take a look at the intention of Jesus' words in commanding believers to also pray a higher form of prayer that centers not upon us, but upon things that pertain to God. Specifically singled out are things that pertain to His Name, His Kingdom, and His will:



**"OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN,
 HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME.
 YOUR KINGDOM COME.
 YOUR WILL BE DONE
 ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN."**

Matt. 6:9

In our previous newsletter, we examined the reason why Jesus wants His people to pray in such a manner as stated in the Lord's Prayer. In essence, the first four steps (working from the bottom) of this instructional prayer teaches believers how to overcome Satan in his corresponding roles as (1) the Adversary, (2) the Tempter, (3) the Accuser, and (4) the Devourer. This is "survival praying" :



Understand that such "survival praying" will be necessary for every believer as long as (1) Satan roams the earth, and (2) we continue to live on this temporal earth which presently remains under his demonic influence (see 1 Jn. 5:19, Eph. 2:2, 6:11-13, 2 Cor. 4:4).

The remaining three steps (again, working from the bottom) of the Lord's Prayer, contain a significant and important paradigm shift from an emphasis upon the believer overcoming Satan's temporary kingdom, unto the needful, progressive establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Satan, (and his kingdom) is on the way out, but the fullness of the Kingdom of God is on the way in! Although we, as believers, must continue to practice "survival praying" against the effects of Satan and his kingdom in our daily lives, we must also begin to pray what must be viewed as "sacrificial praying" for the ever-increasing manifestation of the Kingdom of God to come first and foremost in our own lives, and secondly, to a very needy and desperate world that continues to be blinded by Satan's counterfeit kingdoms. Paul elaborates for us this most needful priority of grasping what is going on in this world under the control of Satan, and what needs to take place by means of the true gospel message:



**"BUT EVEN IF OUR GOSPEL IS VEILED,
IT IS VEILED TO THOSE WHO ARE PERISHING,
WHOSE MINDS THE GOD OF THIS AGE HAS BLINDED,
WHO DO NOT BELIEVE,
LEST THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL OF THE GLORY OF CHRIST,
WHO IS THE IMAGE OF GOD, SHOULD SHINE ON THEM...
FOR IT IS GOD WHO COMMANDED LIGHT TO SHINE OUT OF DARKNESS
WHO HAS SHONE IN OUR HEARTS TO GIVE THE LIGHT OF
THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST."**

2 Cor. 4:3-6

**"...FOR IT IS GOD
WHO COMMANDED LIGHT
TO SHINE OUT OF DARKNESS
WHO HAS SHONE IN OUR HEARTS
TO GIVE THE LIGHT
OF THE KNOWLEDGE
OF THE GLORY OF GOD
IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST."**

2 Cor. 4:6



**"BUT THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL COME AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT,
IN WHICH THE HEAVENS WILL PASS AWAY WITH A GREAT NOISE,
AND THE ELEMENTS WILL MELT WITH A FERVENT HEAT; BOTH THE EARTH AND THE
WORKS THAT ARE IN IT WILL BE BURNED UP. THEREFORE SINCE ALL THESE THINGS
WILL BE DISSOLVED, WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS OUGHT YOU TO BE
IN HOLY CONDUCT AND GODLINESS, LOOKING FOR
AND HASTENING THE COMING OF THE DAY OF GOD,
BECAUSE OF WHICH THE HEAVENS WILL BE DISSOLVED BEING ON FIRE,
AND THE ELEMENTS WILL MELT WITH FERVENT HEAT?
NEVERTHELESS WE, ACCORDING TO HIS PROMISE,
LOOK FOR NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH IN WHICH RIGHTEOUSNESS DWELLS.
THEREFORE, BELOVED, LOOKING FORWARD TO THESE THINGS,
BE DILIGENT TO BE FOUND BY HIM IN PEACE, WITHOUT SPOT AND BLAMELESS..."**

2 Pet. 3:10-14

Incredibly, Peter implies that by means of "holy conduct and godliness" among God's people, that the coming of the day of God can be HASTENED! Does that also imply conversely that by "unholy conduct and ungodliness" being practiced by God's people, this day could be DELAYED? I find it most interesting that in the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins we find the prophetic event of the coming of Jesus as the Bridegroom, "But while the Bridegroom was DELAYED..." (Matt. 25:5). Likewise, in the parable of the Unfaithful Servant (Luke 12) we find that even this wicked servant of the Master had determined, "...My Master is DELAYING His coming..." (Luke 12:45). In speaking of the terrible tribulation to come Jesus said, "And unless those days were SHORTENED, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be SHORTENED" (Matt. 24:22). We all know the Tribulation is prophesied to be seven years in length. However, there is also a prophecy that implies that the length of a day will be SHORTENED by 12 hours (see Amos 8:9). Do you realize that the actual time of the tribulation in hours could be cut in half and yet still fulfill the seven year prophecy? Just make the days half in length of what they are now and it would fulfill Jesus' promise of "...those days will be SHORTENED"

Such concepts are unsettling to us who would rather put all the responsibility for those prophetic dates squarely upon the shoulders of the sovereignty of our God. Let Him set the date and we will try to figure it out. I have been guilty of that myself as a teacher of God's prophetic Word. Does it bother you that there is a preferred tendency to be more fixated with figuring out those pre-determined, sovereign dates than trying to hasten the Lord's coming through proper prayer and right living? Like you, I am disturbed by the concepts stated above by Peter and Our Lord Jesus. However, in light of their existence, perhaps we too should be praying in the midst of difficult times (as did Paul) for a hastening of Christ's coming:

**"IF ANYONE DOES NOT LOVE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,
LET HIM BE ACCURSED.
O LORD, COME!"**

1 Cor. 16:22





It is important to grasp that the Lord's Prayer (both halves) was specifically given to govern the lives of God's people. It was not given to become some kind of a sanctimonious and nebulous religious guide for special events in the lives of unbelievers in this present world (as it has indeed become). We are warned by Paul concerning our interaction with Satan:



**"...LEST SATAN SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF US,
FOR WE ARE NOT IGNORANT OF HIS DEVICES."**

2 Cor. 2:11



By means of cherished traditions, modern-day Christianity has become very ignorant of Satan's devices. For instance, what Satan has done with the contents of the Lord's Prayer is to reduce it to meaningless dribble on the lips of the unsaved world through rote memorization that is divorced from its true purpose and intent. Satan's strategy is to take great biblical truths and erode their effectiveness by over familiarity and misapplication by the world. This is Satan's premiere strategy:

**ATTACH A LITTLE TRUTH TO A LOT OF WORLDLY TRADITION AND THE RESULT IS
TO MAKE THE WORD OF GOD OF NO PRACTICAL EFFECT**

(see principle in Mark 7:6-13).

For example, take the great event of the birth of Christ and look at what Satan has done with it. The whole "civilized" world celebrates the birth of Christ along with a host of pagan-based traditions Satan has attached to it under the banner of "Christmas." Catholicism moved the celebration of the birth of Christ from the biblical time of the Fall Feasts of the Lord (Tabernacles) and purposely placed it on the festive day of the pagan-based celebration of the Winter Solstice (Dec.25th) which was totally dedicated to worshipping the S-u-n as a god rather than the S-o-n. The result is that today we have Jesus and the manger scene shoved under the same pagan-based Christmas tree worshipped in ancient times:

**"DO NOT LEARN THE WAY OF THE GENTILES...FOR THE CUSTOMS OF THE PEOPLE
ARE FUTILE: FOR ONE CUTS A TREE FROM THE FOREST...THEY DECORATE WITH
SILVER AND GOLD; THEY FASTEN IT WITH NAILS AND HAMMERS SO THAT IT WILL
NOT TOPPLE. THEY ARE UPRIGHT, LIKE A PALM TREE..."** Jer. 10:1-4

Also widely embraced is mistletoe, Yule logs and Santa Claus right along with the birth of baby Jesus. Which gets first billing?

Likewise, take the monumental event of the resurrection of Christ. It too occurred on a biblical Feast day (Firstfruits) according to the apostle Paul (1 Cor. 15:20-23). However, Satan has taken this monumental event and diminished its significance by attaching to it the world-wide acceptance (even among Christians) of pagan-based "Easter" (Ishtar-goddess of fertility). Thus the resurrection of Christ becomes buried among a myriad of fertility symbols such as "Easter bunnies and Easter eggs." Attach a little truth to a lot of worldly tradition and the result is to make the Word of God of no practical effect.

Should we not be bothered that the world around us celebrates their own perverted version of the birth of Christ and the resurrection of Christ? Should we not be bothered that CHRISTIANS celebrate those same perverted versions of truth-Christmas and Easter? Should we not be bothered that the Lord's Prayer is also widely quoted by the unsaved pagan-based world? Can we not see what Satan is doing to concepts of Scripture that should be sacred and cherished truths given to the people of God?

Let us look now at the three remaining statements in the Lord's Prayer with the illumination that they are the exclusive property of God's people. They do not belong to the world around us.



Let us also keep in mind that these last three statements, like the four that preceded them, are to be more than mere words we speak to God, but also expressions of how we live our daily lives before Him.

We can easily see how trite it is for the unsaved world to utter the words, “Hallowed be Your name, Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Does the world “hallow” (revere) God's name or blaspheme it day by day with cursive expressions whenever they get angry? Does the world really seek the Kingdom of God or the kingdoms of this world (such as “Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness?") Does the world really desire for the will of God to be done on earth or does each man, apart from God, fervently seek the desires of his own will to be expressed on earth?

How much more of a tragedy is it for God's people to tritely utter the words, “Hallowed be Your name, Your Kingdom come, and Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven,” and all the while live in such a carnal, worldly or selfish fashion that God's name is not “hallowed” (revered) in the life of the believer?

Is it right to pray, “Your Kingdom come” and then madly pursue after the kingdom in which we live (America) as if God had appointed it to be the (new) Kingdom of God on earth? The Puritans believed this nonsense about America being the “New Israel-the Kingdom of God on earth.” It is quite evident that the likes of the Religious Right and the Moral Majority believe it too! Why else are they madly trying to legislate the moral laws of God on an immoral people? It is because they too believe America is the Kingdom of God on earth, yet they pray the Lord's Prayer, “Your Kingdom come” without a clue as to what the real Kingdom of God is all about.

Are Christians really devoted to seeing, “Your (God's) will be done on earth as it is in heaven”? If so, why then do so many of God's people look like, act like, speak like and have the same priorities of the world around them? Why do they live contrary to the revealed will of God as stated in the Scriptures? Why is it that although God says He hates divorce (Mal. 2:16), yet the divorce rate among Christians now exceeds that of unbelievers? Why is it that although God says that marriage is honorable and undefiled (Heb.13:4), yet multitudes of Christians choose to live together in fornication, unmarried just like the world around them?

Do we really believe that by just bowing our heads at the appropriate time and uttering the words, “Hallowed be Your name, Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”, it becomes a sanctified prayer in God's ears or are we in danger of hearing God say to us the same words He spoke about Israel's hypocritical prayers:

**“WELL DID ISAIAH PROPHECY OF YOU HYPOCRITES,
AS IT IS WRITTEN:
‘THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS,
BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME.
AND IN VAIN THEY WORSHIP ME...’ ”**
Mark 7:6-7



Painfully, I think we can see the severity of the problem of tritely praying the contents of the Lord's Prayer from rote memorization without attempting to allow these statements to be at work in our lives in an ongoing, daily basis. We must come to see that each of the seven statements contained in The Lord's Prayer are meant to become vivid declarations of how we choose to live out our lives as Christians while on this temporal earth. The statements contained in the Lord's Prayer were meant to be constant reminders of what are to be our priorities until the return of Jesus Christ.

Let us consider a brief synopsis of the remaining three statements, “Hallowed be Your name, Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” →

Let us continue to examine this list working as we have, from the bottom to the top.



The next statement we want to examine from our list is the fifth one which says:

5. "YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN."

This is to be the personal confession of every follower of Christ simply because it was the very confession of Christ Himself while on earth:

"...I DO NOT SEEK MY OWN WILL BUT THE WILL OF THE FATHER WHO SENT ME." Jn. 5:30

"...FATHER IF IT IS YOUR WILL, REMOVE THIS CUP FROM ME; NEVERTHELESS NOT MY WILL, BUT YOURS BE DONE." Luke 22:42

The priority of Christ on earth was to do the Father's will. The priority of a Christian on earth is to do the Father's will. "Not My will" was the battle cry of Jesus Christ. It must become the battle cry of every follower of Christ. It is important to note that Jesus had a will of His own, but He always subjected it to the higher will of God His Father. We too have a will of our own which must likewise be subservient to the higher, expressed will of God for us. This is the essence of denying ourselves, taking up our cross daily, and following after Christ (see Luke 9:23). Romans gives us the way to become a doer of God's will:

"I BESEECH YOU THEREFORE, BRETHREN...THAT YOU PRESENT YOUR BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE, HOLY, ACCEPTABLE TO GOD, WHICH IS YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE...DO NOT BE CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD, BUT BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND, THAT YOU MAY PROVE (DEMONSTRATE) WHAT IS THAT GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE AND PERFECT WILL OF GOD." Rom. 12:1-2

We need to be as serious and dedicated to doing God's will as was Jesus. Let Jesus tell us why doing God's will must be a high priority:

"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." Matt. 7:21

6. "YOUR KINGDOM COME..."

If you had to write out in fifty words or less the meaning of this next proclamation of the Lord's Prayer, what would you say? What would comprise your understanding of the meaning of this saying?



For the most part, I have found that believers in Christ think this saying means that we are to pray for the return of Jesus Christ to establish His Millennial Kingdom on earth and rule the nations with a rod of iron.

Although the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus Christ is a valid expression of the Kingdom of God in Scripture, this FUTURE manifestation of the Kingdom will not help us as Christians in this present life, unless we realize that there is a PRESENT manifestation of the Kingdom of God already on earth! It is this PRESENT manifestation of the Kingdom of God to which this proclamation of the Lord's Prayer is applicable. As born-again believers in Christ, we are to pray, "Your Kingdom come" and be manifest in our lives as followers of Christ! The Kingdom of God does not begin with the Millennial reign of Christ on earth, but rather it begins with the Kingdom of God abiding NOW in the hearts of every born-again believer on earth. The Kingdom of God is not a physical Kingdom abiding in a geographical location! Jesus emphatically said:



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

Jn.18:36

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

Luke 17:20-21 Amplified

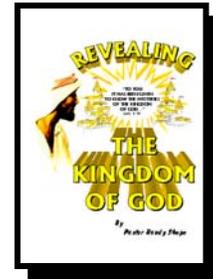
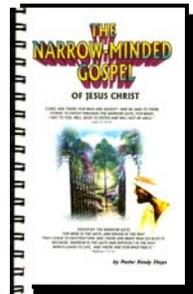
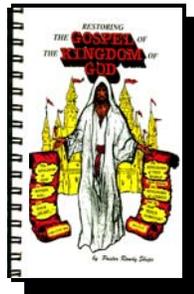


Paul confirms that there is a PRESENT manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth:

“FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT FOOD AND DRINK, BUT RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE AND JOY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT. FOR HE WHO SERVES CHRIST IN THESE THINGS IS ACCEPTABLE TO GOD...” Rom. 14:17-18

Notice the three marks of the Kingdom of God on earth is NOT “Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.” I am not seeking to be unkind, but much of Christianity in America is serving the wrong kingdom! Acceptable service to God is focusing upon the true Kingdom of God namely, righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. American Christianity is devoid of an emphasis upon the true Kingdom of God and has adopted the Puritan counterfeit of America being God’s “New Israel-The Kingdom of God on earth.” (see my newsletters, **AMERICA IN THE SIGHT OF GOD: NEW ISRAEL OR NEW ROME?** and **“THE PURITAN WAY VS. THE PILGRIM WAY”** at “pastorrandyshupe.com”).

I can say little about this subject in the space left, so let me recommend two books and a DVD teaching to you if you have never heard much taught about the Kingdom of God. These items are listed and described on my website: “PastorRandyShupe.com”



DVD series- \$25.00

7. “HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME”

A definition of this archaic word (“Hallow”) is needed to understand this final proclamation believers are to pray to God and demonstrate in their lives lived on earth. Webster states the meaning of “hallow” as:

“HOLY, SET APART, KEEP AS SACRED, RESPECT, REVERE, HONOR”

What is quite incredible to me is the use of this word “hallow” in the ever-so popular, but pagan and demonic holiday of “HALLOWEEN”!

Is God’s name “hallowed” in the earth? Hardly! Isaiah the prophet said:

“AND MY NAME IS BLASPHEMED CONTINUALLY EVERY DAY. THEREFORE MY PEOPLE SHALL KNOW MY NAME...” Isa. 52:5-6

When angry, much of the world’s people (even the educated) cannot finish a sentence without using the Lord’s name in a profane way. God told His people Israel:

“YOU SHALL NOT PROFANE MY HOLY NAME, BUT I WILL BE HALLOWED AMONG THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. I AM THE LORD WHO SANCTIFIES YOU.” Lev. 22:32

God’s people certainly should not be using His name in profanity! However, neither should they break the third commandment of taking the Lord’s name in vain:

“YOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD IN VAIN, FOR THE LORD WILL NOT HOLD HIM GUILTY WHO TAKES HIS NAME IN VAIN” Ex. 20:7

Taking the name of the Lord in vain has nothing to do with profanity. It rather means that one who calls himself a Christian bears the name of the Lord. A Christian is to be a follower of Christ. If we take His name to ourselves and do not follow Christ, then we are guilty of taking the name of the Lord in vain. The word “vain” in Scripture means, “useless, empty, worthless.” This is why Paul admonished believers:

“WE THEN AS WORKERS TOGETHER WITH HIM ALSO PLEAD WITH YOU NOT TO RECEIVE THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN.” 2 Cor. 6:1

We marvel at the fact that God has given us His grace. Paul warns that we can receive it in vain. Pray, “Hallowed be Your name” and analyze whether we who have received the grace of God are “hallowing” the name of God not only with our lips, but also with a lifestyle that brings honor to His name!

"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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