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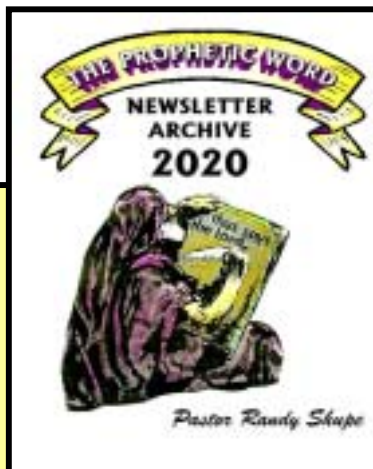
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DISPENSATION-
"a specific period of time in which God deals with man in a specified manner."

God is a dispensationalist. He has appointed specific times and seasons in which He accomplishes specified tasks.

We are presently in the dispensation of the grace of God (Eph. 3:2). That dispensation will continue until the pre-appointed time in which the fullness of the Gentiles have been gathered into His fold according to God's stated time table (Rom. 11:25).

"UNDERSTANDING THE MASTER'S KEYS"

"The KEYS of HADES and DEATH"



"The KEYS of THE KINGDOM"



"The KEY of THE HOUSE of DAVID"



At the end of the dispensation of "the fullness of the Gentiles"

(Rom. 11:25)

God will switch His objective to cause all Israel to be saved

(Rom. 11:26-27).

In Gal. 4:4-5 Paul states that it was when "the fullness of the time had come" (dispensation) that God sent forth His Son for the purpose of redemption of Jewish believers

(Gal. 4:4-5).

This sheds more light for us as to what God says He is going to do in yet another dispensation:

THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL:

"HAVING MADE KNOWN TO US THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL THAT IN THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULLNESS OF THE TIMES HE MIGHT GATHER TOGETHER IN ONE ALL THINGS IN CHRIST, BOTH WHICH ARE IN HEAVEN AND WHICH ARE ON EARTH-IN HIM..." Eph. 1:10

"SEE THEN THAT YOU WALK CIRCUMSPECTLY, NOT AS FOOLS BUT AS WISE, REDEEMING THE TIME, BECAUSE THE DAYS ARE EVIL. THEREFORE DO NOT BE UNWISE, UNDERSTAND WHAT THE WILL OF THE LORD IS." Eph. 5:15-17

Paul is not speaking above of the perspective of understanding what is the will of God for your own personal life. Rather, Paul speaks of the need to understand what is the will of the Lord that He seeks to accomplish universally on earth. In other words, we need to understand not only **WHAT** God is going to accomplish in various dispensations of the last days, but also **HOW** He is going to achieve those objectives:

JESUS WILL ACCOMPLISH THE MISSION OF THE FATHER TO "GATHER ALL THINGS IN ONE IN CHRIST" BY MEANS OF THE SYSTEMATIC, DISPENSATIONAL USE OF THE THREE KEYS THAT HE POSSESSES AS PICTURED ABOVE.

If we, as His people, properly interpret the meaning of these three keys we will unlock for ourselves a fuller understanding of the mystery of His will. These three keys will also reveal to us at what stage Jesus is presently accomplishing His given mission to gather all things in one, in Christ, both which are in heaven and on earth. May your eyes of understanding be enlightened to His revealed will!

**"HAVING MADE KNOWN TO US THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL...
THAT IN THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULLNESS OF THE TIMES
HE MIGHT GATHER TOGETHER IN ONE ALL THINGS IN CHRIST,
BOTH WHICH ARE IN HEAVEN AND WHICH ARE ON EARTH-IN HIM..." Eph. 1:9-10**

**"The
KEYS of**



HADES and DEATH"

Rev. 1:18

"DO NOT BE AFRAID; I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST. I AM HE WHO LIVES, AND WAS DEAD, AND BEHOLD, I AM ALIVE FOREVERMORE. AMEN. AND I HAVE THE KEYS OF HADES AND OF DEATH."
Rev 1:17-19

"...AND DEATH AND HADES DELIVERED UP THE DEAD WHO WERE IN THEM. AND THEY WERE JUDGED, EACH ONE ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS. THEN DEATH AND HADES WERE CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE. THIS IS THE SECOND DEATH."
Rev 20:13-15

**"The
KEYS of**



THE KINGDOM"

Matt. 16:19

"...I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH, AND THE GATES OF HADES SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT. AND I WILL GIVE YOU (THE CHURCH) 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 16:18-19

**"The
KEY of**



THE HOUSE of DAVID"

Rev. 3:7
Isa. 22:22

"AND TO...THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA WRITE, 'THESE THINGS SAYS HE WHO IS HOLY, HE WHO IS TRUE, "HE WHO HAS THE KEY OF DAVID, HE WHO OPENS AND NO ONE SHUTS, AND SHUTS AND NO ONE OPENS": "I KNOW YOUR WORKS. SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR, AND NO ONE CAN SHUT IT...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...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. 3:7-11

"THE KEY OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID I WILL LAY ON HIS SHOULDER; SO HE SHALL OPEN, AND NO ONE SHALL SHUT; AND HE SHALL SHUT, AND NO ONE SHALL OPEN...AND HE WILL BECOME A GLORIOUS THRONE TO HIS FATHER'S HOUSE. THEY WILL HANG ON HIM ALL THE GLORY OF HIS FATHER'S HOUSE..." Isa.22:22

As the above dispensations depict, man's days on earth are numbered. We are running out of time. Everything is winding down to the final events which have been pre-determined by the counsel of His will. We are not on some endless, uncharted time table, but rather the unfolding of a systematic dispensational plan which God has foreordained to take place at appointed times known to God. The point is simply that it is much later in God's time-table than we are prone to think. This present demonically inspired world continues to lull it's inhabitants into deep spiritual slumber. The above diagram spans the dispensation of the fullness of times in which Jesus is systematically gathering together what belongs to Him. These three keys represent the past, present, and future acts of Jesus as He moves about on the appointed times of the Father to fulfill the mystery of His will.

The first set of keys represent a dispensation in which Jesus has initially used those keys to gather to Himself what belongs to Him. It is the keys to unlock Hades and Death. He will use those same keys once more at the end of the ages to deal with those in Hades that do not belong to Him. It results in what is called "the Second Death."

The second set of keys Jesus transfers from Himself to His church. It is the delegated authority to bind and loose things on earth that are instituted by Satan and his horde of demon spirits. Sadly, for the most part, the church has failed to properly use these keys as commissioned by the Master.

The last set of keys will bring forth the culmination of all things as Jesus uses the key of David to end the dispensation of grace when the fullness of the Gentiles have been brought into the Kingdom of God. This is the key of David which opens the door in heaven at the rapture. Hear this: We must qualify to be found worthy to escape! It is not the level of His grace in us that He is measuring, but our works!

"The KEYS of HADES and DEATH"



Rev. 1:18

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

Rev. 1:18

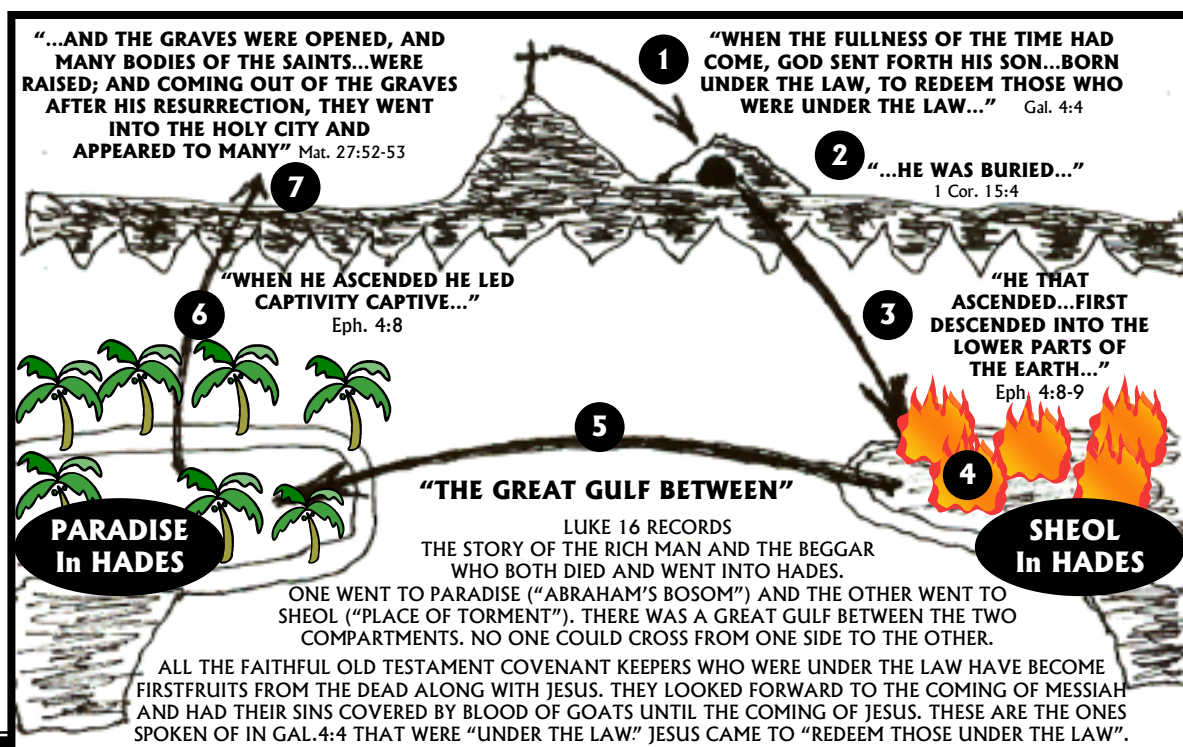


The diagram shown at the bottom of this page is well worth careful consideration. There is a lot more to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus than initially meets the eye. An even greater work of redemption took place **BELOW** the earth as the selected Scriptures below indicate.

Galatians 4: 4-5 tell us of a previous dispensation in which God sent forth His Son "when the fullness of the time had come". Note that He first came to redeem those who were under The Law (see Gal.4:4-5). The seven feasts of the Lord of Leviticus 23 constitute God's divine appointment calendar. The four gospels will reveal that Jesus died on the feast of Passover, was buried on the feast of Unleavened Bread, and rose from the dead on the feast of Firstfruits. It was on this latter feast day that Jesus used the keys of Hades and Death to translate from the lower parts of the earth all of the Old Testament saints that were in Abraham's Bosom, in Paradise, in the lower parts of Hades (see Luke 16:19-31). Paul elaborates on this event in Ephesians 4:8-9 clearly stating that Jesus first **DESCENDED** before He **ASCENDED**. While in the lower parts of the earth He "led captivity captive" by emptying out the Paradise side of Hades which held those presently under The Law of which Christ came to redeem. The other side of Hades, Sheol, is still being filled with unbelievers which will face the Great White Throne Judgment of Rev. 20 where Jesus will once again use the keys of Hades and Death (Rev. 20:13-15).

At His resurrection, on the feast of Firstfruits, Mat.27:52-53 records that many, but not all, of the bodies of the saints were raised along with Christ and were seen by many in Jerusalem. Sadly this great truth is rarely given emphasis in the depiction of the resurrection of Christ. However, it is proof-positive that Jesus has already begun the work of "gathering together all things in one that are in Christ" as our opening text stated as the mystery of His will (Eph. 1:19-20).

Ponder well this depiction of what happened under the earth as well as what happened on its surface:



"The
KEYS of



Matt. 16:19

THE KINGDOM"

**"AND I WILL GIVE YOU
THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM
OF HEAVEN, AND WHATEVER
YOU BIND ON EARTH WILL BE
BOUND FROM HEAVEN, AND WHATEVER
YOU LOOSE ON EARTH WILL BE
LOOSED FROM HEAVEN."**

Matt. 16:19

When Jesus was on earth we find that His mission was centered upon using "the keys of the Kingdom" to undo the binding work of Satan.

Here are some examples:

"...THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE HAS ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO HEAL THE BROKEN HEARTED, TO PREACH DELIVERANCE TO THE CAPTIVES AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET AT LIBERTY THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED..."

Luke 4:18

"...GOD ANOINTED JESUS WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND WITH POWER, WHO WENT ABOUT DOING GOOD AND HEALING ALL WHO WERE OPPRESSED BY THE DEVIL, FOR GOD WAS WITH HIM." Acts 10:38-39

"...THERE WAS A WOMAN WHO HAD A SPIRIT OF INFIRMITY 18 YEARS...WHEN JESUS SAW HER...HE SAID TO HER, "WOMAN, YOU ARE LOOSED FROM YOUR INFIRMITY....OUGHT NOT THIS WOMAN, BEING A DAUGHTER OF ABRAHAM, WHOM SATAN HAD BOUND-THINK OF IT- FOR 18 YEARS, BE LOOSED FROM THIS BOND...?"

Luke 13:11-16 excerpts

Notice that it is by the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus accomplished His mission. The mission of Jesus has become the mission of the church. That is why He gave us the keys to the Kingdom-to undo the work of Satan, to loose what he has bound! As it was for Jesus, so it is for the church, and namely, that we too must be anointed with power which comes from the Holy Spirit, and that power was given at the feast of Pentecost by means of the baptism in the Holy Spirit:

"BUT YOU SHALL RECEIVE POWER AFTER THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS COME UPON YOU; AND YOU SHALL BE WITNESSES TO ME...TO THE END OF THE EARTH" Acts 1:8

"NOW WHEN THE DAY OF PENTECOST HAD FULLY COME... THEY WERE ALL FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT..." Acts 2:1-4 excerpts

Jesus said of the church, "Greater works than these will you do because I go to My Father" (Jn. 14:12). He then began to speak of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the believers after His ascension (Jn. 14-16). It is the same Holy Spirit and the same keys of the kingdom that empowered Jesus. However, it is sad to realize that it is the same objective that the church is lacking, namely, loosing what Satan has bound! God will only anoint the mission that Jesus embraced. Perhaps it is best expressed by these words of Paul:

"STRENGTHENED WITH ALL MIGHT, ACCORDING TO HIS GLORIOUS POWER... HE HAS DELIVERED US FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS AND TRANSLATED US INTO THE KINGDOM OF THE SON OF HIS LOVE..." Col. 1:11-12

The keys of the Kingdom, like the keys of Hades and Death, are for the work of translation. Jesus translated the saints from the lower parts of the earth into heaven itself. While we are on earth, as His followers, we are to be about the Father's business as was Jesus. By means of proclaiming the new birth and the Kingdom of God, we are to translate those whom Satan has bound into the kingdom of the Son of His love! That is what the keys of the Kingdom are intended for in this present dispensation.

Where is the crux of the problem? Why has not the church of Jesus Christ done greater works than the Master? Reason number one: We don't preach the real Kingdom of God. It has been replaced with the pursuit of an earthly kingdom erroneously titled: "One Nation Under God." The original Kingdom of God earmarked by the spiritual goals of "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17) have been replaced with the pursuit of physical goals based on "life, liberty and happiness." If we change what was preached by the Master we cannot achieve the same results as did our Master, can we?



"The KEY of THE HOUSE of DAVID"



Rev. 3:7
Isa. 22:22

**"THESE THINGS SAYS HE WHO IS
HOLY AND TRUE,
"HE WHO HAS
THE KEY OF DAVID,
HE WHO OPENS AND NO ONE
SHUTS, AND SHUTS AND NO ONE
OPENS. I KNOW YOUR WORKS.
SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU
AN OPEN DOOR,
AND NO ONE CAN SHUT IT..."**

Rev. 1:18



The key Jesus refers to as
"the key of David" in Revelation 3:7

is called the key of the house of David in Isaiah 22:22.

Actually, it is this Old Testament Scripture that Jesus is quoting in His letter
to the church of Philadelphia.

The use of this key by Jesus is to set an open door before the church of Philadelphia that no one can shut. I believe it is the key to the rapture! It is the last act of the translation of saints in which Jesus is going to "gather together in one". He will use this key to translate these faithful saints from earth to heaven before the coming of the Day of the Lord (the wrath of God) of which Philadelphia is promised to escape:

**"...I WILL KEEP YOU FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL WHICH SHALL COME UPON
THE WHOLE WORLD TO TEST THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH."** Rev. 3:10

That "hour of trial" Jesus refers to begins in Revelation chapter Six
with the appearance of the Antichrist and "the lie" replacing Jesus Christ and "the truth".
This replacement is the beginning of the outpouring of the wrath of God which Paul warns is a strong
delusion sent from God upon those who did not receive the love of the truth (2Thess. 2:9-12).

In chapter 4 of Revelation we find the distinct symbolism of the rapture:

**"AFTER THESE THINGS I LOOKED, AND BEHOLD, A DOOR STANDING OPEN IN HEAVEN.
AND THE FIRST VOICE WHICH I HEARD WAS LIKE A TRUMPET SPEAKING WITH ME,
SAYING, "COME UP HERE, AND I WILL SHOW YOU THE THINGS WHICH MUST TAKE PLACE AFTER
THIS." AND IMMEDIATELY I WAS IN THE SPIRIT; AND BEHOLD, A THRONE SET IN HEAVEN..."**

Rev. 4:1-2

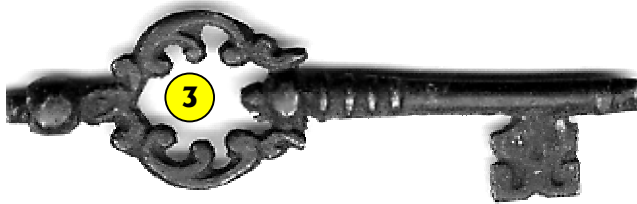
It is very, very significant that the rest of the vision John is shown is now viewed from his new position in heaven. He got there by means of "an open door" and a voice like "a trumpet". It takes place "after these things" which is a chronological reference to the seven letters written to Jesus' churches. When the church age ends with the rapture, then the wrath of the seven years of tribulation will begin!

Like the two previous keys we have examined this one too is tied to one of the feasts of the Lord-
Trumpets! Dear friend, we do know "the day and the hour" of the rapture! It is on the feast of Trumpets
which is the first day of the Jewish month of Tishri! The "hour" will be at midnight according to the
parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins of Matthew 25:1-13. We only do not know what year in which it
will happen! It is also interesting to note that in this parable of the coming of "the Bridegroom for His
bride" that again we find the theme of "a door" being opened to some, but shut to others:

**"...THE BRIDEGROOM CAME
AND THEY THAT WERE READY WENT IN WITH HIM TO THE WEDDING;
AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT.
AFTERWARD THE OTHER VIRGINS CAME SAYING,
"LORD, LORD, OPEN TO US!..."**

Matt. 25:10-11

However, note well that when Jesus shuts the door-no man can open it! It takes the use of the key of
David to open it. In the remainder of this newsletter I want to expound on **WHY** this key is called the key
of the **HOUSE** of David.



THE HOUSE OF DAVID

**"...THE KEY OF
THE HOUSE OF DAVID
I WILL LAY ON
HIS SHOULDER;
SO HE WILL OPEN
AND NO ONE SHUT;
AND HE SHALL SHUT
AND NO ONE
SHALL OPEN...
HE WILL BECOME
A GLORIOUS THRONE
TO
HIS FATHER'S HOUSE."**

Isa. 22:22-23



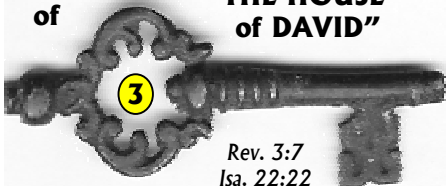
**"THESE THINGS SAYS
HE WHO IS HOLY,
HE WHO IS TRUE,
"HE WHO HAS
THE KEY OF DAVID.
HE WHO OPENS
AND NO ONE SHUTS,
AND SHUTS
AND NO ONE OPENS
I KNOW YOUR WORKS.
SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE
YOU AN OPEN DOOR,
AND NO ONE
CAN SHUT IT..."**

Rev. 3:7-8

What Jesus speaks prophetically to His church in Philadelphia is a previous quotation of what was first stated in the book of Isaiah. This is an important principle: It often takes what has been first written in the volume of the book (the O.T.) to understand properly what is stated in its conclusion (Revelation). The passage in the conclusion of the book refers to the key of David, but what is written in the volume of the book (Isaiah) more fully identifies this key as being the key of the house of David. Our goal is to seek to understand what is meant by the added revelation of it being the key to the house of David. There is within this statement much prophetic and practical significance for us today.

**"The
KEY
of**

**THE HOUSE
of DAVID"**



Rev. 3:7
Isa. 22:22

This last key in Jesus' possession unlocks the mysterious event known as the rapture. It represents the final stage of Jesus' mission to "gather together in one all things that are in Christ". The rapture is presented in Scripture as a mystery, a hidden truth (1 Cor. 15:51). Therefore we find such hidden symbolism heavily depicted in these verses from Rev. 4:1-2. It is here that we find further illumination of the mysterious "open door" promised to the faithful saints in Philadelphia.

**"I KNOW YOUR
WORKS.**

SEE

**I HAVE SET
BEFORE YOU**

**AN
OPEN
DOOR**

**...KEEP YOU
FROM THE HOUR
OF TRIAL WHICH
SHALL COME
UPON THE WHOLE WORLD
TO TEST THOSE WHO
DWELL ON THE EARTH"**

Rev. 3:8-10



**"AFTER THESE THINGS
I LOOKED,
AND BEHOLD,**

**A DOOR
STANDING
OPEN IN
HEAVEN**

**...A VOICE LIKE
A TRUMPET...
SAYING,
COME UP HERE...
AND IMMEDIATELY
I WAS IN THE SPIRIT;
AND BEHOLD,
A THRONE SET IN HEAVEN..."**

Rev. 4:1-2



"I KNOW YOUR WORKS,
SEE
I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU
AN OPEN DOOR
...KEEP YOU FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL WHICH SHALL COME UPON THE WHOLE WORLD TO TEST THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH"
Rev. 3:8-10

"AFTER THESE THINGS I LOOKED, AND BEHOLD,
A DOOR STANDING OPEN IN HEAVEN
...A VOICE LIKE A TRUMPET... SAYING, COME UP HERE... AND IMMEDIATELY I WAS IN THE SPIRIT; AND BEHOLD, A THRONE SET IN HEAVEN..."
Rev. 4:1-2

From Revelation chapter 4:1-2 the rest of what remains in Revelation is now shown to John from his new raptured position in heaven. This is a significant change of events! While on earth he is shown the present condition of the churches, but "after these things" (Rev. 1:19, 4:1a, 4:1b) he is translated into heaven to see what is going to happen on earth after the removal of the faithful saints.

What follows is the systematic unveiling of the wrath of God being poured out during the hour of trial which is to test those who dwell on the earth. John is translated from earth to heaven as a portrayal of what awaits the likes of Philadelphia for her faithfulness to God. Because this church has passed her testing on earth, she is therefore promised to be kept from this future test awaiting those who remain on the earth. May God help us to see that the promise of the rapture is given as a reward from God rather than a gift attached to the new birth! Out of the seven letters Jesus writes to His churches it is only Philadelphia that gets this promise of an "open door". The contents in the letter to Philadelphia demonstrates that it is the result of having lived a new life rather than merely having experienced the act of the new birth. All seven churches are "born again." Paul does not support today's popular theory that a carnal Christian is just as safe as a spiritual Christian (see Rom. 8:5-14, 1st Cor. 3:1-4, 2nd Tim. 2:19-22). Read the rest of Jesus' letters to those who have not passed the test of faithfulness for they do not receive the promise of being raptured, but rather of being left behind, cut off, spewed out, cast into tribulation and even their names blotted out of the Book of Life!

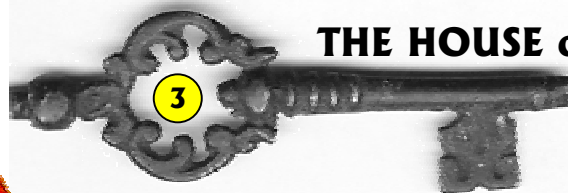
Dear saint, set your heart on being found faithful as was Philadelphia for we cannot inherit the promise of the rapture apart from also fulfilling the conditions attached to it. Pay attention to what Jesus says this church has going for it. The promise of God, "I will keep you from...", is the result of "because you have..." (Rev. 3:8-10). It is dangerous to pull out all the promises of "I will keep you from...", and then ignore all the "because you have..." statements of qualifications God also records. There are always conditions attached to God's promises. It is self-delusion to claim the promises and ignore all the "if's" and "because's" that surround the promise. This is not "rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

In the remainder of this newsletter I want to reveal to you that this key of David, this key of the house of David, is a major part of why Philadelphia alone has the reward of an open door set before them by Jesus Christ.

"The KEY of



DAVID



THE HOUSE of DAVID"

**"HE RAISED UP FOR THEM DAVID AS KING,
TO WHOM HE ALSO GAVE TESTIMONY AND SAID,
"I HAVE FOUND DAVID, THE SON OF JESSE,
A MAN AFTER MY OWN HEART,
WHO WILL DO ALL MY WILL.
FROM THIS MAN'S SEED,
ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE,
GOD RAISED UP FOR ISRAEL A SAVIOR-JESUS"**
Acts 13:22-23

This testimony that God bore of David reveals why he held a special place in God's heart. Jesus, the son of David, also bore the same testimony (see Heb. 10:5-9, Jn. 4:34, 6:38).

DAVID: "HE SHALL BUILD A HOUSE FOR MY NAME..."

"WHEN YOU FULFILL YOUR DAYS AND YOU REST WITH YOUR FATHERS, I WILL SET UP YOUR SEED AFTER YOU, WHO WILL COME FROM YOUR BODY, AND I WILL ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM. HE SHALL BUILD A HOUSE FOR MY NAME, AND I WILL ESTABLISH THE THRONE OF HIS KINGDOM FOREVER." 2 Sam. 7:12-13

Take the time to read all of the prophecy that Nathan the prophet spoke over David and his kingdom (2 Sam.7:4-17).

I believe that the statement above "he shall build a house for my name" goes far beyond the physical house that Solomon, the son of David built for God. This prophecy extends all the way into eternity establishing a kingdom and a throne that will last forever. This prophecy is of Jesus, who also is called the son of David and is also the seed of David's body.

Solomon, as the son of David and as the seed of David's body, built a temporal physical house for God. Jesus, who is also the Son of David, the seed of David's body, is presently building an eternal spiritual house as well:



"FOR EVERY HOUSE IS BUILD BY SOMEONE, BUT HE WHO BUILT ALL THINGS IS GOD. AND MOSES INDEED WAS FAITHFUL IN ALL HIS HOUSE AS A SERVANT, FOR A TESTIMONY OF THOSE THINGS WHICH WOULD BE SPOKEN AFTERWARD, BUT CHRIST AS A SON OVER HIS OWN HOUSE, WHOSE HOUSE WE ARE..."
Hebrews 3:4-6

David's seed was commissioned to build a house for God's name (2 Sam. 7:12-13). It is Jesus who is building this house of David, **WHOSE HOUSE WE ARE!** That is why we find in Revelation Jesus, the son of David, reminding the church at Philadelphia that He has the key of David-the key of the house of David! It is a key to an open door in heaven for a church which is found faithful in all their house as was Moses and David! Let us finish the verses found in Hebrews where it states **"WHOSE HOUSE WE ARE"** for this great promise is followed by many specific conditions attached:

"...WHOSE HOUSE WE ARE IF WE HOLD FAST THE CONFIDENCE AND THE REJOICING OF THE HOPE FIRM TO THE END. THEREFORE THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYS: "TODAY, IF YOU WILL HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS IN THE REBELLION....BEWARE BRETHREN, LEST THERE BE IN ANY OF YOU AN EVIL HEART OF UNBELIEF IN DEPARTING FROM THE LIVING GOD....LEST ANY OF YOU BE HARDENED THROUGH THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN. FOR WE HAVE BECOME PARTAKERS OF CHRIST IF WE HOLD THE BEGINNING OF OUR CONFIDENCE STEADFAST TO THE END..."

Heb. 3:6-14

Are these words of warning meaningless to us today because we are now under God's amazing grace? Rather, are they not specifically addressed to the church with the emphasis of **"TODAY, IF YOU WILL HEAR..."**? Can we get away with isolating the claim, **"WHOSE HOUSE WE ARE"** and ignore the great **"IF'S"** that are specifically attached to that promise?

Sadly, I believe we still live in times today as Jude described existed in his day:

"FOR CERTAIN MEN HAVE CREPT IN UNNOTICED... WHO TURN THE GRACE OF OUR GOD INTO LICENTIOUSNESS..."

Jude 4



Amazingly, there are six pages in Strong's Concordance translated as "house". Of course, many refer to physical houses, but others are describing spiritual houses.

The word "house" literally means "a dwelling place- temple".

As Christ's house we are the dwelling place and temple of God as 1 Cor. 3:16 and 6:19-20 clearly state.

Now consider the fourfold root meaning of the Hebrew word from which we get the word "house": —————→

Individually, as Christ's house, we must each ask ourselves what in life are we seeking

TO BUILD, TO OBTAIN, TO REPAIR, and TO ESTABLISH?

Is there a biblical pattern for us to follow? Most assuredly there is. I want to suggest to you what those four foundations of our house should be.



The life of David is set before us as the pattern for our "house". Remember, it is the **KEY OF DAVID** that we are unfolding, even more specifically, it is the key to the **HOUSE** of David that is our focus. We saw earlier that both Moses and Jesus were singled out as faithful in all their house (*Hebrews 3:4-6*). Let us now ponder the **HOUSE** David built:

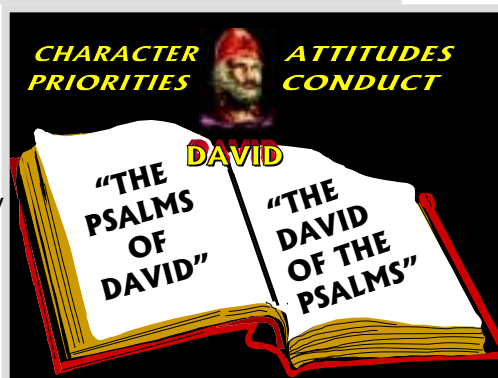
"I WILL WALK WITHIN MY HOUSE WITH A PERFECT HEART"
Psalms 101:2

→ **GODLY CHARACTER**
 → **GODLY PRIORITIES**
 → **GODLY ATTITUDES**
DAVID → **GODLY CONDUCT**

Based on the fourfold meaning of the word shown above as "house", I would like to suggest to you that David's house consisted of these four spiritual foundations:

1. To **BUILD** Godly **CHARACTER**...
2. To **OBTAIN** Godly **PRIORITIES**...
3. To **REPAIR** Godly **ATTITUDES**...
4. To **ESTABLISH** Godly **CONDUCT**...

We have an incredible resource from which we can look at the spiritual house of David in which we can see his outworking of godly character, godly priorities, godly attitudes and godly conduct. This resource is the contents of **THE PSALMS OF DAVID**.



With a little play on the words, it is even more illuminating to refer to the Psalms as revealing **"THE DAVID OF THE PSALMS."** We can do this due to the fact that David wrote 75 of the 149 Psalms. Recorded in them is a volume of evidence for the godly life lived by David. They are a detailed plan for us to emulate as we build our spiritual house.

From the many verses found in David's psalms depicting how he felt about the house of God, we can easily see where he got the pattern for his own house. Perhaps this is why David himself warns us:

**"UNLESS
THE LORD BUILDS
THE HOUSE,
THEY LABOR
IN VAIN
WHO BUILD IT"**

Psalm 127:1

CHARACTER PRIORITIES

"I HAVE LOVED
THE HABITATION
OF

YOUR HOUSE

AND

THE PLACE
WHERE YOUR
GLORY DWELLS"

Psm. 26:8

"WE SHALL BE
SATISFIED WITH
THE GOODNESS
OF

YOUR HOUSE"

Psm. 65:4



DAVID

"ONE THING I HAVE
DESIRED OF
THE LORD;

THAT I MAY DWELL

IN

**THE HOUSE
OF THE LORD**

ALL

THE DAYS OF MY LIFE"

Psm. 27:4

"ZEAL FOR **YOUR HOUSE** HAS EATEN ME UP"

Psm. 69:9

ATTITUDES CONDUCT

"BLESSED ARE THOSE
WHO
DWELL IN

YOUR HOUSE,

THEY

WILL STILL BE
PRAISING YOU- SELAH!

Psm. 84:4

"YOUR TESTIMONIES
ARE VERY SURE;
HOLINESS
ADORNS

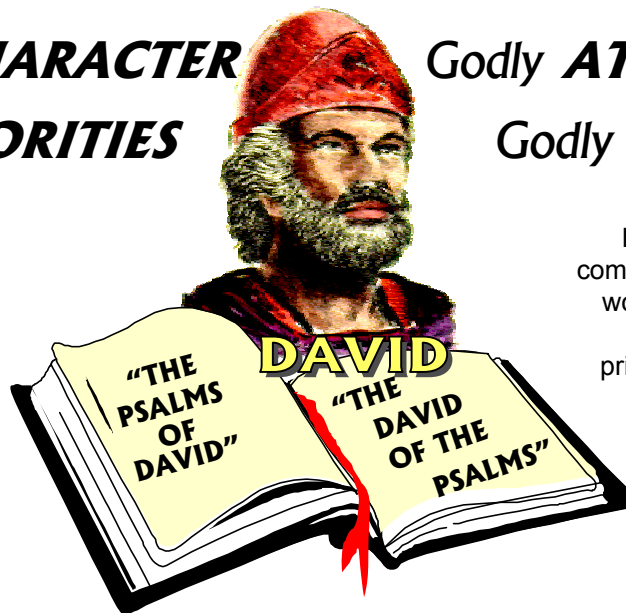
YOUR HOUSE,
O LORD, FOREVER"

Psm. 93:5

Godly CHARACTER Godly PRIORITIES

The contents of David's 75 psalms contain a blueprint for what comprises the house of David.

The pages that follow single out four different aspects that can be easily seen within David's psalms.

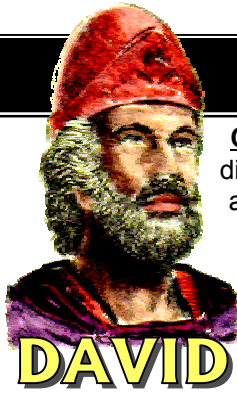


Godly ATTITUDES Godly CONDUCT

His psalms depict for us what comprised the man that God said would do all of His will. We can examine his godly character, priorities, attitudes and conduct throughout his psalms.

These are four Christian virtues that you will find emphasized throughout the New Testament in the writings of Paul.

God entrusted two thirds of the New Testament epistles to the apostle Paul. Likewise, He entrusted David to write half of the 150 psalms. Both of these men pour out their hearts in their writings. Both have fervent love for God. We can safely emulate both of them as patterns for the Christian life. Paul was bold enough to state that fact in several of his epistles (Phil.3:17, 1Cor. 4:16). In the charts that follow, I have singled out several of David's passages that confirm that these subjects were very important to him. They depict the essence of what constitutes **THE HOUSE OF DAVID**. My purpose is to instill in you the desire to take a look at the psalms of David and the David of the psalms in a new way. Philadelphia has an open door placed before her which Jesus ties to the key of David, the key to the rapture. The psalms become a vast supply of details for us to consider if we also desire to inherit what Philadelphia is promised. Our house must be found like David's.



THE GODLY *CHARACTER* OF DAVID

13

CHARACTER "Disposition, temperament, personality- the dominant quality or qualities distinguishing a person. Disposition implies customary moods and attitude toward the life around one. a cheerful *disposition*. Temperament implies the qualities acquired through experience that determine how a person meets difficulties or handles situations. Character applies to the moral qualities by which a person is judged. Strength of *character, personality* applies to qualities that distinguish one as a person. a somber, serious, determined *personality*.

Synonyms- *Decency, honor, uprightness, morality, goodness, integrity, virtue, righteousness, incorruptibility, irreproachability.*" Merriam Webster

THE CHARACTER OF DAVID IN THE PSALMS:

"HEAR ME WHEN I CALL, O GOD OF MY RIGHTEOUSNESS! YOU HAVE RELIEVED ME WHEN I WAS IN DISTRESS; HAVE MERCY UPON ME, AND HEAR MY PRAYER. HOW LONG, O YOU SONS OF MEN, WILL YOU TURN MY GLORY TO SHAME? HOW LONG WILL YOU LOVE WORTHLESSNESS AND SEEK FALSEHOOD? SELAH. BUT KNOW THAT THE LORD HAS SET APART FOR HIMSELF HIM WHO IS GODLY; THE LORD WILL HEAR WHEN I CALL TO HIM...OFFER THE SACRIFICES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND PUT YOUR TRUST IN THE LORD."

Psalms 4:1-5

"FOR YOU ARE NOT A GOD WHO TAKES PLEASURE IN WICKEDNESS, NOR SHALL EVIL DWELL WITH YOU. THE BOASTFUL SHALL NOT STAND IN YOUR SIGHT; YOU HATE ALL WORKERS OF INIQUITY. YOU SHALL DESTROY THOSE WHO SPEAK FALSEHOOD; THE LORD ABHORS THE BLOODTHIRSTY AND DECEITFUL MAN. BUT AS FOR ME, I WILL COME INTO YOUR HOUSE IN THE MULTITUDE OF YOUR MERCY; IN FEAR OF YOU I WILL WORSHIP TOWARD YOUR HOLY TEMPLE. LEAD ME, O LORD, IN YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS BECAUSE OF MY ENEMIES; MAKE YOUR WAY STRAIGHT BEFORE MY FACE... FOR YOU, O LORD, WILL BLESS THE RIGHTEOUS; WITH FAVOR YOU WILL SURROUND HIM AS WITH A SHIELD."

Psalms 5:4-8, 11-12

"LORD, WHO MAY ABIDE IN YOUR TABERNACLE? WHO MAY DWELL IN YOUR HOLY HILL? HE WHO WALKS UPRIGHTLY, AND WORKS RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND SPEAKS THE TRUTH IN HIS HEART; HE WHO DOES NOT BACKBITE WITH HIS TONGUE, NOR DOES EVIL TO HIS NEIGHBOR, NOR DOES HE TAKE UP A REPROACH AGAINST HIS FRIEND; IN WHOSE EYES A VILE PERSON IS DESPISED, BUT HE HONORS THOSE WHO FEAR THE LORD; HE WHO SWEARS TO HIS OWN HURT AND DOES NOT CHANGE; HE WHO DOES NOT PUT OUT HIS MONEY AT USURY, NOR DOES HE TAKE A BRIBE AGAINST THE INNOCENT. HE WHO DOES THESE THINGS SHALL NEVER BE MOVED."

Psalms 15:1-5

"I WILL BLESS THE LORD WHO HAS GIVEN ME COUNSEL; MY HEART ALSO INSTRUCTS ME IN THE NIGHT SEASONS. I HAVE SET THE LORD ALWAYS BEFORE ME; BECAUSE HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND I SHALL NOT BE MOVED. THEREFORE MY HEART IS GLAD, AND MY GLORY REJOICES; MY FLESH ALSO WILL REST IN HOPE...IN YOUR PRESENCE IS FULLNESS OF JOY; AT YOUR RIGHT HAND ARE PLEASURES FOREVERMORE."

Psalms 16:7-11

"I HAVE PURPOSED THAT MY MOUTH SHALL NOT TRANSGRESS... BY THE WORD OF YOUR LIPS, I HAVE KEPT MYSELF FROM THE PATHS OF THE DESTROYER. UPHOLD MY STEPS IN YOUR PATHS, THAT MY FOOTSTEPS MAY NOT SLIP...

KEEP ME AS THE APPLE OF YOUR EYE;
HIDE ME UNDER THE SHADOW OF YOUR WINGS...
AS FOR ME, I WILL SEE YOUR FACE IN RIGHTEOUSNESS;
I SHALL BE SATISFIED WHEN I AWAKE IN YOUR LIKENESS."

Psalms 17:3-9, 15

"BOW DOWN YOUR EAR, O LORD, HEAR ME;
 FOR I AM POOR AND NEEDY. PRESERVE MY LIFE,
 FOR I AM HOLY; YOU ARE MY GOD;
 SAVE YOUR SERVANT WHO TRUSTS IN YOU! BE MERCIFUL TO ME,
 O LORD, FOR I CRY TO YOU ALL DAY LONG. REJOICE THE SOUL
 OF YOUR SERVANT, FOR TO YOU, O LORD, I LIFT UP MY SOUL.
 FOR YOU, LORD, ARE GOOD, AND READY TO FORGIVE,
 AND ABUNDANT IN MERCY TO ALL THOSE WHO CALL UPON YOU.
 GIVE EAR, O LORD, TO MY PRAYER;
 AND ATTEND TO THE VOICE OF MY SUPPLICATIONS.
 IN THE DAY OF MY TROUBLE I WILL CALL UPON YOU,
 FOR YOU WILL ANSWER ME... TEACH ME YOUR WAY, O LORD;
 I WILL WALK IN YOUR TRUTH; UNITE MY HEART TO FEAR YOUR NAME.
 I WILL PRAISE YOU, O LORD MY GOD, WITH ALL MY HEART,
 AND I WILL GLORIFY YOUR NAME FOREVERMORE.
 FOR GREAT IS YOUR MERCY TOWARD ME, AND YOU HAVE DELIVERED MY
 SOUL FROM THE DEPTHS OF SHEOL. O GOD, THE PROUD HAVE RISEN
 AGAINST ME, AND A MOB OF VIOLENT MEN HAVE SOUGHT MY LIFE,
 AND HAVE NOT SET YOU BEFORE THEM. BUT YOU, O LORD,
 ARE A GOD FULL OF COMPASSION, AND GRACIOUS, LONGSUFFERING AND
 ABUNDANT IN MERCY AND TRUTH. OH, TURN TO ME, AND HAVE MERCY ON
 ME! GIVE YOUR STRENGTH TO YOUR SERVANT, AND SAVE THE SON OF YOUR
 MAIDSERVANT. SHOW ME A SIGN FOR GOOD, THAT THOSE WHO HATE ME
 MAY SEE IT AND BE ASHAMED, BECAUSE YOU, LORD,
 HAVE HELPED ME AND COMFORTED ME."

Psalm 86:1-7, 11-17

"MAKE A JOYFUL SHOUT TO THE LORD,
 ALL YOU LANDS!
 SERVE THE LORD WITH GLADNESS; COME BEFORE HIS PRESENCE WITH SINGING.
 KNOW THAT THE LORD, HE IS GOD; IT IS HE WHO HAS MADE US,
 AND NOT WE OURSELVES; WE ARE HIS PEOPLE AND THE SHEEP OF HIS PASTURE.
 ENTER INTO HIS GATES WITH THANKSGIVING, AND INTO HIS COURTS WITH PRAISE.
 BE THANKFUL TO HIM, AND BLESS HIS NAME. FOR THE LORD IS GOOD;
 HIS MERCY IS EVERLASTING, AND HIS TRUTH ENDURES TO ALL GENERATIONS."

Psalm 100:1-5

"BUT AS FOR ME,
 MY PRAYER IS TO YOU, LORD, IN THE ACCEPTABLE TIME;
 O GOD, IN THE MULTITUDE OF YOUR MERCY, HEAR ME IN THE TRUTH OF YOUR
 SALVATION. DELIVER ME OUT OF THE MIRE, AND LET ME NOT SINK;
 LET ME BE DELIVERED FROM THOSE WHO HATE ME, AND OUT OF THE DEEP WATERS.
 LET NOT THE FLOODWATER OVERFLOW ME, NOR LET THE DEEP SWALLOW ME UP;
 AND LET NOT THE PIT SHUT ITS MOUTH ON ME. HEAR ME, O LORD,
 FOR YOUR LOVINGKINDNESS IS GOOD; TURN TO ME ACCORDING TO THE MULTITUDE
 OF YOUR TENDER MERCIES. AND DO NOT HIDE YOUR FACE FROM YOUR SERVANT,
 FOR I AM IN TROUBLE; HEAR ME SPEEDILY. DRAW NEAR TO MY SOUL,
 AND REDEEM IT; DELIVER ME BECAUSE OF MY ENEMIES...LET YOUR SALVATION, O
 GOD, SET ME UP ON HIGH. I WILL PRAISE THE NAME OF GOD WITH A SONG,
 AND WILL MAGNIFY HIM WITH THANKSGIVING. THIS ALSO SHALL PLEASE THE LORD
 BETTER THAN AN OX OR BULL, WHICH HAS HORNS AND HOOVES.
 THE HUMBLE SHALL SEE THIS AND BE GLAD;
 AND YOU WHO SEEK GOD,
 YOUR HEARTS SHALL LIVE..."

Psalm 69:13-18, 30-32



THE GODLY *PRIORITIES* OF DAVID

15

PRIORITIES- "The dedication and purposing of one's will. Something that becomes more important than other things and that needs to be done or dealt with first. The things that someone cares about and thinks are most important: the condition of being more important than something or someone else and therefore coming or being dealt with first.

Synonyms- "urgency, preeminence, "to place on the front burner",
the most important consideration, top/high/immediate priority,"
Merriam Webster

THE PRIORITIES OF DAVID IN THE PSALMS:

"BUT AS FOR ME, I WILL COME INTO YOUR HOUSE IN THE MULTITUDE OF YOUR MERCY; IN FEAR OF YOU I WILL WORSHIP TOWARD YOUR HOLY TEMPLE. LEAD ME, O LORD, IN YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS BECAUSE OF MY ENEMIES; MAKE YOUR WAY STRAIGHT BEFORE MY FACE."

Psalm 5:7-8

**"I WILL PRAISE YOU, O LORD, WITH MY WHOLE HEART;
I WILL TELL OF ALL YOUR MARVELOUS WORKS.
I WILL BE GLAD AND REJOICE IN YOU;
I WILL SING PRAISE TO YOUR NAME, O MOST HIGH."**

Psalm 9:1-2

**"I WILL BLESS THE LORD WHO HAS GIVEN ME COUNSEL;
MY HEART ALSO INSTRUCTS ME IN THE NIGHT SEASONS.
I HAVE SET THE LORD ALWAYS BEFORE ME;
BECAUSE HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND I SHALL NOT BE MOVED."**

Psalm 16:7-8

**"ONE THING I HAVE DESIRED OF THE LORD, THAT WILL I SEEK;
THAT I MAY DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE,
TO BEHOLD THE BEAUTY OF THE LORD, AND TO INQUIRE IN HIS TEMPLE...
WHEN YOU SAID, "SEEK MY FACE" MY HEART SAID TO YOU,
"YOUR FACE, LORD, I WILL SEEK..."**

Psalm 27:4,8

**"BUT AS FOR ME, I TRUST IN YOU, O LORD;
I SAY, "YOU ARE MY GOD."
MY TIMES ARE IN YOUR HAND."**

Psalm 31:14-15

"I WILL BLESS THE LORD AT ALL TIMES; HIS PRAISE SHALL CONTINUALLY BE IN MY MOUTH. MY SOUL SHALL MAKE ITS BOAST IN THE LORD...I SOUGHT THE LORD AND HE HEARD ME, AND DELIVERED ME FROM ALL MY FEARS...OH, TASTE AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS GOOD; BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO TRUSTS IN HIM!...THOSE WHO SEEK THE LORD SHALL NOT LACK ANY GOOD THING...WHO IS THE MAN WHO DESIRES LIFE, AND LOVES MANY DAY, THAT HE MAY SEE GOOD? KEEP YOUR TONGUE FROM EVIL, AND YOUR LIPS FROM SPEAKING GUILE.

**DEPART FROM EVIL, AND DO GOOD; SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT...
THE LORD REDEEMS THE SOUL OF HIS SERVANTS, AND NONE OF THOSE WHO TRUST IN HIM SHALL BE CONDEMNED."**

Psalm 34 excerpts

**"DEPART FROM EVIL, AND DO GOOD; AND DWELL FOREVERMORE.
FOR THE LORD LOVES JUSTICE, AND DOES NOT FORSAKE HIS SAINTS;
THEY ARE PRESERVED FOREVER... THE MOUTH OF THE RIGHTEOUS SPEAKS WISDOM,
AND HIS TONGUE TALKS OF JUSTICE. THE LAW OF HIS GOD IS IN HIS HEART;
NONE OF HIS STEPS SHALL SLIDE..."**

**MARK THE BLAMELESS MAN, AND OBSERVE THE UPRIGHT;
FOR THE FUTURE OF THAT MAN IS PEACE..."**

Psalm 37:27-31,37

**"FOR MY INIQUITIES HAVE GONE OVER MY HEAD;
LIKE A HEAVY BURDEN THEY ARE TOO HEAVY FOR ME...**

FOR I AM READY TO FALL,

AND MY SORROW IS CONTINUALLY BEFORE ME.

FOR I WILL DECLARE MY INIQUITY;

I WILL BE IN ANGUISH OVER MY SIN...DO NOT FORSAKE ME, O LORD;

O MY GOD, BE NOT FAR FROM ME! MAKE HASTE TO HELP ME,

O LORD OF MY SALVATION! "

Psalms 38:4, 17-18, 21-22

"HAVE MERCY UPON ME, O GOD, ACCORDING TO YOUR LOVINGKINDNESS;

ACCORDING TO THE MULTITUDE OF YOUR TENDER MERCIES,

BLOT OUT MY TRANSGRESSIONS. WASH ME THOROUGHLY FROM MY INIQUITY,

AND CLEANSE ME FROM MY SIN. FOR I ACKNOWLEDGE MY TRANSGRESSIONS,

AND MY SIN IS ALWAYS BEFORE ME. AGAINST YOU, YOU ONLY, HAVE I SINNED,

AND DONE THIS EVIL IN YOUR SIGHT --THAT YOU MAY BE FOUND JUST WHEN YOU

SPEAK, AND BLAMELESS WHEN YOU JUDGE... BEHOLD, YOU DESIRE TRUTH IN THE

INWARD PARTS, AND IN THE HIDDEN PART YOU WILL MAKE ME TO KNOW WISDOM.

PURGE ME WITH HYSSOP, AND I SHALL BE CLEAN; WASH ME, AND I SHALL BE

WHITER THAN SNOW. MAKE ME HEAR JOY AND GLADNESS, THAT THE BONES YOU

HAVE BROKEN MAY REJOICE. HIDE YOUR FACE FROM MY SINS,

AND BLOT OUT ALL MY INIQUITIES. CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART, O GOD,

AND RENEW A STEADFAST SPIRIT WITHIN ME. DO NOT CAST ME AWAY FROM YOUR

PRESENCE, AND DO NOT TAKE YOUR HOLY SPIRIT FROM ME... AND UPHOLD ME BY

YOUR GENEROUS SPIRIT. THEN I WILL TEACH TRANSGRESSORS YOUR WAYS,

AND SINNERS SHALL BE CONVERTED TO YOU. DELIVER ME FROM THE GUILT OF

BLOODSHED, O GOD, THE GOD OF MY SALVATION, AND MY TONGUE SHALL SING

ALLOUD OF YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. O LORD, OPEN MY LIPS, AND MY MOUTH SHALL

SHOW FORTH YOUR PRAISE. FOR YOU DO NOT DESIRE SACRIFICE, OR ELSE I WOULD

GIVE IT; YOU DO NOT DELIGHT IN BURNT OFFERING. THE SACRIFICES OF GOD ARE

A BROKEN SPIRIT, A BROKEN AND A CONTRITE HEART -

THESE O GOD YOU WILL NOT DESPISE."

Psalms 51:1-18

"I DELIGHT TO DO YOUR WILL, O MY GOD, AND YOUR LAW IS WITHIN MY HEART.

I HAVE PROCLAIMED THE GOOD NEWS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS...INDEED, I DO NOT

RESTRAIN MY LIPS...I HAVE NOT HIDDEN YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS...I HAVE DECLARED

YOUR FAITHFULNESS AND YOUR SALVATION; I HAVE NOT CONCEALED YOUR

LOVINGKINDNESS AND YOUR TRUTH FROM THE GREAT CONGREGATION...

LET YOUR LOVINGKINDNESS AND YOUR TRUTH CONTINUALLY PRESERVE ME..."

Psalms 40:8-11

"HE ALSO BROUGHT ME UP OUT OF A HORRIBLE PIT, OUT OF THE MIRY CLAY,

AND SET MY FEET ON A ROCK, AND ESTABLISHED MY STEPS.

HE HAS PUT A NEW SONG IN MY MOUTH-PRAISE TO OUR GOD;

MANY WILL SEE IT AND FEAR, AND WILL TRUST IN THE LORD.

BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO MAKES THE LORD HIS TRUST,

AND DOES NOT RESPECT THE PROUD, NOR SUCH AS TURN ASIDE TO LIES...

I DELIGHT TO DO YOUR WILL, O MY GOD, AND YOUR LAW IS WITHIN MY HEART."

Psalms 40:2-8

"IN YOU O LORD, I PUT MY TRUST; LET ME NEVER BE ASHAMED; DELIVER ME IN YOUR

RIGHTEOUSNESS...BE MY ROCK OF REFUGE, A FORTRESS OF DEFENSE TO SAVE ME.

FOR YOU ARE MY ROCK AND MY FORTRESS; THEREFORE, FOR YOUR NAME'S SAKE,

LEAD ME AND GUIDE ME...YOU HAVE REDEEMED ME, O LORD GOD OF TRUTH...

...BUT AS FOR ME,

I TRUST IN YOU, O LORD; I SAY,

'YOU ARE MY GOD' MY TIMES ARE IN YOUR HAND...

MAKE YOUR FACE SHINE UPON YOUR SERVANT...

DO NOT LET ME BE ASHAMED, O LORD,

FOR I HAVE CALLED UPON YOU."

Psalms 31:1-5, 14-17



THE GODLY *ATTITUDES* OF DAVID

17

ATTITUDE-“ a good attitude helps you see the good in people. It is a mental attitude that sees the good and the accomplishments in your life, rather than the negative and the failures. A positive attitude is a mindset that helps you see and recognize opportunities. Positive attitude means positive thinking. manner, disposition, feeling, position, etc., with regard to a person or thing; tendency or orientation, especially of the mind: A mental bias or way of thinking... position or posture of the body appropriate to or expressive of an action, emotion, etc.

A positive attitude is essential to happiness, joy, and progress in life.

This state of mind brings light, hope and enthusiasm into the life of those who possess it. Adopting it in your life does not mean that everything will always move smoothly and there will be no bumps on the road. However, it ensures that any setback you might encounter will not stop you or change your state of mind, and that you will go on, try again, and do your best despite any setback.

SYNONYMS- *“perspective, outlook, persuasion, conviction...” Merriam Webster*

THE ATTITUDES OF DAVID IN THE PSALMS:

ATTITUDE OF THANKSGIVING:

**“OH, THAT MEN WOULD GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD FOR HIS GOODNESS,
AND FOR HIS WONDERFUL WORKS TO THE CHILDREN OF MEN!
LET THEM SACRIFICE THE SACRIFICES OF THANKSGIVING,
AND DECLARE HIS WORKS WITH REJOICING.”**

Psalm 107:21-22

**“ENTER INTO HIS GATES WITH THANKSGIVING,
AND INTO HIS COURTS WITH PRAISE.
BE THANKFUL TO HIM, AND BLESS HIS NAME. FOR THE LORD IS GOOD;
HIS MERCY IS EVERLASTING, AND HIS TRUTH ENDURES TO ALL GENERATIONS.”**

Psalm 100:4-5

**“LORD, TRULY I AM YOUR SERVANT; THE SON OF YOUR MAIDSERVANT;
YOU HAVE LOOSED MY BONDS.
I WILL OFFER TO YOU THE SACRIFICE OF THANKSGIVING...”**

Psalm 116:16-17

ATTITUDE OF PRAISE:

**“I WILL PRAISE YOU, O LORD, WITH MY WHOLE HEART;
I WILL TELL OF ALL YOUR MARVELOUS WORKS.
I WILL BE GLAD AND REJOICE IN YOU;
I WILL SING PRAISE TO YOUR NAME, O MOST HIGH.”**

Psalm 9:1-2

**“IN THE MIDST OF THE ASSEMBLY I WILL PRAISE YOU.
YOU WHO FEAR THE LORD, PRAISE HIM!
...MY PRAISE SHALL BE OF YOU IN THE GREAT ASSEMBLY...
THOSE WHO SEEK HIM WILL PRAISE THE LORD. ”**

Psalm 22:22-26

**“I WILL BLESS THE LORD AT ALL TIMES;
HIS PRAISE SHALL CONTINUALLY BE IN MY MOUTH.
MY SOUL SHALL MAKE ITS BOAST IN THE LORD;
THE HUMBLE SHALL HEAR OF IT AND BE GLAD.
OH, MAGNIFY THE LORD WITH ME, AND LET US EXALT HIS NAME TOGETHER.”**

Psalm 34:1-3

ATTITUDE OF REPENTANCE:

**"BLESSED IS HE WHOSE TRANSGRESSION IS FORGIVEN,
WHOSE SIN IS COVERED. BLESSED IS THE MAN TO WHOM THE LORD
DOES NOT IMPUTE INIQUITY,
AND IN WHOSE SPIRIT THERE IS NO DECEIT...
I ACKNOWLEDGED MY SIN TO YOU, AND MY INIQUITY I HAVE NOT
HIDDEN. I SAID, 'I WILL CONFESS MY TRANSGRESSIONS TO THE
LORD,' AND YOU FORGAVE THE INIQUITY OF MY SIN...
FOR THIS CAUSE EVERYONE WHO IS GODLY SHALL PRAY TO YOU
IN A TIME WHEN YOU MAY BE FOUND..."**

Psalm 32:1-6

**"AND MY SORROW IS CONTINUALLY BEFORE ME.
FOR I WILL DECLARE MY INIQUITY;
I WILL BE IN ANGUISH OVER MY SIN."**

Psalm 38:18

ATTITUDE OF GODLINESS:

**"EARLY WILL I SEEK YOU; MY SOUL THIRSTS FOR YOU;
MY FLESH LONGS FOR YOU IN A DRY AND THIRSTY LAND
WHERE THERE IS NO WATER. SO I HAVE LOOKED FOR YOU IN THE SANCTUARY,
TO SEE YOUR POWER AND YOUR GLORY. BECAUSE YOUR LOVINGKINDNESS IS
BETTER THAN LIFE, MY LIPS SHALL PRAISE YOU. THUS I WILL BLESS YOU
WHILE I LIVE; I WILL LIFT UP MY HANDS IN YOUR NAME."**

Psalm 63:1-4

ATTITUDE OF HOLINESS:

**"THE LORD REWARDED ME ACCORDING TO MY RIGHTEOUSNESS;
ACCORDING TO THE CLEANNESS OF MY HANDS HE HAS RECOMPENSED ME.
FOR I HAVE KEPT THE WAYS OF THE LORD,
AND HAVE NOT WICKEDLY DEPARTED FROM MY GOD.
FOR ALL HIS JUDGMENTS WERE BEFORE ME, AND I DID NOT PUT AWAY HIS
STATUTES FROM ME. I WAS ALSO BLAMELESS BEFORE HIM,
AND I KEPT MYSELF FROM MY INIQUITY. THEREFORE THE LORD HAS RECOMPENSED
ME ACCORDING TO MY RIGHTEOUSNESS,
ACCORDING TO THE CLEANNESS OF MY HANDS IN HIS SIGHT."**

Psalm 18:20-24

ATTITUDE OF TESTIMONY:

**"COME AND HEAR, ALL YOU WHO FEAR GOD,
AND I WILL DECLARE WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR MY SOUL."**

Psalm 66:16

**"I HAVE PROCLAIMED THE GOOD NEWS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE GREAT
CONGREGATION. INDEED, I DO NOT RESTRAIN MY LIPS, O LORD, YOU YOURSELF
KNOW... I HAVE DECLARED YOUR FAITHFULNESS AND YOUR SALVATION.
I HAVE NOT CONCEALED YOUR LOVINGKINDNESS
AND YOUR TRUTH FROM THE GREAT CONGREGATION."**

Psalm 40: 9-10



THE GODLY CONDUCT OF DAVID

19

CONDUCT- "to cause (oneself) to act or behave in a particular and especially in a controlled manner. A mode or standard of personal behavior especially as based on moral principles. conduct, manage, control, direct, lead: to use one's powers to lead, guide, or dominate. Direct handling and manipulating or maneuvering toward a desired result. Manage implies a regulating or restraining in order to keep within bounds or on a course. Controlling implies constant guiding and regulating.

Synonyms- leadership, ruler-ship, guardianship, guidance, manage, steer, control, limit, restraint, resistance to disobedience..."

Merriam Webster

THE CONDUCT OF DAVID IN THE PSALMS:

**"BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO WALKS NOT IN THE COUNSEL OF THE UNGODLY,
NOR STANDS IN THE PATH OF SINNERS, OR SITS IN THE SEAT OF THE SCORNFUL;
BUT HIS DELIGHT IS IN THE LAW OF THE LORD,
AND IN HIS LAW HE MEDITATES DAY AND NIGHT."**

Psalms 1:1-2

**"LORD, WHO MAY ABIDE IN YOUR TABERNACLE? WHO MAY DWELL IN YOUR HOLY
HILL? HE WHO WALKS UPRIGHTLY, AND WORKS RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND SPEAKS THE
TRUTH IN HIS HEART; HE WHO DOES NOT BACKBITE WITH HIS TONGUE NOR DOES
EVIL TO HIS NEIGHBOR, NOR DOES HE TAKE UP A REPROACH AGAINST HIS FRIEND;
IN WHOSE EYES A VILE PERSON IS DESPISED, BUT HE HONORS THOSE WHO FEAR THE
LORD; HE WHO SWEARS TO HIS OWN HURT AND DOES NOT CHANGE; HE WHO DOES
NOT PUT OUT HIS MONEY AT USURY, NOR DOES HE TAKE A BRIBE AGAINST THE
INNOCENT. HE WHO DOES THESE THINGS SHALL NEVER BE MOVED."**

Psalms 15:1-5

**"YOU HAVE TESTED MY HEART; YOU HAVE VISITED ME IN THE NIGHT;
YOU HAVE TRIED ME AND HAVE FOUND NOTHING; I HAVE PURPOSED THAT MY MOUTH
SHALL NOT TRANSGRESS. CONCERNING THE WORKS OF MEN, BY THE WORD OF YOUR
LIPS, I HAVE KEPT AWAY FROM THE PATHS OF THE DESTROYER.**

UPHOLD MY STEPS IN YOUR PATHS, THAT MY FOOTSTEPS MAY NOT SLIP."

Psalms 17:3-5

**"THE LORD REWARDED ME ACCORDING TO MY RIGHTEOUSNESS; ACCORDING TO THE
CLEANNESS OF MY HANDS HE HAS RECOMPENSED ME. FOR I HAVE KEPT THE WAYS OF
THE LORD, AND HAVE NOT WICKEDLY DEPARTED FROM MY GOD. FOR ALL HIS
JUDGMENTS WERE BEFORE ME, AND I DID NOT PUT AWAY HIS STATUTES FROM ME.
I WAS ALSO BLAMELESS BEFORE HIM, AND I KEPT MYSELF FROM MY INIQUITY.
THEREFORE THE LORD HAS RECOMPENSED ME ACCORDING TO MY RIGHTEOUSNESS,
ACCORDING TO THE CLEANNESS OF MY HANDS IN HIS SIGHT."**

Psalms 18:20-24

**"CLEANSE ME FROM SECRET FAULTS. KEEP BACK YOUR SERVANT ALSO FROM
PRESUMPTUOUS SINS; LET THEM NOT HAVE DOMINION OVER ME.
THEN I SHALL BE BLAMELESS, AND I SHALL BE INNOCENT OF GREAT TRANSGRESSION.
LET THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH AND THE MEDITATION OF MY HEART
BE ACCEPTABLE IN YOUR SIGHT, O LORD, MY STRENGTH AND MY REDEEMER."**

Psalms 19:12-14

**"WHO MAY ASCEND INTO THE HILL OF THE LORD?
OR WHO MAY STAND IN HIS HOLY PLACE?
HE WHO HAS CLEAN HANDS AND A PURE HEART,
WHO HAS NOT LIFTED UP HIS SOUL TO AN IDOL,
NOR SWORN DECEITFULLY.
HE SHALL RECEIVE BLESSING FROM THE LORD,
AND RIGHTEOUSNESS FROM THE GOD OF HIS SALVATION."**

Psalms 24:3-5

"VINDICATE ME, O LORD, FOR I HAVE WALKED IN MY INTEGRITY.
 I HAVE ALSO TRUSTED IN THE LORD; I SHALL NOT SLIP.
 EXAMINE ME, O LORD, AND PROVE ME; TRY MY MIND AND MY HEART.
 FOR YOUR LOVINGKINDNESS IS BEFORE MY EYES, AND I HAVE WALKED
 IN YOUR TRUTH. I HAVE NOT SAT WITH IDOLATROUS MORTALS, NOR WILL I GO IN
 WITH HYPOCRITES. I HAVE HATED THE ASSEMBLY OF EVILDOERS, AND WILL NOT SIT
 WITH THE WICKED. I WILL WASH MY HANDS IN INNOCENCE; SO I WILL GO ABOUT
 YOUR ALTAR, O LORD, THAT I MAY PROCLAIM WITH THE VOICE OF THANKSGIVING,
 AND TELL OF ALL YOUR WONDROUS WORKS. LORD, I HAVE LOVED THE HABITATION
 OF YOUR HOUSE, AND THE PLACE WHERE YOUR GLORY DWELLS. DO NOT GATHER
 MY SOUL WITH SINNERS, NOR MY LIFE WITH BLOODTHIRSTY MEN, IN WHOSE HANDS
 IS A SINISTER SCHEME, AND WHOSE RIGHT HAND IS FULL OF BRIBES. BUT AS FOR ME,
 I WILL WALK IN MY INTEGRITY; REDEEM ME AND BE MERCIFUL TO ME. MY FOOT
 STANDS IN AN EVEN PLACE; IN THE CONGREGATIONS I WILL BLESS THE LORD."

Psalms 26:1-12

"I SAID,
 "I WILL GUARD MY WAYS, LEST I SIN WITH MY TONGUE;
 I WILL RESTRAIN MY MOUTH WITH A MUZZLE..."

Psalms 39:1

"...I WILL BEHAVE WISELY IN A PERFECT WAY. OH, WHEN WILL YOU COME TO
 ME? I WILL WALK WITHIN MY HOUSE WITH A PERFECT HEART.
 I WILL SET NOTHING WICKED BEFORE MY EYES; I HATE THE WORK OF THOSE
 WHO FALL AWAY; IT SHALL NOT CLING TO ME. A PERVERSE HEART SHALL
 DEPART FROM ME I WILL NOT KNOW WICKEDNESS. WHOEVER SECRETLY
 SLANDERS HIS NEIGHBOR, HIM I WILL DESTROY; THE ONE WHO HAS A HAUGHTY
 LOOK AND A PROUD HEART, HIM I WILL NOT ENDURE. MY EYES SHALL BE ON
 THE FAITHFUL OF THE LAND, THAT THEY MAY DWELL WITH ME; HE WHO WALKS
 IN A PERFECT WAY, HE SHALL SERVE ME. HE WHO WORKS DECEIT SHALL NOT
 DWELL WITHIN MY HOUSE; HE WHO TELLS LIES SHALL NOT CONTINUE IN MY
 PRESENCE. EARLY I WILL DESTROY ALL THE WICKED OF THE
 LAND, THAT I MAY CUT OFF ALL THE EVILDOERS
 FROM THE CITY OF THE LORD."

Psalms 101:1-8

"WHAT SHALL I RENDER TO THE LORD FOR ALL HIS BENEFITS TOWARD ME?
 I WILL TAKE UP THE CUP OF SALVATION AND CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD.
 I WILL PAY MY VOWS TO THE LORD NOW IN THE PRESENCE OF ALL HIS PEOPLE...
 O LORD, TRULY I AM YOUR SERVANT...
 YOU HAVE LOOSED MY BONDS. I WILL OFFER TO YOU THE SACRIFICE OF
 THANKSGIVING, AND WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD.
 I WILL PAY MY VOWS TO THE LORD NOW IN THE PRESENCE OF ALL HIS PEOPLE..."

Psalms 116:12-19

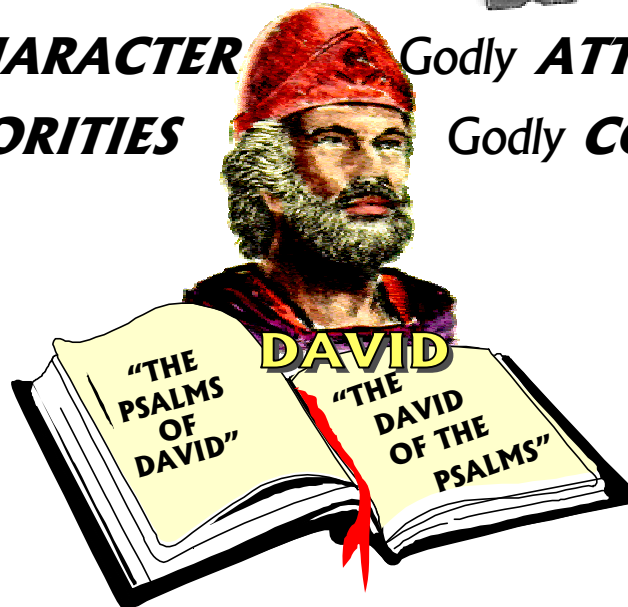
"SET A GUARD, O LORD, OVER MY MOUTH; KEEP WATCH OVER THE DOOR
 OF MY LIPS. DO NOT INCLINE MY HEART TO ANY EVIL THING,
 TO PRACTICE WICKED WORKS WITH MEN WHO WORK INIQUITY;
 AND DO NOT LET ME EAT OF THEIR DELICACIES LET THE RIGHTEOUS
 STRIKE ME; IT SHALL BE A KINDNESS. AND LET HIM REPROVE ME; IT SHALL
 BE AS EXCELLENT OIL; LET MY HEAD NOT REFUSE IT...BUT MY EYES ARE
 UPON YOU, O GOD THE LORD; IN YOU I TAKE REFUGE; DO NOT LEAVE
 MY SOUL DESTITUTE. KEEP ME FROM THE SNARES WHICH THEY HAVE LAID
 FOR ME, AND FROM THE TRAPS OF THE WORKERS OF INIQUITY.
 LET THE WICKED FALL INTO THEIR OWN NETS, WHILE I ESCAPE SAFELY."

Psalms 141:1-5, 8-10

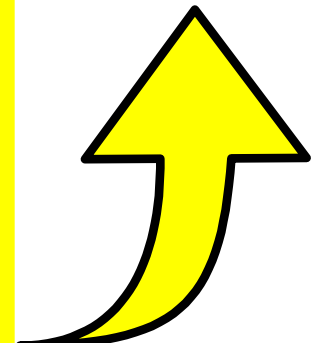
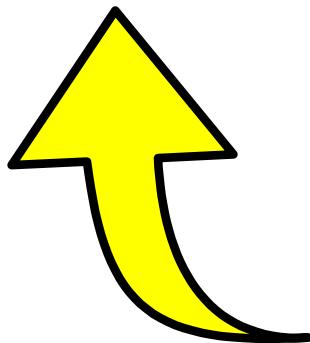


Godly **CHARACTER** Godly **ATTITUDES**
Godly **PRIORITIES** Godly **CONDUCT**

"...THE KEY OF
THE HOUSE OF DAVID
I WILL LAY ON
HIS SHOULDER;
SO HE WILL OPEN
AND NO ONE SHUT;
AND HE SHALL SHUT
AND NO ONE
SHALL OPEN...
HE WILL
BECOME
A GLORIOUS THRONE
TO
HIS FATHER'S HOUSE."
Isa. 22:22-23



"THESE THINGS SAYS
HE WHO IS HOLY,
HE WHO IS TRUE,
"HE WHO HAS
THE KEY OF DAVID.
HE WHO OPENS
AND NO ONE SHUTS,
AND SHUTS
AND NO ONE OPENS
I KNOW YOUR WORKS.
SEE,
I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU
AN OPEN DOOR,
AND NO ONE
CAN SHUT IT..."
Rev. 3:7-8



"AND TO...THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA WRITE,
'THESE THINGS SAYS HE WHO IS HOLY, HE WHO IS TRUE,
'HE WHO HAS THE KEY OF DAVID, HE WHO OPENS AND NO ONE SHUTS,
AND SHUTS AND NO ONE OPENS"
I KNOW YOUR WORKS. SEE, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR,
AND NO ONE CAN SHUT IT. FOR YOU HAVE...KEPT MY WORD, AND HAVE NOT DENIED MY
NAME....BECAUSE YOU HAVE KEPT MY COMMAND TO PERSEVERE, I ALSO WILL KEEP YOU FROM
THE HOUR OF TRIAL WHICH SHALL COME UPON THE WHOLE WORLD, TO TEST THOSE WHO
DWELL ON THE EARTH.....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.HE WHO HAS AN EAR,
LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES."

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CHRIST**

and **HIS
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as the

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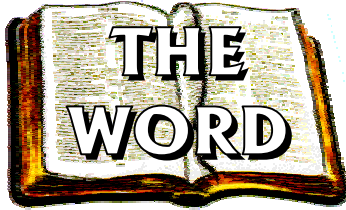
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THE PRACTICE OF ~ CREMATION ~

IS IT INSPIRED BY



THE
GOD
OF



"DIRECT MY STEPS BY YOUR WORD."

Psalm 119:133

**"BY THE WORDS OF YOUR LIPS,
I HAVE KEPT MYSELF FROM
THE PATHS OF THE DESTROYER."**

Psalm 17:4



THE
GOD
OF



**"THE WHOLE WORLD LIES UNDER
THE SWAY OF THE WICKED ONE."**

1 John 5:19

**"...THE COURSE OF THIS WORLD
(IS) ACCORDING TO THE PRINCE
OF THE POWER OF THE AIR.."**

Eph.2:2



There are two sources of wisdom from which mankind can obtain direction. According to the Bible they are "wisdom from above" and "wisdom from below" (James 3:13-18). Man can seek a Divine source of wisdom that is found within the confines of the Bible, **THE WORD** authored by God Himself, or man can submit to what is a very deceptive, demonic source of wisdom authored and inspired by Satan who is the god of **THE WORLD** in which man lives. Since there are only two sources available it becomes an "either/or" decision for every one of us to make. Man places himself under one of these two sources of wisdom by his own choice. We either believe in **THE WORD** or we believe in **THE WORLD**. Understanding those two forces that are at work, let us now ponder this ever developing phenomena that is in our present world:

"OVER THE NEXT 18 YEARS, THE RATE OF CREMATION IN THE UNITED STATES IS PROJECTED TO INCREASE BY NEARLY 30 PERCENT ACCORDING TO THE 2018 CREMATION AND BURIAL REPORT, RELEASED BY THE NATIONAL FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION (NFDA). ALREADY HAVING OUTPACED THE RATE OF BURIAL FOR THREE CONSECUTIVE YEARS, THE NATIONAL CREMATION RATE WILL REACH NEARLY 80 PERCENT (OR 2.80 MILLION CREMATIONS PER YEAR) BY 2035, BASED ON A VARIETY OF FACTORS INCLUDING CHANGING CONSUMER PREFERENCE, WEAKENING RELIGIOUS PROHIBITIONS AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS."

BROOKFIELD, Wis., July 12, 2018 /PRNewswire/ --

The Dec. 5, 1995 issue of USA Today revealed that on the average, 30% of North American funerals were cremations. This same article reports that in 1960 the average was less than 5%. That is a significant increase over a thirty-five year period. By 2004 that average had increased to 47%. From the above statistic it will double to a whopping 80% by 2035. Obviously we are witnessing an ever-increasing, trend-setting pace developing in the world in which we live. As a teacher of God's Word, I am ever scrutinizing trends that I see in the world and comparing them to what is recorded in God's Word simply because of the principle that, for the most part, what the world embraces is 180 degrees opposite of what is stated in God's Word. This is borne out to be true because Satan is identified as "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4), the direction or course of this world is guided by Satan (Eph.2:2), and "the whole world lies under the sway of the Wicked One" (1 Jn.5:19).

Increasing trends such as we see in cremation of the body rather than the long established Scriptural practice of burial, must be deemed as having great Satanic influence. What the world tends to endorse is the result of Satan's purposeful corruptive and detrimental guidance. It is imperative that we, as followers of Christ, must seek to find out what is Satan's underlying motive behind the ever-increasing trend of pushing for the cremation of the body of believers. This newsletter is dedicated to unveiling Satan's reason for pushing cremation, and especially upon believers.

I want to state that cremation is a difficult and sensitive subject for me to write about and perhaps for you to read. Considering the high level of cremations that are taking place we, as Christians, are therefore exposed to the dilemma of being personally involved in cremation funerals of loved ones, friends and acquaintances. It is not my purpose to judgmentally criticize what the world accepts as normal behavior. The Scripture plainly states that the people of the world are those "...whose minds the god of this world has blinded..." (2 Cor. 4:4). Therefore the world's inhabitants are presently and systematically "having their understanding darkened" (Eph. 4:18), but the believer should be on a different pathway, that of following what is written in God's Word in which they will have their "eyes of understanding enlightened" (Eph. 1:18). That contrast of opposite direction should produce a people that are markedly different than those in the world. However, what should be so is not always so. It often requires making hard choices. This newsletter is written to God's people who are called to be "not of this world" (Jn. 15:19), and who choose to be among those "not conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2).

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

1 Cor. 10:11

Notice that what has been previously written is to be God's counsel for those of us who live in "the end of the ages." God's will in the area of the proper disposal of the body of believers is revealed in His Word. We are going to take a look at what has been recorded in the Scriptures pertaining to the practice of cremation as well as what God's Word has to say about burial. From the first page you can deduce that I am strongly in favor of the practice of Christian burial rather than the ever increasingly popular preference for cremation. However, I want to stress to all my readers that the act of cremation has no bearing on eternal destiny. Willful choice of cremation over burial will not cost you eternal life, but it may cost you some precious eternal rewards. Whether one has been cremated or not is not the issue that determines whether one enters heaven or hell. It is only the existence or the absence of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ that makes that determination. Cremation is not a deadly sin unto damnation. However, I do want to convince you that it is a sin against the believer's body which is the temple of God. I want to stress that cremation is a forgivable sin. Not all sin is the same. Even the Old Testament law made a distinction between sins of ignorance and willful disobedience:

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

Numbers 15:29-30

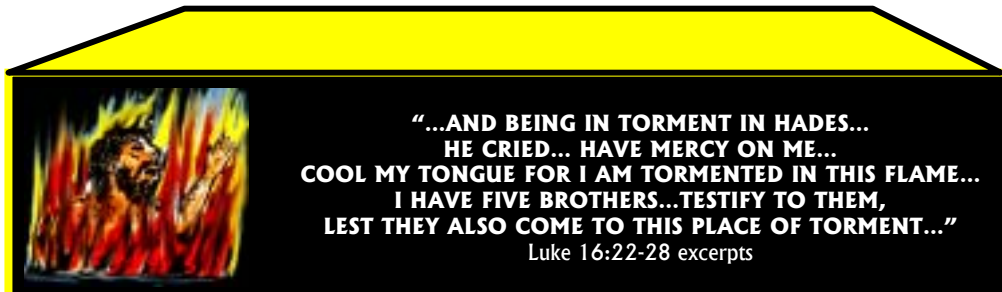
The apostle James obviously has this law in mind as he warns New testament believers:

"...TO HIM WHO KNOWS TO DO GOOD AND DOES NOT DO IT, TO HIM IT IS SIN."

James 4:17

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

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



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

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

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

French Historian, Amaury de Reincourt



Notice once again in this statement about the growing trend toward cremation that "weakening religious prohibitions" has become one of the driving factors at work:

"THE NATIONAL CREMATION RATE WILL REACH NEARLY 80 PERCENT (OR 2.80 MILLION CREMATIONS PER YEAR) BY 2035, BASED ON A VARIETY OF FACTORS INCLUDING CHANGING CONSUMER PREFERENCE, WEAKENING RELIGIOUS PROHIBITIONS AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS."

BROOKFIELD, Wis., July 12, 2018 /PRNewswire/ --

Why the increase in cremation vs. burial?

This is but one of many surveys posted on the internet that have been taken in an attempt to answer that question.

The initial statement recorded in this survey is the primary reason given for preferring cremation over burial, it "saves money."

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

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

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

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

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

1 Cor. 6:19-20

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

← Consider also these words of Paul: →

"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

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

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

1 Thess. 5:23

THE BIBLICAL ARGUMENT FOR BURIAL OF THE BODY OF A BELIEVER

27

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

Rom. 15:4

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

EXAMPLES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT:

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

EXAMPLES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT:

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

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

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

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

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

THE BIBLICAL ARGUMENT AGAINST CREMATION OF THE BODY OF A BELIEVER

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

1 Cor. 10:11

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We know that Satan "deceives the whole world" (Rev.12:9). However, if we, as followers of God, are not careful to take our direction solely from the Word of God instead of from the misdirection of "the god of this world" (2 Cor.4:4), then we too can find ourselves to also be deceived by him (Mat. 24:24).

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

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

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

Mark 7:8-13 excerpts

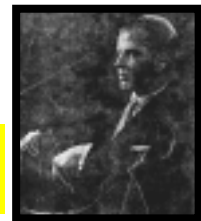


Jesus said these words to the Jewish leaders at His first coming. I wonder if He will utter the same reproof to segments of His church at His second coming? Is not much of the professing church guilty of also replacing the commandments of God with the tradition of men? Things such as "Christmas" and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

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

I remind you again that the secular French historian Amaury de Reincourt, in his book, *"The Coming Caesars"* made this remarkable and perhaps, prophetic statement:

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



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

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

Rom. 12:2 Phillips

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

WHY THE BODY OF A BELIEVER IN CHRIST SHOULD BE BURIED IN THE EARTH RATHER THAN BURNED WITH FIRE

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

Acts 1:8

"you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...and you shall be witnesses to me...to the end of the earth." Of course, we primarily understand this form of witness to speak of the supernatural manifestation of the the Holy Spirit to empower the believer to live a Spirit-empowered life on earth as a new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). As important as this concept is to enable the believer to bear witness to the power of God at work in our lives on earth, there is more to consider which brings us to the matter at hand namely, the importance of the believer's body to be buried in the earth at death. Consider these dual thoughts from the apostle Paul pertaining to the yet-future act of the Holy Spirit's power in the event known as the resurrection of the dead in Christ:



**"BUT IF THE SPIRIT OF HIM WHO RAISED
JESUS FROM THE DEAD DWELLS IN YOU,
HE WHO RAISED CHRIST FROM THE DEAD
WILL ALSO GIVE LIFE
TO YOUR MORTAL BODIES THROUGH HIS
SPIRIT WHO DWELLS IN YOU."**

Rom 8:11

**"FOR THE LORD HIMSELF WILL DESCEND FROM
HEAVEN WITH A SHOUT, WITH THE VOICE OF AN
ARCHANGEL, AND WITH THE TRUMPET OF GOD.
AND THE DEAD IN CHRIST WILL RISE FIRST.
THEN
WE WHO ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN
SHALL BE CAUGHT UP TOGETHER WITH THEM
IN THE CLOUDS TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR.
AND THUS WE SHALL ALWAYS BE WITH THE LORD."**

1 Thess 4:16-18

Every graveyard on the face of the earth is going to manifest a stark witness to all who have lived a life on earth through faith in Christ! The two scriptures depicted next to the above graveyard scene reveal that it will be the grave of every Spirit-filled, Spirit-led believer in Christ that is going to be opened physically for all to witness the truth. All non-believers will remain in closed graves. Only the graves of believers will be opened and found empty! The faithful Christian's body will be literally raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit that raised Christ from the dead! Look at these passages from the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Scripture states He did not come up alone:

**"...AND THE GRAVES WERE OPENED;
AND MANY BODIES OF THE SAINTS WHO HAD FALLEN ASLEEP WERE RAISED;
AND COMING OUT OF THE GRAVES AFTER HIS RESURRECTION,
THEY WENT INTO THE HOLY CITY AND APPEARED TO MANY."**

Matt 27:52-53

God created man spirit, soul and body therefore the salvation of man will include not only his spirit and soul but also his body! Although the body of a believer will suffer physical death it will also experience resurrection unto eternal life. Instead of the pagan practice of burning the body with fire, the Christian in faith has his body buried in the earth so that at the resurrection there is an earthly grave that will yet bear great witness to the Christian's commitment to Christ. His body, buried like a seed in the earth, comes forth out of the grave at the beckon call of Christ via the rapture trumpet first heard by the dead in Christ. What greater witness is there than the validity of the Christian message demonstrated by the final act of salvation which will be the resurrection of the bodies of faithful believers in Christ? Think of this great witness scene: Only the Christians graves will be opened at this great event. All others remain unopened. Will your body be found as a witness of being raised from an earthen grave for all the world to see? Only if you obey God's plan to bury the body!

WHY THE BODY OF A BELIEVER IN CHRIST SHOULD BE BURIED IN THE EARTH RATHER THAN BURNED WITH FIRE

**"NOW MAY THE GOD OF PEACE HIMSELF
SANCTIFY YOU COMPLETELY;
AND MAY YOUR WHOLE SPIRIT, SOUL,
AND BODY BE PRESERVED BLAMELESS
AT THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.
HE WHO CALLS YOU IS FAITHFUL, WHO ALSO WILL DO IT."
1 Thess 5:23-24**

The verse above validates that man is a three-part creation: he is a spirit, he has a soul, and lives in a physical body. Salvation must come to all three. Man is born (again) a spirit (Jn.3:6). Salvation is then worked out by faith in the restoration of the soul (Heb. 10:39, 1 Pet.1:9). The final act of salvation will be the physical body when redeemed mortal man finally and visibly puts on immortality via the resurrection of the dead in Christ (Rom.8:23-25, 1 Cor. 15:52-55).

Look carefully again at the verse above (1 Thess.5:23-24). It is plainly stated that the will of God for the believer is a three-fold act of ongoing sanctification. He is to become sanctified completely in his whole spirit, soul, and body to be found blameless at the Second coming of Christ. God promises that He will do it. However, it is assumed that we must also do our part in cooperation with God's plan which requires that we make hard choices in life to preserve our spirit from contamination (2 Cor.7:1). It requires that we submit daily to God's plan to restore our soul (Psalm 23:3, Eph. 4:22-24, Col.3:8-10). Finally, we come to the subject of this newsletter, the real "final solution" God has for redeemed man's physical body. It is the physical resurrection of that very buried body from the grave. Adolph Hitler had a different "final solution" for the bodies of God's chosen people, the Jews. He sought to burn their bodies with fire as an act of complete annihilation. There would be no bodies found as evidence in graves or awaiting the witness of physical resurrection. Satan would see to that. This was demonic inspiration. So likewise was the burning at the stake of the bodies of multitudes of Christian believers by the evil hierarchy of early Catholicism.

Do we doubt that Satan is still at work seeking to destroy the bodies of believers by fire? What Satan wants is for no bodies to be found in graves awaiting a visible sign of resurrection namely, physically opened graves by the hand of God for all the world to see! Rather we have only scenes of ashes in an urn sitting on a fireplace, or ashes scattered to the four winds by various creative means. Can't you see that Satan is the real motivation force behind the swing from Christian burial of the body to cremation by fire? Is he not seeking to subvert God's plan to make the visible resurrection of the body via multitudes of open graves all over the earth? Is it not a subtle plan of Satan to diminish the mighty witness of God's power in completing the final act of salvation-the resurrection of the dead bodies that are in Christ?

What about your witness on earth dear reader? What is your confession to all who know you? What is your testimony to others about the importance of your body in God's economy? Are you in agreement with God and what He has recorded about the importance of the body? The error of the Gnostics of Paul's day was that they taught the Christian that his body was of no importance to God but that only the spirit receives eternal life. Jesus singles out the Gnostics and their evil perversion of truth pertaining to the physical body. The Gnostics were a sect of "Christians" who taught that only the spirit was saved therefore it did not matter what they did with or within the body. It was of no importance. Jesus says of this perverse doctrine of the Gnostic Nicolaitians, "This thing I hate" (Rev.2:15).

In life, the body of a believer is to be continually offered up to God as a "living sacrifice (Rom.12:1.) Note that this required action is considered to be "our reasonable service" (Rom.12:1). The very next verse warns us, "and do not be conformed to this world" (Rom.12:2). Conformity to this world is the result of doing what everybody else in the world is doing. The pendulum of preference in the world is swinging toward being cremated by fire. However, we have seen this is not God's will for the believer. That act of sanctification of the body as a sacrifice to God in life carries on for the believer at death with a final act of faith in burying the body, planted in the earth as a seed in the ground, to be resurrected from the grave as a witness for all the world to see. SELAH! ("think on that!")

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THE NEED FOR CULTIVATING AN

"INVISIBLE FAITH"



"NOW THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH..."

Heb 10:38

**"NOW FAITH IS THE SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR,
THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN..."**

Heb. 11:1

"...FOR WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT."

2 Cor. 5:7

**"...WHILE WE DO NOT LOOK AT THE THINGS WHICH ARE SEEN,
BUT AT THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SEEN.
FOR THE THINGS WHICH ARE SEEN ARE TEMPORARY,
BUT THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SEEN ARE ETERNAL."**

2 Cor 4:18

**"BY FAITH HE FORSOOK EGYPT,
NOT FEARING THE WRATH OF THE KING;
FOR HE ENDURED
AS SEEING HIM
WHO IS INVISIBLE."**

Heb 11:27-28

Faith, as described above, is an oxymoron to the natural mind. How does one express faith in what cannot be seen with the physical eye gate? Paul elaborates for us on this contrasting dilemma:



**"...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 ALSO SPEAK,
NOT IN WORDS WHICH MAN'S WISDOM TEACHES
BUT WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT TEACHES,
COMPARING SPIRITUAL THINGS WITH SPIRITUAL.
BUT 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 2:11-15

Ponder well Paul's above definition of the problem that exists. The dilemma is due to the fact that there are two opposing "spirit" sources at work which are:

THE SPIRIT OF GOD



**"WORDS WHICH
THE HOLY SPIRIT TEACHES"
(that are spiritually discerned)**

THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD



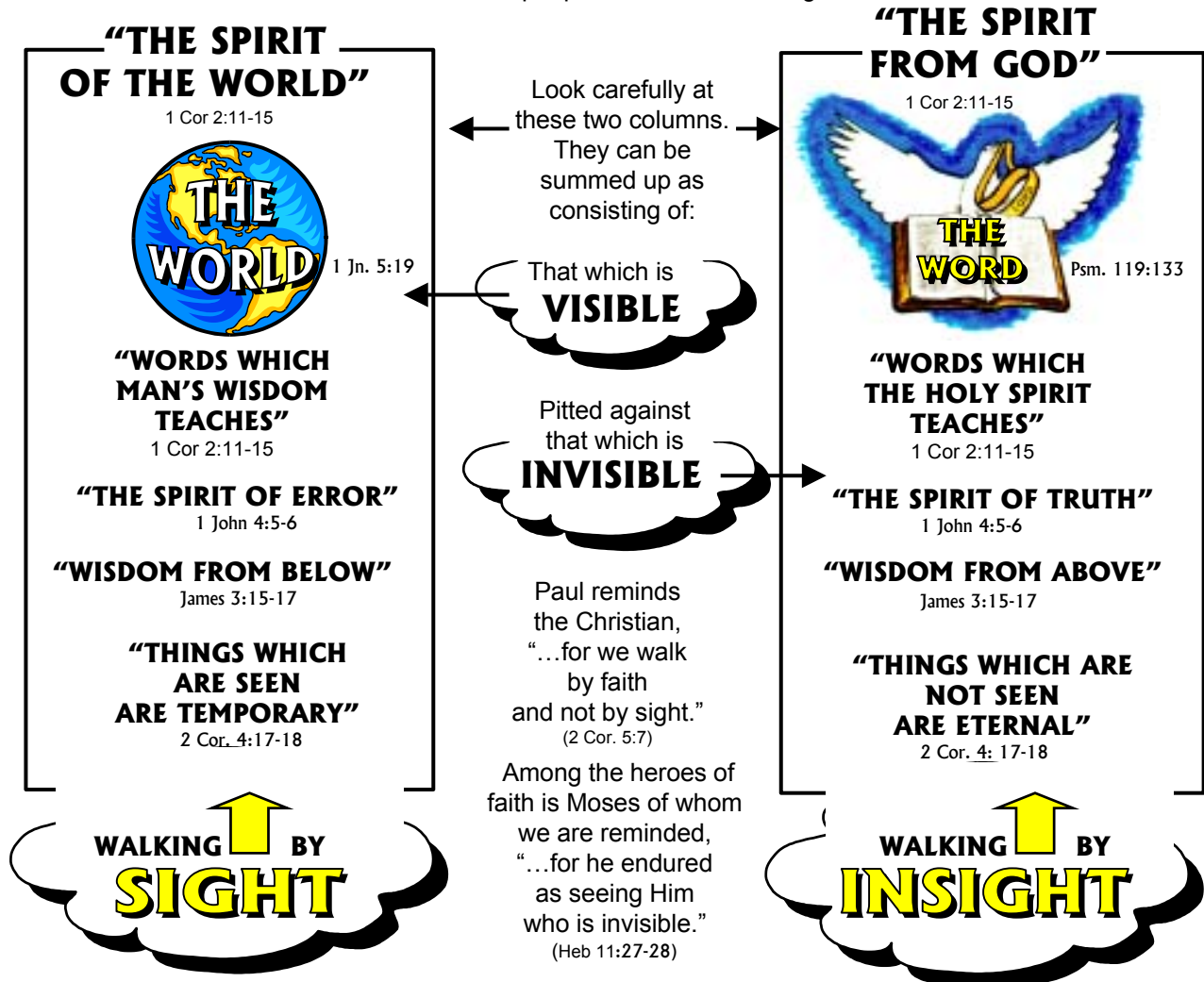
**"WORDS WHICH
MAN'S WISDOM TEACHES"
(that are naturally discerned)**

The apostle John also singles out these same conflicting spirit forces at work:

**"...THEY ARE OF THE
WORLD. THEREFORE THEY
SPEAK AS OF THE WORLD,
AND THE WORLD HEARS
THEM. 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 John 4:5-6

The scriptures from the previous page can be tersely divided into these two contrasting categories. They are worthy of intense consideration for they depict the nature of the battle we face as Christians to be found a people of faith in God's sight:



Let me make three statements to you about the importance of faith. Perhaps two of them you already know, but you will need to embrace all three to be a person of faith. Here they are as stated in Scripture:

1. **"THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."** (Heb.10:38)
2. **"WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM."** (Heb.11:6)
3. **"FOR WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT."** (2 Cor. 5:7)

Faith is not based on sight. Perhaps you have never given much thought to how much of the tenets of Christianity are based on the **INVISIBLE** realm. Pursue these subjects with a concordance and you will find that first of all God, who is a spirit Himself, is **INVISIBLE** (Jn. 1:18, 1 Jn. 4:12, Col.1:15, 1 Tim.1:17). The Holy Spirit, being a spirit, is also **INVISIBLE** (Jn.14:17). The devil is **INVISIBLE** to man. Good angels are **INVISIBLE** (2 Kings 6:17-20). Bad angels (principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness, hosts of wickedness in heavenly places) are **INVISIBLE** (Eph. 6:12, Col.1:16). Demon spirits on earth are **INVISIBLE** to man. Heaven at present is **INVISIBLE** to man. Hell below is **INVISIBLE** to man. Life, as a certainty after death is **INVISIBLE** to man.

Think of it: all that we must believe by faith functions in the **INVISIBLE** realm. Everything that is visible to the eye is not an expression of faith. Therefore the most important aspect about faith is:

"FOR WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT." (2 Cor. 5:7)

Here is the only tangible way in which a Christian can walk by faith and not rely on his sight:



"FOR WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT."

(2 Cor. 5:7)

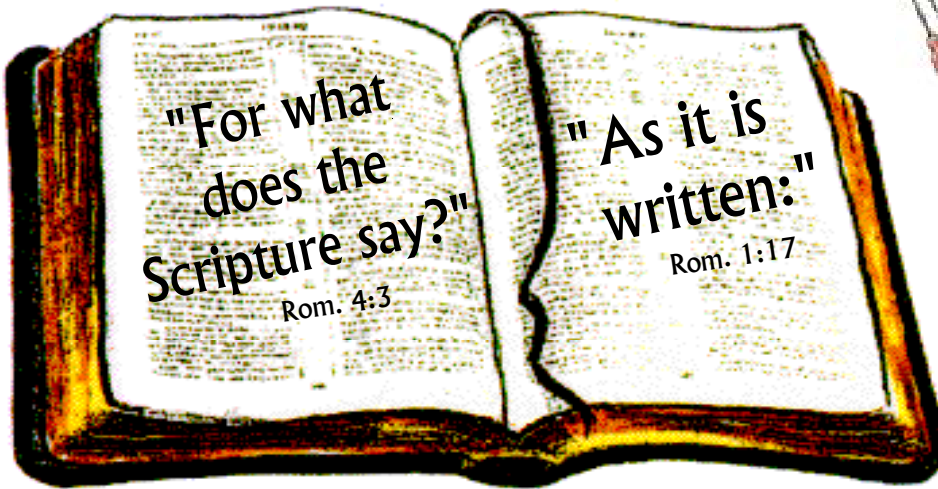
**"...FOR HE
ENDURED
AS SEEING HIM
WHO IS INVISIBLE."**

(Heb 11:27-28)



THE ABOVE PREMISE REQUIRES THE EXPLICIT USE OF THE SOLE
VISIBLE SOURCE OF INSIGHT INTO THE INVISIBLE REALM:

FAITH IN THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD:



As we have seen, all the tenets of faith are **INVISIBLE** to our natural eyes. Therefore we must turn to a source by which the **INVISIBLE** becomes **VISIBLE**. We must replace things of sight with spiritual insight. Remember, all the things of sight are temporary. Only the things we cannot presently see are eternal.

We have established the importance of faith:

1. **"THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."** (Heb.10:38)
2. **"WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM."** (Heb.11:6)
3. **"FOR WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT."** (2 Cor. 5:7)

What then is the object of our faith? Upon what do we focus as the means to express faith? It is the Word of God, the only visible thing given to us by God by which we can express faith. In every situation of this temporal life we must ask of ourselves the two questions as stated above by Paul:

1. **"FOR WHAT DOES THE SCRIPTURE SAY?"** Rom. 4:3
2. **"AS IT IS WRITTEN:"** Rom. 1:17

It is the Word of God that records all we need to know about the realm of **INVISIBLE** things. The written Word contains great insight into the things that are not presently visible to our eyes. Real faith is expressed by believing in what is written even though you cannot see it visibly at this moment in time.

The more passages we carefully ponder of what is recorded about the Word of God itself, the more we are able to understand the importance it is given as being the very enabling agent the Christian possesses to fulfill the mandate to walk by faith and not by sight:

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

Heb. 4:12 Amplified

**"HAVE I NOT
WRITTEN TO
YOU
EXCELLENT
THINGS
OF COUNSELS
AND
KNOWLEDGE,
THAT I MAY
MAKE YOU
KNOW
THE CERTAINTY
OF
THE WORDS OF
TRUTH,
THAT YOU MAY
ANSWER
WORDS OF
TRUTH
TO THOSE
WHOM
I SEND TO
YOU?"**

Proverbs 22:20-21

from
JESUS CHRIST
who is
**THE WORD
OF GOD**

John 1:1

Rev. 19:13



**"ALL
SCRIPTURE IS
GIVEN BY
INSPIRATION
OF GOD,
AND IS
PROFITABLE
FOR DOCTRINE,
FOR REPROOF,
FOR
CORRECTION,
FOR
INSTRUCTION
IN
RIGHTEOUSNESS
, THAT
THE MAN
OF GOD
MAY BE
COMPLETE,
THOROUGHLY
EQUIPPED FOR
EVERY GOOD
WORK."**
2 Tim 3:16-17

Now the Christian has in his hand the means to make the **INVISIBLE** become **VISIBLE**.



Recorded within its sacred pages are many "word pictures" of every invisible realm we face in today's world. The Word of God takes us behind the scenes and allows us to "see" into every normally invisible realm man faces and gives us whatever insight is needed to enable us to fulfill the threefold commission of faith:

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

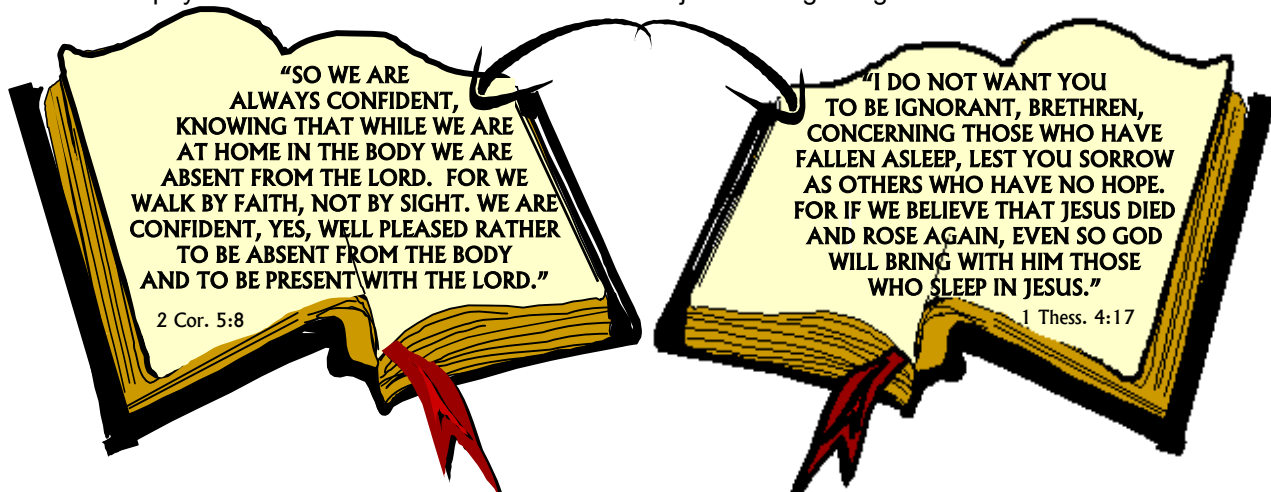
"WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM." Heb.11:6
FOR WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT." 2 Cor. 5:7

Let us consider several aspects of life we all face as Christians and see how the Word of God allows us to see into such invisible realms that are oblivious to the natural eye.

THE DEATH OF A LOVED ONE



The finality of the stark images at a funeral seen only with the physical eye can be overwhelming to say the least. The only way to handle by faith what is seen is for those left behind to focus upon the insight contained within the Scriptures. Only the Word of God sheds light upon what happens at the death of a believer in Christ. Faith focuses upon what you cannot see, not upon what you can see. The Word of God carries us beyond the stark finality of the grave. Here we are taken into the invisible realm of the reality of faith. The physical death of the believer is shown to be just the beginning of eternal life.



God created man as a spirit, possessing a soul, and living in a physical body. Hear this: only the body is visible to the eye. At death it is the physical body that dies, not the spirit nor the soul. Paul the apostle reminds us above that the Christian is "...well pleased to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." It is only Scripture that gives us this confident truth upon which we can place our faith. All we can see visibly is an obvious deceased physical body devoid of the life of the spirit and the soul. The individual has not died, but only his/her physical body. The spirit and the soul having departed the body, have gone to be with the Lord. Christian, comfort one another with these words! They will help you to place the deceased body of your loved one into the grave to await the resurrection of that very body as promised by Christ!

Let us consider another topic in which we need biblical eyes of faith to see. The only way to see heaven is to go there-period! Heaven is **INVISIBLE** to beings on earth. It is needful to inject a word of caution about the abundance of books that have been marketed of people with a story to tell (or sell) about having made a trip there. What follows is a deceptive description that is unbiblical to the core. Perhaps you know that Paul the apostle was stoned and left for dead by his adversaries of which he told us this account:

"I KNOW A MAN IN CHRIST WHO FOURTEEN YEARS AGO...SUCH A ONE WAS CAUGHT UP TO THE THIRD HEAVEN. AND I KNOW SUCH A MAN...HOW HE WAS CAUGHT UP INTO PARADISE AND HEARD INEXPRESSIBLE WORDS, WHICH IT IS NOT LAWFUL FOR A MAN TO UTTER."

2 Cor 12:1-5

"... WAS CAUGHT UP TO THE THIRD HEAVEN. AND I KNOW THAT THIS MAN... WAS CAUGHT UP INTO PARADISE, AND HE HEARD UTTERANCES BEYOND THE POWER OF MAN TO PUT INTO WORDS, WHICH MAN IS NOT PERMITTED TO UTTER."

2 Cor 12:1-5 Amplified



Paul wrote by the delegated inspiration of God nearly two-thirds of the New Testament. We must consider that what God stated was unlawful for Paul as a man of God to utter, what he was not permitted by God to speak, has not since been made lawful for any lesser Christian than the apostle Paul. To put in print under the banner of "I was taken up into heaven and here is what I saw", I say brethren beware!

There is only one book containing "word pictures" of Heaven that is approved by God.

It is the Word of God! Let us now consider:

MAKING HEAVEN VISIBLE BY THE WORD OF GOD

Much of what is presented as a picture of heaven suffers from unbiblical presentations of God Himself. Much of Christianity has been fed a steady diet of a "three-in-one-God." He is likened to an "egg" with three components; the shell, the egg-white and the yoke, but one egg.

But we must ask, "What does the Scripture say?"

(Rom. 4:3)

What will I see as God when I get to Heaven? One or three?



OLD TESTAMENT:

"I WATCHED TILL THRONES WERE PUT IN PLACE, AND THE ANCIENT OF DAYS WAS SEATED; HIS GARMENT WAS WHITE AS SNOW, AND THE HAIR OF HIS HEAD WAS LIKE PURE WOOL. ...A THOUSAND THOUSANDS MINISTERED TO HIM; TEN THOUSAND TIMES TEN THOUSAND STOOD BEFORE HIM... AND BEHOLD, ONE LIKE THE SON OF MAN, COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN! HE CAME TO THE ANCIENT OF DAYS, AND THEY BROUGHT HIM NEAR BEFORE HIM. THEN TO HIM WAS GIVEN DOMINION AND GLORY AND A KINGDOM, THAT ALL PEOPLES, NATIONS, AND LANGUAGES SHOULD SERVE HIM. HIS DOMINION IS AN EVERLASTING DOMINION, WHICH SHALL NOT PASS AWAY, AND HIS KINGDOM THE ONE WHICH SHALL NOT BE DESTROYED."

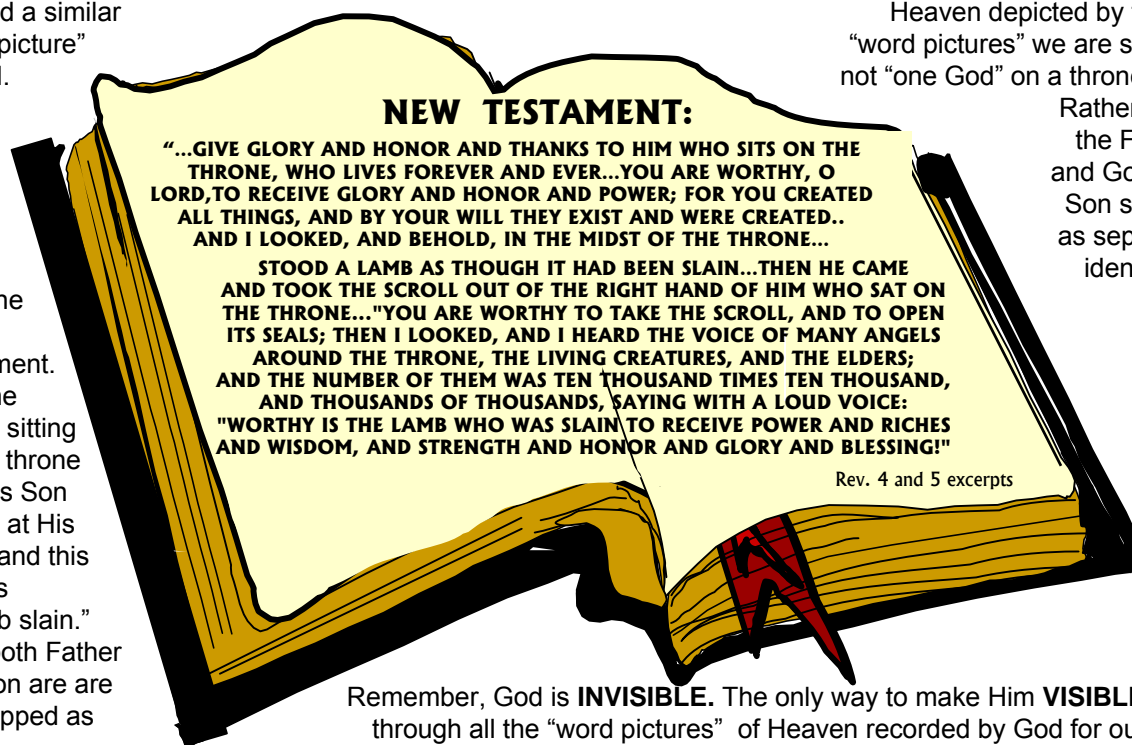
Dan. 7:9-13

Christianity does present God as a trinity consisting of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. However, He is not depicted as a three-in-one God. In Heaven will we only see one God on His throne or does the Word of God depict for us three Divine personages as God seen in Heaven?

Is our cherished "three-in-one" image of God what is shown throughout Scripture in literal glimpses into Heaven itself?

Likewise, in the New Testament, we find a similar "word picture" of God.

What is shown to us is the same as in the Old Testament. God the Father sitting on His throne and His Son shown at His right hand this time as "a lamb slain." Note both Father and Son are worshipped as God.



Whenever we find God in Heaven depicted by these "word pictures" we are shown not "one God" on a throne, but Rather God the Father and God the Son shown as separate identities.

Remember, God is **INVISIBLE**. The only way to make Him **VISIBLE** is through all the "word pictures" of Heaven recorded by God for our learning of who this "invisible" God is.

He is never depicted by any of these depictions of God in Heaven as a "three-in-one God." That false image of God was birthed by Catholicism in the 3rd and 4th centuries. Christianity adopted this mystic Catholic view of God and is still taught widely today under the "oneness of God" banner. God is "one God" in unity! It is a **THREEFOLD CORD** that cannot be quickly broken (Ecc.4:12). God is that threefold cord consisting of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. They are all God, but they are not co-equal! God the Father is above all (Eph. 4:6). God the Son, by His own confession, is lesser than the Father (Jn. 13:16, Jn. 14:28). Consider how Paul speaks of the submitted relationship between God the Father and God the Son:

"THEN COMES THE END, WHEN HE (the Son) DELIVERS THE KINGDOM TO GOD THE FATHER, WHEN HE PUTS AN END TO ALL RULE AND ALL AUTHORITY AND POWER. FOR HE (the Son) MUST REIGN TILL HE HAS PUT ALL ENEMIES UNDER HIS FEET. THE LAST ENEMY THAT WILL BE DESTROYED IS DEATH. FOR "HE (the Son) HAS PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET." BUT WHEN HE SAYS "ALL THINGS ARE PUT UNDER HIM," IT IS EVIDENT THAT HE WHO PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIM IS EXCEPTED. NOW WHEN ALL THINGS ARE MADE SUBJECT TO HIM (the Father), THEN THE SON HIMSELF WILL ALSO BE SUBJECT TO HIM (the Father) WHO PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIM, THAT GOD (the Father) MAY BE ALL IN ALL." 1 Cor 15:24-28

Throughout Scripture God is presented as a **PLURAL GODHEAD**. His plural name is "Elohim" (Gods). That is why God speaks of Himself in a literal plural existence in saying things like, "Let **US** make man in **OUR** image, according to **OUR** likeness" (Gen. 1:26), and, "Who will go for **US**?" (Isa. 6:8).

We sing that old song, "I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God." However, we don't really believe that the Godhead itself is the origin of that family concept. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit comprise the original family of God. We are adopted into that family as children of God via the new birth. The Family of God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) are one in unity and purpose. They are so as examples to us, as children of God, to emulate and that is why Jesus prayed for us in this manner:

"...HOLY FATHER, KEEP THROUGH YOUR NAME THOSE WHOM YOU HAVE GIVEN ME, THAT THEY MAY BE ONE AS WE ARE...I DO NOT PRAY FOR THESE ALONE, BUT ALSO FOR THOSE WHO WILL BELIEVE IN ME THROUGH THEIR WORD; THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE, AS YOU, FATHER, ARE IN ME, AND I IN YOU; THAT THEY ALSO MAY BE ONE IN US..."

John 17:11, 20-21



There are other "word pictures" recorded in scripture which give us insight into what we will see in Heaven when we get there.



Here are two more examples for your consideration as confirmation of what you will see when you get to Heaven:

**"TO HIM WHO OVERCOMES
I WILL GRANT TO SIT WITH ME ON
MY THRONE,
AS I ALSO OVERCAME
AND SAT DOWN
WITH MY FATHER ON HIS THRONE.
"HE WHO HAS AN EAR,
LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT
SAYS TO THE CHURCHES."**
Rev. 3:21

This promise of Jesus to all overcomers in His church also conveys a revelation of what you can expect to see in Heaven itself. Notice Jesus refers to "His Throne in Heaven" as well as "His Father's Throne in Heaven." That is two thrones in Heaven, one belonging to God the Father and the other belonging to God the Son. We are not given a "word picture" of only one God sitting on a throne in Heaven, are we? Then why do we embrace a mystical concept of the oneness of God that He is a "three-in-one God"? Every "word picture" we find in scripture refutes this depiction of God.

**"BUT HE,
BEING FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT,
GAZED INTO HEAVEN
AND SAW THE GLORY OF GOD,
AND JESUS STANDING AT THE RIGHT
HAND OF GOD, AND SAID,
"LOOK! I SEE THE HEAVENS OPENED
AND THE SON OF MAN STANDING
AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD!"**
Acts 7:54-55

Here we find Stephen, in the midst of being martyred for his witness to God, is shown a vision into Heaven itself as an encouragement from God to be faithful unto death. What does this faithful man of God see? He sees in the midst of the glory of God in Heaven two Divine personages: (1) the Son of man, and (2) God the Father. Stephen was not shown a picture of one God in Heaven, but rather God the Father and Jesus His Son standing at His right hand. What can we expect to see when we get to Heaven? The very same!

The moral to the story is that what is **INVISIBLE** to the believer right now on earth becomes **VISIBLE** only by considering the "word pictures" that have been recorded in God's Word. You will see in Heaven exactly what has been seen before! I have labored to drill in the point that if what has been recorded as facts in God's Word are turned into fiction then we will hold an unbiblical expectation of Heaven. Why have I shared all these passages about the Godhead with you? So that you would not expect to see one God on one throne when you get to Heaven. That "three-in-one" image of God is a fictitious picture based on handed-down traditions of men steeped in Catholicism, the king of religious traditions! Jesus warned of the power of handed-down traditions nullifying what is recorded in God's Word:



**"HE SAID TO THEM,
"ALL TOO WELL YOU REJECT THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD,
THAT YOU MAY KEEP YOUR TRADITION...
MAKING THE WORD OF GOD OF NO EFFECT THROUGH YOUR TRADITION
WHICH YOU HAVE HANDED DOWN. AND MANY SUCH THINGS YOU DO."** Mark 7:9-13

French historian, Amaury de Reincourt made a similar statement about the power of tradition:

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

French Historian, Amaury de Reincourt



We have considered enough about the **INVISIBLE** aspect above earth called Heaven. Let us now consider another **INVISIBLE** realm far below Heaven which is Hell. Let us consider

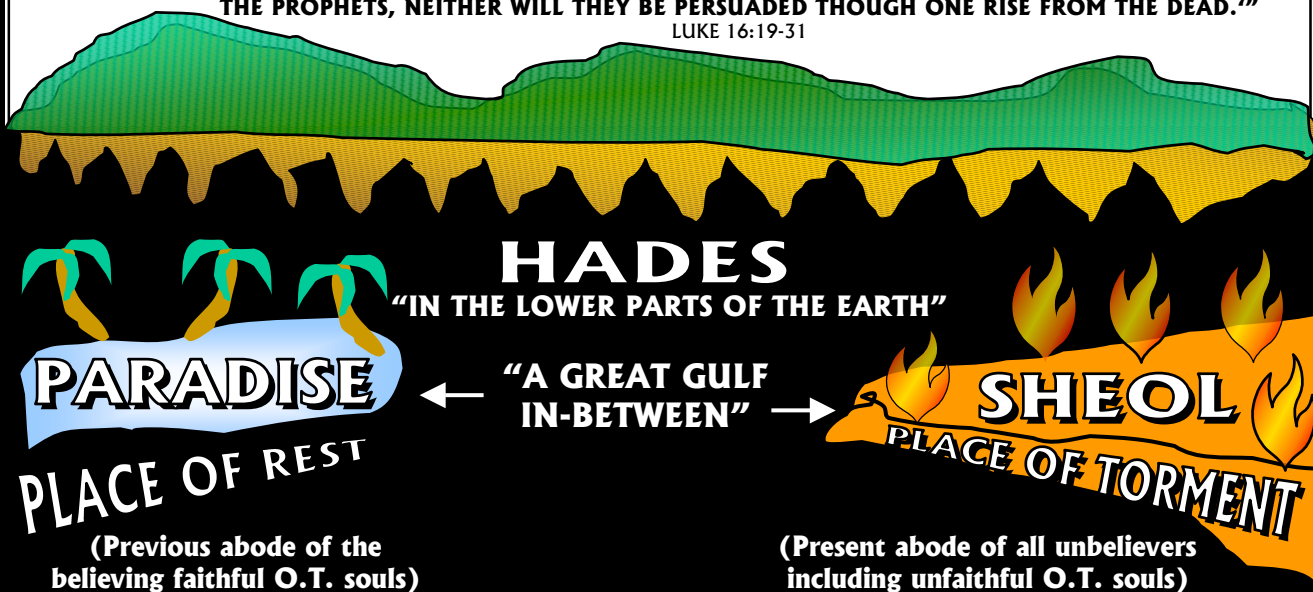
MAKING HELL VISIBLE BY THE WORD OF GOD

Would it surprise you to learn that Jesus spoke far more about Hell than He did about Heaven? Perhaps He did so because man on earth devoid of God does not believe in Hell. To them Hell is a place from which funny jokes originate. However, there is nothing funny about Hell. Let us consider some of the stories Jesus told about this awful place. Like Heaven, no one has been to Hell and returned to tell about it. It is an **INVISIBLE** place to the physical eye, but Jesus describes it vividly for us:



"THERE WAS A CERTAIN RICH MAN WHO WAS CLOTHED IN PURPLE AND FINE LINEN AND FARED SUMPTUOUSLY EVERY DAY. BUT THERE WAS A CERTAIN BEGGAR NAMED LAZARUS, FULL OF SORES, WHO WAS LAID AT HIS GATE, DESIRING TO BE FED WITH THE CRUMBS WHICH FELL FROM THE RICH MAN'S TABLE. MOREOVER THE DOGS CAME AND LICKED HIS SORES. SO IT WAS THAT THE BEGGAR DIED, AND WAS CARRIED BY THE ANGELS TO ABRAHAM'S BOSOM. THE RICH MAN ALSO DIED AND WAS BURIED. AND BEING IN TORMENTS IN HADES, HE LIFTED UP HIS EYES AND SAW ABRAHAM AFAR OFF, AND LAZARUS IN HIS BOSOM. "THEN HE CRIED AND SAID, 'FATHER ABRAHAM, HAVE MERCY ON ME, AND SEND LAZARUS THAT HE MAY DIP THE TIP OF HIS FINGER IN WATER AND COOL MY TONGUE; FOR I AM TORMENTED IN THIS FLAME.' BUT ABRAHAM SAID, 'SON, REMEMBER THAT IN YOUR LIFETIME YOU RECEIVED YOUR GOOD THINGS, AND LIKEWISE LAZARUS EVIL THINGS; BUT NOW HE IS COMFORTED AND YOU ARE TORMENTED. AND BESIDES ALL THIS, BETWEEN US AND YOU THERE IS A GREAT GULF FIXED, SO THAT THOSE WHO WANT TO PASS FROM HERE TO YOU CANNOT, NOR CAN THOSE FROM THERE PASS TO US.' "THEN HE SAID, 'I BEG YOU THEREFORE, FATHER, THAT YOU WOULD SEND HIM TO MY FATHER'S HOUSE, FOR I HAVE FIVE BROTHERS, THAT HE MAY TESTIFY TO THEM, LEST THEY ALSO COME TO THIS PLACE OF TORMENT.' ABRAHAM SAID TO HIM, 'THEY HAVE MOSES AND THE PROPHETS; LET THEM HEAR THEM.' AND HE SAID, 'NO, FATHER ABRAHAM; BUT IF ONE GOES TO THEM FROM THE DEAD, THEY WILL REPENT.' BUT HE SAID TO HIM, 'IF THEY DO NOT HEAR MOSES AND THE PROPHETS, NEITHER WILL THEY BE PERSUADED THOUGH ONE RISE FROM THE DEAD.'"

LUKE 16:19-31



Although Jesus told many of His illustrations by using fictitious parables, this does not qualify as a parable due to the unique use of the proper names of individuals in this story (Abraham, Lazarus). Jesus is relating a true event that took place with real people. That implies that this rich man is still being tormented in this flame even as you read this newsletter. He has been there for early 4,000 years (since the death of Abraham). Hell-fire is unending. How many deceived people have committed suicide thinking they will end their life of misery on earth only, like the rich man, to open their eyes in torment in Hades. Rather than ending torment, it is just beginning. Hell is no laughing matter to joke about.

"IT IS BETTER FOR YOU TO ENTER INTO LIFE MAIMED, RATHER THAN HAVING TWO HANDS, TO GO TO HELL, INTO THE FIRE THAT SHALL NEVER BE QUENCHED -- WHERE' THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.'

AND IF YOUR FOOT CAUSES YOU TO SIN, CUT IT OFF. IT IS BETTER FOR YOU TO ENTER LIFE LAME, RATHER THAN HAVING TWO FEET, TO BE CAST INTO HELL, INTO THE FIRE THAT SHALL NEVER BE QUENCHED -- WHERE 'THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.' AND IF YOUR EYE CAUSES YOU TO SIN, PLUCK IT OUT. IT IS BETTER FOR YOU TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD WITH ONE EYE, RATHER THAN HAVING TWO EYES, TO BE CAST INTO HELL FIRE -- WHERE 'THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.'"

Mark 9:43-48

"IF YOUR RIGHT EYE CAUSES YOU TO SIN, PLUCK IT OUT AND CAST IT FROM YOU; FOR IT IS MORE PROFITABLE FOR YOU THAT ONE OF YOUR MEMBERS PERISH, THAN FOR YOUR WHOLE BODY TO BE CAST INTO HELL. AND IF YOUR RIGHT HAND CAUSES YOU TO SIN, CUT IT OFF AND CAST IT FROM YOU; FOR IT IS MORE PROFITABLE FOR YOU THAT ONE OF YOUR MEMBERS PERISH, THAN FOR YOUR WHOLE BODY TO BE CAST INTO HELL."

Matt. 5:29

"THE WICKED SHALL BE TURNED INTO HELL, AND ALL THE NATIONS THAT FORGET GOD."

Ps 9:17

"THE WAY OF LIFE WINDS UPWARD FOR THE WISE, THAT HE MAY TURN AWAY FROM HELL BELOW."

Prov. 15:24



One cannot read the likes of what the Scriptures record about this awful place called Hell and think God is not serious about His expressed intentions to send all rebellious people, whether they be ignorant unbelievers or rebellious believers. Hell is the alternative for Heaven. Proverbs spells out that "the way of life" winds upward for whoever is wise in order that he/she may turn away from the place called Hell that lies below. (Prov.15:24)

I will never forget the brazen boast of the Oklahoma Bomber, a trained military soldier and security guard who bragged that even if there was a place called Hell, being a skilled military man, he would find a way of escape. No prison could hold him. Think about it: It has been thirty years since Tim McVeigh entered Hell having spoke those defiant militant words against God.

I wonder how he feels about his arrogant position now?

"LET DEATH SEIZE THEM; LET THEM GO DOWN ALIVE INTO HELL, FOR WICKEDNESS IS IN THEIR DWELLINGS AND AMONG THEM."

Ps 55:15

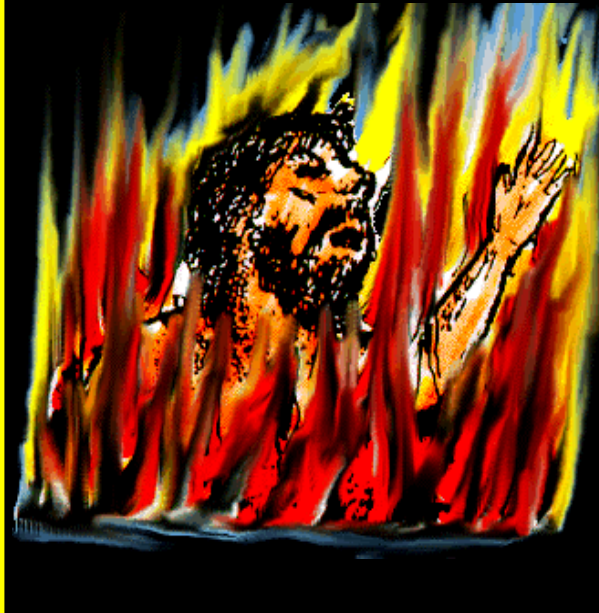
"FOR IF GOD DID NOT SPARE THE ANGELS WHO SINNED, BUT CAST THEM DOWN TO HELL AND DELIVERED THEM INTO CHAINS OF DARKNESS, TO BE RESERVED FOR JUDGMENT; AND DID NOT SPARE THE ANCIENT WORLD, BUT SAVED NOAH... BRINGING IN THE FLOOD ON THE WORLD OF THE UNGODLY; AND TURNING THE CITIES OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH INTO ASHES, CONDEMNED THEM TO DESTRUCTION, MAKING THEM AN EXAMPLE TO THOSE WHO AFTERWARD WOULD LIVE UNGODLY...AND TO RESERVE THE UNJUST UNDER PUNISHMENT FOR THE DAY OF JUDGMENT, AND ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO WALK ACCORDING TO THE FLESH IN THE LUST OF UNCLEANNES AND DESPISE AUTHORITY. THEY ARE PRESUMPTUOUS, SELF-WILLED. THEY ARE NOT AFRAID TO SPEAK EVIL OF DIGNITARIES...BUT THESE, LIKE NATURAL BRUTE BEASTS MADE TO BE CAUGHT AND DESTROYED, SPEAK EVIL OF THE THINGS THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND, AND WILL UTTERLY PERISH IN THEIR OWN CORRUPTION, HAVING EYES FULL OF ADULTERY AND THAT CANNOT CEASE FROM SIN, ENTICING UNSTABLE SOULS. THEY HAVE A HEART TRAINED IN COVETOUS PRACTICES, AND ARE ACCURSED CHILDREN. THEY HAVE FORSAKEN THE RIGHT WAY AND GONE ASTRAY...THESE ARE WELLS WITHOUT WATER, CLOUDS CARRIED BY A TEMPEST, FOR WHOM IS RESERVED THE BLACKNESS OF DARKNESS FOREVER."

2 Peter 2 excerpts

"HELL AND DESTRUCTION ARE BEFORE THE LORD; SO HOW MUCH MORE THE HEARTS OF THE SONS OF MEN."

Prov 15:11

There is one more "word picture" of Hell that is worth bringing to light because the arrogant likes of Tim McVeigh exist in abundance on earth. I have heard such mockers of Hell say,
 "At least I will be down there with all my friends!" Really?
 Let us examine what the Scriptures have to say about
 the isolated condition of a person's existence in Hell:



**"...MY LIFE
 DRAWS NEAR TO THE GRAVE.
 I AM COUNTED WITH THOSE
 WHO GO DOWN TO THE PIT;
 I AM LIKE A MAN WHO HAS NO STRENGTH,
 ADRIFT AMONG THE DEAD,
 LIKE THE SLAIN WHO LIE IN THE GRAVE,
 WHOM YOU REMEMBER NO MORE,
 AND WHO ARE CUT OFF FROM YOUR HAND.
 YOU HAVE LAID ME IN THE LOWEST PIT,
 IN DARKNESS, IN THE DEPTHS.
 YOUR WRATH LIES HEAVY UPON ME,
 AND YOU HAVE AFFLICTED ME
 WITH ALL YOUR WAVES. SELAH!
 YOU HAVE PUT AWAY MY ACQUAINTANCES
 FAR FROM ME;
 YOU HAVE MADE ME
 AN ABOMINATION TO THEM;
 I AM SHUT UP, AND I CANNOT GET OUT;
 MY EYE WASTES AWAY BECAUSE OF AFFLICTION."**

Ps 88:3-9

It doesn't appear that it could get any worse than what is described above by the Psalmist, but it does. Jesus concludes with the yet-future destiny of all people who are presently in Hell. They will not stay there forever, and that is not good news. Here is the sober warning from Jesus that it will get much worse than Hell. Consider this "word picture" of a place called "the Lake of Fire":

**"THEN I SAW A GREAT WHITE THRONE AND HIM WHO SAT ON IT,
 FROM WHOSE FACE THE EARTH AND THE HEAVEN FLED AWAY.
 AND THERE WAS FOUND NO PLACE FOR THEM.
 AND I SAW THE DEAD, SMALL AND GREAT, STANDING BEFORE GOD,
 AND BOOKS WERE OPENED. AND ANOTHER BOOK WAS OPENED,
 WHICH IS THE BOOK OF LIFE. AND THE DEAD WERE JUDGED ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS,
 BY THE THINGS WHICH WERE WRITTEN IN THE BOOKS.
 THE SEA GAVE UP THE DEAD WHO WERE IN IT,
 AND DEATH AND HADES DELIVERED UP THE DEAD WHO WERE IN THEM.
 AND THEY WERE JUDGED,
 EACH ONE ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS."**

Rev. 20:11-13

**"THEN DEATH
 AND HADES
 WERE CAST
 INTO THE
 LAKE OF FIRE.
 THIS IS THE
 SECOND
 DEATH. AND
 ANYONE NOT
 FOUND
 WRITTEN IN
 THE BOOK OF
 LIFE WAS CAST
 INTO THE
 LAKE OF FIRE."**

Rev. 20:14-15



**"THE LAKE OF FIRE"
 "THE SECOND DEATH"**

**"...THE COWARDLY,
 UNBELIEVING,
 ABOMINABLE,
 MURDERERS,
 SEXUALLY
 IMMORAL,
 SORCERERS,
 IDOLATERS, AND
 ALL LIARS SHALL
 HAVE THEIR PART
 IN THE LAKE WHICH
 BURNS WITH FIRE
 AND BRIMSTONE,
 WHICH IS
 THE SECOND
 DEATH."**

Rev. 21:8

The final area of the **INVISIBLE** that the Word of God makes **VISIBLE** is the subject of angelic beings:

MAKING ANGELS VISIBLE BY THE WORD OF GOD

**"FOR HE SHALL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE OVER YOU,
TO KEEP YOU IN ALL YOUR WAYS.
IN THEIR HANDS THEY SHALL BEAR YOU UP,
LEST YOU DASH YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE."**

Ps 91:11

**"ARE
THEY NOT
ALL
MINISTERING
SPIRITS
SENT
FORTH
TO MINISTER
FOR
THOSE
WHO WILL
INHERIT
SALVATION?"**

Heb. 1:14



**"THE
ANGEL
OF
THE LORD
ENCAMPS
ALL
AROUND
THOSE
WHO
FEAR HIM,
AND
DELIVERS
THEM."**

Ps 34:7

Have you ever seen an Angel? Probably not. For the most part they remain **INVISIBLE** to the eyes of man. Such was the case for Elisha's servant:

**"AND WHEN THE SERVANT OF THE MAN OF GOD AROSE EARLY AND WENT OUT,
THERE WAS AN ARMY, SURROUNDING THE CITY WITH HORSES AND CHARIOTS.
AND HIS SERVANT SAID TO HIM, "ALAS, MY MASTER! WHAT SHALL WE DO?" SO HE ANSWERED,
"DO NOT FEAR, FOR THOSE WHO ARE WITH US ARE MORE THAN THOSE WHO ARE WITH THEM."
AND ELISHA PRAYED, AND SAID, "LORD, I PRAY, OPEN HIS EYES THAT HE MAY SEE."
THEN THE LORD OPENED THE EYES OF THE YOUNG MAN, AND HE SAW.
AND BEHOLD, THE MOUNTAIN WAS FULL OF HORSES AND CHARIOTS OF FIRE ALL AROUND ELISHA."**

2 Kings 6:15-18

Elisha knew a secret: "those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Perhaps this is why Elisha was so bold in His God. He knew to be true what is expressed above about the purpose of God's angels:

"FOR HE SHALL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE OVER YOU, TO KEEP YOU IN ALL YOUR WAYS." Psm. 91:11

**"ARE THEY NOT ALL MINISTERING SPIRITS SENT FORTH TO MINISTER
FOR THOSE WHO WILL INHERIT SALVATION?" Heb. 1:14**

**"THE ANGEL OF THE LORD ENCAMPS ALL ROUND THOSE
WHO FEAR HIM, AND DELIVERS THEM." Ps 34:7**

Are these great promises of angelic protection the exclusive property of only those called to be "prophets of God" like Elisha? The answer is an emphatic "No!" Rather, these great promises of angelic protection belong to every believer that has been called to "inherit salvation" from God.

How are these promises appropriated? By cultivating faith in the **INVISIBLE** !

"HE WHO DWELLS IN THE SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH SHALL ABIDE UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY. I WILL SAY OF THE LORD, "HE IS MY REFUGE AND MY FORTRESS; MY GOD, IN HIM I WILL TRUST."

...YOU SHALL NOT BE AFRAID OF THE TERROR BY NIGHT, NOR OF THE ARROW THAT FLIES BY DAY, NOR OF THE PESTILENCE THAT WALKS IN DARKNESS, NOR OF THE DESTRUCTION THAT LAYS WASTE AT NOONDAY. A THOUSAND MAY FALL AT YOUR SIDE, AND TEN THOUSAND AT YOUR RIGHT HAND; BUT IT SHALL NOT COME NEAR YOU."



Psalm 91

...FOR HE SHALL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE OVER YOU, TO KEEP YOU IN ALL YOUR WAYS. IN THEIR HANDS THEY SHALL BEAR YOU UP, LEST YOU DASH YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE...

...BECAUSE HE HAS SET HIS LOVE UPON ME, THEREFORE I WILL DELIVER HIM; I WILL SET HIM ON HIGH, BECAUSE HE HAS KNOWN MY NAME. HE SHALL CALL UPON ME, AND I WILL ANSWER HIM; I WILL BE WITH HIM IN TROUBLE; I WILL DELIVER HIM AND HONOR HIM. WITH LONG LIFE I WILL SATISFY HIM, AND SHOW HIM MY SALVATION."

Psalm 91 is the believer's security blanket against all unseen evil that stems from "principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this age, and the host of wickedness in Heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12). You see, not all angels are good. One third of the angels rebelled with Satan eons of time ago, and they are here to do his evil bidding. However, two-thirds of the angels remained loyal to God Almighty and exist to be "ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation." Hear this: as it was in Elisha's day, "there are more with us than there are those with them." How many angels are there? We get hints throughout God's Word. There are "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands" according to Revelation 5:11. Hebrews states them to be "an innumerable company of Angels" (Heb. 12:13). In other words, there are more than enough to go around.

Should we fear the evil angels? No, we should not. However, we are called by God to warfare with these unseen forces of evil:

"FOR WE DO NOT WRESTLE AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD, BUT AGAINST PRINCIPALITIES, AGAINST POWERS, AGAINST THE RULERS OF THE DARKNESS OF THIS AGE, AGAINST SPIRITUAL HOSTS OF WICKEDNESS IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES. THEREFORE TAKE UP THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO WITHSTAND IN THE EVIL DAY, AND HAVING DONE ALL, TO STAND."

Eph 6:12-13

Paul states God's purpose for the believer in such spiritual warfare against those evil principalities and powers:

"...TO THE INTENT THAT NOW THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD MIGHT BE MADE KNOWN BY THE CHURCH TO THE (evil) PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS (still) IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES, ACCORDING TO THE ETERNAL PURPOSE WHICH HE (God the Father) ACCOMPLISHED IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD, IN WHOM WE HAVE BOLDNESS AND ACCESS WITH CONFIDENCE THROUGH FAITH IN HIM."

Eph 3:10-13

Last, but not least, Paul reminds the believer of the high positional relationship from which we are able to do such warfare with the unseen forces of evil:

"...THAT YOU MAY KNOW...THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER TOWARD US WHO BELIEVE, ACCORDING TO THE WORKING OF HIS MIGHTY POWER WHICH HE WORKED IN CHRIST WHEN HE RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD AND SEATED HIM AT HIS RIGHT HAND IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES, FAR ABOVE ALL PRINCIPALITY AND POWER AND MIGHT AND DOMINION, AND EVERY NAME THAT IS NAMED, NOT ONLY IN THIS AGE BUT ALSO IN THAT WHICH IS TO COME. AND HE PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET, AND GAVE HIM TO BE HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO THE CHURCH, WHICH IS HIS BODY...AND RAISED US UP TOGETHER, AND MADE US SIT TOGETHER IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS..."

Eph. 1:21-23, 2:4-7

Pastor Randy Shupe

APOSTOLIC MISSIONS

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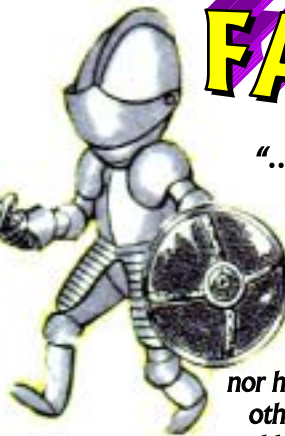
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PANDEMIC OR PANDEMIC FEAR FAITH?

"...Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life. In the morning you shall say, 'Oh, that it were evening!' And at evening you shall say, 'Oh, that it were morning!' because of the fear which terrifies your heart, and because of the sight which your eyes see."
Deut 28:66-67



"...For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
Rom 8:38-39

"Oh Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you..."

Isa 41:14

Pandemic:

"Any sickness/disease that spreads quickly through a whole country or through the whole world"

The Bible clearly warns God's people against feeding on fear because, "Fear involves torment" (1 Jn. 4:18). However, we live in troubled times of increasing fear on every side. The level of sheer panic that quickly spread throughout the whole world in January/March of 2020 pertaining to the projected deadly potential of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) quickly rose to a pandemic event and produced a panic of wide-spread fear. The fear of "sudden death" quickly loomed over all and filled the mass media with 24-7 endless reports of potential problems due to this new deadly virus. In reality, it is a new strain of the flu virus. Not given was the needful balanced perspective that more people died in 2018 (61,000) and 2019 (62,000) of the flu than have died from this new virus (as of the end of April-40,000). However, bad news is what fuels frenzy among the populace in which we live. Sadly, it is such reports of frenzied fear that sells. The depth of that panic and fear rapidly produced mind-boggling actions that lacked any and all sound logic. After just a few days, the internet news stated that the sales of the popular Mexican "Corona Beer" suddenly tanked due to sheer fear of anything associated with the name "Corona." That is the power behind frenzy feeding on unreasonable panic and fear.

**"...I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU. BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE...
HAVE I NOT COMMANDED YOU? BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE;
DO NOT BE AFRAID, NOR BE DISMAYED, FOR THE LORD YOUR GOD IS WITH YOU WHEREVER YOU GO."**
Joshua 1:1-9

From the above, we can see that God desires that His people would be manifestly different than those in the world who do not know Him: "Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed." We live in times of great fear. However, God has a plan for conquering fear among His people.

In covering the COVID-19 crisis, Fox News often uses this cliché as the need of the hour to conquer fear and panic: →



For God's people there is something greater than facts to conquer fear. It is faith. →



However, often the startling facts of the matter can be overwhelming enough to germinate great fear and panic as well.

Only God's people can manifest faith as a higher solution for the likes of COVID-19.

It has been well said, "You are what you eat." Equally true then is this saying, "You are what you watch."

The **NAUSEATING** **SPIRIT OF FEAR:**



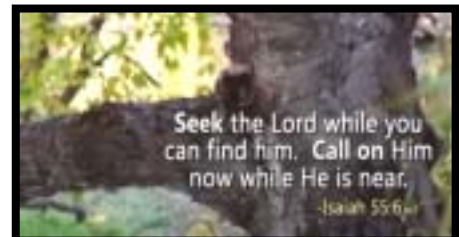
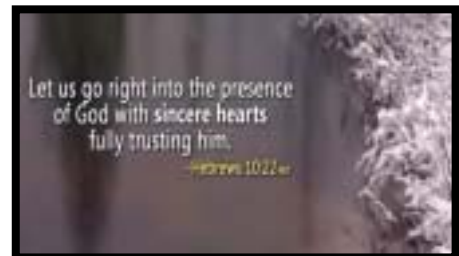
On the left is what this world will feed you to your heart's discontent. Turn it on any time of the day or night and it will fill you up with nauseating fear. However, we rationalize watching it because we are self-convinced that "we need to be informed."

In stark contrast, on the right, are clips I took off of the TV also. This is a program on Daystar called "Reflections." They do not broadcast "day and night", only late at night, but you can record them with your DVR and replay them constantly. These are videos of God's beautiful creation with superimposed scriptures.

In the background it plays beautiful old hymns. It's your choice as well as mine which one we will choose to fill our minds. However, one will fill you with **FEAR** and the other will fill you with **FAITH**. Here is God's counsel on which one will do you the most good:

**"FINALLY, BRETHREN,
WHATEVER THINGS ARE TRUE, WHATEVER THINGS ARE NOBLE, WHATEVER THINGS ARE JUST, WHATEVER THINGS ARE PURE, WHATEVER THINGS ARE LOVELY, WHATEVER THINGS ARE OF GOOD REPORT, IF THERE IS ANY VIRTUE AND IF THERE IS ANYTHING PRAISEWORTHY -- MEDITATE ON THESE THINGS. THE THINGS WHICH YOU LEARNED AND RECEIVED AND HEARD AND SAW IN ME, THESE DO, AND THE GOD OF PEACE WILL BE WITH YOU."** Phil. 4:8-9

THE **ENERGIZING** **SPIRIT OF POWER:**



Saints of God, the fear of death is not where God wants His people to dwell! The spirit of death at work in the world must propel us, as the people of God, to a Spirit-filled, Spirit-empowered life lived in the power of Christ's resurrection! Do you want to live in the deadly grip of fear like the rest of the people in America are presently doing? Would it not be far more pleasing to God if His people would rise to the resurrection power of a faith-filled life able to cast out all fear? Does not the Apostle Paul plainly state this to be God's will for His people? Consider his words to his son Timothy in the faith who also wrestled with fear:

"...WHEN I CALL TO REMEMBRANCE THE GENUINE FAITH THAT IS IN YOU, WHICH DWELT FIRST IN YOUR GRANDMOTHER LOIS AND YOUR MOTHER EUNICE, AND I AM PERSUADED IS IN YOU ALSO. THEREFORE I REMIND YOU TO STIR UP THE GIFT OF GOD WHICH IS IN YOU THROUGH THE LAYING ON OF MY HANDS. FOR GOD HAS NOT GIVEN US A SPIRIT OF FEAR, BUT OF POWER AND OF LOVE AND OF A SOUND MIND."
2 Tim 1:5-7

As it was for Timothy so likewise it can be for us. The spirit of fear at times overwhelmed his faith. Paul's cure was to replace that fear with the three ingredients of resurrection power from God:

"GOD HAS NOT GIVEN US A SPIRIT OF FEAR, BUT OF POWER AND OF LOVE AND OF A SOUND MIND."

When we are encompassed about with any message that produces fear it should be met head on with a response of God's gift to us of "power, love and a sound mind." This is resurrection power at work to quench fear. We **ARE** going to be assaulted with bouts of fear as long as we are in this world dominated by Satan. He uses fear effectively, and the Bible warns us, "Fear has torment", but "love casts out fear" (see 1 Jn.4:18).

Perhaps a personal experience I had this week will help make the point. I am very adamant about the promises of Psalm 91 being very sufficient to protect God's people from the recent pandemic of fear swelling up among the sea of people around us. The "24-7" media coverage of the COVID-19 crisis is overwhelming to say the least. If you allow yourself to be immersed in this barrage of over-kill information pertaining to "how many infections today", or "how may hospitalizations today" or even worse, "how many died today", the level of this information can sink you into the abyss of "the fear of death." If the saying is true, "you are what you eat", then it is also true, "you are what you watch." One night last week I definitely watched too much information about COVID-19. Later that night I awoke about 3 am with nausea and cold sweats which for me is not unusual as I am still fighting an ongoing battle with Lymphoma cancer. I also seemed to have the sniffles as well as some bowel discomforts which I will not describe. I lingered for a while in the bathroom, returned to bed and immediately felt like I was going to throw up. I ran back to the bathroom and heaved up my stomach's contents and sank to the floor. Immediately I was flooded with thoughts of fear, "it's COVID-19!" However, it was not, just the overdose of fear I allowed to enter my mind earlier in the evening. The Bible says, "When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will raise a standard against him." (Isa. 59:19). Thankfully the enemy's assault did not prevail as my mind was quickly washed from fear by the water of God's Word as contained in Psalm 91. What I had fed upon the most (Psalm 91) quickly overpowered the fear I had taken in through the TV earlier. If we feed on a heavy dose of the death message of fear you are going to be plagued with the fruits of such fear. Counter that feeding with a message of resurrection power and you will be quickly raised up.

My wife and I were discussing our own reactions to this present crisis of COVID-19. There have been terrible waves of fear that we both have momentarily entertained. However, we both realize that something has awakened within ourselves that was quite dormant before the crisis.

The Christian walk, especially here in prosperous America, can become quite routine, even redundantly steeped in ritualistic practices that we perform faithfully and dutifully, but lacking in true energizing motivation (like prayer, reading God's Word, etc.) We have changed all that not by choice but by dire necessity. The COVID-19 crisis has become a personal stimulus for us in our daily walk. We both, although tired and weary at times, have been operating at a level of zeal that we have not experienced for a long time. The moral to the story is what Satan means for evil purposes, God will work it for good." (Gen.50:20)

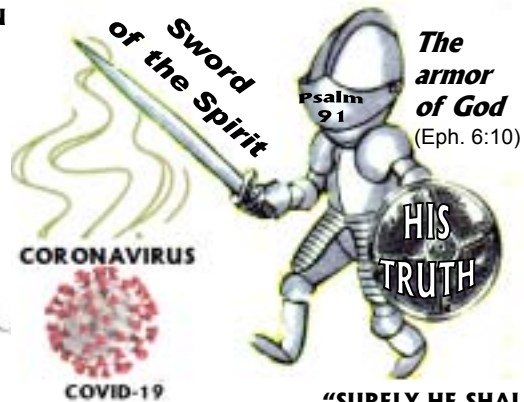
This brings me to the "hot topic" of whether to wear a face mask or not. Here is my very personal conviction: as long as it is not "the law of the land", but remains a suggested request by our authorities, I will continue not to wear a mask. Why so? Because my body, as the "house" of Christ, has living in it not only the Father, but the Son, and the Holy Spirit as well (see John 14:23). That implies to me that the Blood of the Lamb covers this "portable house" of God as well. Both "houses" in which I dwell are marked with the Blood of the Lamb! COVID-19 has no place in such a dwelling place! If face masks become the law of the land (and I think it will due to the level of panic and fear), then I will wear a mask and obey the law. However, to make a distinction between faith and fear, it will say this → on the outside for all to see.



I personally believe very firmly that God has given us a "spiritual mask" to wear that is far more effective against the COVID-19 virus than a physical one. In Psalm 91 God singles out the thought that "His Truth shall be your shield ("mask"). Our spiritual "mask" must become the Truth contained in God's Word!

"WHEN THE ENEMY COMES IN LIKE A FLOOD, THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD WILL LIFT UP A STANDARD AGAINST HIM."

Isa. 59:19



"SURELY HE SHALL DELIVER YOU FROM ... THE PERILOUS PESTILENCE..."

HIS TRUTH SHALL BE YOUR SHIELD AND BUCKLER. YOU SHALL NOT BE AFRAID ... OF

THE PESTILENCE THAT WALKS IN DARKNESS... IT SHALL NOT COME NEAR YOU... NO EVIL SHALL BEFALL YOU, NOR SHALL ANY PLAGUE COME NEAR YOUR DWELLING..."

excerpts Psalm 91

God's spiritual truths, such as stated in Psalm 91, are more than adequate protection against Satan's COVID-19 virus flood poured out against us.

Just look at these portions alone which specifically single out "perilous pestilence and plagues" that God will not allow to either "come near you" or to even "come near your dwelling." Ask yourself: Do I believe this?

"HIS TRUTH SHALL BE YOUR SHIELD..."



We all love peace and hate war, but it is imperative for God's people to understand that the Christian life on earth is an unceasing warfare with Satan, the present God of this world:

"WOE TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH! FOR THE DEVIL HAS COME DOWN TO YOU, HAVING GREAT WRATH, BECAUSE HE KNOWS THAT HE HAS A SHORT TIME... AND HE WENT TO MAKE WAR WITH THOSE WHO KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD AND HAVE THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST." Rev 12: 12-17

In light of the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic, President Trump recently made this twofold statement (1) "We are at war with an unseen enemy" (2) "I am a war-time president." He is right on both counts. However, it goes beyond the physical enemy of the COVID-19 virus itself for there is an unseen evil force behind it all which is Satan, the God of this world! Scripture reminds of the underlying cause of all evil found in the world:

"WE KNOW THAT WE ARE OF GOD, AND THE WHOLE WORLD LIES UNDER THE SWAY OF THE WICKED ONE."

1 John 5:19



"THE COURSE OF THIS WORLD, (IS) ACCORDING TO THE PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR..."

Eph. 2:2



(suggested reading)

In his book, *"Into Battle"*, Arthur Wallis opened with these sober words, *"The Christian life is a warfare from beginning to end."* I made a similar statement in my book, *"War Against the Saints"*:

"In our warfare with Satan there are no long periods of sustained peace, no treaty or armistice to halt hostilities can ever be created with our enemy. There will be no letup in Satan's relentless pursuit of the Christian for he is fully bent on continually making war against the saints day and night:



(suggested reading)

"BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT; BECAUSE YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL WALKS ABOUT LIKE A ROARING LION, SEEKING WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR. RESIST HIM, STEADFAST IN THE FAITH, KNOWING THAT THE SAME SUFFERINGS ARE EXPERIENCED BY YOUR BROTHERHOOD IN THE WORLD." 1 Pet. 5:8-10

"FOR THOUGH WE WALK IN THE FLESH, (physical realm) WE DO NOT WAR ACCORDING TO THE FLESH (physical realm) . FOR THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE ARE NOT CARNAL (physical) BUT MIGHTY IN GOD FOR PULLING DOWN STRONGHOLDS, CASTING DOWN ARGUMENTS AND EVERY HIGH THING THAT EXALTS ITSELF AGAINST THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, BRINGING EVERY THOUGHT INTO CAPTIVITY TO THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST..." 2 Cor 10:3-6

"FINALLY, MY BRETHREN, BE STRONG IN THE LORD AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT. PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO STAND AGAINST THE WILES OF THE DEVIL. FOR WE DO NOT WRESTLE AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD, BUT AGAINST PRINCIPALITIES, AGAINST POWERS, AGAINST THE RULERS OF THE DARKNESS OF THIS AGE, AGAINST SPIRITUAL HOSTS OF WICKEDNESS IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES. THEREFORE TAKE UP THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO WITHSTAND IN THE EVIL DAY, AND HAVING DONE ALL, TO STAND." Eph. 6:11-13

Continue reading in these passages from Ephesians 6 and you will see that Paul places supreme emphasis upon one piece of the armor of God above all the others:

I am personally convinced that Psalm 91 contains the detailed battle plan for God's people to be enabled to stand firm behind "the shield of faith" by which we can "quench all the fiery darts of the Wicked One." Christian, you can't defeat this enemy by physical means for its origin lies in supernatural forces of evil, "principalities...powers... rulers of the darkness...hosts of spiritual wickedness." We need the supernatural armor of God to stand against a supernatural army of darkness.

"...ABOVE ALL, TAKING THE SHIELD OF FAITH WITH WHICH YOU WILL BE ABLE TO QUENCH ALL THE FIERY DARTS OF THE WICKED ONE."

Eph 6:16-17



We are to be a people of hope in the midst of a world that is presently being dominated by intense pandemic fear. It is needful to stress that biblically-based hope is more than just maintaining a positive outlook ("I hope it goes away"). Biblical hope is founded on the rock-bed of Scripture, the promises of God's Word, ("...You are my hiding place and my shield, I hope in Your Word") (Psm. 119:114).

It is rare to get words of insight from most TV preachers, but here is one thought I really liked. In speaking of the fear of the dreaded "COVID-19" virus, Marcus Lamb made this statement: "Just take the phrase "COVID-19" and reverse the numbers 19 and make it 91, as in Psalm 91!" This indeed is God's antidote for the fear of COVID-19, Psalm 91! In all of Scripture there is nothing like Psalm 91. It is a bold and blatant declaration from God's mouth directly to His people pertaining to the level of protection that He has provided for them.

Either this is a detailed Psalm containing absolute protection from God for His people over this evil demonic-controlled world in which we live, or it is just a Psalm filled with words of hyperbole that cannot be taken literally. Dear friends, if it is the latter of those two choices then we might as well throw away our Bibles for God doesn't really mean what He has said. For instance, consider this exacting promise of God to His people taken from the heart of Psalm 91:

**"SURELY HE SHALL DELIVER YOU FROM THE PERILOUS PESTILENCE.
...A THOUSAND MAY FALL AT YOUR SIDE, AND TEN THOUSAND AT YOUR RIGHT HAND;
BUT IT SHALL NOT COME NEAR YOU."** Psm.91:7

Christian, which is it, a statement of absolute faith in God's promises or hyperbole from God to over-emphasize a point? Can this specific promise from God deliver you from the likes of the pandemic fear generated by COVID-19 that currently surrounds us on every side? Are the "facts" of the problem greater than the promise from our God? One time Jesus cursed a fig tree saying to it, "Let no fruit ever grow on you again." Immediately the tree withered and died. His disciples marveled and said, "How did the fig tree wither so soon?" Here is Jesus' answer:

**"ASSUREDLY, I SAY TO YOU,
IF YOU HAVE FAITH AND DO NOT DOUBT,
YOU WILL NOT ONLY DO
WHAT WAS DONE
TO THE FIG TREE,
BUT ALSO IF YOU SAY TO THIS MOUNTAIN,
'BE REMOVED AND BE CAST INTO THE SEA,'
IT WILL BE DONE.
AND WHATEVER THINGS YOU ASK
IN PRAYER, BELIEVING,
YOU WILL RECEIVE."**
Matt 21:21-22



Jesus said faith in God is big enough to cast mountains into the sea. Understanding that mountains in scripture are often symbolic of obstacles in our way, are such "mountains" in life bigger than God's promises to His people? Saints of God, are the above illustrations from Psalm 91 and from Matthew 21 not big enough to protect us from such "perilous pestilence", or even great enough to enable us to curse the likes of any COVID-19 into a withered state that threatens our very well-being?

If they are not able to conquer the likes of COVID-19, then we must ask ourselves what situations are such promises applicable to?

**"THIS IS THE WORD OF THE LORD TO ZERUBBABEL:
'NOT BY MIGHT NOR BY POWER,
BUT BY MY SPIRIT,
'SAYS THE LORD OF HOSTS.
'WHO ARE YOU, O GREAT MOUNTAIN?
BEFORE ZERUBBABEL YOU SHALL BECOME A PLAIN!
AND HE SHALL BRING FORTH THE CAPSTONE WITH SHOUTS OF
'GRACE, GRACE TO IT!'"**
Zech 4:6-7



Are you ready to have faith in the promises of God's Word as stated in Psalm 91? If your answer is yes, then you must also have faith in the God of the promises. Let me explain that statement. Look at the diagram of Psalm 91 below. I have divided it into two camps of thought by placing a yellow box around what are the stipulations or conditions found in Psalm 91 that govern the ability to inherit all the mighty promises of this Psalm. We cannot just single out and claim all the promises of protection apart from also fulfilling the specified conditions. In other words, the promises reveal what God will do for His people, but the yellow areas reveal what must become a personal commitment of faith before our God.

(1) CONDITIONS:

"HE WHO DWELLS IN THE SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH SHALL ABIDE UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY. I WILL SAY OF THE LORD, 'HE IS MY REFUGE AND MY FORTRESS; MY GOD, IN HIM I WILL TRUST.'"

(1) PROMISES:

SURELY HE SHALL DELIVER YOU FROM THE SNARE OF THE FOWLER AND FROM THE PERILOUS PESTILENCE. HE SHALL COVER YOU WITH HIS FEATHERS, AND UNDER HIS WINGS YOU SHALL TAKE REFUGE; HIS TRUTH SHALL BE YOUR SHIELD AND BUCKLER. YOU SHALL NOT BE AFRAID OF THE TERROR BY NIGHT, NOR OF THE ARROW THAT FLIES BY DAY, NOR OF THE PESTILENCE THAT WALKS IN DARKNESS, NOR OF THE DESTRUCTION THAT LAYS WASTE AT NOONDAY. A THOUSAND MAY FALL AT YOUR SIDE, AND TEN THOUSAND AT YOUR RIGHT HAND; BUT IT SHALL NOT COME NEAR YOU...



(2) CONDITIONS:

BECAUSE YOU HAVE MADE THE LORD, WHO IS MY REFUGE, EVEN THE MOST HIGH, YOUR DWELLING PLACE,

(2) PROMISES:

NO EVIL SHALL BEFALL YOU, NOR SHALL ANY PLAGUE COME NEAR YOUR DWELLING; FOR HE SHALL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE OVER YOU, TO KEEP YOU IN ALL YOUR WAYS IN THEIR HANDS THEY SHALL BEAR YOU UP, LEST YOU DASH YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE. YOU SHALL TREAD UPON THE LION AND THE COBRA, THE YOUNG LION AND THE SERPENT YOU SHALL TRAMPLE UNDERFOOT.

(3) CONDITIONS:

"BECAUSE HE HAS SET HIS LOVE UPON ME,

(3) PROMISES:

THEREFORE I WILL DELIVER HIM; I WILL SET HIM ON HIGH,

(4) CONDITIONS:

BECAUSE HE HAS KNOWN MY NAME,

(4) PROMISES:

HE SHALL CALL UPON ME, AND I WILL ANSWER HIM; I WILL BE WITH HIM IN TROUBLE; I WILL DELIVER HIM AND HONOR HIM. WITH LONG LIFE I WILL SATISFY HIM, AND SHOW HIM MY SALVATION."

Let us progress our way through each number of conditions and promises as depicted above. Take time to read carefully all the incredible promises shown under the number (1). Is that not what you want for yourself from God in the midst of this fearful pandemic that is upon us? The answer is obvious. Now look at what precedes those (1) promises. Look at the number (1) conditions. What is needful of us? First of all, it is stated that we are to "dwell in the secret place of the Most High (God)". What is that "secret place" of the Most High God? We do not lack for a clear definition. Listen to Jesus speak of the Father's "secret place":

"...WHEN YOU PRAY, GO INTO YOUR ROOM, AND WHEN YOU HAVE SHUT YOUR DOOR, PRAY TO YOUR FATHER WHO IS IN THE SECRET PLACE; AND YOUR FATHER WHO SEES IN SECRET WILL REWARD YOU OPENLY." Matt 6:6-7

The level of our faith can only be measured by the words we speak privately to God while in the "secret place" of prayer. We are vulnerable to pray vain words in public prayer, words that we want others to hear, but only what we say to God in private is a valid measure of the level of our faith.

Notice in the (1) condition above that we are to "dwell" (live, abide) in the secret place. This implies that it is a habitual practice that we do daily. Notice also that the result of abiding in the secret place causes us to dwell so close to God that we are in essence "under the shadow of the Almighty" that He casts. This is a vivid picture of being very close to God ("Draw near to God and He will draw near to you") Jas. 4:8.

(1) CONDITIONS:

"HE WHO DWELLS IN THE SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH SHALL ABIDE UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY.

**I WILL SAY OF THE LORD,
"HE IS MY REFUGE AND MY FORTRESS;
MY GOD, IN HIM
I WILL TRUST."**

(1) PROMISES:

SURELY HE SHALL DELIVER YOU FROM THE SNARE OF THE FOWLER AND FROM THE PERILOUS PESTILENCE. HE SHALL COVER YOU WITH HIS FEATHERS, AND UNDER HIS WINGS YOU SHALL TAKE REFUGE; HIS TRUTH SHALL BE YOUR SHIELD AND BUCKLER. YOU SHALL NOT BE AFRAID OF THE TERROR BY NIGHT, NOR OF THE ARROW THAT FLIES BY DAY, NOR OF THE PESTILENCE THAT WALKS IN DARKNESS, NOR OF THE DESTRUCTION THAT LAYS WASTE AT NOONDAY. A THOUSAND MAY FALL AT YOUR SIDE, AND TEN THOUSAND AT YOUR RIGHT HAND; BUT IT SHALL NOT COME NEAR YOU...

**FOR
HE SHALL
GIVE
HIS
ANGELS
CHARGE
OVER YOU,
TO
KEEP YOU
IN ALL
YOUR WAYS**



(2) CONDITIONS:

**BECAUSE YOU HAVE MADE THE LORD,
WHO IS MY REFUGE,
EVEN THE MOST HIGH,
YOUR DWELLING PLACE,**

(2) PROMISES:

**NO EVIL SHALL BEFALL YOU,
NOR SHALL ANY PLAGUE COME NEAR
YOUR DWELLING; FOR HE SHALL GIVE
HIS ANGELS CHARGE OVER YOU,
TO KEEP YOU IN ALL YOUR WAYS
IN THEIR HANDS THEY SHALL BEAR YOU UP,
LEST YOU DASH YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.
YOU SHALL TREAD UPON THE LION AND THE
COBRA, THE YOUNG LION AND THE SERPENT
YOU SHALL TRAMPLE UNDERFOOT.**

(3) CONDITIONS:

"BECAUSE HE HAS SET HIS LOVE UPON ME,

(3) PROMISES:

**THEREFORE I WILL DELIVER HIM;
I WILL SET HIM ON HIGH,**

(4) CONDITIONS:

BECAUSE HE HAS KNOWN MY NAME,

(4) PROMISES:

**HE SHALL CALL UPON ME,
AND I WILL ANSWER HIM;
I WILL BE WITH HIM IN TROUBLE;
I WILL DELIVER HIM AND HONOR HIM.
WITH LONG LIFE I WILL SATISFY HIM,
AND SHOW HIM MY SALVATION."**

Let us now consider the second part of the number (1) conditions as stated above. We are required to utter words of faith to God, but also we are to verbally and boldly confess our trust in God before men whenever He gives us an open door to do so (such as in the midst of COVID-19) Consider as examples:

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

1 Peter 3:15-16

**"THE LORD GOD HAS GIVEN ME THE TONGUE OF THE LEARNED,
THAT I SHOULD KNOW HOW TO SPEAK A WORD IN SEASON TO HIM WHO IS WEARY..."**

Isa. 50:4

What kind of words are we to say to men pertaining to our personal relationship to God? I believe it is the likes of what we find stated in Psalm 91 :


**"I WILL SAY OF THE LORD,
'HE IS MY REFUGE AND MY FORTRESS;
MY GOD, IN HIM I WILL TRUST."**

What are we, as God's ambassadors, saying to those around us in the midst of this COVID-19 crisis? Are they words of fear like the world in which we live, or are they words of faith such as recorded in Psalm 91? What are we telling those around us is the source of our comfort? Do we so honor God our Father as does Paul?

**"BLESSED BE THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,
THE FATHER OF MERCIES AND GOD OF ALL COMFORT,
WHO COMFORTS US IN ALL OUR TRIBULATION,
THAT WE MAY BE ABLE TO COMFORT THOSE WHO ARE IN ANY TROUBLE,
WITH THE COMFORT WITH WHICH WE OURSELVES ARE COMFORTED BY GOD."**

2 Cor. 1:4


We have two more short sets of conditions and promises left from Psalm 91. Let us briefly consider them in closing out our look at this powerful Psalm:

(3) CONDITIONS:
"BECAUSE HE HAS SET HIS LOVE UPON ME,

(3) PROMISES:
THEREFORE I WILL DELIVER HIM;
I WILL SET HIM ON HIGH,

"... WHAT DOES THE LORD YOUR GOD REQUIRE OF YOU, BUT TO FEAR THE LORD YOUR GOD, TO WALK IN ALL HIS WAYS AND TO LOVE HIM, TO SERVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND TO KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD AND HIS STATUTES WHICH I COMMAND YOU TODAY FOR YOUR GOOD? INDEED HEAVEN AND THE HIGHEST HEAVENS BELONG TO THE LORD YOUR GOD, ALSO THE EARTH"

Deut. 10:12-14

Whom shall God "deliver and set on high"? The one that has "set his love upon Him." The passage above from Deuteronomy vividly describes what that love entails. It requires heart-dedication ("all your heart and all your soul"). Remember Jesus warned His followers, "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt.6:21). Proverbs also warns, "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring all the issues of life" (Prov.4:23). Notice the reference in Deuteronomy to God owning the highest heavens as well as the earth below it. The promise from Psalm 91 is explicit. He will deliver us from all that is on the earth as long as we are on the earth. Then in eternity, for all eternity, God will set us on high in the highest heavens with Him! Selah! ("think on that"!)

(4) CONDITIONS:
BECAUSE HE HAS KNOWN MY NAME,

(4) PROMISES:
HE SHALL CALL UPON ME,
AND I WILL ANSWER HIM;
I WILL BE WITH HIM IN TROUBLE;
I WILL DELIVER HIM AND HONOR HIM.
WITH LONG LIFE I WILL SATISFY HIM,
AND SHOW HIM MY SALVATION."

"THEREFORE GOD ALSO HAS HIGHLY EXALTED HIM AND GIVEN HIM THE NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME, THAT AT THE NAME OF JESUS EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, OF THOSE IN HEAVEN, AND OF THOSE ON EARTH, AND OF THOSE UNDER THE EARTH, AND THAT EVERY TONGUE SHOULD CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER."

Phil 2:9-11

"AND HIS NAME, THROUGH FAITH IN HIS NAME, HAS MADE THIS MAN STRONG, WHOM YOU SEE AND KNOW. YES, THE FAITH WHICH COMES THROUGH HIM HAS GIVEN HIM THIS PERFECT SOUNDNESS IN THE PRESENCE OF YOU ALL."

Acts 3:16

"THEN SOME OF THE ITINERANT JEWISH EXORCISTS TOOK IT UPON THEMSELVES TO CALL THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS OVER THOSE WHO HAD EVIL SPIRITS, SAYING, "WE EXORCISE YOU BY THE JESUS WHOM PAUL PREACHES." ALSO THERE WERE SEVEN SONS OF SCEVA, A JEWISH CHIEF PRIEST, WHO DID SO. AND THE EVIL SPIRIT ANSWERED AND SAID, "JESUS I KNOW, AND PAUL I KNOW; BUT WHO ARE YOU?" THEN THE MAN IN WHOM THE EVIL SPIRIT WAS LEAPED ON THEM AND OVERPOWERED THEM..."

Acts 19:13-15

There is power in the Name of Jesus to those that know the One to whom that Name belongs. The last verse above proves that such power only belongs to those who know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Psalm 91 states that it is "Because he has known My Name" that the closing verses of Psalm 91 state the benefits that exist between the Christian and the Christ.

On the next page is a re-print of Psalm 91 and some other verses from the Psalms that are "of like faith" to what we have considered in Psalm 91. I have printed them on a single page in order that you may have them readily available as a quick reminder. Learn to confess them out loud along with Psalm 91. Get the content from your head to your heart and you will replace pandemic fear with pandemic faith!

"...MY SOUL
TRUSTS IN YOU;
AND
IN THE SHADOW
OF YOUR WINGS
I WILL MAKE
MY REFUGE,
UNTIL
THESE CALAMITIES
HAVE PASSED BY.
I WILL CRY OUT
TO GOD MOST HIGH,
TO GOD WHO
PERFORMS
ALL THINGS FOR ME.
HE SHALL
SEND FROM HEAVEN
AND SAVE ME...
GOD SHALL
SEND FORTH
HIS MERCY
AND
HIS TRUTH."

Ps 57:1-3

"I WILL LOVE YOU,
O LORD,
MY STRENGTH.
THE LORD IS MY ROCK
AND MY FORTRESS
AND MY DELIVERER;
MY GOD,
MY STRENGTH,
IN WHOM I WILL TRUST;
MY SHIELD
AND THE HORN
OF MY SALVATION,
MY STRONGHOLD.
I WILL CALL UPON THE LORD,
WHO IS
WORTHY TO BE PRAISED;
SO SHALL I BE SAVED
FROM MY ENEMIES...
IN MY DISTRESS
I CALLED
UPON THE LORD,
AND CRIED OUT
TO MY GOD;
HE HEARD MY VOICE
FROM HIS TEMPLE,
AND MY CRY
CAME BEFORE HIM,
EVEN TO HIS EARS."

Ps 18:1-6

"IN YOU, O LORD,
I PUT MY TRUST;
LET ME NEVER BE ASHAMED;
DELIVER ME IN
YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.
BOW DOWN YOUR EAR TO ME,
DELIVER ME SPEEDILY;
BE
MY ROCK OF REFUGE,
A FORTRESS OF DEFENSE
TO SAVE ME.
FOR YOU ARE
MY ROCK
AND MY FORTRESS;
THEREFORE,
FOR YOUR NAME'S SAKE,
LEAD ME AND GUIDE ME...
FOR YOU ARE MY STRENGTH...
BUT AS FOR ME,
I TRUST IN YOU, O LORD;
I SAY, "YOU ARE MY GOD."
MY TIMES ARE IN YOUR HAND;
DELIVER ME FROM
THE HAND OF MY ENEMIES...
HOW GREAT IS YOUR
GOODNESS,
WHICH YOU HAVE
LAID UP FOR THOSE
WHO FEAR YOU,
WHICH YOU HAVE PREPARED
FOR THOSE WHO TRUST IN YOU...
YOU SHALL HIDE THEM
IN THE SECRET PLACE
OF YOUR PRESENCE
FROM THE PLOTS OF MAN;
YOU SHALL KEEP THEM
SECRETLY IN A PAVILION."

Ps 31:1-5, 14-15, 19-20

"HE WHO DWELLS IN
THE SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH
SHALL ABIDE UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY.
I WILL SAY OF THE LORD, "HE IS MY REFUGE AND
MY FORTRESS; MY GOD, IN HIM I WILL TRUST."

SURELY HE SHALL DELIVER YOU FROM THE SNARE OF THE
FOWLER AND FROM THE PERILOUS PESTILENCE. HE SHALL COVER
YOU WITH HIS FEATHERS, AND UNDER HIS WINGS YOU SHALL
TAKE REFUGE; HIS TRUTH SHALL BE YOUR SHIELD AND
BUCKLER. YOU SHALL NOT BE AFRAID OF THE TERROR BY
NIGHT, NOR OF THE ARROW THAT FLIES BY DAY,
OR OF THE PESTILENCE THAT WALKS IN DARKNESS,

NOR OF THE DESTRUCTION THAT LAYS WASTE AT NOONDAY. A THOUSAND MAY FALL AT YOUR
SIDE, AND TEN THOUSAND AT YOUR RIGHT HAND; BUT IT SHALL NOT COME NEAR YOU. ONLY WITH
YOUR EYES SHALL YOU LOOK, AND SEE THE REWARD OF THE WICKED.

BECAUSE YOU HAVE MADE THE LORD, WHO IS MY REFUGE,
EVEN THE MOST HIGH, YOUR DWELLING PLACE,

NO EVIL SHALL BEFALL YOU, NOR SHALL ANY PLAGUE COME NEAR YOUR DWELLING;
FOR HE SHALL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE OVER YOU, TO KEEP YOU IN ALL YOUR WAYS.
IN THEIR HANDS THEY SHALL BEAR YOU UP, LEST YOU DASH YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.
YOU SHALL TREAD UPON THE LION AND THE COBRA, THE YOUNG LION AND THE SERPENT YOU SHALL
TRAMPLE UNDERFOOT. "BECAUSE HE HAS SET HIS LOVE UPON ME, THEREFORE I WILL DELIVER HIM;
I WILL SET HIM ON HIGH, BECAUSE HE HAS KNOWN MY NAME. HE SHALL CALL UPON ME, AND I WILL
ANSWER HIM; I WILL BE WITH HIM IN TROUBLE; I WILL DELIVER HIM AND HONOR HIM. WITH LONG
LIFE I WILL SATISFY HIM, AND SHOW HIM MY SALVATION."

Psalms 91

One final illustration I would like to emphasize from Psalm 91. I have always been an eagle fan (not the football variety). God uses eagles often to convey spiritual truths. For instance:

"THE EVERLASTING GOD, THE LORD, THE CREATOR OF THE ENDS OF THE EARTH, NEITHER FAINTS NOR IS WEARY. HIS UNDERSTANDING IS UNSEARCHABLE. HE GIVES POWER TO THE WEAK, AND TO THOSE WHO HAVE NO MIGHT HE INCREASES STRENGTH... BUT THOSE WHO WAIT ON THE LORD SHALL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH; THEY SHALL MOUNT UP WITH WINGS LIKE EAGLES, THEY SHALL RUN AND NOT BE WEARY, THEY SHALL WALK AND NOT FAINT." Isa 40:28-31

However, in Psalm 91 God Almighty uses the eagle specifically as best representing Himself to His people in the area of protection:

"HE WHO DWELLS IN THE SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH SHALL ABIDE UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY... HE SHALL COVER YOU WITH HIS FEATHERS, AND UNDER HIS WINGS YOU SHALL TAKE REFUGE... HE SHALL DELIVER YOU FROM... THE PERILOUS PESTILENCE. YOU SHALL NOT BE AFRAID OF... THE PESTILENCE THAT WALKS IN DARKNESS..."

Psalm 91:1-4

These two displays of eagles I placed in my office right after the COVID-19 sprang up. Note the baby eaglet "abiding under the shadow of the almighty" daddy eagle. —————→

In this secure habitat the eaglet takes his refuge. He feels quite safe and secure "under his wings" and covered with "his feathers." Think about it: this is the picture God chose to best represent His powerful protection over those who belong to Him. Twice in these passages he singles out "pestilence" as part of His covering over us.



APOSTOLIC MISSIONS

promoting



**JESUS
CHRIST**

and **HIS
CHURCH**

as the

"LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

PastorRandyShupe.com

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"THEREFORE, BRETHREN, HAVING BOLDNESS TO ENTER THE HOLIEST BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS, BY A NEW AND LIVING WAY WHICH HE CONSECRATED FOR US..."

Heb 10:19-21

"...THEY OVERCAME HIM BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB AND BY THE WORD OF THEIR TESTIMONY,"

Rev 12:11

"HOW MUCH MORE SHALL THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, WHO THROUGH THE ETERNAL SPIRIT OFFERED HIMSELF WITHOUT SPOT TO GOD, CLEANSE YOUR CONSCIENCE FROM DEAD WORKS TO SERVE THE LIVING GOD?"

Heb 9:14-15

"FOR INDEED CHRIST, OUR PASSOVER, WAS SACRIFICED FOR US. THEREFORE LET US KEEP THE FEAST..."

1 Cor 5:7-8

"...TAKE LAMBS FOR YOURSELVES ACCORDING TO YOUR FAMILIES, AND KILL THE PASSOVER LAMB.

AND YOU SHALL TAKE A BUNCH OF HYSSOP, DIP IT IN THE BLOOD THAT IS IN THE BASIN, AND STRIKE THE LINTEL AND THE TWO DOORPOSTS WITH THE BLOOD THAT IS IN THE BASIN. AND NONE OF YOU SHALL GO OUT OF THE DOOR OF HIS HOUSE UNTIL MORNING. FOR THE LORD WILL PASS THROUGH TO STRIKE THE EGYPTIANS; AND WHEN HE SEES THE BLOOD

ON THE LINTEL AND ON THE TWO DOORPOSTS , THE LORD WILL PASS OVER THE DOOR AND NOT ALLOW THE DESTROYER TO COME INTO YOUR HOUSES TO STRIKE YOU..."

Ex 12:21-25

"...JOHN SAW JESUS COMING TOWARD HIM, AND SAID, "BEHOLD! THE LAMB OF GOD WHO TAKES AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD!"

John 1:29-30

"...HE SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES, "YOU KNOW THAT AFTER TWO DAYS IS THE PASSOVER, AND THE SON OF MAN WILL BE DELIVERED UP TO BE CRUCIFIED."

Matt 26:1-2

"...YOU WERE NOT REDEEMED WITH CORRUPTIBLE THINGS, LIKE SILVER OR GOLD.. BUT WITH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST, AS OF A LAMB WITHOUT BLEMISH AND WITHOUT SPOT."

1 Peter 1:18-21

"JESUS CHRIST... WHO LOVED US AND WASHED US FROM OUR SINS IN HIS OWN BLOOD..."

Rev 1:5-6

I once heard a bible teacher on the radio make the statement, "The Old Testament Feast of Passover has nothing to do with the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. There is no connection between the Passover lamb's blood and the Blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross of Calvary." To refute such a proclamation, I refer the reader to consider all the above New Testament verses placed along side the Old Testament verses from Exodus. The apostle Paul, writer of two-thirds of the New Testament epistles, refutes such nonsense with one single verse, "For Indeed Christ, our Passover was sacrificed for us." (1 Cor. 5:7-8).

In this newsletter I would like to expose you to the greatness of "the power of the Blood of the Lamb."

Since Paul affirms that "Christ is our Passover Lamb sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7-8), then we can begin our story with the type and shadow contained within the Exodus account of the first Passover:

THE TWIN BENEFITS OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST, THE LAMB OF GOD, AT PASSOVER:

**Eating of the sacrificed lamb
inside the house...**



**FORGIVENESS
OF SINS
BY
THE BLOOD
OF CHRIST**



**PROTECTION
FROM SATAN
BY
THE BLOOD
OF CHRIST**

**Applying the blood of the lamb
outside the house...**



*"THEN THEY SHALL EAT THE FLESH ON THAT NIGHT;
ROASTED IN FIRE, WITH UNLEAVENED BREAD AND WITH
BITTER HERBS THEY SHALL EAT IT. ...
YOU SHALL LET NONE OF IT REMAIN UNTIL MORNING,
AND WHAT REMAINS OF IT UNTIL MORNING YOU SHALL
BURN WITH FIRE. AND THUS YOU SHALL EAT IT:
WITH A BELT ON YOUR WAIST,
YOUR SANDALS ON YOUR FEET,
AND YOUR STAFF IN YOUR HAND.
SO YOU SHALL EAT IT IN HASTE.
IT IS THE LORD'S PASSOVER."*
Ex 12:8-11

The milk of the Passover message above is the well-known and widely accepted truth that the blood that was shed by the death of the Passover lamb was a prophetic picture of the true Lamb of God, Jesus Christ who, "loved us and washed us in His own Blood" (Rev 1:5). Of this Christ, Paul stated, "God has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed 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).

*"AND YOU SHALL TAKE A BUNCH OF HYSSOP, DIP IT IN
THE BLOOD THAT IS IN THE BASIN, AND STRIKE THE LINTEL
AND THE TWO DOORPOSTS WITH THE BLOOD THAT IS IN THE
BASIN. AND NONE OF YOU SHALL GO OUT OF THE DOOR
OF HIS HOUSE UNTIL MORNING. FOR THE LORD WILL PASS
THROUGH TO STRIKE THE EGYPTIANS; AND WHEN HE SEES THE
BLOOD ON THE LINTEL AND ON THE TWO DOORPOSTS,
THE LORD WILL PASS OVER THE DOOR AND NOT ALLOW THE
DESTROYER TO COME INTO YOUR HOUSES TO STRIKE YOU...
IT IS THE PASSOVER SACRIFICE OF THE LORD, WHO PASSED
OVER THE HOUSES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL IN EGYPT
WHEN HE STRUCK THE EGYPTIANS AND DELIVERED
OUR HOUSEHOLDS."*
Ex 12:22-27

The meat of the Passover message is another aspect of the Blood of the Lamb. It is not just "forgiveness of sin" this time, but rather something that was done after the shedding of the blood. It was first captured in a basin and then applied by God's people as an act of faith. This same blood that forgives our sins would also be sufficient for use as protection from "the destroyer", the evil angel of death, who had free access into every house **EXCEPT** the ones with the blood applied to the lintel and side door posts.

You believe in the milk message, do you not? Is the Blood of the Lamb sufficient to forgive **ALL** your sins? We all heartily respond with "Amen! It is true!" Saint of God, do you **ALSO** believe in the meat of the message that follows the milk? Do you believe that the same blood that forgives all your sins is also equally able to protect you from any and all acts of "the Destroyer" (Satan), the "angel of death"? What say you to this aspect of truth? If your answer is not also a hearty "Amen! It is true!", then how can you be sure that you are forgiven of all your sins by the Blood of the Lamb? Perhaps forgiveness of sin is not all-inclusive if we don't equally believe the same Blood is able to halt "the Destroyer" in his tracks concerning the likes of COVID-19? It is the same Lamb, the same Blood, and the same Passover story that portrays the dual message of "forgiveness and protection" being the twin result of the shed Blood of the Lamb. Both require clear acts of faith from God's people to appropriate, do they not?

The problem lies in the fact that we have preached the milk message far more fully than we have proclaimed the meat message. Perhaps this is why the scriptures cry out for us to hold a balanced perspective when it comes to truths:

**"BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL; AND ALL THAT IS WITHIN ME, BLESS HIS HOLY NAME!
BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL, AND FORGET NOT ALL HIS BENEFITS:
WHO FORGIVES ALL YOUR INIQUITIES, WHO HEALS ALL YOUR DISEASES,
WHO REDEEMS YOUR LIFE FROM DESTRUCTION,
WHO CROWNS YOU WITH LOVINGKINDNESS AND TENDER MERCIES,
WHO SATISFIES YOUR MOUTH WITH GOOD THINGS,
SO THAT YOUR YOUTH IS RENEWED LIKE THE EAGLE'S."**

Ps 103:1-5

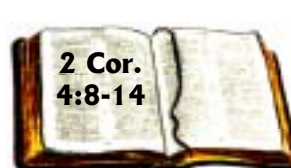
In "forgiving **ALL** our iniquities" we speak of the milk of God's Word concerning forgiveness of all our transgressions. In speaking of "healing **ALL** our diseases" we speak of the meat of God's Word concerning deliverance from evil forces who come to "rob, kill and destroy."

Do you understand the distinction I am making between "milk and meat"? First of all, God's Word has a basic, simple, easy-to-understand message. It is considered like milk to a baby. However, as we grow up spiritually we need more than milk, we need meat. God's Word is so designed that it can feed "babes in Christ" with needful milk, but also it can provide solid food ("meat") to sustain the life of those who have grown up to become Christians that are "mature in Christ." The milk of God's Word deals with the basic fundamental and obvious meanings of scripture. For instance, milk declares, "Christ was crucified for us." However, "meat" will declare, "I was crucified with Christ." We know that milk says, "Christ raised from the dead", but the meat will declare something far deeper, "If you have been raised with Christ, seek those things that are above where Christ is, sitting at the Right Hand of God. Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth..." The resurrection of Christ goes far beyond the physical event itself, it leads to a spiritual resurrection in God's people.



**"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.
FOR I DELIVERED TO YOU
FIRST OF ALL THAT WHICH
I ALSO RECEIVED:
THAT CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS
ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES,
AND THAT HE WAS BURIED,
AND THAT HE ROSE AGAIN
THE THIRD DAY ACCORDING
TO THE SCRIPTURES..."**

From these two epistles
(1st and 2nd Corinthians),
both written by the Apostle
Paul, we can vividly see two
vastly different depictions that
he presents to the same
people, about the same
subject, the death and
resurrection of Jesus Christ.



**"WE ARE HARD PRESSED ON EVERY SIDE,
YET NOT CRUSHED, WE ARE PERPLEXED,
BUT NOT IN DESPAIR...STRUCK DOWN,
BUT NOT DESTROYED-
ALWAYS CARRYING ABOUT IN THE BODY
THE DYING OF THE LORD JESUS,
THAT THE LIFE OF JESUS
MAY BE MANIFESTED IN OUR BODY.
FOR WE WHO LIVE ARE ALWAYS
DELIVERED TO DEATH FOR JESUS' SAKE,
THAT THE LIFE OF JESUS MAY ALSO BE
MANIFESTED IN OUR MORTAL FLESH...
KNOWING THAT HE WHO
RAISED UP THE LORD JESUS
WILL ALSO RAISE US UP
WITH JESUS..."**

One is a simple basic message Paul calls "the gospel" dealing with the importance of having personal faith in the physical death and resurrection of Christ. It is as stated to be the message "in which you stand" and "by which you are saved." This fundamental message falls under the banner of containing the milk of God's Word. The Apostle Peter says, "As newborn babes desire the pure milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby..." (1 Pet 2:2). However, Paul's second message to the Corinthians is more than the milk of a message proclaiming the likes of "You must be born-again" (John 3:3-7). Although it is important to state that the message of the milk of salvation is still a grave matter of life and death we each must deal with. Our personal choice determines whether we shall see heaven or hell for all eternity. Milk messages, though fundamental in content, are still very necessary.

However, the other message presented by Paul to the Corinthians is a deeper look into the death and resurrection of Christ than a milk message of salvation. This additional message is filled with strong spiritual meat. Paul now presents to the same born-again Christians how to personally apply Christ's death and resurrection into their own walk with Christ while living in a world dominated by evil forces of darkness bent on destroying the testimony of any and all Christians. Satan dominates this world under his control by bombarding it's inhabitants with a spirit of "the fear of death." We are presently being besieged with a satanic pandemic of the fear of death due to COVID-19. It will take the "meat" of God's Word to defeat it. Listen to the warning about remaining on a diet of milk:

**"...AND YOU HAVE COME TO NEED MILK AND NOT SOLID FOOD.
FOR EVERYONE WHO PARTAKES ONLY OF MILK IS UNSKILLED IN THE WORD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,
FOR HE IS A BABE. BUT SOLID FOOD BELONGS TO THOSE WHO ARE OF FULL AGE,
THAT IS, THOSE WHO BY REASON OF USE HAVE THEIR SENSES EXERCISED TO DISCERN
BOTH GOOD AND EVIL."** Heb 5:12-14

Let us begin to unfold the "milk and meat" of the Passover message. I would like to give you some prophetic encouragement from this old story found in the second book of the Bible, Exodus. It is the story of the "exodus" of God's people from the bondage of slavery in Egypt under the wicked and cruel rule of Pharaoh, the King of Egypt. God sent Moses and Aaron to Egypt to confront Pharaoh with a demand to "Let my people go that they may keep a Feast to Me in the wilderness" (Ex. 5:1). Pharaoh in defiance replies, "And Pharaoh said, 'Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go.'" (Ex. 5:2).

What follows in Exodus is a series of ten plagues the Lord God begins to unfold upon Egypt and its false Gods. They are designed to reveal to Pharaoh who is "The Lord." Pharaoh thinks he is God, but the Lord our God shows him otherwise by the magnitude of these ten plagues poured out one-by-one on Pharaoh, Egypt and its false Gods. The tenth plague is the most severe of all. God is about to loose upon Egypt the spirit of death who is called "the Destroyer", an evil angel of death who will enter every house in Egypt to slay the firstborn of each family. Up to this final plague, the Lord God made a distinction between the people of Egypt and the people of God held captive by Egypt. Beginning in the fifth plague God warns Pharaoh:

**"...AND IN THAT DAY I WILL SET APART
THE LAND OF GOSHEN,
IN WHICH MY PEOPLE DWELL,
THAT NO SWARMS OF FLIES SHALL BE THERE,
IN ORDER THAT YOU MAY KNOW
THAT I AM THE LORD
IN THE MIDST OF THE LAND,
I WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN MY PEOPLE AND YOUR PEOPLE."**
Ex. 8:21-23

In this tenth and final plague, God sets apart His people from the work of "the Destroyer" in a special way that will be a prophetic picture of how God "saves" His people from the hand of the Destroyer today. Take time and read the 12th chapter of Exodus. At least read these excerpts from it for it depicts how God would prophetically "provide a lamb" for the saving of His people today.

**"...TAKE LAMBS FOR YOURSELVES
ACCORDING TO YOUR FAMILIES,
AND KILL THE PASSOVER LAMB.
AND YOU SHALL TAKE A BUNCH OF HYSSOP,
DIP IT IN THE BLOOD
THAT IS IN THE BASIN,
AND STRIKE THE LINTEL AND THE TWO DOORPOSTS
WITH THE BLOOD
THAT IS IN THE BASIN.
AND NONE OF YOU SHALL GO OUT OF
THE DOOR OF HIS HOUSE UNTIL MORNING.
FOR THE LORD WILL
PASS THROUGH TO STRIKE THE EGYPTIANS;**



**AND WHEN HE SEES THE BLOOD
ON THE LINTEL AND ON THE TWO DOORPOSTS,
THE LORD WILL PASS OVER THE DOOR
AND NOT ALLOW THE DESTROYER
TO COME INTO YOUR HOUSES TO STRIKE YOU..."**
Ex 12:21-25

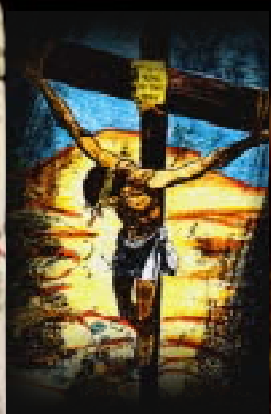
Every household of God's professing people in Egypt would take an innocent lamb and slay it. Its blood would be caught in a basin and then with "hyssop", as a paintbrush, they would apply the blood over the top and two sides of the doorway entrance. It would be a "sign" that would prevent "the Destroyer", the angel of death, from entering the houses of the people who belonged to God.

When the Angel of Death, the Destroyer, came to such a doorway marked with the sacrificial blood of a lamb, this death-bearing angel would not be allowed to enter that house, but rather was forced by God Almighty to **"PASS OVER"** that household due to its sovereign protection of being under "the Blood of the Lamb."

What distinguished the people of God from the people of Egypt? God's people were known by "the Blood of a Lamb", but the people of Egypt had no such identifying mark! Death entered wherever there was no blood of a lamb protecting it!

**"AND WHEN HE SEES THE BLOOD
ON THE LINTEL AND ON THE TWO DOORPOSTS,
THE LORD WILL PASS OVER THE DOOR
AND NOT ALLOW THE DESTROYER
TO COME INTO YOUR HOUSES TO STRIKE YOU..."**
Ex 12:21-25

PASSOVER



**"...TAKE LAMBS FOR YOURSELVES
ACCORDING TO YOUR FAMILIES,
AND KILL THE PASSOVER LAMB.
AND YOU SHALL TAKE A BUNCH OF HYSSOP,
DIP IT IN THE BLOOD
THAT IS IN THE BASIN,
AND STRIKE THE LINTEL AND THE TWO DOORPOSTS
WITH THE BLOOD
THAT IS IN THE BASIN.
AND NONE OF YOU SHALL GO OUT OF
THE DOOR OF HIS HOUSE UNTIL MORNING.
FOR THE LORD WILL
PASS THROUGH TO STRIKE THE EGYPTIANS;**



**AND WHEN HE SEES THE BLOOD
ON THE LINTEL AND ON THE TWO DOORPOSTS,
THE LORD WILL PASS OVER THE DOOR
AND NOT ALLOW THE DESTROYER
TO COME INTO YOUR HOUSES TO STRIKE YOU..."**
Ex 12:21-25

The innocent lambs sacrificed in the Exodus story are but a prophetic portrayal of Jesus Christ, the perfect Lamb of God without blemish or spot who was sent by the Father to take away the sins of the world by shedding His blood on the cross. Truly, He is the Passover Lamb!

Why should a New Testament believer celebrate the Old Testament Feast of Passover? Simply because Paul states that "The Law is a shadow of the good things to come" (Heb. 10:1). The lambs of Exodus were a shadow of Jesus as the Lamb of God! "Egypt" in Exodus depicts this present world filled with false gods! "Pharaoh" of Egypt represents Satan as the God of this world! It was Paul the apostle that told the church to celebrate Passover:

**"...FOR INDEED CHRIST, OUR PASSOVER,
WAS SACRIFICED FOR US.
THEREFORE LET US KEEP THE FEAST..."**

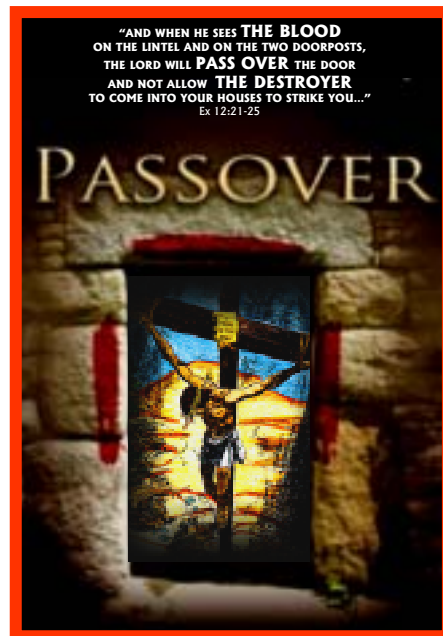
1 Cor 5:7-8

Take the time to look carefully at the “type and shadow” given in the Exodus story. It all foreshadows Christ as our Passover Lamb. Look at this picture. In Exodus, where was the blood of the lamb applied? It was placed above the lintel and on the two side posts. That forms three points of a cross, but not four. Notice in Exodus the blood was not applied to the floor of the doorway. Why so? Perhaps because of this prophetic passage of Scripture:

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

Heb 10:29-30

In reverence to the means by which Christ died, namely the cross, the blood of the lamb slain in the Exodus story was placed on the lintel and the two side posts, but was not to be applied to the threshold of the doorway lest they would “trample under foot the blood of the covenant by which they were sanctified.” How exacting is God’s Word, Old and New Testament alike!



As important as the forgiveness of sin is by means of the shed Blood of the Lamb, that is not all there is to the story as we see emphasized in Exodus. The Blood of the Lamb also provided protection from the Destroyer, the angel of Death. Perhaps in light of the COVID-19 “death threat” that hangs over us today, we can make a parallel application to the “power of the Blood” to protect God’s people from this modern-day “destroyer” (COVID-19) at work in our midst.

We have been ordered to “stay in our houses” just like God ordered His people in Exodus “not to go out your door” until He has dealt with “the Destroyer, the angel of death.”

The problem is that the government has one solution for dealing with “the Destroyer” (COVID-19), but our God has a much higher solution for this plague. The government has a **NATURAL** solution, but God has a **SUPERNATURAL** way of dealing with “the Destroyer.”

The natural solution has been drilled into us by those in our government. It consists of fervently washing your hands, practicing social distancing, and as a last resort, being “locked down” in our homes. I am not against any of these practices for they all make sense. As long as it is “the law of the land” I will obey it and encourage others to do also. So far, wearing a mask is a suggestion, but not the law of the land. As a man of faith in Psalm 91, I firmly believe that I am not a carrier of this virus. Therefore I don’t need a mask unless the law insists I wear one.

As good as all the natural solution sounds, God’s solution for this virus is supernatural. That does not mean God is against laws of hygiene for He invented them. Leviticus abounds with such laws of personal hygiene. God’s solution is not more water, but more blood-supernatural Blood provided by Jesus, the Lamb of God. His blood not only cleanses us from our sins, but it also protects us from “the Destroyer.” God **STILL** wants His people to practice faith that it is **STILL** “the Blood of the Lamb” that secures our households from “the Destroyer,” and He wants His people to boldly proclaim that fact.

What is the extent of protection Psalm 91 provides for us while we are in our homes protected by the Blood of the Lamb?

**“NO EVIL SHALL BEFALL YOU,
NOR SHALL ANY PLAGUE COME NEAR YOUR DWELLING;
FOR HE SHALL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE OVER YOU,
TO KEEP YOU IN ALL YOUR WAYS... HE SHALL CALL UPON ME,
AND I WILL ANSWER HIM; I WILL BE WITH HIM IN TROUBLE;
I WILL DELIVER HIM AND HONOR HIM.
WITH LONG LIFE I WILL SATISFY HIM, AND SHOW HIM MY SALVATION.”**



**"FOR THOUGH WE WALK IN THE FLESH (physical realm),
WE DO NOT WAR ACCORDING TO THE FLESH (physical realm).
FOR THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE ARE NOT CARNAL (physical)
BUT MIGHTY IN GOD FOR PULLING DOWN STRONGHOLDS,
CASTING DOWN ARGUMENTS AND EVERY HIGH THING
THAT EXALTS ITSELF AGAINST THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD,
BRINGING EVERY THOUGHT INTO CAPTIVITY
TO THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST..."**

2 Cor 10:3-6

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

"...THEY
OVERCAME HIM
BY THE BLOOD
OF THE LAMB
AND
BY THE WORD
OF THEIR TESTIMONY..."
Rev 12:11



THE NAME OF CHRIST

"THAT AT THE NAME OF JESUS
EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW,
OF THOSE IN HEAVEN,
AND OF THOSE ON EARTH,
AND OF THOSE UNDER THE EARTH,
AND THAT EVERY TONGUE SHOULD
CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD,
TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER."

Phil. 2:10-11

The two great and mighty weapons of our warfare are stated above. Learn how to use them properly.
The Blood of Christ is used to **PROTECT** us from all demonic harm that threatens us from without.
The Name of Jesus is used to **CAST OUT** anything demonic that can harm us from within.
Both qualify as "mighty in God for pulling down strongholds."

However, this newsletter is about the Blood of Christ, the Lamb of God. If you are fully persuaded that the Blood of Christ can forgive all your sins as it did in type and shadow for the Children of Israel in Egypt, then you must become equally convinced that the same Blood of the same Lamb is fully capable of protecting "the house of God's people" from the work of "the Destroyer."

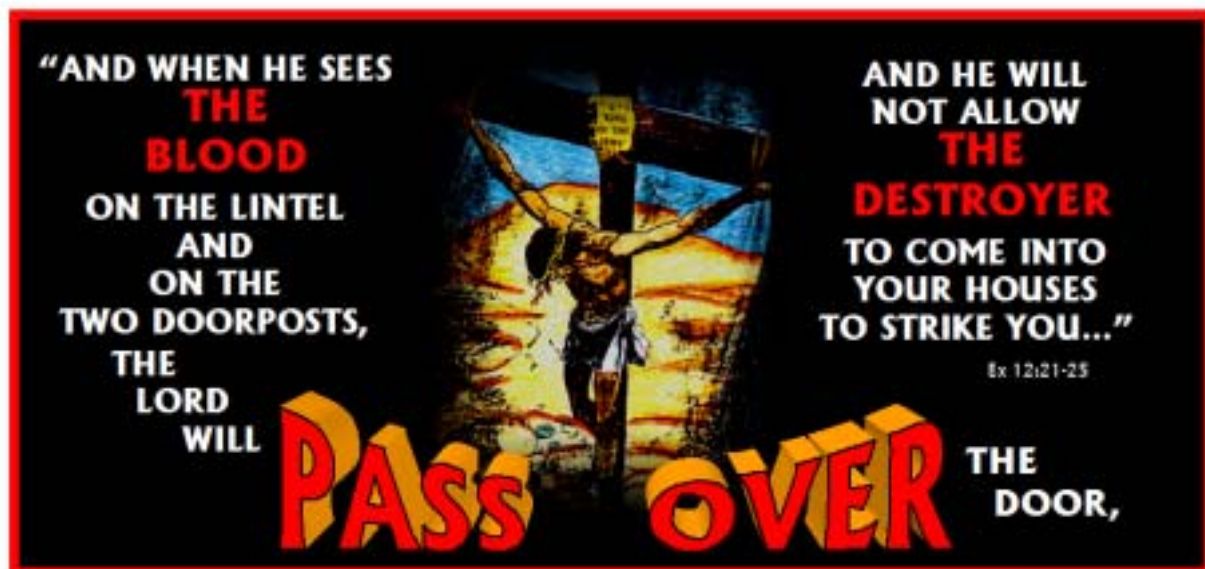
"THE HOUSE OF GOD'S PEOPLE IN EGYPT OF OLD"



"THE HOUSE OF GOD'S PEOPLE IN "EGYPT" (THE WORLD) IN OUR DAY



So convinced of this truth, my wife and I marked our doors with a declaration of the power of the Blood of the Lamb to keep away from our dwelling place the likes of COVID-19. Our home in God is to be a fortress of safety from all that is in the world just as it was for the Children of Israel on the night of the first Passover when the Destroyer passed through the land to destroy the firstborn. However, when he saw the Blood of the Lamb covering the door, he was forced by God Almighty to "pass over" it!



**"THE HOUSE
OF GOD'S PEOPLE
IN "EGYPT" (THE WORLD) IN OUR DAY**



**"NO EVIL SHALL BEFALL YOU,
NOR SHALL ANY PLAGUE
COME NEAR YOUR DWELLING..."**

**"SURELY HE SHALL DELIVER YOU
FROM THE SNARE OF THE
FOWLER AND FROM THE
PERILOUS PESTILENCE..."**

**"AND WHEN HE SEES THE BLOOD
ON THE LINTEL AND ON THE TWO
DOORPOSTS, THE LORD WILL PASS
OVER THE DOOR
AND NOT ALLOW THE DESTROYER
TO COME INTO YOUR HOUSES
TO STRIKE YOU..."**
(excerpts Pwsalm 91)

Not only is our physical
geographical dwelling
place protected by the
Blood of the Lamb,
but God help us to
grasp that also our
"portable" house,
our physical body,
is also under the
protection of the Blood
of the Lamb!

Do you know that
the Triune Godhead
dwells ("lives")
inside our body?

The Holy Spirit
(1 Cor. 16:19-20)

God the Father
and God the Son
(John 14:23)

If that is true (and it is)
then we must realize
that everywhere our
body goes, the Triune
Godhead goes with
us. That means the
Blood of Jesus, the
Lamb of God protects
us when we go into
the market place, into
the work place, etc.

**ALSO "THE HOUSE"
OF GOD'S PEOPLE!**



**"...FOR EVERY HOUSE IS BUILT BY
SOMEONE, BUT HE WHO BUILT ALL
THINGS IS GOD. AND MOSES
INDEED WAS FAITHFUL IN ALL HIS
HOUSE AS A SERVANT, FOR A
TESTIMONY OF THOSE THINGS
WHICH WOULD BE SPOKEN
AFTERWARD, BUT CHRIST AS A
SON OVER HIS OWN HOUSE,
WHOSE HOUSE WE ARE..."**

Heb 3:4-6

**"...DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT
YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF
THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO
IS IN YOU...
THEREFORE GLORIFY GOD IN
YOUR BODY AND IN YOUR SPIRIT,
WHICH ARE GOD'S (PROPERTY)."**

1 Cor 6:19-20

THE DUAL POWER OF **THE BLOOD** OF THE PASSOVER LAMB

THE POWER OF THE BLOOD OF THE PASSOVER LAMB TO FORGIVE US

The application of the Blood of the Lamb for forgiveness is not automatic. By that I mean that the believer in Christ must constantly and consistently appropriate forgiveness of sin, it does not come to us automatically. Surprised by that statement? Then consider what the word of God records, for far too often, we cling to the words of men instead of the Word of God. As Paul would say, "For what does the scripture say?" (Rom. 4:3). Here is what it says:

"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. MY LITTLE CHILDREN, THESE THINGS I WRITE TO YOU, SO 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 FOR OURS ONLY BUT ALSO FOR THE WHOLE WORLD."

1 John 1:7-10, 2:1-2

Rather than having received pre-forgiveness of sins not yet committed (as popularly taught), John says "do not sin." However, "if anyone sins" it requires the one who sins to confess his sins to God in order to obtain forgiveness. Upon such confession, God will be faithful and just to forgive those sins. One way to receive such forgiveness is through the partaking of Communion:

"MOST ASSUREDLY, I SAY TO YOU, UNLESS YOU EAT THE FLESH OF THE SON OF MAN AND DRINK HIS BLOOD, YOU HAVE NO LIFE IN YOU. WHOEVER EATS MY FLESH AND DRINKS MY BLOOD HAS ETERNAL LIFE, AND I WILL RAISE HIM UP AT THE LAST DAY. FOR MY FLESH IS FOOD INDEED, AND MY BLOOD IS DRINK INDEED. HE WHO EATS MY FLESH AND DRINKS MY BLOOD ABIDES IN ME, AND I IN HIM."

John 6:53-57

If you think those are hard words from Jesus so did His disciples, "Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, 'This is a hard saying; who can understand it?...From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.'" (Jn.6:66)



THE POWER OF THE BLOOD OF THE PASSOVER LAMB TO PROTECT US

Same story: The application of the Blood of the Lamb for protection is not automatic. God requires the believer to apply by faith the blood of the Passover lamb to the lintels and door post over the door to their dwelling place.

The blood from the sacrificed lamb was available, however, it needed to be applied by the believer to the entrance of his dwelling place. The blood shed and caught in a basin needed to be applied with "the hyssop of faith" to the door opening. God was not going to do it for the believer, he must take an action of faith in the protective power of the blood of the lamb.

If it was applied and visible for all to see, "the Destroyer", the angel of death, would be forced by God to "pass over" that house because it was protected "under the blood."

"AND WHEN HE SEES THE BLOOD ON THE LINTEL AND ON THE TWO DOORPOSTS, THE LORD WILL PASS OVER THE DOOR AND NOT ALLOW THE DESTROYER TO COME INTO YOUR HOUSES TO STRIKE YOU..."

Ex 12:21-25

Christianity is inundated with the preaching of "half truths." The point I want you to see on both sides of the blood issue is that whether we speak of "forgiveness of sins" or of "protection from evil" the believer has an active role to play. We have suffered enough from "vicarious Christianity." Far too long we have been willing to let God do all the suffering, all the cross-bearing and all the dying. Here is what Jesus said:

"IF ANYONE DESIRES TO COME AFTER ME, LET HIM DENY HIMSELF, AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS, AND FOLLOW ME. FOR WHOEVER DESIRES TO SAVE HIS LIFE WILL LOSE IT, BUT WHOEVER LOSES HIS LIFE FOR MY SAKE WILL FIND IT. FOR WHAT PROFIT IS IT TO A MAN IF HE GAINS THE WHOLE WORLD, AND LOSES HIS OWN SOUL? OR WHAT WILL A MAN GIVE IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS SOUL? FOR THE SON OF MAN WILL COME IN THE GLORY OF HIS FATHER WITH HIS ANGELS, AND THEN HE WILL REWARD EACH ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS."

Matt. 16:24-27

Pastor Randy Shupe

APOSTOLIC MISSIONS

promoting



**JESUS
CHRIST**

and **HIS
CHURCH**

as the

"LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

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**"NOW
FAITH IS
THE SUBSTANCE OF
THINGS HOPED FOR,
THE EVIDENCE OF
THINGS NOT SEEN.
FOR BY IT THE ELDERS
OBTAINED A
GOOD TESTIMONY."**
Heb 11:1-2

**"I HAVE MORE UNDERSTANDING
THAN ALL MY TEACHERS FOR
YOUR TESTIMONIES
ARE MY MEDITATION."**

Ps 119:99

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

~ TESTIMONY

**"a record of witness, life-story, bearing witness to events,
an account, evidence, declaration of happenings, highlights..."**

"THERE CANNOT BE A TESTIMONY WITHOUT A TEST." (unknown quote)

The Bible is filled with various accounts of "testimonies." Perhaps there is no place greater in scripture than the list of testimonies recorded in Hebrews Chapter 11 more commonly known as "the heroes of faith." All good testimonies contain "tests" as the quote above affirms. The subject of faith also involves tests as the apostle James bears witness to:

**"MY BRETHREN, COUNT IT ALL JOY WHEN YOU FALL INTO VARIOUS TRIALS,
KNOWING THAT THE TESTING OF YOUR FAITH PRODUCES PATIENCE.
BUT LET PATIENCE HAVE ITS PERFECT WORK, THAT YOU MAY BE PERFECT AND
COMPLETE, LACKING NOTHING."** James 1:3



I would like to use Hebrews Chapter 11 as a means to impart to the reader how it is that we can, as followers of Christ, have our own testimony of a life lived by faith that is parallel to the examples listed in this great chapter from Hebrews. In another of Paul's epistles written to the Romans, he also made reference to the saints of old as being examples for us to emulate as followers of Christ :



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

Rom. 15:4,13

Noting the importance Paul places on hope above, let us begin with a twofold definition of faith given in the opening verse of Hebrews 11: —→

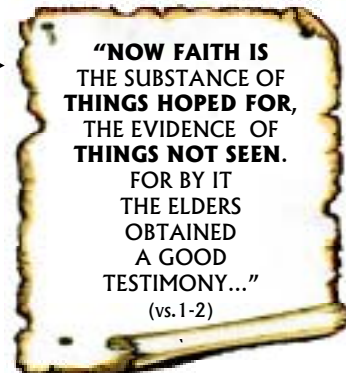
Both of these criteria of faith are vitally connected to having biblical hope. Hope and faith are intricately linked together. You can't have one without the other. Hope centers upon the 5,000+ promises that God has recorded throughout His Word. Faith is the means by which we lay hold of those promises:

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

Heb 6:11-12

**"NOW FAITH IS
THE SUBSTANCE OF
THINGS HOPED FOR,
THE EVIDENCE OF
THINGS NOT SEEN.
FOR BY IT
THE ELDERS
OBTAINED
A GOOD
TESTIMONY..."**

(vs. 1-2)



We shall seek to unfold the real faith message that Hebrews Chapter 11 contains. You may be surprised by its message.

When the subject of "faith" is brought up immediately people seem to let their minds go to thoughts of what I like to call, "miracle-working faith." Although miracles are the result of exercising faith, we must understand that faith itself is not defined by performing miracles. Let me say it this way: There is more to faith than working miracles.

Who was the greatest worker of miracles in the Old Testament? Actually there were two; the prophet Elijah and his servant Elisha. Elijah is typically viewed as a type of Christ and Elisha, his servant, as a type of the church of Jesus Christ.

You know the story. Elisha beseeched his master for a double portion of the anointing that rested upon Elijah. When Elijah was taken up in a chariot of fire, his mantle fell to the ground and was picked up by Elisha who then went out and precisely performed double the miracles as Elijah did. So when we talk about faith, the story of miracle-working Elijah and Elisha spring forth as the most vivid of examples of faith.

However, does it surprise you if I tell you that among all the heroes of faith found listed one by one in Hebrews Chapter 11 that neither Elijah or Elisha are even mentioned by name as being among the "heroes of faith"? We would all like to be workers of miracles, but the fact of the matter is that such miracles belong to a select group of people chosen by the sovereign will of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4-11).

Hebrews Chapter 11 must be a brand of faith available to all of God's people, and it is. All those listed as "heroes of faith" in Hebrews Chapter 11 have a common denominator. They all are people that in life demonstrated in action what Paul opens Hebrews 11 with, a two-fold definition of what faith consists of. Here is that definition again:

**"NOW FAITH IS
THE SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR,
THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN.
FOR BY IT THE ELDERS OBTAINED A GOOD TESTIMONY..."**

Heb. 11:1-2

Every example Paul uses in Hebrews Chapter 11 describe a people operating a faith based on one or both of these faith principles: "things hoped for" and/or "things not seen." When God tells us to "draw near in the full assurance of faith" (Heb. 10:22), that faith will be based on "things hoped for and/or "things not seen."

"NOW THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." What does it mean to "live by faith"? The book of Acts sheds light on living by faith in revealing, "for in Him we live and move and have our being..." (Acts 17:28). In carefully analyzing that verse, it conveys to me, how we must live out our daily lives before men. Also, how and why we must move in such a specified manner in purpose and action in the midst of others. And finally, how we must manifest to others what is in our very inner being of soul ("my mind, my will and my emotions"). Our lives, as followers of Christ, should be so performed in a vivid, vibrant demonstration of faith in our God that it can be plainly seen and heard by all with whom we come in contact. To prove this stated analysis is true, all we need to do is take a look analytically at the various "heroes of faith" as portrayed in Hebrews Chapter 11.

However, this story of faith from the apostle Paul does not begin in Chapter 11 of Hebrews, but rather he opened the subject in Chapter 10. He concludes the message in Chapter 12.



Unless you see the total theme contained in them, you can easily miss “the moral to the story.” By that, I simply mean that if you consider Hebrews Chapter 11 isolated all by itself, you can easily miss the practical application of these “heroes of faith” to your own walk of faith. Here is a brief synopsis of all three chapters using the key theme verses that apply to faith:



From the opening in Hebrews Chapter 10, Paul exhorts all New Covenant believers to “draw near” to God by means of “full assurance of faith” in the Blood of Jesus. Then he issues the mandate, “Now the just shall live by faith”, followed by a strong warning that the believer who “draws back” from that mandate will cause God to find “no pleasure in him.” That is a parallel expression God made of the Children of Israel, “with most of them He was not well-pleased” because they turned an eleven-day journey from Egypt to the Promise Land into a forty-year nightmare of rebellion in the Wilderness (see 1 Cor.10). Paul closes out Hebrews Chapter 10 with a personal rejection of those who choose to draw back, but a hearty endorsement of those who “believe (have faith) to the saving of the soul.”

What follows is Chapter 11 of Hebrews opening with a definition of what faith consists of followed by the exhortation, “but without faith it is impossible to please Him.”

Do you know what kept the Children of Israel in the confines of “the great and terrible wilderness” for forty years? Paul stated the answer earlier in the very same epistle, Hebrews Chapter 3 & 4:

**“BEWARE, BRETHREN, LEST THERE BE IN ANY OF YOU
AN EVIL HEART OF UNBELIEF IN DEPARTING FROM THE LIVING GOD...
SO WE SEE THAT THEY COULD NOT ENTER IN BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF...
FOR INDEED THE GOSPEL WAS PREACHED TO US AS WELL AS TO THEM;
BUT THE WORD WHICH THEY HEARD DID NOT PROFIT THEM,
NOT BEING MIXED WITH FAITH IN THOSE WHO HEARD IT...”**

Heb. 3:12,19, 4:1-2

The enemy of faith is unbelief, in other words, “no faith.” A sad testimony God gives of His first covenant people is that they proved themselves to be labeled by God as “Children in whom is no faith” (Deut 32:20).

“CHILDREN IN WHOM THERE IS NO FAITH” (Deut 32:20) is a stinging reproof, is it not? To counter this poor testimony of some of God’s people in the past, Paul now launches into Chapter 11 of Hebrews to present a great and long dissertation about the subject of good testimonies of faith. Notice it begins by presenting the record of the elders that “by faith, obtained a good testimony” (Heb.11:1). Drop down to verse 39 and again Paul states, “And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith.” Sandwiched in-between verses 1 and 39 are 18 uses of the opening phrase, “by faith.” Paul is giving a barrage of examples of saints of old that bore “good testimonies of faith.” What prompted Paul to enumerate all these examples of faith? It was Chapter 10 of Hebrews in which he compared those who “draw near” to God by faith vs. those who bore evidence of “no faith” (unbelief) and therefore are guilty of “drawing back” from God. Chapter 11 of Hebrews becomes Paul’s argument of how New Covenant believers can “draw near” to God in full assurance of faith!

Now jump over to Hebrews Chapter 12 which opens with the word “Therefore.” Derek Prince would emphasize, “When you see a “therefore”, go see what it is there for.” Paul’s opening statement reminds you and me, as New Covenant believers, that the “therefore” refers to being surrounded by “so great a cloud of witnesses”, the “heroes of faith” of the Old Covenant which Paul has enumerated one by one as examples of people who were able to “draw near” to God by means of faith. In other words, they are our good examples to follow as we too embrace the mandate, “the just shall live by faith” (Heb. 10:38).

**“THEREFORE WE ALSO,
SINCE WE ARE SURROUNDED BY SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES,
LET US LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT,
AND THE SIN WHICH SO EASILY ENSNARES US,
AND LET US RUN WITH ENDURANCE THE RACE THAT IS SET BEFORE US,
LOOKING UNTO JESUS, THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH...”**

Heb. 12:1-2

As I was typing the above Scripture I was suddenly quickened by the words, “let us lay aside...the sin that so easily ensnares us.” I now think that Paul had a specific sin in mind that he has been systematically warning about at least in these three Chapters of Hebrews, but perhaps goes all the way back to Hebrews 3 and 4 as well. Paul is warning us about the ever-so common sin of **UNBELIEF**, a lack of **FAITH**! Perhaps in context the verse above from Heb. 12 even requires us to translate “the race” we run with endurance as also referring to the subject of “faith.” Consider Paul’s thinking along this line from Second Timothy:

**“...THE TIME OF MY DEPARTURE IS AT HAND.
I HAVE FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT, I HAVE FINISHED THE RACE, I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH...”**

2 Tim 4:6-8

Sandwiched on either side of what Paul calls “the race” are statements about having fought the good fight (of faith) and of having kept the faith. Therefore “the race” itself must be considered as part of the faith life.

Regardless, do take note that in this verse from Hebrews 12:2, Paul identifies Jesus as not only the “author” of our faith, but He is further identified as “the finisher” of our faith as well. It is not finished. When will it be finished? When our life is finished and we go home to be with Jesus! Life is to begin with faith and it is to end with faith!

The need for this newsletter of faith has been generated by the recent COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Let us therefore ponder to what degree we are individually tempted with a spiritual "plague" of unbelief.

In the life we are now forced to live, are we showing forth to others evidence of, "in Him we live, and move, and have our being"? Are we "fighting the good fight of faith" against "the sin that so easily ensnares us", the sin of unbelief? Are there places and events that we have experienced that we could have responded with a manifestation of "faith in God" instead of panic and fear? Are we among those bearing a "good testimony of faith" before others or are we like those of old, "children in whom there is no faith"? Are our fears just like the world? Are our solutions just like the world? Hard questions-no doubt, but perhaps worthy of pondering. How are we using all this free time we find ourselves suddenly inundated with due to being locked down in our dwelling places with no place to go? Are we using it wisely or foolishly? Redeem the time for the days are evil!

Dear saints, we live in the day in which God's people are looking more and more like everybody else around them and less and less like the image of Jesus Christ. Christianity is meant to be a "moving" experience! The truth is that we are either going forward or backward in our walk of faith. God declared to Pharaoh, "I will make a difference ("distinction") between My people and your people" (Ex. 8:23). The distinction God seeks to make between His people and the people of the world ("Egypt") is simply this: My people draw near to Me while the people of the world are far from Me. Paul's urgent message in Hebrews is to make a stark comparison between those professing believers who draw near to their God and those who are drawing back. Conformity to the world is evidenced by drawing back from living a life of faith in God to a life that looks and acts just like everybody else in the world! We have the same world-based fears! We show forth the same world-based solutions! Where are the people of God demonstrating that they are living by faith? I have always been troubled by these prophetic words spoken by Jesus concerning His return to earth:

**"...WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMES, WILL HE REALLY FIND
FAITH ON THE EARTH?"**

Luke 18:8

Obviously, Jesus isn't concerned about finding faith in God among the unbelieving people on earth that are under the sway of the Wicked One, is He? Rather we must accept that Jesus is presenting the real dilemma of just prior to His return that He would not be able to find faith in God existing among His own people on earth:



**"FOR YET A LITTLE WHILE,
AND**

**HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME
AND WILL NOT TARRY.
NOW THE JUST SHALL
LIVE BY FAITH..."**

Heb 10:37-38

**"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



**"THEREFORE, BRETHREN,
...ENTER...
BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS,
BY A NEW AND LIVING WAY...
LET US
DRAW NEAR
WITH A TRUE HEART
IN FULL ASSURANCE OF
FAITH..."**

Heb 10:19-22

"...YOU WERE WITHOUT CHRIST... HAVING NO HOPE AND WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD."

Eph 2:12-13

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

Rom. 15:4,13

**"...BUT HOPE THAT IS SEEN IS NOT HOPE; FOR WHY DOES ONE STILL HOPE FOR WHAT HE SEES?
BUT IF WE HOPE FOR WHAT WE DO NOT SEE, WE EAGERLY WAIT FOR IT WITH PERSEVERANCE."**

Rom. 8:24

**"NOW FAITH IS THE SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR,
THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN."**

Heb. 11:1-1

Those who are in the world, but without Christ, have "no hope." Those who are in this world with Christ "abound in hope", because God is "the God of all hope." The principle at work is summed up under the banner, "like father-like son." Biblical hope is to be the marked distinction between believers and unbelievers.

Let us now zero in on the subject of faith. It is important to see that no one can express faith apart from hope for "faith is the substance of things hoped for" (Heb.11:1) Paul is careful above to establish that "hope that is seen is not hope" for it is folly to "hope for something that you already see." Rather, if we are "hoping for what we do not yet see, then we eagerly wait for it with perseverance." When our hope is founded as Paul clearly describes it, then we have the basis of a solid-based faith! SELAH! (think about that).

The Chapter of faith, Hebrews 11:1-2, opens with this two-fold definition of faith: It is founded upon (1) "things hoped for" and (2) "things not seen." Both of these criteria are vitally connected to having biblical hope as defined in our opening passages above. Hope and faith are intricately linked together. You can't have one without the other. Hope centers upon the 5,000+ promises that God has recorded throughout His Word. Faith is the means by which we lay hold of those promises.

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

Heb 6:11-12

Now Paul begins a long list of "the elders", the saints of old, that bore a good testimony of manifesting a faith based on "things hoped for" and/or "things not seen." There are 18 examples listed, but we cannot touch on each one. However, we shall look at a sufficient number of them to get the point across. These are pertinent illustrations meant to be practically applied to our walk of faith. Let us begin with Enoch:

In the type and shadow of Enoch there is something presented that is held today by God's people in high esteem, and that is "the rapture."

**"FOR THE LORD HIMSELF WILL DESCEND FROM HEAVEN WITH A
SHOUT...AND WITH THE TRUMPET OF GOD...WE WHO ARE ALIVE
AND REMAIN SHALL BE CAUGHT UP TOGETHER WITH THEM
IN THE CLOUDS TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR.
AND THUS WE SHALL ALWAYS BE WITH THE LORD..."**

1 Thess 4:16-18

This event certainly qualifies as being a high priority of "things hoped for" but continues to remain among "things not seen." Every year at the Feast of Trumpets "we hope for it", but as the day passes, "it is not seen."

**"NOW FAITH IS
THE SUBSTANCE OF
THINGS HOPED FOR,
THE EVIDENCE OF
THINGS NOT SEEN.**

FOR BY IT
THE ELDERS
OBTAINED
A GOOD
TESTIMONY..."

(vs.1-2)

**" BY FAITH
ENOCH WAS
TAKEN AWAY**

SO THAT HE DID NOT SEE DEATH, "
AND WAS NOT FOUND,
BECAUSE GOD HAD TAKEN HIM";
FOR BEFORE HE WAS TAKEN
HE HAD THIS TESTIMONY,
THAT HE PLEASSED GOD.
BUT WITHOUT FAITH
IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM,
FOR HE WHO COMES TO GOD
MUST BELIEVE THAT HE IS (GOD)
AND THAT HE IS
A REWARDER OF THOSE
WHO DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM."

(vs. 5-6)

Of this promised future event we are warned by Jesus of a needful qualifier:

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



The story of Enoch adds this thought, "before He was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Back up into Genesis and we read more insight into Enoch:

"ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD THREE HUNDRED YEARS, AND HAD SONS AND DAUGHTERS. SO ALL THE DAYS OF ENOCH WERE THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIVE YEARS. AND ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD; AND HE WAS NOT, FOR GOD TOOK HIM." Gen 5:22-24

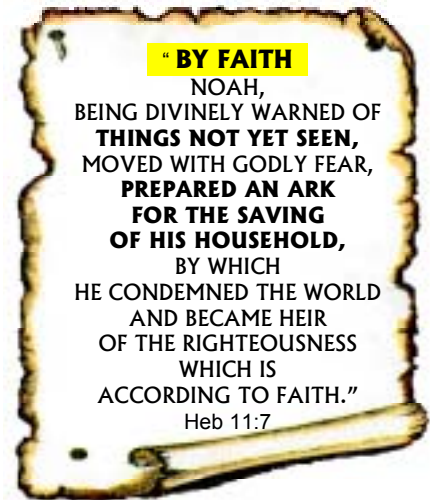
The epistle of Jude reveals what kind of Godly life Enoch lived in a nasty world under the pending judgment of God:

"NOW ENOCH, THE SEVENTH FROM ADAM, PROPHESED... SAYING, 'BEHOLD, THE LORD COMES WITH TEN THOUSANDS OF HIS SAINTS, TO EXECUTE JUDGMENT ON ALL, TO CONVICT ALL WHO ARE UNGODLY AMONG THEM OF ALL THEIR UNGODLY DEEDS WHICH THEY HAVE COMMITTED IN AN UNGODLY WAY, AND OF ALL THE HARSH THINGS WHICH UNGODLY SINNERS HAVE SPOKEN AGAINST HIM.'" Jude 14-16

Dear saint of God, can you and I live such a God-centered life in the midst of our nasty world as did Enoch that so pleased His God? If we follow his example of faith then we will inherit the same reward as did Enoch! He was taken and did not see death!

Following the testimony of Enoch we find the story of Noah: →

Right off we can see the validity of the fact that all of these examples of faith portray the definition of faith either as being "things hoped for" or "things not seen." Specifically, Noah has been divinely warned of "things not yet seen." Due to that advanced warning, Noah begins to "move with godly fear" of the pending judgment of God and he does something "by faith." What does he do as a pattern for what we should also do? Noah "prepared an ark for the saving of his household." Have we, like Noah, been divinely warned of some things that prophetically lie ahead, but are also "things not yet seen"?



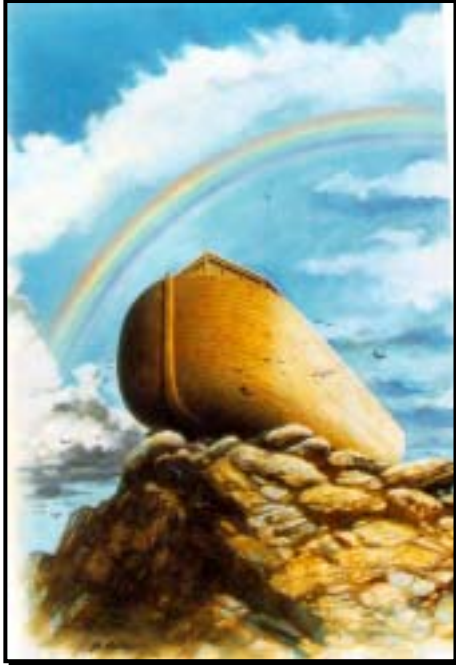
Has not Jesus Himself warned us of some specific things on the horizon that He labeled as "the beginning of sorrows"?

"FOR NATION WILL RISE AGAINST NATION, AND KINGDOM AGAINST KINGDOM. AND THERE WILL BE FAMINES, PESTILENCES, AND EARTHQUAKES IN VARIOUS PLACES. ALL THESE ARE THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS."

Matt 24:7-8

Among the things Jesus lists above are "pestilences." Do you remember that we had epidemic pestilences in 2018, 2019, and now we face "the mother of all pestilences", a world-wide pandemic, COVID-19! Here is the question: Having been divinely warned by such a world-wide, world-changing pandemic of fear, have we, like Noah, been moved by it to also prepare an "ark" (vessel of salvation) for the saving of our household?

have we, like Noah, been moved by it to also prepare an “ark” (vessel of salvation) for the saving of our household? Are these verses of Paul and Peter applicable to minister to the members of our household in such a time as this?:



**“BY FAITH NOAH,
BEING DIVINELY WARNED OF THINGS NOT YET SEEN,
MOVED WITH GODLY FEAR,
PREPARED AN ARK
FOR THE SAVING OF HIS HOUSEHOLD,
BY WHICH HE CONDEMNED THE WORLD
AND BECAME HEIR OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS
WHICH IS ACCORDING TO FAITH.”**

Heb 11:7

**“AND DO NOT BE AFRAID OF THEIR THREATS,
NOR BE TROUBLED.” BUT SANCTIFY THE LORD GOD IN YOUR
HEARTS, AND ALWAYS BE READY
TO GIVE A DEFENSE TO EVERYONE WHO ASKS YOU
A REASON FOR THE HOPE THAT IS IN YOU,
WITH MEEKNESS AND FEAR...”**

1 Peter 3:14-16

**“...THAT GOD WOULD OPEN TO US A DOOR FOR THE WORD,
TO SPEAK THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST...
THAT I MAY MAKE IT MANIFEST, AS I OUGHT TO SPEAK.
WALK IN WISDOM TOWARD THOSE WHO ARE OUTSIDE,
REDEEMING THE TIME.
LET YOUR SPEECH ALWAYS BE WITH GRACE,
SEASONED WITH SALT,
THAT YOU MAY KNOW HOW YOU
OUGHT TO ANSWER EACH ONE.”**

Col 4:3-6

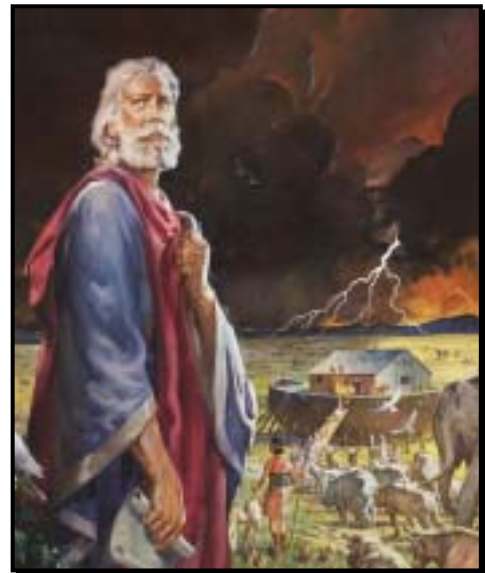
Could we not risk at least sharing some of these newsletters with those for whom we care even if they don't seem to care? Whatever happened to the old adage, “Strike while the iron is hot?” Saints, even if the “aint's” don't care, be like Noah. He began with eight, and finished with eight. However, he preached righteousness for 120 years to the people who lived near him:

**“AND THE LORD SAID,
“MY SPIRIT SHALL NOT STRIVE WITH MAN FOREVER,
FOR HE IS INDEED FLESH; YET HIS DAYS SHALL BE ONE
HUNDRED AND TWENTY YEARS.” ...THEN THE LORD SAW
THAT THE WICKEDNESS OF MAN WAS GREAT IN THE
EARTH, AND THAT EVERY INTENT OF THE THOUGHTS OF
HIS HEART WAS ONLY EVIL CONTINUALLY.
AND THE LORD WAS SORRY THAT HE HAD MADE MAN ON
THE EARTH, AND HE WAS GRIEVED IN HIS HEART.
SO THE LORD SAID, “I WILL DESTROY MAN WHOM I HAVE
CREATED FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH, BOTH MAN
AND BEAST, CREEPING THING AND BIRDS OF THE AIR,
FOR I AM SORRY THAT I HAVE MADE THEM.”
BUT NOAH FOUND GRACE IN THE EYES OF THE LORD.”**

Gen 6:3-8

**“...AND (God) DID NOT SPARE THE ANCIENT WORLD,
BUT SAVED NOAH, ONE OF EIGHT PEOPLE,
A PREACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, BRINGING IN THE FLOOD
ON THE WORLD OF THE UNGODLY...”**

2 Peter 2:5-6



Yes, they all perished, but not because of a lack of warning being issued. God does not hold us personally responsible for the end result, but rather He holds us accountable for being faithful ambassadors to the message entrusted to us:

**“...THAT GOD WAS IN CHRIST RECONCILING THE WORLD TO HIMSELF... AND HAS COMMITTED TO US
THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION...WE ARE AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST, AS THOUGH GOD WERE
PLEADING THROUGH US: WE IMPORE YOU ON CHRIST'S BEHALF, BE RECONCILED TO GOD.”**

2 Cor. 5:18-20

And now we come to a lengthy dissertation describing the faith of Abraham, called by Paul, "the father of us all" (Rom. 4:16), a great man of God singled out by the apostle James as having been called "the friend of God" (James 2:23).

You must ponder each of the recorded words of testimony pertaining to the life of faith demonstrated by Abraham: —————→

Note he was "called to go out."

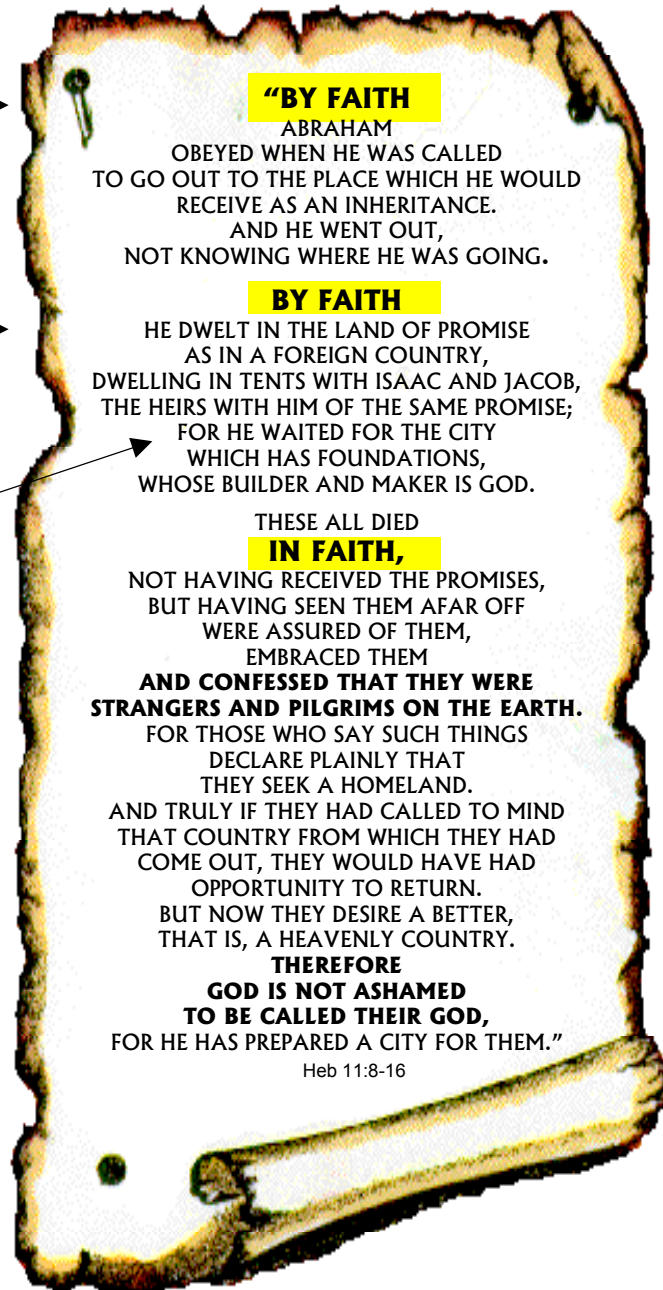
Are you aware that the word "church" means "the called-out ones"? Abraham did not even know where he was going. However, on this side of the cross message, we know where we are going!

Abraham was one who lived on earth as if he lived in "a foreign country", "dwelling in tents." He was a wealthy man but never heaped his wealth on himself. He did not build a "mansion on a hilltop" but rather dwelt in tents. Why so, we must ask? Because He had a special promise from God, and so do we! (see John 14:1-4).

Are there **ANY** of the statements above that are not applicable or not practical to us as followers of Jesus Christ today? Has God prepared a city for us that awaits us in eternity? Which "city" or "country" do we "call to mind", an earthly one or a heavenly one? Are we ever-mindful of the one from which God has called us out? (like America). Watch out! That is the one which we can easily return to. However, pick the heavenly one as did Abraham (the friend of God), and He will not be ashamed to be called your God. What will make God be ashamed to be called your God? Just return to the country from which you came out and be totally absorbed by its cares and concerns. How can a Christian do that? It is easy: Like so many others, just forget about the main ingredient that Jesus preached under the banner of "the gospel", the Kingdom of God. Just exchange the Kingdom of God for the kingdom of America. The American gospel has become a unique blend of "God and country." Abraham embraced a different way of living on earth:

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

We can read passages like the one above all day long and yet it will remain remote, obscure and obsolete to our minds as American Christians. We have been so inundated with the religious blending of "God and country" that it is impossible to relate any practical application in which we can see ourselves as "strangers and pilgrims" on earth as was Abraham. We too must be looking by faith for "a city whose builder and maker was God."



"BY FAITH

ABRAHAM

OBEYED WHEN HE WAS CALLED
TO GO OUT TO THE PLACE WHICH HE WOULD
RECEIVE AS AN INHERITANCE.
AND HE WENT OUT,
NOT KNOWING WHERE HE WAS GOING.

BY FAITH

HE DWELT IN THE LAND OF PROMISE
AS IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY,
DWELLING IN TENTS WITH ISAAC AND JACOB,
THE HEIRS WITH HIM OF THE SAME PROMISE;
FOR HE WAITED FOR THE CITY
WHICH HAS FOUNDATIONS,
WHOSE BUILDER AND MAKER IS GOD.

THESE ALL DIED

IN FAITH,

NOT HAVING RECEIVED THE PROMISES,
BUT HAVING SEEN THEM AFAR OFF
WERE ASSURED OF THEM,
EMBRACED THEM
**AND CONFESSED THAT THEY WERE
STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON THE EARTH.**
FOR THOSE WHO SAY SUCH THINGS
DECLARE PLAINLY THAT
THEY SEEK A HOMELAND.
AND TRULY IF THEY HAD CALLED TO MIND
THAT COUNTRY FROM WHICH THEY HAD
COME OUT, THEY WOULD HAVE HAD
OPPORTUNITY TO RETURN.
BUT NOW THEY DESIRE A BETTER,
THAT IS, A HEAVENLY COUNTRY.

THEREFORE

**GOD IS NOT ASHAMED
TO BE CALLED THEIR GOD,**
FOR HE HAS PREPARED A CITY FOR THEM."

Heb 11:8-16

The American Christian focuses upon earthly cities in an earthly kingdom. Why so? The "Kingdom of God" or as Abraham called it "the heavenly country" has been removed from the picture. Today, we preach what is popularly called "the gospel." The single theme of that gospel is "you must be born again" (Jn.3:3). However, that is only **HALF** the message Jesus preached:

"NOW AFTER JOHN WAS PUT IN PRISON, JESUS CAME TO GALILEE, PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND SAYING, 'THE TIME IS FULFILLED, AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND. REPENT, AND BELIEVE IN THE GOSPEL.'"

Mark 1:14



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

Jn. 3:3-7

According to Jesus "the gospel" was centered upon the coming of "the Kingdom of God." According to man, "the gospel is only "you must be born again." However, Jesus tells us that being "born again" is a prerequisite to entering the Kingdom of God!

Because the message of "you must be born again" has been divorced from its counterpart, "the Kingdom of God", one is preached without the other! Jesus is emphasizing that you can neither see nor enter the Kingdom of God apart from being born again. That is "the full gospel." Take away the Kingdom message and those that become born again can only return to the country from which they have been called out. There is no higher vision than the earthly kingdom in which the born again believer can express faith. The result is the mixing of "God and country", of "God and politics", and of "God and righteous causes on earth" such as anti-abortion, anti-gay, etc. Put the Kingdom of God back into the gospel and you also can have faith like Abraham to be "a stranger and pilgrim on earth." Do so and God will not be ashamed to be called your God!

Consider what we have looked at so far. As I have stated previously, these are not stories about men of faith who worked miracles like Elijah and Elisha. Although great miracle workers they were, they are not even mentioned in Hebrews Chapter 11 at all. There is a reason for that. These are not stories about "the unusual" but rather "the usual." By that, I mean the theme of this faith chapter deals with examples of faith that can be followed by people like you and me. Do you believe that? Can we live as did the heroes of faith? My answer is an emphatic "Yes!"

Enoch was a man like us. He lived in very corrupt times in which God's judgment was ready to fall. However, Enoch walked with God and his life style pleased God, and God took Enoch to heaven alive-he did not see death. We have that same promise via means of the rapture! However, you must "watch and pray that you be counted worthy to escape!"

Noah also lived in great times of wickedness permeating the earth. Noah was divinely warned by God of pending judgment coming, and so have we been warned of a period called "the beginning of sorrows." Noah preached righteousness for 120 years to a wicked world that was living in ungodly behavior. He began with eight and finished with eight, but his preaching condemned the whole world. God considered him faithful, and a man of faith. Can we not make the same stand as did our counterpart Noah? Can we warn the wicked and the complacent? Should we warn them even if they don't want to hear? Noah did and ended up being counted among the Heroes of faith!

Abraham had faith in "things hoped for" and "things not seen." He endured by seeing the invisible Kingdom of God, a "heavenly country", which was coming to earth "some day." He lived out his life on earth as a "stranger and pilgrim", and so must we! How did he do it? He "waited for a city whose builder and maker is God." That heavenly motivation of "thing hoped for" and of "things not seen" enabled him to become "a stranger and pilgrim on earth."



Perhaps the greatest of the great "heroes of faith" is Moses. Like Abraham who was called "the friend of God", this old saint of God had quite a testimony recorded of him by God Himself:

"BY FAITH, Moses

"...WHEN MOSES ENTERED THE TABERNACLE, THAT THE PILLAR OF CLOUD DESCENDED AND STOOD AT THE DOOR OF THE TABERNACLE, AND THE LORD TALKED WITH MOSES... SO THE LORD SPOKE TO MOSES FACE TO FACE, AS A MAN SPEAKS TO HIS FRIEND..." Ex 33:9-11

"HEAR NOW MY WORDS: IF THERE IS A PROPHET AMONG YOU, I, THE LORD, MAKE MYSELF KNOWN TO HIM IN A VISION; I SPEAK TO HIM IN A DREAM. NOT SO WITH MY SERVANT MOSES; HE IS FAITHFUL IN ALL MY HOUSE. I SPEAK WITH HIM FACE TO FACE, EVEN PLAINLY, AND NOT IN DARK SAYINGS; AND HE SEES THE FORM OF THE LORD..." Num. 12:6-8

"BUT SINCE THEN THERE HAS NOT ARISEN IN ISRAEL A PROPHET LIKE MOSES, WHOM THE LORD KNEW FACE TO FACE..." Deut 34:10-11

Let us consider the contents of the testimony of Moses:

There are three things contained within this statement about Moses that perhaps are not as clearly spoken of as they are found in other places in scripture. The three items of which I speak are stated plainly by the apostle John as:

**"FOR ALL THAT IS IN THE WORLD --
THE LUST OF THE FLESH,
THE LUST OF THE EYES,
AND THE PRIDE OF LIFE --
IS NOT OF THE FATHER BUT IS OF THE WORLD.
AND THE WORLD IS PASSING AWAY, AND THE LUST OF IT;
BUT HE WHO DOES THE WILL OF GOD ABIDES FOREVER."**
1 John 2:16-17

These are Satan's favorite areas of temptation. He used them on Adam and Eve in the Garden (Gen. 3:1-5), he used them on Jesus in the wilderness temptation (Matt. 4:1-10), and he uses them on us as followers of Christ in John's epistle. Look carefully now at the testimony of Moses:

**"BY FAITH,
WHEN HE BECAME OF AGE,
REFUSED TO BE CALLED
THE SON OF PHARAOH'S
DAUGHTER,
CHOOSING RATHER TO
SUFFER AFFLICTION
WITH THE PEOPLE OF GOD
THAN TO ENJOY
THE PASSING PLEASURES
OF SIN,
ESTEEMING
THE REPROACH OF CHRIST
GREATER RICHES
THAN THE TREASURES
IN EGYPT;
FOR HE LOOKED
TO THE REWARD."**
Heb 11:24-26

It is not difficult to see that in refusing to be called "the son of Pharaoh's daughter" Moses was turning down the temptation of "the pride of life." Pharaoh was God to the Egyptians. His daughter, who adopted Moses as her own, was a goddess. Therefore Moses would have been worshiped as the descendant of the gods of Egypt. This pagan worship Moses refused. In its place Moses chose to rather "suffer affliction with the people of God." For us, "the pride of life" is found in power, position and possessions. What we do for a living, who we are, who we know, what we know, what we drive, where we live, what we possess of this world's "treasures" all fall under the sinful banner of "the pride of life."

Moses also refused "the passing pleasures of sin" which for us is "the lust of the flesh." I think you can easily judge for yourself what falls under this banner here in America. It is the sensual, the sexual and the sensational pleasures this country offers. It is "in the stars." By that I mean "rock stars, movie stars, and sport stars." Pick your poison! Moses rejected all that Egypt (the world) offered.

Lastly, Moses chose "greater riches" than all the treasures in Egypt. Moses rejected "the lust of the eyes." How did he do that? He had heavenly vision to see that the eternal rewards God offered him were far greater than all of the silver and gold of Egypt (and there was a lot of it!) Jesus said it well:

"DO NOT LAY UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES ON EARTH, WHERE MOTH AND RUST DESTROY AND WHERE THIEVES BREAK IN AND STEAL; BUT LAY UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES IN HEAVEN, WHERE NEITHER MOTH NOR RUST DESTROYS AND WHERE THIEVES DO NOT BREAK IN AND STEAL. FOR WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE YOUR HEART WILL BE ALSO." Matt 6:19-22

For Moses, he "forsook Egypt" and did not "fear the wrath of the king" (Pharaoh). For us as followers of Christ, Egypt represents a type of "this present world" of which "Satan is the God of this world" (King Pharaoh).

How did Moses survive? He endured as "seeing Him who is invisible." How, dear saint of God shall we survive living under our "Egypt" ("this present evil world")? How shall we endure the "wrath of its king-Satan"? The same way Moses did, by "seeing Him who is invisible.":

**"NOW TO THE KING
ETERNAL, IMMORTAL, INVISIBLE,
TO GOD WHO ALONE IS WISE,
BE HONOR AND GLORY FOREVER AND EVER.
AMEN."**

1 Tim 1:17

**"FOR OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION, WHICH IS BUT FOR A MOMENT,
IS WORKING FOR US A FAR MORE EXCEEDING AND ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY,
WHILE WE DO NOT LOOK AT THE THINGS WHICH ARE SEEN,
BUT AT THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SEEN.
FOR THE THINGS WHICH ARE SEEN ARE TEMPORARY,
BUT THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SEEN ARE ETERNAL."**

2 Cor 4:17-18

What other testimony do we have of Moses as an act of great faith in the sight of His God? A very important one: "he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood." →

**"...TAKE LAMBS FOR YOURSELVES
ACCORDING TO YOUR FAMILIES,
AND KILL THE PASSOVER LAMB.
AND YOU SHALL TAKE A BUNCH OF HYSSOP,
DIP IT IN THE BLOOD
THAT IS IN THE BASIN,
AND STRIKE THE LINTEL
AND THE TWO DOORPOSTS
WITH THE BLOOD
THAT IS IN THE BASIN.
AND NONE OF YOU SHALL GO OUT OF
THE DOOR OF HIS HOUSE UNTIL MORNING.
FOR THE LORD WILL
PASS THROUGH TO STRIKE THE EGYPTIANS;
AND WHEN HE SEES THE BLOOD
ON THE LINTEL AND ON THE TWO DOORPOSTS,
THE LORD WILL PASS OVER THE DOOR
AND NOT ALLOW THE DESTROYER
TO COME INTO YOUR HOUSES TO STRIKE YOU..."**

Ex 12:21-25



**" BY FAITH
HE
FORSOOK
EGYPT,
NOT FEARING
THE WRATH
OF THE KING;
FOR
HE ENDURED
AS
SEEING HIM
WHO IS
INVISIBLE."**

Heb 11:27-28

**"BY FAITH
HE
KEPT
THE PASSOVER
AND
THE SPRINKLING
OF BLOOD,
LEST
HE WHO
DESTROYED
THE FIRSTBORN
SHOULD
TOUCH THEM."**

Heb 11:28

Have faith in God. Allow the Passover story of Exodus to be part of your faith in God. Learn to apply with the "hyssop of faith" the Blood of the Lamb to the lintel and doorposts of your house. Your house is the safest place on earth because of the supernatural protection of our unchanging God. What He did for the children of Israel under the threat of death He will still do for His children today! Do you believe that?

**"NO EVIL SHALL BEFALL YOU,
NOR SHALL ANY PLAGUE
COME NEAR YOUR DWELLING;
FOR HE SHALL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE OVER YOU,
TO KEEP YOU IN ALL YOUR WAYS...
HE SHALL CALL UPON ME, AND I WILL ANSWER HIM;
I WILL BE WITH HIM IN TROUBLE; I WILL DELIVER HIM
AND HONOR HIM. WITH LONG LIFE I WILL SATISFY HIM,
AND SHOW HIM MY SALVATION."**

**"THE HOUSE
OF GOD'S PEOPLE
IN EGYPT OF OLD"**



In Egypt the blood of the lamb was applied to the physical houses in which the Children of Israel dwelt. As long as they remained inside their dwelling place "the Destroyer" (Satan, the angel of death), was kept outside the house by the power of that blood being applied by the faith of the people.

To demonstrate that the Blood of the Passover Lamb (Jesus) still provides protection for His people today, my wife and I decorated all three of our entry doors with this display: →

**"THE HOUSE
OF GOD'S PEOPLE
IN "EGYPT" (THE WORLD) IN OUR DAY**



We intend to leave ours up as long as COVID-19 remains a threat to our physical houses (both our private dwelling and our meeting room below). We stand firmly on the promises contained in Psalm 91:

**"NO EVIL SHALL BEFALL YOU,
NOR SHALL ANY PLAGUE
COME NEAR YOUR DWELLING..."**

**"SURELY HE SHALL DELIVER YOU
FROM THE SNARE OF THE FOWLER
AND FROM THE PERILOUS PESTILENCE..."**

In addition to a physical location in which I dwell at in Arvada CO, the meat of God's Word tells me that my physical body is also the "house" in which I dwell. It too, needs to be under the protection of the Blood of the Lamb. →

To understand that we must consider that there is more to the "house" being the physical structure in which we reside. The Bible says this:

**"..DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT YOUR BODY
IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO IS IN YOU..."**

1 Cor 6:19-20

"...FOR EVERY HOUSE IS BUILT BY SOMEONE, BUT HE WHO BUILT ALL THINGS IS GOD. AND MOSES INDEED WAS FAITHFUL IN ALL HIS HOUSE AS A SERVANT, FOR A TESTIMONY OF THOSE THINGS WHICH WOULD BE SPOKEN AFTERWARD, BUT CHRIST AS A SON OVER HIS OWN HOUSE, WHOSE HOUSE WE ARE..." Heb 3:4-6



**ALSO "THE HOUSE"
OF GOD'S PEOPLE!**

**"THEREFORE
WE ALSO,
SINCE WE ARE SURROUNDED BY**



ENOCH



NOAH



ABRAHAM



MOSES

***SO GREAT
A CLOUD OF WITNESSES,***

**LET US LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT, AND THE SIN WHICH SO EASILY ENSNARES US,
AND LET US RUN WITH ENDURANCE THE RACE THAT IS SET BEFORE US,
LOOKING UNTO JESUS,
THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH..."**

Hebrews 12:1-2



What do you think New Covenant Christian? Can we also bear a "good testimony" as did our examples in Hebrews Chapter 11? Can we also live such a life of faith focused upon "things hoped for" and "things not seen"? Should not our testimony on earth be just like theirs was on earth?

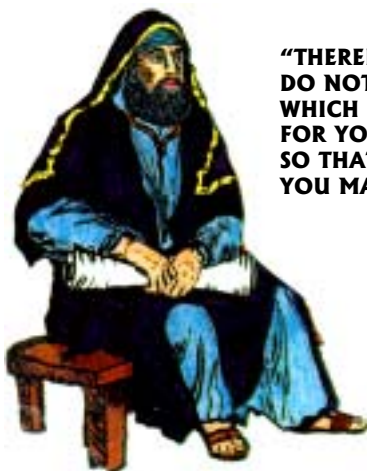
We have considered four of the "heroes of faith" recorded for us in Hebrews Chapter 11. The number "4" is the biblical number that scripture assigns to "the world." Here are four men who lived in the world, but were not men of the world, were they? Specifically, each of them rejected all that this present world offered to them as subtle substitutes for what God Almighty promised to them by faith.

BY FAITH Enoch was "raptured" off the face of the earth and did not see death because "God took him." Why was he taken by God? Because he lived his life in a pleasing manner to God. Enoch did not live in paradise on earth. Wickedness surrounded him on every side but Enoch made firm stands in which he warned the ungodly of the pending judgment of God for all their ungodly deeds (Jude 14-16). Like John the Baptist, he was a "voice crying out in the wilderness" for repentance, but no one listened. Finally, God took him off the earth. Can we live like Enoch? Will we receive the same reward as Enoch? Saints, pray that you be counted worthy to escape and to stand before the Son of Man! (Luke 21:34-36)

BY FAITH Noah preached righteousness for 120 years. No one listened to him either. However, he prepared an Ark for the saving of his own household. We saw that he began with eight and finished with eight. Not even one convert! However, he did end up listed among the "heroes of faith." God is not looking for successful men but only faithful ones! Can we follow the faith of faithful Noah?

BY FAITH Abraham chose a life on earth identifying himself as "a stranger and a pilgrim." He too rejected this present world built on sand foundations and all that it could offer temporally in favor of a solid foundations of rock, "a city whose builder and maker was God." Abraham rejected the temporal for the eternal (2 Cor. 4:18). Can we have the faith of Abraham, "the friend of God"?

BY FAITH Moses also rejected this present world and all that it contained namely, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life." In a world ruled by "the Destroyer" (Satan), Moses had faith in the Blood of the Passover Lamb to nullify the effect of the Destroyer to kill and destroy God's people. Saints of God, can we have the faith of Moses?



**"THEREFORE
DO NOT CAST AWAY YOUR CONFIDENCE,
WHICH HAS GREAT REWARD.
FOR YOU HAVE NEED OF ENDURANCE,
SO THAT AFTER YOU HAVE DONE THE WILL OF GOD,
YOU MAY RECEIVE THE PROMISE:**

**'FOR YET A LITTLE WHILE,
AND HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME AND WILL NOT TARRY.
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."**

Hebrews 10:35-39

**"...BRETHREN,
HAVING BOLDNESS TO
ENTER...
BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS,
LET US DRAW NEAR IN FULL
ASSURANCE OF FAITH...
LET US HOLD FAST
THE CONFESSION OF OUR
HOPE WITHOUT WAVERING...
LET US CONSIDER ONE
ANOTHER IN ORDER TO STIR
UP LOVE... EXHORTING ONE
ANOTHER, AND SO MUCH
THE MORE AS YOU SEE THE
DAY APPROACHING...**

**...FOR YET A LITTLE WHILE,
AND HE WHO IS COMING
WILL COME AND WILL NOT
TARRY. 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."**

Hebrews 10

**"NOW FAITH IS
THE SUBSTANCE
OF THINGS HOPED FOR,
THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN.
FOR BY IT (FAITH) THE ELDERS
OBTAINED A GOOD TESTIMONY...**

**...BUT WITHOUT FAITH
IT IS IMPOSSIBLE
TO PLEASE HIM,
FOR HE WHO COMES TO GOD
MUST BELIEVE ...
THAT HE IS A REWARDER OF
THOSE WHO DILIGENTLY SEEK
HIM.**

BY FAITH ENOCH...

BY FAITH NOAH...

BY FAITH ABRAHAM...

BY FAITH MOSES...

("BY FAITH" IS REPEATED 18 TIMES)

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

**AND ALL THESE,
HAVING OBTAINED A GOOD
TESTIMONY THROUGH FAITH,
DID NOT RECEIVE THE PROMISE,
GOD HAVING PROVIDED
SOMETHING BETTER FOR US..."**

Hebrews 11

**"THEREFORE
WE ALSO,
SINCE WE ARE
SURROUNDED BY
SO GREAT
A CLOUD OF WITNESSES,**

(in Hebrews 11)

**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..."**

Hebrews 12

Pastor Randy Shupe

APOSTOLIC MISSIONS

promoting



**JESUS
CHRIST**

and **HIS
CHURCH**

as the

"LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

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1. **POWER**
2. **LOVE**
3. **SOUND MIND**



**"...I REMIND YOU TO STIR UP THE GIFT OF GOD WHICH IS IN YOU...
FOR GOD HAS NOT GIVEN US A SPIRIT OF FEAR,
BUT OF POWER AND OF LOVE AND OF A SOUND MIND...
...FOR I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED AND AM PERSUADED THAT HE IS ABLE
TO KEEP WHAT I HAVE COMMITTED TO HIM UNTIL THAT DAY."**

2 Tim 1:6-12

Analyze carefully our opening text passage from 2 Timothy for it contains a stark contrast between two different "spirits" at work, (1) the demonically inspired spirit of fear, and (2) the faith building Spirit of the living God! These are two opposing spiritual forces set against each another, one from "the God of this world", Satan, who seeks to paralyze people with a spirit of fear, and the other, the Holy Spirit sent by God the Father to counter satanically inspired fear with super natural energizing faith from God! This must be our banner of faith:



THE SPIRIT OF FEAR...

**"WHEN THE ENEMY COMES IN LIKE A FLOOD,
THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD WILL LIFT UP A STANDARD AGAINST HIM...
"AS FOR ME," SAYS THE LORD,
"THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM:
MY SPIRIT WHO IS UPON YOU,
AND MY WORDS WHICH I HAVE PUT IN YOUR MOUTH,
SHALL NOT DEPART FROM YOUR MOUTH,
NOR FROM THE MOUTH OF YOUR DESCENDANTS,
NOR FROM THE MOUTH OF YOUR DESCENDANTS' DESCENDANTS,"**

**SAYS THE LORD,
"FROM THIS TIME AND FOREVERMORE."**



THE SPIRIT OF FAITH...

Isa. 59:19



FEAR

OF CIRCUMSTANCES BELOW...

"...FEAR INVOLVES TORMENT...
HE WHO FEARS
HAS NOT BEEN MADE PERFECT IN LOVE...
THERE IS NO FEAR IN LOVE...
...PERFECT LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR..."
1 Jn. 4:18



FAITH

IN GOD'S PROMISES ABOVE...

"BUT YOU, BELOVED, BUILDING
YOURSELVES UP ON YOUR MOST HOLY FAITH,
PRAYING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT,
KEEP YOURSELVES IN THE LOVE OF GOD..."
Jude 20



"BEWARE LEST ANYONE CHEAT YOU
THROUGH PHILOSOPHY AND EMPTY DECEIT,
ACCORDING TO THE TRADITION OF MEN,
ACCORDING TO THE BASIC
PRINCIPLES OF THE WORLD,
AND NOT ACCORDING TO CHRIST."
Col 2:8-9

"AS YOU THEREFORE HAVE RECEIVED
CHRIST JESUS THE LORD, SO WALK IN HIM,
ROOTED AND BUILT UP IN HIM AND
ESTABLISHED IN THE FAITH,
AS YOU HAVE BEEN TAUGHT,
ABOUNDING IN IT WITH THANKSGIVING."
Col 2:6-7

**EVIL...
DEATH...
CURSING...**
Deut. 30:19

"SEE,
I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU
LIFE AND GOOD, DEATH AND EVIL...
I CALL HEAVEN AND EARTH AS WITNESSES TODAY AGAINST YOU,
THAT I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU LIFE AND DEATH, BLESSING AND CURSING;
THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE, THAT BOTH YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS
MAY LIVE; THAT YOU MAY LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD,
THAT YOU MAY OBEY HIS VOICE, AND THAT YOU MAY CLING TO HIM,
FOR HE IS YOUR LIFE AND THE LENGTH OF YOUR DAYS..."

Deut 30:15-20

**GOOD...
LIFE...
BLESSING...**
Deut. 30:19

What is depicted above is a stark contrast of "evil and good", "death and life", and "cursing and blessing." It is a series of contrasts well worth your time pondering the end result of each category. This is a contrast of yielding to the world's "spirit of error" vs. the Word's "Spirit of truth" (1 Jn. 4:6). Ultimately, it boils down to a choice between living a life of worldly **FEAR** or a life lived by **FAITH** in God's Word. I stress the point that these are contrasts set before us that require us to make a choice. The old proverbial position of "sitting on the fence" between two opposites, or the philosophy based on a little of "the best of both worlds", is no longer a choice for God's people. The Word of God clearly warns us:

"IF ANY OF YOU LACKS WISDOM, LET HIM ASK OF GOD, WHO GIVES TO ALL LIBERALLY AND WITHOUT REPROACH, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO HIM. BUT LET HIM ASK IN FAITH, WITH NO DOUBTING, FOR HE WHO DOUBTS IS LIKE A WAVE OF THE SEA DRIVEN AND TOSSED BY THE WIND. FOR LET NOT THAT MAN SUPPOSE THAT HE WILL RECEIVE ANYTHING FROM THE LORD; HE IS A DOUBLE-MINDED MAN, UNSTABLE IN ALL HIS WAYS." James 1:5-8

"BUT LET YOUR "YES" BE "YES," AND YOUR "NO," "NO," LEST YOU FALL INTO JUDGMENT."

James 5:12

No one in their right mind would choose what is in the left column above once you grasp what is in the right column. However, it is only the Word of God that illuminates our minds to the immense deception that is able to present something evil as good. Isaiah the prophet warns us about such times in which evil would become so disguised that it would be perceived as being something good:

"WOE TO THOSE WHO CALL EVIL GOOD, AND GOOD EVIL; WHO PUT DARKNESS FOR LIGHT, AND LIGHT FOR DARKNESS; WHO PUT BITTER FOR SWEET, AND SWEET FOR BITTER! WOE TO THOSE WHO ARE WISE IN THEIR OWN EYES, AND PRUDENT IN THEIR OWN SIGHT!"

Isa 5:20-21

Paul the Apostle gives us this depiction of the right way for a Christian to follow:

"AS YOU THEREFORE HAVE RECEIVED CHRIST JESUS THE LORD, SO WALK IN HIM, ROOTED AND BUILT UP IN HIM AND ESTABLISHED IN THE FAITH, AS YOU HAVE BEEN TAUGHT, ABOUNDING IN IT WITH THANKSGIVING."
Col 2:6-7



He follows that right way with a prophetic warning of the subtle substitutes Satan would offer:

"BEWARE LEST ANYONE CHEAT YOU THROUGH PHILOSOPHY AND EMPTY DECEIT, ACCORDING TO THE TRADITION OF MEN, ACCORDING TO THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE WORLD, AND NOT ACCORDING TO CHRIST."
Col 2:8-9

(3) A SOUND MIND



(1) **POWER**

(2) **LOVE**

THE ILLUMINATING SPIRIT OF GOD...

"THE GOD OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST...MAY GIVE TO YOU THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND REVELATION IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIM, THE EYES OF YOUR UNDERSTANDING BEING ENLIGHTENED; THAT YOU MAY KNOW ...WHAT IS THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER TOWARD US WHO BELIEVE...WHICH HE WORKED IN CHRIST AND SEATED HIM AT HIS RIGHT HAND IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES...FAR ABOVE ALL PRINCIPALITY AND POWER AND MIGHT AND DOMINION,"
Eph. 1:17-21

If you ponder carefully the contents of each column above you will see that both are **SUPERNATURAL** forces at work, one is good but the other is evil. Think about it: all that transpires on earth is the direct result of what takes place above the earth, "in heavenly places". One source provides illumination from God, but the other supplies deception by "spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."

It is important to see that one supernatural force is higher than the other, "far above all principality and power and might and dominion." This speaks of the Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. From this source comes "power, love and a sound mind" to the people of God. We, as the people of God on earth, must seek and receive by faith what God willingly and lovingly supplies to us. However, we must reject, refuse and repel what the evil principalities and powers daily bombard the earth with namely, "philosophy, empty deceit, traditions of men and the basic principles of the world." Of those four categories listed by Paul as a warning to all Christians, only one of them reveals that all four categories are to be equally rejected. Out of the four is "empty deceit" that shows the true nature of all four as being deceptively evil. What is wrong with "philosophy"? What is wrong with "tradition of men"? What is wrong with the "basic principles of the world"? Now ask, "what is wrong with empty deceit"? The answer is obvious: we are to avoid deception:

"LET NO ONE DECEIVE HIMSELF. IF ANYONE AMONG YOU SEEMS TO BE WISE IN THIS AGE, LET HIM BECOME A FOOL THAT HE MAY BECOME WISE. FOR THE WISDOM OF THIS WORLD IS FOOLISHNESS WITH GOD."
1 Cor. 3:18

"LET NO ONE DECEIVE YOU WITH EMPTY WORDS, FOR BECAUSE OF THESE THINGS THE WRATH OF GOD COMES UPON THE SONS OF DISOBEDIENCE. THEREFORE DO NOT BE PARTAKERS WITH THEM."
Eph. 5:6

(4) **BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE WORLD**

(2) **EMPTY DECEIT**



(1) **PHILOSOPHY**

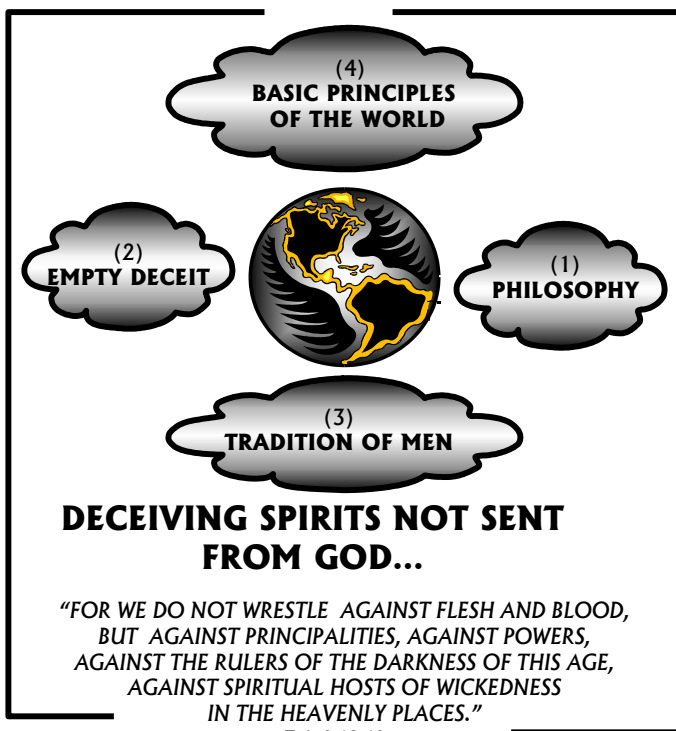
(3) **TRADITION OF MEN**

DECEIVING SPIRITS NOT SENT FROM GOD...

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

**"LET NO ONE DECEIVE YOU WITH EMPTY WORDS,
FOR BECAUSE OF THESE THINGS
THE WRATH OF GOD
COMES UPON THE SONS OF DISOBEDIENCE.
THEREFORE DO NOT BE PARTAKERS WITH THEM."**

Eph. 5:6



Let us consider briefly the four areas in which evil "principalities , powers, rulers of the darkness of this age, and hosts of wickedness in heavenly places" seek to deceive those who live on earth.

That includes all believers on earth! We must especially guard ourselves so that no one deceives us with empty words contained within deceptive "philosophy, empty deceit, the tradition of men, and the basic principles of the world."

1. PHILOSOPHY- is the love, obsession, and intellectual pursuit of knowledge. Paul warns against seeking such false knowledge:

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

1 Cor 8:1-3

Here is the source of all true knowledge that we are to seek:

**"...THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY ONE IS
UNDERSTANDING. FOR BY ME YOUR DAYS WILL
BE MULTIPLIED, AND YEARS OF LIFE WILL BE
ADDED TO YOU. IF YOU ARE WISE, YOU ARE
WISE FOR YOURSELF, AND IF YOU SCOFF,
YOU WILL BEAR IT ALONE."**

Prov. 9:10

You may remember that in the Garden of Eden there were two sources of food set before Adam and Eve. One was permissible, but the other forbidden fruit. One "fruit" came from "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil", the other came from "the tree of life." The forbidden fruit was the kind of acquired knowledge Paul describes as "knowledge that puffs up." The person that seeks after this kind of knowledge "knows nothing as he ought to know." Rather it is "the knowledge of the Holy one" that brings real understanding. Seek this knowledge and "your days will be multiplied, and years of life will be added to you." However, scoff at real knowledge and replace it with philosophy based on "the wisdom of this world", and you will plunge into deception just like the rest of the world. Saints of God, if you don't get proper knowledge from God's Word to govern your life then the alternative is deceptive philosophy upon the peoples of the earth from evil "principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this present age, and from a whole host of "spiritual wickedness" in heavenly places. Don't be fooled because it is delivered to you in a deceptive package of "evil presented as good and darkness disguised as light."

2. EMPTY DECEIT- Something that is "empty" is full of "nothing." However, by clever deception, it is presented as being fulfilling, but really consists of nothing but "empty deceit." We are presently living in a world marked by "empty deceit." The COVID-19 pandemic in this country is filled with "empty deceit." Yes, there is a valid virus out there, but the level of panic and fear that the media bombards us with is mostly "empty deceit." The numbers of reported COVID-19 deaths by the CDC is padded with people who died from other complications. There are people who want the fear of COVID-19 to be seen as bigger than it really is. There are many control freaks who don't want to relinquish the power that unbridled fear gives them. The so-called virus "experts" keep changing their story, don't they? They are filled with "empty deceit." They tell us to "believe the science" but the science does not support their dire predictions, do they? They sound "so sincere" don't they? It is more of this world's "empty deceit." This is all that this world is capable of producing because in reality "the whole world lies under the sway of the Wicked One."

3. TRADITIONS OF MEN- "tradition" is the only New Testament Greek word that has a biblical number of "666." Tradition is therefore anti-Christ (also the number 666). Jesus told the Jews, "all to well you reject the commandment of God that you may keep your tradition...making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down, and many such things you do." (Mark 7:13). The church is not different. We say proudly, "One nation under God" but this is the tradition of men. We say of this nation, "in God we trust", but this is far from the truth! Where is the evidence of that so-called trust? Rather, we prove that "we trust in the arm of (our own) flesh" (Jer. 17:5)

4. THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THIS WORLD- The Apostle John states, "all that is in this world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world" (1 Jn.2:15-16). These are the "basic principles of the world", but so are the corrupt fields of "politics, commerce and religion" among the "basic principles of the world. John states prophetically of this coming trinity of evil:

**"...ALL THE NATIONS HAVE DRUNK OF THE WINE OF THE WRATH OF HER FORNICATION,
THE KINGS OF THE EARTH HAVE COMMITTED FORNICATION WITH HER,
AND THE MERCHANTS OF THE EARTH HAVE BECOME RICH THROUGH THE ABUNDANCE OF HER LUXURY."**

Rev 18:2-3

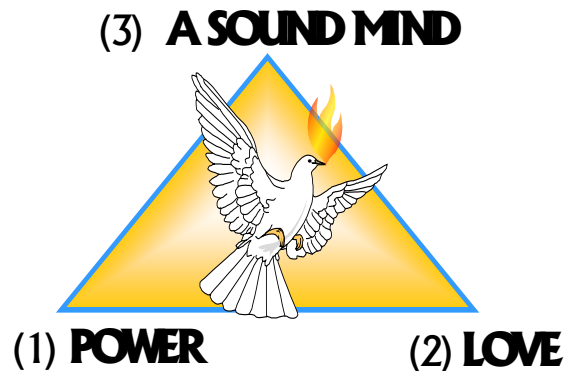
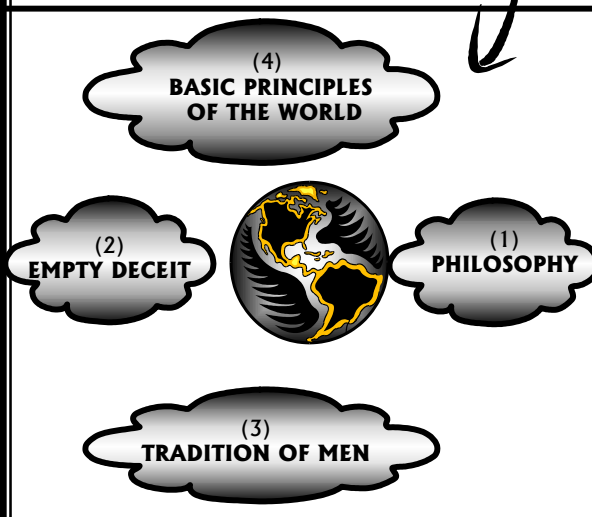
We have seen a brief synopsis of what this present world is like under the "leadership" of evil "principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age and (under) a host of spiritual wickedness in heavenly places."

This is its fourfold "fruit":

Let us now consider what God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ can offer to counteract the work of corrupt principalities and powers on earth. Remember:

**"WHAT IS THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER TOWARD
US WHO BELIEVE...WHICH HE WORKED IN CHRIST AND SEATED
HIM AT HIS RIGHT HAND IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES...
FAR ABOVE ALL PRINCIPALITY AND POWER
AND MIGHT AND DOMINION..."**

Eph. 1:19



**"WHEN
THE ENEMY
COMES IN
LIKE A FLOOD,**



Satan likes to use the paralyzing power of fear on earth, but God uses the energizing power of faith to conquer all such fear.

Let us now consider God's threefold cure for fear as stated in 2 Tim 1:6-12:

**THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD
WILL LIFT UP
A STANDARD
AGAINST HIM..."**

Isa. 59:19





**"FOR GOD HAS NOT GIVEN US
A SPIRIT OF FEAR,**

(3) A SOUND MIND



(1) POWER

(2) LOVE

1. POWER- Paul reminds us, "For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance..." (1 Thess 1:5). Having just completed the celebration of the Feast of Pentecost last week, I remind you that this feast celebration is also about the power of the Holy Spirit., "He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, which He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now...you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me..." (Acts.1:5-8).

Jesus is referring to the spiritual gift of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. It is a gift promised by the Father,"He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, which He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (Acts 2:38-39) This is a gift promised to every believer God calls to Himself, "and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." The evidence of having received it is the supernatural ability to speak in unknown tongues (Acts 2:3-4, Acts 2:11, Acts 10:46, Acts 19:6, 1 Cor. 14:39, 1 Cor. 14:13-18, Rom. 8:26, Jude 20).

As great as this gift of unknown tongues is, it is not the only power gift available from God to the believer. There are nine other power gifts singled out by Paul that are given "as the Spirit wills."

**"THERE ARE DIVERSITIES OF GIFTS,
BUT THE SAME SPIRIT.
THERE ARE DIFFERENCES OF MINISTRIES,
BUT THE SAME LORD. AND THERE ARE
DIVERSITIES OF ACTIVITIES, BUT IT IS THE
SAME GOD WHO WORKS ALL IN ALL.
BUT THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT IS
GIVEN TO EACH ONE FOR THE PROFIT OF
ALL: FOR TO ONE IS GIVEN THE WORD OF
WISDOM THROUGH THE SPIRIT, TO
ANOTHER THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE
THROUGH THE SAME SPIRIT, TO ANOTHER
FAITH BY THE SAME SPIRIT, TO ANOTHER
GIFTS OF HEALINGS BY THE SAME SPIRIT,
TO ANOTHER THE WORKING OF MIRACLES,
TO ANOTHER PROPHECY, TO ANOTHER
DISCERNING OF SPIRITS, TO ANOTHER
DIFFERENT KINDS OF TONGUES,
TO ANOTHER THE INTERPRETATION OF
TONGUES. BUT ONE AND THE SAME SPIRIT
WORKS ALL THESE THINGS, DISTRIBUTING
TO EACH ONE INDIVIDUALLY AS HE WILLS."**

1 Cor 12:4-11

**THE NINE GIFTS
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:**

1. THE WORD OF WISDOM...
2. THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE...
3. FAITH...
4. GIFTS OF HEALINGS...
5. THE WORKING OF MIRACLES...
6. PROPHECY...
7. DISCERNING OF SPIRITS...
8. DIFFERENT KINDS OF TONGUES...
9. INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES...



The “power gifts” of the Holy Spirit are not the only thing that God has given to His people to overcome the spirit of fear that permeates the world. God the Father has also given to us “the fruit of the Holy Spirit” in addition to the “gifts of the Spirit.” He has given us power to speak in tongues. He has also given us the fruit of the Spirit, namely, “love.”

**“FOR GOD HAS NOT GIVEN US
A SPIRIT OF FEAR,**



(3) A SOUND MIND



(1) **POWER**

(2) **LOVE**

2. LOVE- “is the greatest”, Paul declares: “there are three that abide, faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love” (1 Cor. 13:13). We are not left to imagine why that statement is made by Paul. In speaking of this fruit of the Holy Spirit, he tells us why love is superior to all other fruit:

**“LOVE SUFFERS LONG AND IS KIND; LOVE DOES NOT ENVY; LOVE DOES NOT PARADE ITSELF,
IS NOT PUFFED UP; DOES NOT BEHAVE RUDELY, DOES NOT SEEK ITS OWN, IS NOT PROVOKED,
THINKS NO EVIL; DOES NOT REJOICE IN INIQUITY, BUT REJOICES IN THE TRUTH;
LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS, BELIEVES ALL THINGS, HOPES ALL THINGS, ENDURES ALL THINGS.
LOVE NEVER FAILS.”**

1 Cor. 13:4-8

In Galatians Paul enumerates the nine fruits the Holy Spirit can produce in the life of the believer. They are listed as:

Notice at the top of this list is “love” and at the bottom of the list is “self-control.” The fruit of the Spirit works in us from the bottom to the top. We do not begin with the fruit of “love” but with “self-control.” That does not mean you yourself control “self”, but rather it is a fruit developed from yielding to the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Self-control is the first fruit of the Holy Spirit to be worked in the believer. It is “self-control” that can subdue all the twenty-one works of the flesh listed in Galatians Chapter Five. Get “self-control” and you can progress upward through “gentleness, faithfulness, goodness, kindness, long-suffering, peace, joy and ultimately, love.”

If you carefully compare 1 Cor. 13:4-8 to Gal. 5:22-23 you will see that “love” comprises many of the other fruits of the Holy Spirit. If you have “love” you have the other manifestations at work as well. “Love is kind” (kindness). “Love does not behave rudely” (gentleness). “Love bears all things” (longsuffering). “Love rejoices in truth” (joy). I think you can see the parallels.

THE NINE FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

1. LOVE...

2. JOY...

3. PEACE...

4. LONGSUFFERING...

5. KINDNESS...

6. GOODNESS...

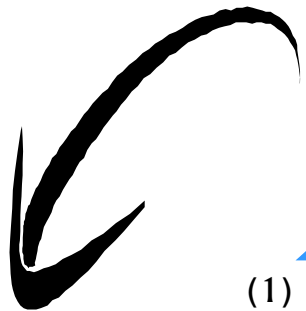
7. FAITHFULNESS...

8. GENTLENESS...

9. SELF-CONTROL...



**"FOR GOD HAS NOT GIVEN US
A SPIRIT OF FEAR,**



(3) A SOUND MIND



(1) POWER

(2) LOVE



3. A SOUND MIND- It has been well said that "the mind is a battlefield in which wars are won and lost." We have already seen that "a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways", and warned "Let not that man think he will receive anything from the Lord" (Jam. 1:8). The importance of the mind cannot be understated. The mind is a vital part of the soul ("mind, will and emotions"). Many carnal Christians have what is called "an inverted soul" in which the emotions rule over the mind and the will. Psalm 23 declares of the Lord, "He restores my soul" (Psm. 23:3). The restored soul is one in which the mind is the first part of the soul which must be renewed. The soul of a Christian must first renew his mind in order to influence his will (decision maker), and lastly the mind and the will bring the emotions under the Spirit's control. Here are a few verses about the need for the mind to be renewed:

**"THAT YOU PUT OFF, CONCERNING YOUR FORMER CONDUCT,
THE OLD MAN WHICH GROWS CORRUPT ACCORDING TO THE DECEITFUL LUSTS,
AND BE RENEWED IN THE SPIRIT OF YOUR MIND,
AND THAT YOU PUT ON THE NEW MAN WHICH WAS CREATED ACCORDING TO GOD,
IN TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HOLINESS."**

Eph 4:22-24

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

Rom 12:2

**"...BUT ACCORDING TO HIS MERCY HE SAVED US,
THROUGH THE WASHING OF REGENERATION AND RENEWING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT,
WHOM HE POURED OUT ON US ABUNDANTLY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR SAVIOR..."**

Titus 3:5



Two needful agents are involved in
the renewing of the mind:
(1) The Holy Spirit of God,
and (2) the Word of God which was authored
by the Holy Spirit.



We have briefly considered God's threefold cure for the fearful times in which we live. There is a "spirit of fear" at work in the world, but praise the Lord, there is also a higher power at work, namely, the Spirit of the living God. His answer to fear is faith in (1) the power of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, (2) the power in the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and (3) power obtained by a renewed mind which also comes from the Spirit of the living God. Let us be like Joshua and Caleb who said, "We are well able to go up and take the land." Don't be like the rest of the people of God who could only see "the giants in the land." Our God is bigger than the giants, even the super giant "Goliath", as well as the giant COVID-19! Selah!

Pastor Randy Shupe



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



**"TO WHAT SHALL WE LIKEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD?
OR WITH WHAT PARABLE SHALL WE PICTURE IT?...'"** Mark 4:30-34

**"FOR IT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO YOU TO KNOW
THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN...
BLESSED ARE YOUR EYES FOR THEY SEE,
AND YOUR EARS FOR THEY HEAR..."** Matt. 13:11,16

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

Jesus presents in parable form a "string of pearls" that must be considered as a single story. The story opens with "the Parable of the Sower" (Matt. 13:1-23) and closes with "the Parable of the Dragnet" (Matt. 13:47-50). They contain in a mystery, a "hidden truth" containing a prophetic depiction of what is destined to happen to the Kingdom of God while on earth. We are talking about a depiction of the church of Jesus Christ from its infant inception with the original twelve disciples right up to this present hour, and on into the future that remains ahead until we reach what Jesus describes as the end of the age.

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

All of Jesus' parables are very important. Why so? Because when Jesus taught on the subject of "the Kingdom of God" He always did so by means of a parable. There are forty kingdom parables in the teachings of Jesus. This newsletter is dedicated to unfolding seven of them, a "string of pearls".

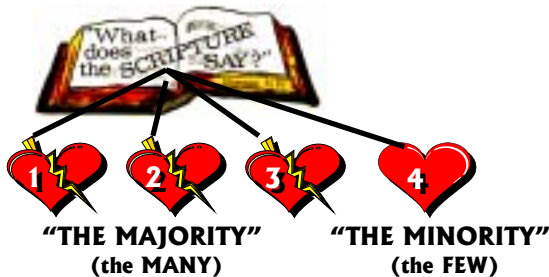
It is my firm conviction that these seven parables span the time-frame of the Kingdom of God on earth from the sowing of the seed to the harvesting of the crop. The first parable begins the Kingdom story with a sower sowing seed, the Word of God, in the hearts of men. The last parable concludes with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

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

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

MARK 4:13

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



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

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

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



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



"THE MAJORITY"

(the MANY) **FOLLOW THE BROAD WAY**



"THE MINORITY"

(the FEW) **FOLLOW THE NARROW WAY**

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

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

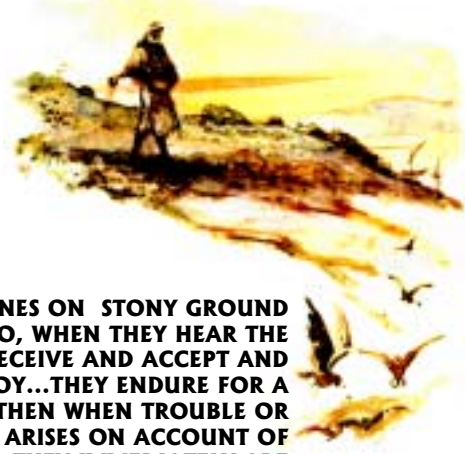
Prov. 4:20-23

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



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

Matthew 13:19



"...THE ONES ON STONY GROUND ARE THOSE WHO, WHEN THEY HEAR THE WORD, AT ONCE RECEIVE AND ACCEPT AND WELCOME IT WITH JOY...THEY ENDURE FOR A LITTLE WHILE; THEN WHEN TROUBLE OR PERSECUTION ARISES ON ACCOUNT OF THE WORD, THEY IMMEDIATELY ARE OFFENDED(BECOME DISPLEASED, INDIGNANT, RESENTFUL) AND THEY STUMBLE AND FALL AWAY."

Mark 4:16-17 Amplified



"...THE CARES AND ANXIETIES OF THE WORLD, AND DISTRACTIONS OF THE AGE, AND THE PLEASURE AND DELIGHT AND FALSE GLAMOUR AND DECEITFULNESS OF RICHES, AND THE CRAVING AND PASSIONATE DESIRE FOR OTHER THINGS CREEP IN..."

Mark 4:18-19 Amplified



"THE MAJORITY"
(the MANY)



"THE MINORITY"
(the FEW)

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

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



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

Mark 4:20 Amplified

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



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

**BY THIS MY FATHER IS GLORIED,
THAT YOU BEAR MUCH FRUIT;
SO YOU WILL BE MY DISCIPLES."**

John 15:16,8

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

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

**"IF ANY MAN HAS EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM BE LISTENING AND LET HIM PERCEIVE AND
COMPREHEND. AND HE SAID TO THEM, BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU ARE HEARING.
THE MEASURE OF THOUGHT AND STUDY YOU GIVE TO THE TRUTH YOU HEAR WILL BE THE
MEASURE OF VIRTUE AND KNOWLEDGE THAT COMES BACK TO YOU-
AND MORE WILL BE GIVEN TO THOSE WHO HEAR..."** Mark 4:23-24 Amplified

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



Let this truth sink in:

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



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

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

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

1 Cor. 3:6-9

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

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

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

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

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

Remember this: those who practice lawlessness in the Kingdom of God will be permitted to continue to do so right up unto the end of the age, but keep in mind what will happen afterwards:

The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Parable of the Tares Explained

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

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

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

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

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

41 "The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,

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

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

Look carefully at this contrast below:

"THE SON OF MAN WILL SEND OUT HIS ANGELS, AND THEY WILL GATHER OUT OF HIS KINGDOM ALL THINGS THAT OFFEND, AND THOSE WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS..."

**THE IMPURE STAGE
(TEMPORAL)**



"YOU ARE HERE"

Mat. 13:41-43

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

**THE PURE STAGE
(ETERNAL)**

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

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

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

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

Mat. 24:10-14

"NOT EVERYONE WHO SAYS TO ME, 'LORD, LORD,' SHALL ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, BUT HE WHO DOES THE WILL OF MY FATHER IN HEAVEN. MANY WILL SAY TO ME IN THAT DAY, 'LORD, LORD, HAVE WE NOT PROPHESED IN YOUR NAME, CAST OUT DEMONS IN YOUR NAME, AND DONE MANY WONDERS IN YOUR NAME?' AND THEN I WILL DECLARE TO THEM, 'I NEVER KNEW YOU; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS!'" Mat. 7:21-23

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

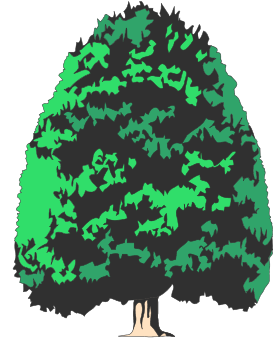
Let us now consider the third parable Jesus gives in Matthew 13 that depicts what the Kingdom of heaven will look like right up until His return at the end of the age:



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

Matt. 13:31-32

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



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

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



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

Psalms 37:35



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

Matt. 13:32



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

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



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



Where does meal come from?

It is from the kernels of wheat which were planted in the field and have been ripened and harvested. This is a further revelation of the progression of the Kingdom of God. The field has yielded a harvest and now is ground into meal.

The parable states "three measures of meal" which I would suggest to you prophetically represents

**JUDAISM
CATHOLICISM
PROTESTANTISM**

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

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

(Mat. 16:5-6)

"..YOU SHOULD BEWARE OF THE LEAVEN...THE DOCTRINE OF THE PHARISEES AND THE SADDUCEES."

Mat. 16:11-12

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

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

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

Gal. 5:7-9

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

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

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

JUDAISM



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PROTESTANTISM**

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

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



**"THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME. AND IN VAIN
THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN. FOR LAYING
ASIDE THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD, YOU HOLD TO THE TRADITION OF MEN...ALL TOO WELL
YOU REJECT THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY KEEP YOUR TRADITION...MAKING
THE WORD OF GOD OF NO EFFECT THROUGH YOUR TRADITION WHICH YOU HAVE HANDED
DOWN. AND MANY SUCH THINGS YOU DO."** Mark. 7:6-13

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



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

JUDAISM

CATHOLICISM

PROTESTANTISM



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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



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



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



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



Standing in stark contrast to the above four dismal accounts of the Kingdom of God are these next two:

← I have always believed that God gives just enough encouragement in order that we are not overwhelmed by discouragement. These next two parables represent the true remnant of Israel and the church.





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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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



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

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

"HE CAME TO HIS OWN, AND HIS OWN DID NOT RECEIVE HIM. BUT AS MANY AS RECEIVED HIM, TO THEM HE GAVE THE RIGHT TO BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD, EVEN TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIS NAME..." John 1:11-12

Paul cried out to the Christ rejecting Jews:

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

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

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

"FOR YOU WERE BOUGHT AT A PRICE..." 1 Cor. 6:20

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

"...THE REDEMPTION OF THE PURCHASED POSSESSION..." Eph. 1:14

One final thought here: Do you know how pearls are formed? They are made by means of the ongoing suffering that the oyster experiences over a long period of time. Paul reminds us that "For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Phil. 1:29), "If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him" (2 Tim. 2:12 KJ).



How it all ends:

**"AGAIN, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A DRAGNET THAT WAS CAST
INTO THE SEA AND GATHERED SOME OF EVERY KIND, WHICH, WHEN IT
WAS FULL, THEY DREW TO SHORE; AND THEY SAT DOWN AND GATHERED
THE GOOD INTO VESSELS, BUT THREW THE BAD AWAY.
SO IT WILL BE AT THE END OF THE AGE. THE ANGELS WILL COME FORTH,
SEPARATE THE WICKED FROM AMONG THE JUST, AND CAST THEM INTO THE
FURNACE OF FIRE. THERE WILL BE WAILING AND GNASHING OF TEETH."**
Matt. 13:47-50



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

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

**"BUT THE WICKED ARE LIKE THE TROUBLED SEA,
WHEN IT CANNOT REST, WHOSE WATERS CAST UP MIRE AND DIRT."**
Isa. 57:20

**"THE LORD... WILL PUNISH LEVIATHAN THE FLEEING SERPENT...
THAT TWISTED SERPENT; AND HE WILL SLAY THE REPTILE
THAT IS IN THE SEA."** Isa. 27:1-2

**"AND FOUR GREAT BEASTS CAME UP FROM THE SEA,
EACH DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER..."** Dan. 7:3



The last picture above (Isa. 27:1-2, Dan. 7:3) describes the appearance of Antichrist. The sea is usually associated with both "the wicked" and the Wicked One" and that may be the very reason that when God makes a new heaven and a new earth we find the omission of any new sea:

"ALSO THERE WAS NO MORE SEA." Rev. 21:1

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

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

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

Mark 4:30-32



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

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

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

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

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



**SATAN'S
SUBTLE SUBSTITUTES
DESIGNED TO GOVERN**

THE WORLD

**"...THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH
WERE MADE DRUNK WITH THE WINE OF HER FORNICATION." Rev. 17:2**
**"...ALL WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH WILL WORSHIP HIM,
WHOSE NAMES HAVE NOT BEEN WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE..." Rev. 13:8**

RELIGION



POLITICS

**"...THE KINGS OF THE EARTH
HAVE COMMITTED FORNICATION
WITH HER...
FOR ALL THE NATIONS
HAVE DRUNK OF THE WINE OF THE WRATH
OF HER FORNICATION,
Rev 18:3**

COMMERCE

**"...THE MERCHANTS OF THE EARTH
HAVE BECOME RICH THROUGH
THE ABUNDANCE OF HER LUXURY." Rev. 18:3**
**"...FOR YOUR MERCHANTS
WERE THE GREAT MEN OF THE EARTH,
FOR BY YOUR SORCERY ALL THE NATIONS
WERE DECEIVED."
Rev 18:23-24**

Vividly depicted above is the threefold means by which Satan causes "the whole world to lie under the sway of the Wicked One" (1 Jn. 5:19), and how he can guide "...the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience..." (Eph.2:2).

Solomon once stated that there is nothing new that takes place under the sun, but that which has been before in ancient times is what will take place again (see Ecc.1:9). That is true because Satan is an "unchanging devil." If it worked before, he will use it again. What is depicted above is his "future plan" for the world he is presently directing. To understand it more fully, we must first look backward to see what he has done in "ancient times." Solomon gives us this governing principle of scripture:

**"...IS THERE ANYTHING OF WHICH IT MAY BE SAID, SEE, THIS IS NEW?"
IT HAS ALREADY BEEN IN ANCIENT TIMES BEFORE US." Eccl. 1:9-10**

"THAT WHICH HAS BEEN IS WHAT WILL BE, THAT WHICH IS DONE IS WHAT WILL BE DONE, AND THERE IS NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN. IS THERE ANYTHING OF WHICH IT MAY BE SAID, SEE, THIS IS NEW"? IT HAS ALREADY BEEN IN ANCIENT TIMES BEFORE US."

Ecc1 1:9-10

This is the yet-future prophetic picture that the book of Revelation presents as that which will constitute Satan's last manifestation of the kingdom of Antichrist on earth just prior to the return of Jesus Christ.

This satanic end-time kingdom will be ear-marked with an evil power structure based upon the principles that constitute religion, politics and commerce. It will function by means of the systematic corruption of "the inhabitants of the earth", "the kings of the earth" and "the merchants of the earth." The demonic mind behind this evil empire will be the one Jesus called "the evil genius of this world" (Jn. 14:30), Satan personified.

"THAT WHICH WILL BE"

"...THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH WERE MADE DRUNK WITH THE WINE OF HER FORNICATION." Rev. 17:2
"...ALL WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH WILL WORSHIP HIM, WHOSE NAMES HAVE NOT BEEN WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE..." Rev. 13:8



RELIGION



POLITICS

THE KINGS OF THE EARTH HAVE COMMITTED FORNICATION WITH HER... FOR ALL THE NATIONS HAVE DRUNK OF THE WINE OF THE WRATH OF HER FORNICATION..."
 Rev 18:3

COMMERCE

"...THE MERCHANTS OF THE EARTH HAVE BECOME RICH THROUGH THE ABUNDANCE OF HER LUXURY." Rev. 18:3
"...FOR YOUR MERCHANTS WERE THE GREAT MEN OF THE EARTH, FOR BY YOUR SORCERY ALL THE NATIONS WERE DECEIVED."
 Rev 18:23-24

Now let us compare what Ezekiel 28 records as the historical account of the initial realm in time past before Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden. Lucifer governed his realm of authority by means of a perverted form of "religion, politics and commerce."

We are not given great detail into this ancient rebellion of Lucifer, but sufficient enough that we can see the seeds of "religion, politics and commerce" were used effectively to cause one-third of angels that were under his charge to rebel against God. Lucifer was the chief archangel in charge of the administration of God's throne. His ancient plan was effective enough that he will use this corruptive strategy again!

"THAT WHICH HAS BEEN BEFORE"

"... YOU WERE IN EDEN, THE GARDEN OF GOD... THE WORKMANSHIP OF YOUR TIMBRELS AND PIPES WAS PREPARED FOR YOU ON THE DAY YOU WERE CREATED... YOU WERE THE ANOINTED CHERUB WHO COVERS... "YOU DEFILED YOUR SANCTUARIES..." Ezek 28:12-15



RELIGION



POLITICS

"YOU WERE ON THE HOLY MOUNTAIN OF GOD... YOU WALKED BACK AND FORTH IN THE MIDST OF FIERY STONES... I CAST YOU AS A PROFANE THING OUT OF THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD; AND I DESTROYED YOU, O COVERING CHERUB, FROM THE MIDST OF THE FIERY STONES..." Ezek. 28:13

COMMERCE

"BY THE ABUNDANCE OF YOUR TRADING YOU BECAME FILLED WITH VIOLENCE... I DESTROYED YOU, O COVERING CHERUB, FROM THE MIDST OF THE FIERY STONES... "YOU DEFILED YOUR SANCTUARIES BY THE MULTITUDE OF YOUR INIQUITIES, BY THE INIQUITY OF YOUR TRADING..."
 Ezek 28:16-18

Let me establish that the scriptures depict that a good side also exists to the topics of "religion, politics, and commerce." Here are a few samples: →

However, we have already seen how Lucifer took a good thing that God ordained and used it for evil purposes in his rebellion in Heaven long ago. There is immense power and influence contained within the function of "religion, politics (government) and commerce."

It is not hard to see that we live in a world that is greatly impacted by these three arenas of operation. It could be easily verified that these three, religion, politics and commerce, "make the world go around."

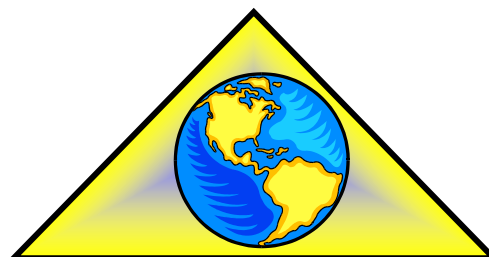
The point I want to make is that although religion, politics and commerce are heading for evil manifestations,

please hear that I am not saying that anyone involved in religion, politics or commerce is inherently evil and doing the work of the devil. However, I am saying that the potential of being ensnared by any of these three arenas is a high risk! Remember, Satan brought down a third of Heaven with these tactics in the past and he fully intends to use them again in the future to fully corrupt (1) "the inhabitants of the earth" by using deceptive religion, and (2) "the kings of the earth" by means of corrupt politics and (3) the "merchants of the earth" by means of manipulative forms of commerce:

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

James 1:27

RELIGION



POLITICS

**"LET EVERY SOUL BE
SUBJECT TO THE
GOVERNING AUTHORITIES.
FOR THERE IS NO
AUTHORITY EXCEPT FROM
GOD, AND THE
AUTHORITIES THAT EXIST
ARE APPOINTED BY GOD. "**

Rom 13:1-3

COMMERCE

**"... MANY ISLES WERE THE MARKET OF
YOUR HAND. THEY BROUGHT YOU
IVORY TUSKS AND EBONY AS
PAYMENT. SYRIA WAS YOUR
MERCHANT BECAUSE OF THE
ABUNDANCE OF GOODS YOU MADE.
THEY GAVE YOU FOR YOUR WARES
EMERALDS, PURPLE, EMBROIDERY,
FINE LINEN, CORALS, AND RUBIES."**

Ezek 27:14-17

**"... YOU WERE IN EDEN, THE GARDEN OF GOD...
THE WORKMANSHIP OF YOUR TIMBRELS AND PIPES WAS
PREPARED FOR YOU ON THE DAY YOU WERE CREATED...
YOU WERE THE ANOINTED CHERUB WHO COVERS...
"YOU DEFILED YOUR SANCTUARIES..." Ezek 28:12-15**



RELIGION



POLITICS

**"YOU WERE ON THE HOLY
MOUNTAIN OF GOD...
YOU WALKED BACK AND
FORTH IN THE MIDST OF FIERY
STONES... I CAST YOU AS A
PROFANE THING OUT OF THE
MOUNTAIN OF GOD; AND I
DESTROYED YOU,
O COVERING CHERUB,
FROM THE MIDST OF THE FIERY
STONES..." Ezek. 28:13**

COMMERCE

**"BY THE ABUNDANCE OF YOUR
TRADING YOU BECAME FILLED WITH
VIOLENCE... I DESTROYED YOU, O
COVERING CHERUB, FROM THE
MIDST OF THE FIERY STONES...
"YOU DEFILED YOUR SANCTUARIES
BY THE MULTITUDE OF YOUR
INIQUITIES, BY THE INIQUITY OF
YOUR TRADING..."**

Ezek 28:16-18

**"...THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH
WERE MADE DRUNK WITH THE WINE OF HER FORNICATION..." Rev. 17:2
"...ALL WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH WILL WORSHIP HIM,
WHOSE NAMES HAVE NOT BEEN WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE..." Rev. 13:8**



RELIGION



POLITICS

**THE KINGS OF THE EARTH
HAVE COMMITTED FORNICATION
WITH HER...
FOR ALL THE NATIONS
HAVE DRUNK OF THE WINE OF THE WRATH
OF HER FORNICATION..."**

Rev 18:3

COMMERCE

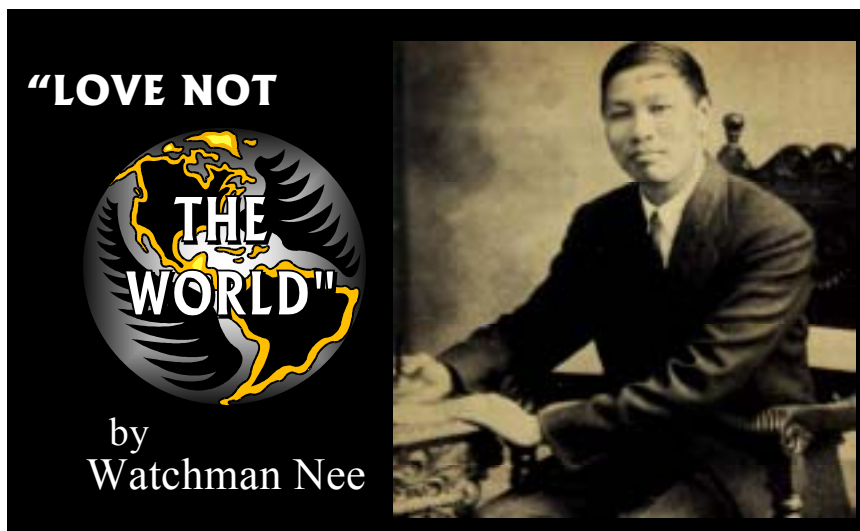
**"...THE MERCHANTS OF THE EARTH
HAVE BECOME RICH THROUGH
THE ABUNDANCE OF HER
LUXURY..." Rev. 18:3
"...FOR YOUR MERCHANTS
WERE THE GREAT MEN OF THE
EARTH, FOR BY YOUR SORCERY
ALL THE NATIONS WERE
DECEIVED."**

Rev 18:23-24

Just as the apostle John prophetically warned believers in saying, "the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world" (1 John 4:3), we must also recognize that the corruption of religion, politics and commerce is already at work in a world under the sway of the Wicked One (1 Jn. 5:19).

Today, there exists few exhortative Christian writers like the late Watchman Nee. Below are a few excerpts from his classic work, *"Love Not The World."* His view of the world in which we must live is radical. It is costly. It is priceless counsel. I challenge you to read it. I warn you that you cannot digest much of it at a time because it goes against the grain of how most of us want to see the world in which we live. We expect religion to save the world. We expect politics to change the world. We expect commerce to enrich the world in which we live. However, none of these things can stand the test of the sober warnings of scripture. We are told "not to love the world" lest the love of the Father not be in us (1 Jn. 2:14). We are told not to be "conformed into the image of this world" (Rom. 12:2). We are warned not to "be a friend of the world" lest we become the enemy of God (James 4:4). Watchman Nee laments in his book:

**"OH, THAT GOD WOULD OPEN OUR EYES
TO SEE CLEARLY WHAT THE WORLD IS!"**



**"EVERY TIME YOU AND I TOUCH THE WORLD
THROUGH THE THINGS OF THE WORLD
(AND WE MUST DO SO REPEATEDLY),
WE SHOULD FEEL MUCH AS WOULD FEEL
ABOUT TAKING MORPHINE, FOR THERE ARE
DEMONS AT THE BACK OF EVERYTHING
THAT BELONGS TO THE WORLD.
BECAUSE I AM STILL IN THE WORLD,
I HAVE TO DO BUSINESS WITH THE WORLD,
FOLLOW SOME TRADE,
EARN MY LIVELIHOOD.**

**BUT HOW MUCH TREATMENT WITH
DANGEROUS DRUGS CAN I SAFELY TAKE
WITHOUT FALLING PREY TO THE CRAVING?**

**HOW MANY THINGS CAN I BUY,
OR HOW MUCH MONEY CAN I MAKE,
OR HOW CLOSE CAN BE BUSINESS
ASSOCIATIONS BE
WITHOUT MY BECOMING HOOKED?**

**HOW VITAL IT IS FOR EVERY CHRISTIAN TO
HAVE A CLEAR REVELATION OF THIS
PRESENT WORLD THAT IS UNDER
SATAN'S CONTROL..."**

**"OH, THAT GOD WOULD OPEN OUR EYES
TO SEE CLEARLY WHAT THE WORLD IS!**

**NOT ONLY THE OBVIOUS EVIL THINGS THAT
IT CONTAINS, BUT ALSO THE SUBTLE THINGS
THAT CAN DRAW US AWAY FROM GOD.**

**THOSE THINGS THAT MAKE US MORE AND MORE
ATTACHED TO THIS PRESENT WORLD.....
...OUR DELIVERANCE FROM THE WORLD
BEGINS SEEING THE WORLD AS GOD SEES IT,
A WORLD THAT IS UNDER THE SENTENCE OF DEATH.**

**A PERSON UNDER THE SENTENCE OF DEATH
HAS NO FUTURE BEYOND THE CELL THAT CONFINES HIM.
HE AWAITS THE INEVITABLE CONCLUSION.**

**LIKEWISE THE WORLD,
BEING UNDER GOD'S PRONOUNCED SENTENCE OF DEATH,
HAS NO FUTURE.
IT MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE TO US
THAT WE SEE THIS."**

**"THE BOOK OF REVELATION REVEALS THAT SATAN
WILL SET UP HIS FINAL KINGDOM
UNDER ANTICHRIST IN THREE REALMS:**

**THE POLITICAL WORLD,
THE RELIGIOUS WORLD,
AND THE WORLD OF COMMERCE.**

**ON THIS THREEFOLD BASIS
OF POLITICS, COMMERCE AND RELIGION,
SATAN'S REIGN WILL FIND
ITS LAST AND ULTIMATE VIOLENT EXPRESSION."**

(Excerpts from Watchman Nee's book,
"Love Not The World")

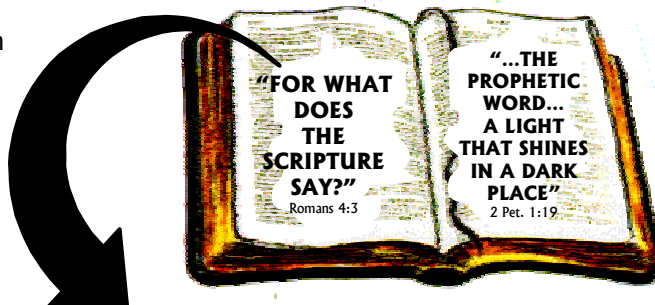
**"THE BOOK OF REVELATION
REVEALS THAT SATAN WILL SET UP HIS FINAL KINGDOM
UNDER ANTICHRIST IN THREE REALMS:
THE POLITICAL WORLD, THE RELIGIOUS WORLD, AND THE WORLD OF COMMERCE.
ON THIS THREEFOLD BASIS OF POLITICS, COMMERCE AND RELIGION,
SATAN'S REIGN WILL FIND ITS LAST AND ULTIMATE VIOLENT EXPRESSION."
(Love Not The World")**



Consider well this dual warning from both the prophetic scriptures of the Book of Revelation as well as the profound warning issued above from the late Watchman Nee.

The world in which we live is heading for a cataclysmic conflict due to the ever-increasing corruption of religion, politics and commerce that will intoxicate all "the inhabitants of the earth", make drunk "the kings of the earth", and "the merchants of the earth" will also practice pharmaceutical sorcery by casting their spell-binding control over all the nations of the earth.

The above paragraph is a mouthful to say the least! At this point in time I dare say that we cannot even begin to express fully what those prophetic charges in Revelation may contain, but we have seen enough that has taken place in these three realms to realize that we are being exposed to the early seeds of an ever-increasing danger that shall encompass the whole world which, Watchman Nee described a potential life-threatening situation:



"...THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH
WERE MADE DRUNK WITH THE WINE OF HER FORNICATION." Rev. 17:2
"...ALL WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH WILL WORSHIP HIM,
WHOSE NAMES HAVE NOT BEEN WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE..." Rev. 13:8



RELIGION



POLITICS

COMMERCE

"...THE KINGS OF THE EARTH
HAVE COMMITTED FORNICATION
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FOR ALL THE NATIONS
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Rev 18:3

"...THE MERCHANTS OF THE EARTH
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Rev. 18:3
"...FOR YOUR MERCHANTS
WERE THE GREAT MEN OF THE EARTH,
FOR BY YOUR SORCERY
ALL THE NATIONS WERE DECEIVED."
Rev 18:23-24

**"EVERY TIME YOU AND I TOUCH THE WORLD THROUGH THE THINGS OF THE WORLD
(AND WE MUST DO SO REPEATEDLY), WE SHOULD FEEL MUCH AS WOULD FEEL ABOUT TAKING MORPHINE,
FOR THERE ARE DEMONS AT THE BACK OF EVERYTHING THAT BELONGS TO THE WORLD."**

Understanding the above prophetic satanic foundation, let us now ponder what we have seen historically, as well as experientially, in these three arenas that lie under the course and direction of the god of this world. Remember, "to be forewarned is to be forearmed." We cannot remain ignorant of Satan's tactics or he will take advantage of us (2 Cor. 2:11):

RELIGION

**"...THE COURSE OF THIS WORLD,
(IS) ACCORDING TO
THE PRINCE OF THE POWER
OF THE AIR..."** Eph 2:2



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



POLITICS

COMMERCE



**"...THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH
WERE MADE DRUNK WITH THE WINE OF HER FORNICATION."** Rev. 17:2

**"...ALL WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH WILL WORSHIP HIM,
WHOSE NAMES HAVE NOT BEEN WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE..."** Rev. 13:8

This is not an attack on religion per say, but rather a warning pertaining to a form of "defiled religion" that will permeate the whole world under the influence of the Wicked One (1 Jn. 5:19). This kind of religion is of satanic origin and is a subtle substitute for "pure and undefiled religion" inspired by God as we see described by the apostle James:

**"IF ANYONE AMONG YOU THINKS HE IS RELIGIOUS...
BUT DECEIVES HIS OWN HEART, THIS ONE'S RELIGION IS USELESS.
PURE AND UNDEFILED RELIGION BEFORE GOD AND THE FATHER IS THIS:
TO VISIT ORPHANS AND WIDOWS IN THEIR TROUBLE,
AND TO KEEP ONESELF UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD."**

James 1:26-27



I stress to you that Satan has always, and continues to offer to mankind his "subtle substitutes" under the guise of religion. There is no greater potential force at work than the religious-based, powerful and persuasive philosophy of, "God With Us" or "One Nation Under God." We are well aware of "One Nation Under God" being America's banner of support for God-inspired religion, but are you aware that Germany "goosed-stepped" its way over Europe under the banner, "God With Us"? Consider the so-called divine inspiration by which the majority of Christian Germans were duped twice, in two World Wars, into goose-stepping across Europe with their destructive war machines:

"GOD WITH US"



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

"GOD WITH US"



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

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/On_the_Jews_and_Their_Lies)

Down through history religion has been greatly misused for the justification of making righteous wars. It was so with Hitler's Nazi Germany. He "justified" his hatred of the Jews based on the perverse theology of the founder of Protestantism, Martin Luther. His perverse theological despise of "the Christ killers" gave Hitler all the justification he needed to righteously exterminate the Jews in the name of religion. Such perverse action always begins with laying a religious foundation for persecution.

It was so for Japan's Emperor Hirohito who was considered by his people to be a god to be worshipped. It took two horrific atomic bombs dropped on Japan's cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima to break their idolatrous worship of Emperor Hirohito. Apart from that deadly but needful shock therapy, Japan's religious devotion to Hirohito would have caused the fanatical people of Japan to defend its shores to the very last man. Such is the power of religion when applied to war.

More recently, there was the attempted Muslim establishment of a murderous caliphate in the troubled Mid-East. Thousands were brutally beheaded, slaughtered in the name of the Muslim god Allah in order to establish a sanctimonious religious caliphate. The original meaning of the phrase "caliphate" was "successor selected by God". Look carefully at the word "caliphate" The last four letters contain the word "hate." Islam means "peace." Some religion of peace! A *caliph* is a spiritual leader of Islam who claims direct succession from the revered prophet Muhammad. Again, it is religion that lurks as a justifiable cause behind murderous acts of war.

Even the Puritan's fierce war with the American Indians had a sanctimonious religious covering:

"THE IDEA THAT AMERICA WAS GOD'S 'NEW ISRAEL' SPAWNED THE DOCTRINE OF MANIFEST DESTINY WHICH RESULTED IN THE JUSTIFIABLE SLAUGHTER OF NATIVE AMERICA MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN ALL ACROSS THE LAND OF THIS 'NEW CANAAN.' THE SENSE OF DIVINE ELECTION AND THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE AMERICA'S WITH ANCIENT CANAAN WERE USED TO JUSTIFY EXPELLING AMERICA'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES FROM THEIR LAND. JUST AS JOSHUA LED THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL AGAINST THE HEATHEN NATIONS OF ISRAEL'S PROMISE LAND, SO LIKEWISE DID THE PURITAN PREACHERS INCITE THE PEOPLE BY FIERY SERMONS FILLED WITH OLD TESTAMENT PATTERNS TO JUSTIFY THE SLAUGHTER OF THE UNCONVERTED HEATHEN AROUND THEM. THE ROAMING INDIAN TRIBES, IN PURITAN EYES, BELONGED TO THE ANIMAL WORLD RATHER THAN THE HUMAN WORLD AND IN SPITE OF A FEW EARLY ATTEMPTS AT MISSIONARY WORK AMONG THEM...THE EARLY SETTLERS DEVELOPED A POLICY OF PIOUS BUT RUTHLESS EXTERMINATION...THEY WERE COLD, IMPLACABLE, AND DETERMINED TO CLEAR THE LAND OF INDIANS... THEY REFUSED TO BE SEDUCED OR INTIMIDATED BY WHAT COTTON MATHER CALLED THE 'PERNICIOUS CREATURES' (Indians)...THE PURITANS CLUNG TENACIOUSLY TO AN ABSTRACT IDEA-THE IDEA OF A PERFECT HUMAN SOCIETY WHICH WOULD ACTUALIZE ON EARTH THE ALMIGHTY'S DREAM (OF A NEW ISRAEL)."

(The Light and the Glory by Peter Marshall, Pg. 35-37)

We must be aware that on the prophetic horizon lies another "justifiable" great war like no other that will also be sanctified by the use of religion. This war will make all the inhabitants of the earth to be intoxicated to proclaim, "Who can make war with the beast?"

***"...AND ALL THE WORLD MARVELED AND FOLLOWED THE BEAST.
SO THEY WORSHIPED THE DRAGON WHO GAVE AUTHORITY TO THE BEAST;
AND THEY WORSHIPED THE BEAST, SAYING, 'WHO IS LIKE THE BEAST? WHO IS ABLE TO MAKE WAR WITH HIM?' AND HE WAS GIVEN A MOUTH SPEAKING GREAT THINGS AND BLASPHEMIES, AND HE WAS GIVEN AUTHORITY TO CONTINUE FOR FORTY-TWO MONTHS. THEN HE OPENED HIS MOUTH IN BLASPHEMY AGAINST GOD, TO BLASPHEME HIS NAME, HIS TABERNACLE, AND THOSE WHO DWELL IN HEAVEN.
IT WAS GRANTED TO HIM TO MAKE WAR WITH THE SAINTS AND TO OVERCOME THEM.
AND AUTHORITY WAS GIVEN HIM OVER EVERY TRIBE, TONGUE, AND NATION.
ALL WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH WILL WORSHIP HIM,
WHOSE NAMES HAVE NOT BEEN WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE OF THE LAMB
SLAIN FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD."***

Rev. 13:2-8

Notice that this becomes a great act of "worship" encompassing the whole earth!

***"...AND THEY WORSHIPED THE BEAST, SAYING, 'WHO IS LIKE THE BEAST? WHO IS ABLE TO MAKE WAR WITH HIM?...AND ALL WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH WILL WORSHIP HIM
WHOSE NAMES ARE NOT WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE..."***

The "all" people who worship must include even atheistic unbelievers of true religion. However, this is a "new" religion based on the supernatural ability to make war! It is this "war god" that will be "worshipped" by all the inhabitants of the earth!

Beware saints of God! War and religion have always gone hand in hand-history proves that to be true. This is a big part of the end-time plan Satan has to ensnare the whole world in his intoxicating drunkenness with war-based religion!



**"...THE KINGS OF THE EARTH
HAVE COMMITTED FORNICATION WITH HER...
FOR ALL THE NATIONS HAVE DRUNK OF THE WINE OF THE WRATH OF HER FORNICATION"**
Rev 18:3

As I write this newsletter in September of 2020, the United States is not united but rather greatly divided by a level of "dirty politics" like no other period of its existence! The above Scripture, although not using the name "politics", vividly describes such a time in which all the "kings" and "nations" (governments) of the earth are intoxicated with the "wine of wrath" produced by her (Mystery Babylon's) "fornication." Fornication is not always a sexual matter. It is a term equally applicable to deeds performed outside of covenant restrictions. Concerning covenant marriage, the scripture warns:

**"MARRIAGE IS HONORABLE AMONG ALL, AND THE BED UNDEFILED;
BUT FORNICATORS AND ADULTERERS GOD WILL JUDGE."** Heb 13:4

But scripture also conveys this sin against God by being "a friend of the world":

"ADULTERERS AND ADULTERESSES! DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD IS ENMITY WITH GOD? WHOEVER THEREFORE WANTS TO BE A FRIEND OF THE WORLD MAKES HIMSELF AN ENEMY OF GOD."
James 4:4-5

The Hebrew/Greek term (Zannah) "fornication, harlotry or adultery" simply means "unfaithful to God and given to idols." Politics, on the level practiced here in America presently, is for the most part, an idolatrous affair among the kings (governments) of the earth. It is such an intense subject in our present hour of trial that it has indeed made, "...all the nations drunk with the wrath of her fornication." Even in the midst of a world-wide pandemic of Covid-19, all things, including Covid-19, have become extremely politically motivated subjects used to produce intense wrath when it is purposely mixed with the subject of politics!

I grew up in the midst of secular counsel that warned, "Two things you don't discuss among friends and family; politics and religion!" Perhaps you have seen these two subjects indeed have the volatile capability to quickly separate friends and family! However, the country in which we live is very religious and very, very politically minded! I doubt if a day can pass without encountering a potential conflict and especially with the subject of politics! Perhaps you have heard this humorous but cynical definition of "politics":

POLITICS: "POLY" MEANING "MANY" AND "TICKS" MEANING "BLOOD-SUCKING VULTURES"

As I stressed to you earlier in this newsletter, not all who are engaged in "politics, commerce and religion" are the cause of the problem. As we have seen these three subjects have a merit side to them and are necessary ingredients to "make the world go round" in an organized and civil manner. We are emphasizing the perversion side to these three subjects that Satan uses to produce havoc and trouble that bring into play his demonic will to be done on earth. If we understand that "the whole world lies under the sway of the Wicked One" (1 Jn. 5:19), then we need only to look at historical and present trends to see what Satan is up to in the world under his influence. There are many adjectives we could use in describing politics in the year 2020. Some would be "wild accusation, hypocrisy, hyperbole, fallacy, misrepresentation, misquotes, and opportunistic."

However, all that can be summed up under one single repeated word we hear spoken nearly every day:
That word is
"lies." →



The degree of this problem in the world is highlighted for us by this cover of a recent Time magazine that bluntly says it all:

"LYING EVERYBODY'S DOIN' IT (HONEST)"

We can sum up the subject of politics with one word—"lies". Remember, "the whole world "lies" under the sway of the Wicked one."



Why does the whole world lie? Because it is under the sway of Satan, whom Jesus identifies as:

“THE FATHER OF LIES”

“YOU ARE OF YOUR FATHER THE DEVIL, AND THE DESIRES OF YOUR FATHER YOU WANT TO DO. HE WAS A MURDERER FROM THE BEGINNING, AND DOES NOT STAND IN THE TRUTH, BECAUSE THERE IS NO TRUTH IN HIM. WHEN HE SPEAKS A LIE, HE SPEAKS FROM HIS OWN RESOURCES, FOR HE IS A LIAR AND THE FATHER OF IT.” John 8:44-45



“A GOOD MAN OUT OF THE GOOD TREASURE OF HIS HEART BRINGS FORTH GOOD; AND AN EVIL MAN OUT OF THE EVIL TREASURE OF HIS HEART BRINGS FORTH EVIL. FOR OUT OF THE ABUNDANCE OF THE HEART HIS MOUTH SPEAKS.” Luke 6:43-45

When we come to see a pattern of a person's mouth speaking purposeful lies under a banner of telling the truth, we can know this one is taking his counsel from the Wicked One, the Father of Lies. Jesus came to earth not only as “the way” but also bearing the name, “the truth” (Jn.14:6). The same can be said of the Holy Spirit. He is “the Spirit of truth” (Jn. 16:13). However, when Antichrist will appear he will come under the delusional banner of speaking “the lie” (2 Thess. 2:11-12). It is equally important to know that the apostle John warns us:

“LITTLE CHILDREN, IT IS THE LAST HOUR; AND AS YOU HAVE HEARD THAT THE ANTICHRIST IS COMING, EVEN NOW MANY ANTICHRISTS HAVE COME, BY WHICH WE KNOW THAT IT IS THE LAST HOUR.”

1 John 2:18-19

What will be the identifying mark of “the last hour”? It is “many antichrists speaking many lies.” Take a look at the historical evidence of politics and what do you see come forth from the mouths of either the Presidency or want-to-be presidents? A recent survey of presidential deception found that all American presidents – from Washington to Trump – have told lies, knowingly, in their public statements. Try these:

President Nixon: “I was not lying,” Nixon replies. “I said things that later on seemed to be untrue.”

(Watergate 1974)

President Clinton: “I did not have sex with that woman!”

(Impeachment trial 1998)

Want-to-be-president Hillary Clinton: “I turned over everything I was obligated to turn over”

(testimony under oath 2016)

(Hillary lied repeatedly about her emails. She failed to reveal 30,000 e-mails to the FBI. She lied when she said there was no classified material in her private emails, nothing marked classified— all of which the FBI director said were untrue. And, to top it all off, she lied about her lies — declaring on national TV, “Director Comey said “my answers were truthful.”)

President Obama: “If you like your doctor, you'll be able to keep your health care plan.”

President Trump:

(the media has often noted the frequency with which President Trump lies.

(2008 campaign)

No “block busters” here, but the Washington Post maintains a running database of what it terms the President's false or misleading claims – which they say now number over 20,000, or an average of 12 per day.)

And if Biden should become the next president:

“I have never discussed with my son or my brother or anyone else anything to do with their businesses. Period.”

(2019)

This Richard Nixon-like emphatic denial by Joe Biden may eventually become his downfall if Tony Bobulinski's recent testimony to the FBI and the Senate investigative committee proves Biden is lying. Time will tell who is telling the truth.

Finally, a look into the prophetic future of “the man of sin”, the Antichrist reveals that lying will still be the dominate trait of the government he will establish:

“BOTH THESE KINGS' HEARTS SHALL BE BENT ON EVIL, AND THEY SHALL SPEAK LIES AT THE SAME TABLE; BUT IT SHALL NOT PROSPER, FOR THE END WILL STILL BE AT THE APPOINTED TIME.” Dan.11:27

Lastly, consider the company that all habitual liars will inherit:

“HE WHO OVERCOMES SHALL INHERIT ALL THINGS, AND I WILL BE HIS GOD AND HE SHALL BE MY SON. BUT THE COWARDLY, UNBELIEVING, ABOMINABLE, MURDERERS, SEXUALLY IMMORAL, SORCERERS, IDOLATERS, AND ALL LIARS SHALL HAVE THEIR PART IN THE LAKE WHICH BURNS WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE...” Rev 21:7-8



"...THE MERCHANTS OF THE EARTH
HAVE BECOME RICH THROUGH THE ABUNDANCE OF HER LUXURY."

Rev. 18:3

**"...FOR YOUR MERCHANTS WERE THE GREAT MEN OF THE EARTH,
FOR BY YOUR SORCERY ALL THE NATIONS WERE DECEIVED."**

Rev 18:23-24

What we have seen both in religion and politics we now seek to establish with our third topic, "commerce." Not all forms of commerce are to be considered evil. Here is what may be considered "good commerce":

1. We work on nature directly, by farming or agriculture, we produce fruit, there's a labor involved, and we sell the produce. This is just, it is a divinely-approved way of earning our living, and it is right for us to sell something that is the fruit of our labor on the earth. Someone gives us money, but we have produced something of value for them through our labor. It is a just and equal exchange of money for hard labor.

2. We have a trade, a skill, which we acquired through training, and we use that skill to render a service and a help to others. We may be an electrician, a mechanic, a plumber, a physician, a nurse, etc – we have a certain set of skills that offer a useful service to others, we labor, and we are compensated for it. This is good.

But there is yet another way of earning our living, which brother Watchman Nee calls, **"Pure [speculative] Commerce."** For instance, the Apostle Paul was a tent maker – when it was necessary, he made tents and sold them to support himself and his co-workers. This is a proper line of work, a good way to make a living. But pure commerce is someone who is shrewd and cunning and he buys a large quantity of tents, holds on to them for a while, because he speculates that in a little while there will be a market for these and thus he can sell them at 3-4 times their price. He doesn't work for them, he just buys them, and then sells them later according to his speculation. There's no work involved. He just buys and sells merchandise earning money for its own sake, with the only intention of extracting money from others as much as possible. He is just "playing the market", using money to get more money for its own sake.

We don't work to make more money, but we work so that we may maintain our living, to live a life for God's economy. According to the entire Bible, God has no intention for a Christian to engage in speculative commerce. It is evil to simply use money to get more money while not producing anything, not providing any valuable service to others... We simply need to ask the Lord to shine on us all and expose what pure commerce is, that we may stay away from it. If our soul is entangled with this form of commerce, if we live according to its principle, if we love making money for the sake of making money, if we love to buy and sell to make more money, we will be judged by God together with Babylon the Great. Commerce is the field in which – more than in any other field – "the corruption which is in the world by lust" (2 Pet. 1:3) relentlessly pursues even the most highly principled of Christians, and it can easily overtake them and put them down (see Neh. 1-3, 13:10-14)."

(Ron Kangas www.agodman.com)

Having sought to make a distinction between what constitutes "good from evil commerce", let us pursue looking at what is going on in this world under the banner of commerce under the direct influence of Satan. First of all, let us consider that Satan began a wicked form of commerce before man was even placed in the Garden of Eden:

"YOU WERE THE ANOINTED CHERUB WHO COVERS; I ESTABLISHED YOU; YOU WERE ON THE HOLY MOUNTAIN OF GOD; YOU WALKED BACK AND FORTH IN THE MIDST OF FIERY STONES. YOU WERE PERFECT IN YOUR WAYS FROM THE DAY YOU WERE CREATED, TILL INIQUITY WAS FOUND IN YOU.

"BY THE ABUNDANCE OF YOUR TRADING YOU BECAME FILLED WITH VIOLENCE WITHIN, AND YOU SINNED; THEREFORE I CAST YOU AS A PROFANE THING OUT OF THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD; AND I DESTROYED YOU, O COVERING CHERUB, FROM THE MIDST OF THE FIERY STONES...I CAST YOU TO THE GROUND..."

**"YOU DEFILED YOUR SANCTUARIES BY THE MULTITUDE OF YOUR INIQUITIES,
BY THE INIQUITY OF YOUR TRADING... AND I TURNED YOU TO ASHES UPON THE EARTH IN THE SIGHT OF ALL WHO SAW YOU. ALL WHO KNEW YOU AMONG THE PEOPLES ARE ASTONISHED AT YOU;
YOU HAVE BECOME A HORROR, AND SHALL BE NO MORE FOREVER."**

Ezek 28:14-18

After having been cast to the earth due to the "iniquity of his trading", Satan now plots out the foundation for a new base for operating his scheme of wicked commerce:

"THEN THE ANGEL WHO TALKED WITH ME CAME OUT AND SAID TO ME, 'LIFT YOUR EYES NOW, AND SEE WHAT THIS IS THAT GOES FORTH.' SO I ASKED, 'WHAT IS IT?' AND HE SAID, 'IT IS A BASKET THAT IS GOING FORTH.' HE ALSO SAID, 'THIS IS THEIR RESEMBLANCE THROUGHOUT THE EARTH: HERE IS A LEAD DISC LIFTED UP, AND THIS IS A WOMAN SITTING INSIDE THE BASKET'; THEN HE SAID, 'THIS IS WICKEDNESS!' AND HE THRUST HER DOWN INTO THE BASKET, AND THREW THE LEAD COVER OVER ITS MOUTH... SO I SAID TO THE ANGEL WHO TALKED WITH ME, 'WHERE ARE THEY CARRYING THE BASKET?' AND HE SAID TO ME, 'TO BUILD A HOUSE FOR IT IN THE LAND OF SHINAR; (Babylon) WHEN IT IS READY, THE BASKET WILL BE SET THERE ON ITS BASE.'" Zech 5:5-6:1

I have written two in-depth books to establish the evidence that America is indeed that "Mystery (hidden truth) Babylon" base upon which wicked commerce was to be built. Consider these very prophetic and illuminating verses from Revelation 18 pertaining to the severe judgment God renders upon Babylon's wicked form of commerce:

"...THE MERCHANTS OF THE EARTH HAVE BECOME RICH THROUGH THE ABUNDANCE OF HER LUXURY... IN THE MEASURE SHE GLORIFIED HERSELF AND LIVED LUXURIOUSLY...ALL THE THINGS WHICH ARE RICH AND SPLENDID...

MERCHANDISE OF GOLD AND SILVER, PRECIOUS STONES AND PEARLS, FINE LINEN...SILK, SCARLET, EVERY KIND OF CITRON WOOD, EVERY KIND OF OBJECT OF IVORY, EVERY KIND OF OBJECT OF MOST PRECIOUS WOOD, BRONZE, IRON, AND MARBLE AND CINNAMON AND INCENSE, FRAGRANT OIL AND FRANKINCENSE, WINE AND OIL, FINE FLOUR AND WHAT, CATTLE AND SHEEP, HORSES AND CHARIOTS, AND BODIES AND SOULS OF MEN." Rev. 18:12-13



1. BABYLON'S "MERCHANTS OF THE EARTH" DO BUSINESS BY MEANS OF EVIL COMMERCE IN MERCHANDIZING "THE BODIES AND SOULS OF MEN."

It is no secret that America, just like its ancient predecessor, the Roman Empire, built their new empire on the forced-labor of imported captive slaves. They were sold in the slave markets by both of these "Roman" empires. The proud saying, "All roads lead to Rome" have the ugly truth that forced slavery built those roads. In America, slaves were captured and brought here primarily to do the tedious labor of picking cotton by hand. The south went to war over giving up their slaves. It was the invention of the mechanical cotton gin that replaced the need for human slaves to pick cotton.

However, there is another side to evil commerce that trades in the "bodies and souls of men." This one is a form of slavery that is still alive and well in modern America, namely "sex trafficking. I am speaking of the volume of poor foreign women lured to America or captured with deceptive practices and forced into living lives of unwilling prostitution. Consider this astounding statistic:

"Much has been said about the impact of the Super Bowl on sex trafficking, most of which indicates it is a key variable leading to a dramatic increase in commercial sexual exploitation and victimization. Recent reports and dozens of news articles strongly point to the Super Bowl as the most prominent national event where sex trafficking flourishes, with estimates of as many as 10,000 victims flooding host cities to be offered to willing purchasers intent on buying sex."

<https://www.mccaininstitute.org/exploring-sex-trafficking-and-prostitution-demand-during-the-super-bowl/>

Look at the second criteria from Revelation 18 that marks "the (evil) merchants of the earth" in Babylon:

2. BABYLON IS SINGLED OUT AS "A HABITATION OF DEMONS, A PRISON FOR EVERY FOUL SPIRIT, AND A CAGE FOR EVERY UNCLEAN AND HATED BIRD."

Notice the emphasis on "habitation...prison and cage." We are not talking about those women who are most willing to be prostitutes in a lucrative income field, but rather "unwilling participants" who are contained, not in high-rise apartments, but rather forced to live in demon-possessed habitations, in prisons of foul spirits, and cages with the unclean and hated..."

**3. "A HABITATION OF DEMONS, A PRISON FOR EVERY FOUL SPIRIT,
AND A CAGE FOR EVERY UNCLEAN AND HATED BIRD!"** Rev. 18:1-2

What makes Revelation pertinent for our time is that it was written long ago with an emphasis placed upon representative imagery rather than specific details. Looking at what is going on presently in our world (America as Mystery Babylon), what does this imagery convey?

Notice this is a specific geographical location (Mystery Babylon) where forms of wicked and evil commerce abide. It is "a habitation, a prison and a cage" that contains "demons, foul spirits and "unclean and hated birds." From other passages of scripture in the gospels we can see that Jesus constantly encountered people who were oppressed and possessed with "demons and foul spirits." The book of Acts says of Jesus' ministry on earth:

**"...GOD ANOINTED JESUS OF NAZARETH WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND WITH POWER,
WHO WENT ABOUT DOING GOOD AND HEALING ALL
WHO WERE OPPRESSED BY THE DEVIL, FOR GOD WAS WITH HIM."**

Acts 10:38-39

If the "demons and foul spirits" were Satan's emissaries in Jesus' days on earth then they are also the same forces we as followers of Jesus in our day must also confront. Remember Jesus commissioned us not only to preach the gospel but also:

**"IN MY NAME THEY WILL CAST OUT DEMONS; THEY WILL SPEAK WITH NEW TONGUES; THEY WILL TAKE UP
SERPENTS; AND IF THEY DRINK ANYTHING DEADLY, IT WILL BY NO MEANS HURT THEM;
THEY WILL LAY HANDS ON THE SICK, AND THEY WILL RECOVER."**

Mark 16:17-18

In addition, Mystery Babylon is a "cage for every unclean and hated bird." This third description is like the first two. God does not hate or consider any bird as such. This too is a picture of Satan's emissaries at work. Consider Jesus' reference to "birds" in His parables:

**"THEN HE SPOKE MANY THINGS TO THEM IN PARABLES, SAYING: "BEHOLD, A SOWER WENT OUT TO SOW.
AND AS HE SOWED, SOME SEED FELL BY THE WAYSIDE; AND THE BIRDS CAME AND DEVOURED
THEM...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 ..."**

Matt 13:3-5, 13:18-19

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

Matt 13:31-32

**"A HABITATION OF DEMONS, A PRISON FOR EVERY FOUL SPIRIT,
AND A CAGE FOR EVERY UNCLEAN AND HATED BIRD!"**

Rev. 18:1-2

We are exhorted not to "teach as man teaches" but rather as "the Holy Spirit teaches" (1 Cor. 2:13). He does so by "comparing spiritual things with spiritual things" (1 Cor. 2:13). Jesus says that "the birds" of His parables do not represent good things, but evil. They represent the actions of "the Wicked One". Neither is it a good thing that "the birds" come to "nest in the branches". It too represents a corruption of the tree in His other parable. So then, what are "the unclean and hated birds" described in Revelation 18:1-2? They too must be the wickedness of the Wicked One. In imagery, one bird comes to mind that is indeed considered "unclean and hated." It is the vulture:

Vultures hang around whatever is in trouble and on the verge of dying. Truly, it is a "bird of prey." It stalks and taunts its victim. Vultures are scavengers, meaning they eat dead animals. They rarely attack healthy animals, but rather kill the wounded or sick.

Vultures are unclean for sure. They urinate straight down their legs. They vomit upon being approached to repulse their enemies.



**3. "A HABITATION OF DEMONS, A PRISON FOR EVERY FOUL SPIRIT,
AND A CAGE FOR EVERY UNCLEAN AND HATED BIRD!"** Rev. 18:1-2

What are some of the "unclean and hated" things that this imagery represent? All things we find repulsive such as the evil and perverse deeds of child molesters, serial rapists, sadists, forced prostitution, homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality, sodomy "and such like" that brought the original judgment of God in the Genesis flood to kill both man and beast. What we find described in Revelation 18 is a prophetic repeat of that judgment on the earth! Jesus said these words as a sober reminder of what is yet to come:

"AND AS IT WAS IN THE DAYS OF NOAH, SO IT WILL BE ALSO IN THE DAYS OF THE SON OF MAN: THEY ATE, THEY DRANK, THEY MARRIED WIVES, THEY WERE GIVEN IN MARRIAGE, UNTIL THE DAY THAT NOAH ENTERED THE ARK, AND THE FLOOD CAME AND DESTROYED THEM ALL. LIKEWISE AS IT WAS ALSO IN THE DAYS OF LOT: THEY ATE, THEY DRANK, THEY BOUGHT, THEY SOLD, THEY PLANTED, THEY BUILT; BUT ON THE DAY THAT LOT WENT OUT OF SODOM IT RAINED FIRE AND BRIMSTONE FROM HEAVEN AND DESTROYED THEM ALL. EVEN SO WILL IT BE IN THE DAY WHEN THE SON OF MAN IS REVEALED." Luke 17:26-30

A light reading of the above scriptures doesn't seem so bad. What was wrong with "They married wives and were given in marriage"? Only by comparing it with the Genesis account do we find that it was "the sons of God (angels) that were shopping for wives for themselves among "the daughters of men".

They had sexual relations with them and produced a new "race" of half human and half angels. They were known as "the mighty men" due to their supernatural strength. For this perversity God locked these angels away in a special prison awaiting judgment (see Jude 6, 2 Pet.2:4) and then flooded the earth to destroy man and beast! Those were indeed days of perversity.

Likewise, the story of Lot finds the populace outside Lot's house demanding, "give us those men that we may know them carnally" (see Gen. 19:5 and Judges 19:22). Paul reminds us, "For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret" (Eph 5:12-13).

**4. "FOR YOUR MERCHANTS WERE THE GREAT MEN OF THE EARTH,
FOR BY YOUR SORCERY ALL THE NATIONS WERE DECEIVED."** Rev 18:23-24

This last statement pertaining to "the merchants of the earth" is worthy of examination. What does Revelation state that enabled the merchants to be considered as "the great men of the earth"? It was because of the "sorcery" they practiced. This was the method by which "the nations were deceived." The Greek word translated as "sorcery" is:

PHARMAKEIA- 5330 Strong's Concordance. Root from: 5332 "PHARMAKEUS"

"MEDICATION" ("pharmacy") A DRUG OF SPELL-GIVING PORTION"

"pharmacy mainly uses a mixture of toxic chemicals, metals, and/or synthetic elements to produce "pharmaceuticals" that are designed to manipulate the biochemistry or metabolic functions of the body in an attempt to get a "desired" affect in the treatment of a disease or sickness. In other words, pharmacy mixes up different types of poison, package it, patent it, and claims that it can treat certain types of diseases. The main problem with that system is that poison is poison. Pharmaceutical drugs are poisonous. When poison is put into the body it has negative effects on the entire body system from head to toe. These are not just "side effects" or "unintended" sicknesses or diseases that a person suffers as a result of using a drug. These are "direct effects" because the reality is that drugs have direct effects on the entire body system including the brain. When you go back to Revelation 18:23, Jesus uses the Greek word "pharmakeia" to reveal to us the main thing that will be used to deceive ALL people in the last days is a well organized system of administering poisonous drugs to billions of people that are not only toxic to the organs of body, but have direct negative effects on the brain. Many of these drugs used for a variety of reasons are known to cause problems with memory, mood, and contribute to negative personality changes...this system of administering poisonous drugs worldwide is a trillion dollar industry and the medical merchants of the earth profit greatly from it. They love the money it produces and ignore the many lives it destroys. Millions worship the system as an idol." <https://www.pathwaytopeace.net/index.php/blogs-and-articles/pharmakeia-deception>

"Purdue Pharma headquarters in Stamford, Conn., in 2019. Purdue Pharma, the maker of OxyContin, and its owners, the Sackler family, have faced hundreds of lawsuits over the company's alleged role in the opioid epidemic that has killed more than 200,000 Americans. The Justice Department announced on Wednesday a global settlement of civil and criminal investigations into Purdue Pharma's aggressive marketing of opioid medications, including OxyContin. Federal officials have long maintained Purdue's actions helped fuel a prescription opioid epidemic that has killed more than 232,000 Americans, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention."

<https://www.npr.org/2020/10/21/926126877/purdue-pharma-reaches-8b-opioid-deal-with-justice-department-over-oxycontin-sale>

The above lawsuit against the pharmaceutical producers of OxyCotin demonstrates that the problem is not always the fault of the drug itself, but rather with the greed of the "merchants of the earth" that exploit and deceive the people with false claims of safety. OxyCotin was deliberately presented as being non-addictive. That was a lie.

Here in 2020 there exists a mad pursuit after a vaccine capable of defeating the dreaded pandemic created by Covid-19. There are several large pharmaceutical firms working under the government's "operation warp-speed" initiative to produce a reliable and safe product. However, as it was with the example of OxyContin above, there exists the same potential of greed to enter into this equation. The call to inoculate the entire world with a new serum can become a very lucrative attraction to the unscrupulous "merchants of the earth."

"Religion, politics and commerce", subjects that give this teacher of God's Word a big headache and a big heartache as well. The immensity of these subjects are so vast that I am reminded of a verse in the conclusion of the writings by Solomon that is most applicable:



**"AND MOREOVER, BECAUSE THE PREACHER WAS WISE,
HE STILL TAUGHT THE PEOPLE KNOWLEDGE;
YES, HE PONDERED AND SOUGHT OUT AND SET IN ORDER MANY
ROVERBS. THE PREACHER SOUGHT TO FIND ACCEPTABLE WORDS;
AND WHAT WAS WRITTEN WAS UPRIGHT -- WORDS OF TRUTH.**

**THE WORDS OF THE WISE ARE LIKE GOADS,
AND THE WORDS OF SCHOLARS ARE LIKE WELL-DRIVEN NAILS,
GIVEN BY ONE SHEPHERD.**

**AND FURTHER, MY SON, BE ADMONISHED BY THESE.
OF MAKING MANY BOOKS THERE IS NO END,
AND MUCH STUDY IS WEARISOME TO THE FLESH.**

LET US HEAR THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER:

**FEAR GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS,
FOR THIS IS THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN.
FOR GOD WILL BRING EVERY WORK INTO JUDGMENT,
INCLUDING EVERY SECRET THING,
WHETHER GOOD OR EVIL."**

Eccl 12:9-14

Pastor Randy Shupe



WHO ARE THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF AMERICA?

That is a very loaded question. Historically there were three distinct groups of peoples that formed "the founding fathers" of America. All three still exist today. Two of them are the source of great division and conflict in the land:

THE POLITICAL SECULARISTS

(1776)

Declaration of Independence
"ANNOUNCING A NEW WORLD ORDER"

(*Secularism* is a way of life and thinking that rejects religion.

If you're into *secularism*, you're not into God, going to church, praying, or anything holy ...

People who are *secularists* particularly believe that religious ideas and beliefs should have nothing to do with government affairs or public education.)



THE POLITICAL PURITANS

(1620)

Mayflower Compact

"A CITY SET ON A HILL-
ONE NATION UNDER GOD,
A LIGHT TO THE WORLD"

(Came to America on the Mayflower along with the Pilgrims. A devoutly religious people that fled religious persecution in England. They came to America to construct a literal working model of the Kingdom of God on earth. Activity in political realms dominated their thinking. They were determined to govern their new (Canaan) land strictly by the biblically-based laws of God.)

THE NON-POLITICAL PILGRIMS

(1620)

Mayflower Compact

" STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON EARTH-
HERE WE HAVE NO CONTINUING CITY-
WE SEEK THE ONE WHICH IS TO COME"

(The Pilgrims were also on the Mayflower seeking a place to worship their God free of religious persecution. They held dear the concept of dwelling on this earth as "strangers and pilgrims in a foreign land" (Heb. 11:9) because they emphatically believed there was a better city waiting for them in eternity. Therefore they remained non-political with a big emphasis upon evangelizing the lost.)

Job wisely proclaimed:

"MAN'S DAYS ON EARTH ARE FEW AND FULL OF TROUBLE." Job 14:1

Below is a brief synopsis of why man's days on earth are "full of trouble". There are "troublemakers" on every side. Forgive me if my illustrations are too blunt or appear too cynical. Choices must be made by each of us in this new "mad hatter's" world in which we must live. Here is how I see it:

GLOBALISM...
ENVIRONMENTALISM...
SECULARISM...
PROCLAIM "RACISM"!...
EXALT HUMANISM...



ENVISION NEW GREEN DEAL...
END CARBON EMISSIONS...
ONLY SOLAR/WIND POWER...
EXALT INTELLECTUALISM...
EMBRACE SOCIALISM...

THE POLITICAL **SECULARISTS**

"extreme left-wing anti-God philosophy"



THE POLITICAL **PURITANS**

"extreme right-wing philosophy"



CAST BALLOTS...
STORE UP BULLETS...
**HELP OVERTHROW
 ABORTION LAWS...**
**ENFORCE STRICT
 CONSTITUTIONAL
 LAW...**

THE NON-POLITICAL **PILGRIMS**

"eternally-minded philosophy"

**PREACH THE GOSPEL
 TO THE LOST...**
**PRACTICE HOLINESS
 TO THE LORD...**
**RUN THE RACE WITH
 ENDURANCE...**

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

In the verse below, Paul also gives us a vivid "word picture" in his warning to the saints in 2 Timothy 3:1-5 pertaining to what kind of immense conflicts will permeate the "last days." The reason "why it is so" is qualified by his opening statement of "for people will be":

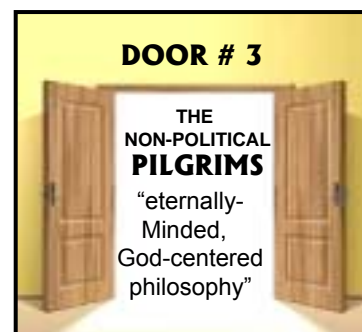
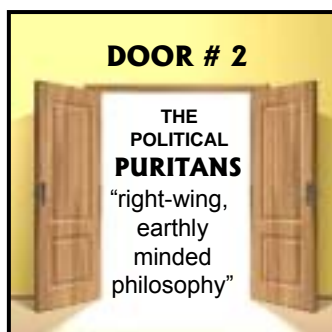
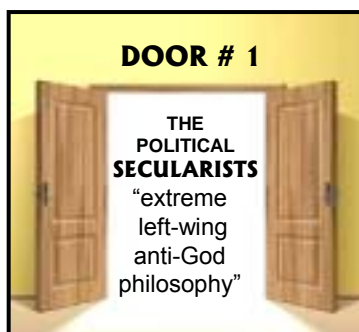
"BUT UNDERSTAND THIS, THAT IN THE LAST DAYS WILL COME (SET IN) PERILOUS TIMES OF GREAT STRESS AND TROUBLE HARD TO DEAL WITH AND HARD TO BEAR. FOR PEOPLE WILL BE LOVERS OF SELF AND UTTERLY SELF-CENTERED, LOVERS OF MONEY AND AROUSED BY AN INORDINATE GREEDY DESIRE FOR WEALTH, PROUD AND ARROGANT AND CONTEMPTUOUS BOASTERS. THEY WILL BE ABUSIVE BLASPHEMOUS, SCOFFING, DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS, UNGRATEFUL, UNHOLY AND PROFANE. [THEY WILL BE WITHOUT NATURAL HUMAN AFFECTION (CALLOUS AND INHUMAN), RELENTLESS ADMITTING OF NO TRUCE OR APPEASEMENT; THEY WILL BE SLANDERERS (FALSE ACCUSERS, TROUBLEMAKERS), INTEMPERATE AND LOOSE IN MORALS AND CONDUCT, UNCONTROLLED AND FIERCE, HATERS OF GOOD. THEY WILL BE TREACHEROUS BETRAYERS, RASH, AND INFLATED WITH SELF-CONCEIT. THEY WILL BE LOVERS OF SENSUAL PLEASURES AND VAIN AMUSEMENTS MORE THAN AND RATHER THAN LOVERS OF GOD. FOR ALTHOUGH THEY HOLD A FORM OF PIETY (TRUE RELIGION), THEY DENY AND REJECT AND ARE STRANGERS TO THE POWER OF IT THEIR CONDUCT BELIES THE GENUINENESS OF THEIR PROFESSION. AVOID ALL SUCH PEOPLE AND TURN AWAY FROM THEM. "

2 Tim 3:1-5 Amplified

There was an old 1950 TV quiz show called, "Let's Make a Deal" with Monty Hall. The game required the contestant to make a choice between, "door# 1, door # 2, or door # 3. In the game show the doors were shut so that the contestant had no idea what was waiting for him on the other side of door.



However, in real life, the doors we face are not such "blind alleys" as in the game show. What I am depicting is no "game show" at all, but rather "life and death" matters that we can plainly see the path where each door leads.



**"FOR A GREAT AND EFFECTIVE DOOR HAS OPENED TO ME,
AND THERE ARE MANY ADVERSARIES."** 1 Cor 16:9

**FURTHERMORE, WHEN I CAME TO TROAS TO PREACH CHRIST'S GOSPEL,
AND A DOOR WAS OPENED TO ME BY THE LORD...NOW THANKS BE TO GOD
WHO ALWAYS LEADS US IN TRIUMPH IN CHRIST, AND THROUGH US DIFFUSES
THE FRAGRANCE OF HIS KNOWLEDGE IN EVERY PLACE."** 2 Cor 2:12-15

**"CONTINUE EARNESTLY IN PRAYER, BEING VIGILANT IN IT WITH THANKSGIVING;
MEANWHILE PRAYING ALSO FOR US,
THAT GOD WOULD OPEN TO US A DOOR FOR THE WORD, TO SPEAK THE MYSTERY
OF CHRIST, FOR WHICH I AM ALSO IN CHAINS, THAT I MAY MAKE IT MANIFEST,
AS I OUGHT TO SPEAK. WALK IN WISDOM TOWARD THOSE WHO ARE OUTSIDE,
REDEEMING THE TIME. LET YOUR SPEECH ALWAYS BE WITH GRACE, SEASONED WITH
SALT, THAT YOU MAY KNOW HOW YOU OUGHT TO ANSWER EACH ONE."**

Col 4:2-6



The apostle Paul continually looked for "open doors" by which he could share the gospel with the lost. He had no other priority. He truly was a "non-political pilgrim" whose message was God-centered and eternally-minded. He was meek enough to realize that it was God who opened those doors of opportunity for him. There were times in which the Holy Spirit said "no" concerning preaching in certain places:

**"NOW WHEN THEY HAD GONE THROUGH PHRYGIA AND THE REGION OF GALATIA, THEY WERE FORBIDDEN
BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO PREACH THE WORD IN ASIA. AFTER THEY HAD COME TO MYRIA, THEY TRIED TO GO
INTO BITHYNIA, BUT THE SPIRIT DID NOT PERMIT THEM. SO PASSING BY MYRIA, THEY CAME DOWN TO
TROAS. AND A VISION APPEARED TO PAUL IN THE NIGHT. A MAN OF MACEDONIA STOOD AND PLEADED
WITH HIM, SAYING, "COME OVER TO MACEDONIA AND HELP US." NOW AFTER HE HAD SEEN THE VISION,
IMMEDIATELY WE SOUGHT TO GO TO MACEDONIA, CONCLUDING THAT THE LORD HAD CALLED US TO
PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THEM."**

Acts 16:6-10

What a sensitivity Paul had to the Holy Spirit! Today, we just "rip the door off the hinges" and say what we want to say, and when we want to say it! Remember Jesus warned His disciples about speaking untimely words to the wrong people:

**"DO NOT GIVE WHAT IS HOLY TO THE DOGS; NOR CAST YOUR PEARLS BEFORE SWINE,
LEST THEY TRAMPLE THEM UNDER THEIR FEET, AND TURN AND TEAR YOU IN PIECES."** Matt 7:6

In the remainder of this newsletter, I want to reprint something that I first gave you in the year 2010. It is a vivid comparison between what constitutes a Puritan vs. a Pilgrim. You can only go through one door in the illustration above. I am not concerned that you would embrace "a political secularist agenda" as a follower of Christ for it is easy to see that it embraces a "left-wing, anti-God philosophy." However, I am greatly concerned that the present animosity toward the left-wing agenda could easily send you through the door that embraces a very political right-wing agenda embraced by the Puritans of old. Puritanism is alive and well in the Body of Christ today. "Ballots and bullets" are not the right choice. God is looking for a few good Pilgrims! Are you interested? Read carefully, analytically, and prayerfully the pages that follow! —————>

I urge you to visit this website: <http://endtimepilgrim.org/puritans.htm>. The remainder of this newsletter contains brief highlights of this 59-page article pertaining to the beliefs of the Puritans versus those of the Pilgrims. I again urge you to consider the whole article as it appears on this website. It is worth reading in its entirety. If you are a Christian in America you are either endorsing the erroneous foundation of the Puritans or the biblically-based foundation of the Pilgrims. Jesus said that if we continue in His Word we would know truth that would set us free (Jn. 8:30-32). It is my conviction that God's people, in this country, need to be set free from politically-based religion. Perhaps this article will help. Here are the highlights:

***PURITAN HISTORY;
PAST, PRESENT,
AND FUTURE***

***From the English Civil War to the settlement of
the New World and onwards to the emerging
New World Order and the end-time drama.***

***An essay by Gavin Finley M.D.
September 2003***



**THE PURITAN HEART AND MINDSET AS THE BASIS
OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ACTION:**

American fundamentalist Christians show a willingness to assume the burden of responsibility for the spiritual condition of America. They also show a readiness to accept the political power that might come along with it.... they show a determined purpose to not only purify the Church in America but also prod the saints to get up and do something. They believe that Christian believers should and must be politically and socially activated. To their way of thinking this is absolutely necessary to preserve the Christian heritage of America and thereby save America itself.... American Christians pursue their quest with great zeal and enthusiasm. They bring their spiritual dreams down from heaven and onto this earth where they can be "manifest". This is the basis of "manifest destiny". It is a sense of America being destined by God for influence beyond her own borders. This was proclaimed back in the 1840's and formulated into U.S. foreign policy. Many historians consider this principle of "manifest destiny" to be the main spiritual engine driving American history forward. These totally committed Christian citizens are all working towards the fulfillment of the same basic dream, and it is a lofty one. It can be summed up in one phrase and sentiment. It is to see the establishment of **'one nation under God'**.

Strange to say, we have seen this very same heart desire, mindset and motivation before. We saw it exemplified in the English and American Puritans of centuries past. It was clearly laid out by John Winthrop in his memorable exhortation to the Puritans as they set sail on their voyage to the New World in 1630. At that time he charged the early colonists with these words,

**"....WE MUST CONSIDER THAT WE SHALL BE AS A CITY UPON A HILL
(AND THAT) THE EYES OF ALL PEOPLE ARE UPON US.."**

This "City upon a hill" was not the 'Holy City' the children of Abraham and the Pilgrims were seeking. It was not the future New Jerusalem John saw coming down from heaven and fully revealed in its ultimate glory. (Rev.21) But the American Dream was certainly tapping into the holy energy of that sublime vision. Their "City on a hill" was very definitely an earthly reflection of the Holy City...The shining city they were now seeing in their mind's eye was something glorious and holy. It was a City which they had in effect brought down from heaven to earth. The object of their dream was something being fashioned by them in the 'here and now'. They were tired of hearing about that City in the sweet by and by. They wanted to see God's "Kingdom now"...They believed themselves to be the people destined to be a great and glorious "nation under God". As such they would enjoy His divine favor, His protection, and the great prosperity that came along with that. This was, (and remains to this day), the Puritan dream for America. The vision is still out there amongst the American people.

Nowadays they do not go by the name 'Puritans'. But nevertheless, the politically and socially active Christians we see in action today are in fact a continuing stream of the very same people who came out from England in the 1600's. The thesis of this article is that the Puritans are still with us....The Puritans are about to inherit global power!

Oliver Cromwell, the Puritan dictator/Lord Protector of England, would be amazed to see what has happened to those democratic Bible believing people who rose up in the 1600's and flowed out of England to the New World. His beloved Parliament is still there. Now in the U.S. Congress his people are still raising their voice for freedom and "one nation under God," and the Puritan Army is still marching on. The same yellow ribbons the Puritan Army wore back in the 1640's can still be seen. They are being displayed all across the land. And now, it seems, the modern Puritans are on the threshold of a dream. They are about to dominate world history! Whether we like it or not world history is now being profoundly shaped and fashioned by American history.

TODAY'S PURITANS IN THE AMERICAN CHURCHES AND THE FIERY PREACHING OF THE 'LAST CRUSADE' FROM THE PULPITS. THIS IS NOW BRINGING IN HISTORY'S FINAL VERSION OF CHRISTIAN DOMINIONISM.

Back here in the west no one dares to use the forbidden "c" word. But from the rhetoric coming from some televangelist preachers it certainly would appear that we might well be re-opening the crusades for a final campaign, even the 'last crusade'. Truly these are historic times....

In the American churches too we are also seeing a new political pugnacity coming into vogue.... There is a lot of talk in the American churches about "taking dominion" and "bringing in the kingdom". This is clearly post-millennialist language. It is at variance with the accepted Biblically based pre-millennialist doctrine traditionally held by careful Biblically well founded evangelicals....

The popular doctrine of the end-time we now see emerging holds that **the Church** will rise up and set things right! **They**, will be the ones to take over the planet! These crusader Christians now coming on the scene believe that they have a mandate from God to take over the political powers of this world and bring in the "Kingdom Now." To their way of thinking Jesus is not coming back until they do!

Do these Utopian post-millennialist Christian Dominionists really believe that they will succeed in their quest? Most assuredly they do. They believe that when the established unified World Church has straightened out everything on the planet then the Second Coming of Christ will just be a formality. They will be the princes of peace. They will have everything wrapped up. Jesus Christ will merely be coming back to officiate at their church sponsored awards ceremony in Jerusalem. The Victorious Church will set up their Christian Television cameras on the Mount of Olives and whistle for Jesus to come back. He will dutifully return and start handing out rewards to "Five fold ministry" dominionist Church leaders. They will then be truly sanctified to rule the planet....

This unscriptural view of the future end-time events is what is behind the pugnacious, even arrogant, new mindset emerging in western Christianity today. The call to politico/military action here is quite different from the traditional evangelical zeal to see the Gospel preached around the world. It goes far beyond our traditional missionary work of sending in food to the starving, medical assistance to the sick, establishing orphanages, digging wells etc. 'Taking dominion' is the 'in' word at the cutting edge of the American church these days.

These militant Christians are not just speaking of a spiritual dominion here. To the Puritan mind the earthly agenda in America is every bit as important as the Gospel and the missionary agenda abroad. Dominionist and 'Kingdom Now' thinking, like Jesuit thinking under Spain or Victorian thinking during the years of the British Empire sees the Christian advance being backed up by the state using the sword or military power. Just how far might we expect a Puritan American dominion to push for empire? Because 'empire' is the true reality here.... Can Puritan Christians be expected to run a police state? They did to some extent back during the English Civil War.

One classic example is seen in the famous 19th century painting, "When Did You Last See Your Father?" by W.F. Yeames. It shows an interrogation of women and children of a Royalist family by agents and soldiers of Oliver Cromwell's Puritan Army. If we take a look at the painting we see something very interesting. The sergeant and the cavaliers, along with the Parliamentarian investigators, are all wearing a **yellow sash**.



http://www.historyonthenet.com/Civil_War/when_did_you_last_see_your_father.htm

Are we seeing 'yellow ribbons' in the picture here? We are certainly seeing them in America at war today. And just what is the meaning of the yellow ribbons? They are now being displayed all across America. Are they a connection to our Puritan past? (see web ref. above)

....If American history today is a continuing stream dating back to Puritan history in England in the 1640's then what does this tell us about ourselves? It means that at a future time in history when the curtain opens up on pivotal world events, we might well expect to see the Anglo-American Puritans emerge again. They are now the superpower and have the responsibility before God of bringing a just and lasting peace on earth. They also have a Godly and global mandate in the Great Commission and the Gospel. We can expect them to act in the same energetic and decisive way they did 460 years ago. We can fully anticipate that they will come on the scene with the same vigor and holy zeal they showed when they went to war for a godly cause back during the English Civil War. At that time every unit in the Puritan Army had its own preacher. And from history we know that the injection of religion into a war makes it all the more effective, and all the more terrible. Are we seeing the Puritans on the rise again? If we are, then we can be sure that they will not be content to just sit around and debate the issues forever. When those issues are moral issues of great importance and they feel that their 'nation under God' is being taken down the road to Sodom and Gomorrah or is becoming an abortion mill or a house of prostitution and pornography and is in danger of losing God's favor then they will act. We can expect them to rise up politically and militarily.... For America, the current presiding superpower, it will be no different. No matter whom they elect to political office, the history which emerges will be that which has been prophesied and written in the Holy Scriptures.

Let us start our journey of discovery by taking a quick look at the modern day Puritans in action today. Then we shall trace their roots back in the 1500's as they emerged in England during the years following the Reformation. Their scriptural zeal alienated them from the heart of King Henry's newly established Church of England. But after several decades of persecution they emerged as a political force to be reckoned with in the early 1600's. These hard bitten politically active Biblical Fundamentalists then rose up in Parliament in an awful row with the King Charles.As we shall see, the Puritans became the main players in the English Civil War. They even had the gall to take up arms against the King of England. After defeating him on the battlefield they tried to make a deal with him but without success. Finally, after accusing King Charles of high treason, they had him beheaded. Puritans do not stand for any nonsense. These people mean business! We shall follow the Puritans on their passage to the New World and observe their dominant role in the forging of the United States of America. Finally we shall see what they are up to today. Just what is their dream and vision? And what course are they plotting for the future....

But some Christians think that this American church-state accord just might become a problem in the future. In fact some are concerned that American evangelicals might do even worse than the British Christians did. Some think that the American church could be politically seduced in the same manner as the German Christian church was misled by Hitler during the 1930's.

During those years of economic distress German Christendom left the 'way of the cross' to 'take up the sword' and follow their political champion. The rest is history. They were led down a dangerous pathway of national domination leading to the Second World War. Could American Christians in similar fashion be gathered to some similar charismatic leader or conqueror? In some future time of national or international crisis could such a political pied piper again rise up and lead the Christian children away on another devastating crusade? Some are concerned that American Christendom could be led into a similar compromise and ensuing disaster with all its blood guiltiness and shame.

Most Christian fundamentalists or evangelicals in America have not expressed any such concerns. Most do not know modern history or the patterns of past history. So this possibility hasn't even crossed their minds. They are quite happy to be on the political right. They are not even on the lookout for pitfalls on the road ahead....

THE AMERICAN PURITANS OF TODAY ARE 'RISING UP' AND TAKING STRONG POLITICAL ACTION FOR 'CHRISTIAN VALUES' IN SOCIETY.

The modern day Puritans are very active on the legal front . They are hiring lawyers and taking their case for a 'nation under God' into the higher courts. They take legal action in the defense of Christians who have been victimized by secularist strong-arm tactics of their arch enemy the ACLU. The American Center For Law and Justice is very active in this area. They will also petition and take legal action at the Supreme Court level on issues such as partial birth abortion, (which is essentially infanticide), pornography, students rights to gather and pray on state school property and a host of other church-state battle zones.

Even though modern day Puritans are very active in the public arena their main voice is heard through their various religious ministries. From the pulpit as well as Christian radio and Christian television they continue to mount a potent preaching and informational campaign against the liberal agenda. Today's Puritans would be represented by such politico/religious organizations as that of the Rev. Jerry Falwell which was once called the "Moral Majority" and Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition. They drum up support for conservative causes and conservative political leaders. They try very hard to get them elected into office hoping for some political favors for the church in return.

Christian political activists believe that playing the political game is the only solid down to earth avenue open for them in their quest to bring back the Godly American culture they once knew and loved. Christian radio and television offer a huge platform and opportunity for ministers of the 'Religious Right' these days. 'Fear is the key' here. Many Christian fundamentalists are fearful. They are therefore angry. They are angry because they are being marginalized and alienated in the American public arena. As Christians this should not be a problem. Such treatment is normal for those who are called of God. But as American citizens our modern day Puritans believe that they are the head and not the tail...Televangelists find it very easy to play on these insecurities and fears. Using the pulpit they often work up their crowd in the manner of political populists in the town hall. They know that there is much to be gained in presenting themselves as a champion of the fundamentalist politico-religious agenda. More money flows in when these issues are aired than when the usual evangelical programming is broadcast. It seems that today's Puritans are more interested in promoting a Christian milieu in the land of their present sojourn than in taking the Gospel to people in other lands.... Christian programs which center on preaching the Gospel or teaching Holy Scripture or promoting missionary outreach abroad are typically under funded. These 'old fashioned' sorts of evangelical programs which center on the Great Commission are sadly neglected. They struggle to stay on the air. This is to our shame.

It seems that our church-life has lost it's zest. The spiritual dynamic in the scriptures and in personal devotions doesn't seem to be as relevant these days as it once was. Christians attend church now for reassurance and social lubrication. A host of programs are now offered centered around "my needs". These include 'self esteem' seminars, rallies in which motivational speakers are hired, singles ministries, baseball etc. This is strange. What has happened to our prime focus in the Gospel and the discipling of our children in the faith? How about the ministry to our brothers and sisters in the poorer inner city churches? And how much action do we see in missionary outreach to other countries?

These are very real concerns. God has given us these times of prosperity for a purpose. That purpose is not just to build up church masonry and indulge our own self life. We have a job to do. Accordingly we should redeem the time during this period of peace God has given us.... What has happened to us? Are we 'falling away' from the faith of our fathers? Have the modern Puritans drifted into a lukewarm state of declining Christian commitment? Could we in the western church of today be the church of Laodicea?

The Puritan Christian has his eyes on his own land...The New World here in America is "it". America is "that city set on a hill". It is hard for him to concern himself with places beyond, places where the Christian family overseas is expanding in an unprecedented and wonderful way.

The situation in China and South America is quite different. Over there the evangelical church carries on without the support of any 'nation under God'. They certainly don't enjoy much in the way of 'political protection' and lavish church buildings either. They have no political champions to 'take dominion' or 'take up the sword' for them. They have no "defender of the faith". Quite the contrary in fact. They are under persecution! Yet in the spiritual sense the suffering church over there is doing extremely well.... Young evangelicals overseas share the Gospel with great devotion and enthusiasm. In China the underground church has no political protection. They conduct secret communion services hidden in the forests. Pastors are under constant threat of imprisonment.... Christians in China are arrested and put in prison for sharing their faith. Many have died for the witness. Many are continuing to die. Many Christians in the persecuted suffering church abroad can't even get a personal Bible. Vietnamese Christians will pay two weeks salary and risk imprisonment to get a Bible on the black market. Meanwhile, back in America, evangelicals pay politicians to gain favors. And for what? Is it out of fear of persecution? And are they getting their money's worth? Is this a rewarding use of God's tithes and offerings? Here is the question for American Puritans:

**CAN WE BUY POLITICAL INSURANCE
TO GUARANTEE PROTECTION AGAINST
THE ALIENATION OF CHRISTIANS IN AMERICA?**

Judging from the testimony of our Christian brothers and sisters overseas might we be better off funding the Gospel missionary outreach abroad.... In spite of all this persecution and the neglect of our western church the vital and faithful witness goes on in the suffering church abroad. The invisible underground church in China continues to double every 7 years. The Chinese Church is now a communion of over 100 million souls. Meanwhile, back here in America and the west our young people yawn when the subject of the Christian faith is brought up... They have little sense of responsibility and are in constant need of being entertained.

...the American Puritans are becoming very vocal. The Christian political fight for a 'nation under God' goes on. By far the biggest issue for Christian fundamentalists today is the continuing abortion outrage.... Puritans in America have made great efforts and much money has been spent on politicking. Have they been able to stop the abortion? No, they have not... What can we do about this? Can we legislate, bribe, or sue a society into Godliness? Shall we join the anarchists and bomb or gun our society into godliness? Or does righteousness come into a society when the throne of Christ is established in individual human hearts?....

The other big issue for politically active Christians is the banning of class prayer in public schools in America... Can we merely replace God with "family values". It is only the indwelling Christ who brings these moral values home to a given group of people in any permanent sort of a way... Christian parents have had enough. They are opting out of the increasingly depraved public school system altogether. They are sending their children to Christian schools or home-schooling them. Where did this zeal for the spiritual preservation of a Christian America come from? Is it new? Or have we seen it before in America's earlier history? If we look back into the very beginnings of American colonization I believe we can see an unmistakable outline of a special group of socially and politically active Christian believers. They came to these shores with a specific goal in mind. Their quest was to nurture a pure Christian culture and establish a Christian nation in the New World. Back in those early days these Christians were called the Puritans.

THE ROOTS OF PURITAN ZEAL IN CHURCH HISTORY

If these Christian activists are indeed the continuation of the Puritans then where did their zeal for a **'nation under God'** come from? This is a very interesting question. The roots of Puritan zeal probably go back a long way.... Perhaps the zeal for 'one nation under God' even goes back deeper into the mists of time. Perhaps its roots go back to the nation of Israel....

This is all very interesting. But for this particular journey in search of that zeal for a 'nation under God' we shall content ourselves with a look back just 500 years into Christian history. Our journey of discovery to seek the roots of the Puritans begins at a time when the Holy Scriptures were coming to the common man in Europe. After a thousand years of medieval darkness the Word of God was returning.... The 1500's were years of great change. The peasants revolted throughout central Europe during a conflict that would come to known as the Peasant Wars. During this period of internal strife the Turks took advantage of the situation. They attacked European Christendom from the east. The Muslim forces advanced to the point where for a while they were actually closing in on Vienna. It was an awful time to be alive in Europe. It was a time of unprecedented religious, political and social upheaval. Out of all this turmoil came **the Anabaptists**. These were the ultimate Christian radicals...

THE ROOTS OF THE PILGRIMS

During the Reformation wars in central Europe many had seen enough of Christian savagery and barbarism to last several lifetimes. For many separatist evangelical Christians it got to the point where they didn't care which army won. From the scriptures they had come to believe that Christianity was a matter of personal faith, not national or church sponsored citizenship. Nor was it about which church or cathedral you belonged to. It was all about a covenant relationship with Jesus Christ and a personal faith walked out with Him daily.

Accordingly, while they paid their taxes to the governing powers the Anabaptists resolved to take no oaths of allegiance with the political or ecclesiastical princes, whoever they might be. Nor would they take up arms with or against any army coming into their valleys, whether they were Protestant or Catholic... For their stand in the peace of Jesus Christ they were bitterly persecuted from both sides. Millions of Anabaptists died at the hands of Catholic and Protestant powers alike. They continued to die for over 200 years. This story has not been told. It has been cut out of the history books.

From these determined Christian separatists came the peace loving Amish and Mennonites along with the Brethren and some primitive Baptists of the free church tradition. They remember this history. We don't. Let us make no mistake about this. The Pilgrim saints who had rejected the sword were still full of Christian zeal. But they had given up on a church that had corrupted itself by going to bed with the state. They would prefer to go to their secret Christian meetings, even if they were under the constant threat of being arrested... The pathway they were now going on was a 'highway of holiness'. ~ Isa.35:8-10.

The Anabaptists resolved to keep their little church pure in devotion to Christ. They were weary of seeing the hideous mixture of the cross and the sword played out before their eyes year after weary year. The sword had been stained with Christian blood. To their mind it had become a despised and shameful thing. It no longer had the sacred power of chivalry it once held over them. They had seen its dark side. It had come to the point where they were going to turn their back on politics and make the peaceful preaching of the Gospel their prime concern come what may. At this time the first missionary outreaches were organized.

The Mennonites, the Baptists, the Brethren and many other Christian groups began to send out missionaries beyond European shores. A new era in Christian missions had begun....

Church history is full of stories of compromised Christians persecuting uncompromised Christians. The millions of Anabaptists who died in the 1500's and 1600's were not put to death by the Turks or pagans from the forest. They died at the hands of self respecting fellow Christians.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE ENGLISH PURITANS IN THE 1500'S AND EARLY 1600'S .

This is where we pick up our story of the Puritans. The coming of the English Bible was giving rise to desires for full Reformation of the Church of England. There was even talk of **'purifying'** the Church of England. It was during the latter part of the 1500's that men like Thomas Cartwright began to argue for a purified English Christianity. They wanted to see a Church of England free of the medieval trappings and vestments of the Roman Church from which it had come. These reformist evangelicals came to be called **'Puritans'**...

Evangelicals in England during those times had two choices. They could separate from the Church of England and become Non-Conformists or Pilgrim style Separatists. Or they could join the Puritans and stay in the system hoping to reform it from within. Both streams of evangelical Christianity were persecuted but the separatists had it far worse. King James had commissioned the printing of the Holy Scriptures which sets men free, but under his reign religious freedom was still not realized. Englishmen were still forbidden to worship outside the Church of England. Many Bible believing Christians, under persecution by the king's bishops, were forced to flee the country. A Puritan community from the town of Scrooby left for Holland in 1608... Here people of faith could gather and worship without fear of persecution. Here too they could educate their children into a biblical world view with their own Christian schools. But for the Pilgrims and Puritans from Scrooby, (and others), Holland was a temporary haven. But it was not their destiny.

The Puritan fellowship from Scrooby would only stay there in Holland 12 years. Then they would set forth towards the next stop on their epic journey. The Pilgrims and Puritans were bound for the New World. During the fall of 1620 they set sail aboard the Mayflower. Meanwhile, back in England, the Puritans fumed and fretted and chafed under the constraints under which their new biblical faith was forced to operate. The difficult Pilgrim path of living as "non conformists" and walking a separated life to Christ was open to them of course, but the Puritans were committed to the continuation of a church-state union. So they remained within the Church of England trying to move the huge medieval colossus with all its "Romish" trappings forward inch by inch into biblical Christianity. Being people who believed in 'the system' the Puritans were determined to change the national church from within....

All this was making things very difficult for the emerging Puritans. They did not want to take the road of 'separation of church and state' as the Pilgrim separatists were doing. They were not going to worship secretly. Nor did they want to gather in little fellowships. They were Englishmen! And they would worship God as Englishmen. If the system was not with them then their future course was clear. They would change the system! ...

The Puritan corporate conscience began to burn within them. They prayed and they agonized as they sought to bring political and social substance to their dreams of a 'nation under God'. They knew what could and should be done. And by God's help they were going to make it happen!... The Puritans soon became the main movers and shakers in the political arena. During the 1630's they began to dominate English Parliament.... The bitter feud between King Charles and the Puritan leaders in Parliament got progressively worse. Finally it erupted into the awful English Civil War.... The Puritans had triumphed in the political arena. Oliver Cromwell, became a virtual Puritan dictator over England. He ruled as 'Lord Protector' until his death in 1658. England prospered greatly during those years.

So as we can see, the Puritans back then meant business. They were totally and absolutely committed to establishing a Christian nation with a representative government elected by and subject to a Christian people. And so they remain today.... As we have seen, the Puritans were politically active Christians of the established English church. They had big dreams for a new Christian nation. In the 1630's to 1650's they had tried to establish their new nation in England. Indeed they had succeeded for a few short years under benign theistic dictatorship of Oliver Cromwell. But alas, this Christian republic was not sustainable... Their dreams and their efforts for a righteous Christian republic ruled by a representative government of Godly, wise and uncorrupted statesmen had not been realized.

A group of Puritans had settled Jamestown in 1611. Then in 1620 the separatist Puritan congregation from Scrooby, via Leiden, Holland, set sail for the New World aboard the Mayflower... Like many who would come after them they were greatly encouraged in their quest for a 'nation under God'. In spite of very harsh living conditions and great loss of life that first winter they firmly believed that their dream was possible. They had arrived at Plymouth Rock and from there they would set foot into the New World. Before them lay an entirely new continent offering a new and fresh opportunity. Surely here in the American colonies they could begin to establish the model Christian society and Christian representative government that was eluding them back in England. As they gathered on board the Mayflower to lay out the basis for their Christian government their dream crystallized in that famous document known as the "Mayflower Compact."

THE PURITANS AND THEIR FRIENDS, THE PILGRIMS

The Puritans were not the only Christians that came to America. On the sea passage with them were other Christians on a mission. These fellow travelers, the ones who could truly be called Pilgrims, were similar in Christian devotion to the Puritans. But these Pilgrim friends did not have the Puritan zeal for hammering out a Christian church-state system. They merely saw themselves as sojourners in the land, travelers on a pilgrim pathway leading onwards into history towards a glorious destiny. They were glad to see their Puritan friends making the effort to set up a Christian nation. In fact many of the Pilgrims would join the ranks of the Puritans at the signing of their covenant on board the Mayflower and later as they went on to tame the wilderness together. The Pilgrims would benefit greatly from living alongside their politically active Christian companions. But for the Pilgrims politics was not their main burden or motivation. They believed that no matter what system was adopted a society was only as good as its people. As evangelicals they were going to 'go with the flow' as much as their consciences allowed. But there was no doubt that these people were different from the Puritans. Their motivation was the evangelical Fire for its own sake. They were out to spread the Light of the Gospel. Their passion was to see the indwelling Christ come into the hearts of men, women, and children. They longed to see Him do His marvelous work changing them from the inside out. This was their burden. It was to see the world changed one heart at a time. For the Pilgrims their social obligation was a simple one. They would pay their taxes, embrace their civic duties and be good citizens wherever they were. Their main agenda was to live a life of Christian witness before men. It was also to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth. They were glad to be out there, sowing the seed God's Word. After all, wasn't this the original purpose of the Christian church?... For the Pilgrims this was their top priority....As for politics, wasn't Jesus Christ their coming Messiah? For the Pilgrims the hope of seeing a perfect government on earth in this present evil age was not a realistic one. If there was any 'kingdom of the church' to be set up then wouldn't Christ Himself bring it into being at the appropriate time? After His return in judgment and deliverance Jesus Himself would establish His Kingdom on earth. And He would achieve this when He returned at the end of this present age. At the set time He would judge the wicked and establish His glorious Millennial Kingdom. His reign upon the earth would last for a thousand years. ~Rev.20 For the Pilgrims these were fairly simple and straightforward observations which any diligent Christian could draw from the Holy Scriptures.

For the Puritans, however, this Pilgrim goal was not sufficient. They had a more complex and more earthy agenda to hammer out. For the Puritans, a Christian republic in the New World, a 'nation under God', was not just a religious pipedream. It was a very present necessity. If they were going to establish a new nation in the New World then they must stick together. Pilgrim separatism would not do. They had big plans for a big Christian nation...

In the early colonization of America the Puritans very nearly achieved the formation of that great theocratic society they had sought. The Massachusetts Bay colony and early English Puritan colonies of the New World were nearly all at that time very much coming to be a 'nation under God'. But could this theocratic society and the 'nation under God' be preserved? That was the burning question back then. And it remains so to this day.

THE AMERICAN PURITANS TODAY VS. THE SECULAR HUMANISTS

Nearly 400 years have now passed by since the Mayflower dropped anchor off Plymouth Rock. Alas, the moral decay and biblical apostasy in America, England and Europe is all too obvious. In the U.S. the secular humanists are coming to the fore. They have set forth an entirely secular agenda for America and the new world. They are now on the bridge of the Great American Ship of State, as it were, and they are about to take the helm. What is more, they have now barred the door to the modern day Puritans. In effect they have told American Christians to "check in your Christianity at the door. Don't bring it into the halls of government, or the town square, or the public school, or the workplace. You are free to practice your Christianity if you wish. But only in the church sanctuary on Sunday." This has incensed many American Christians from all denominations. The Puritans in today's America are the ones who feel particularly hurt in all this. They feel betrayed. They feel like they have been locked out of the society which they, with God's help, built. They fondly remember the Christian America that was. Then they look around and see their nation and their children rejecting God, and they weep.

Secularists in America, like the Puritans, can also be traced back to the early beginnings of the New World. Thomas Paine, Voltaire, and other leaders coming out of the so-called 'Enlightenment' and 'Age of Reason' had little time for the God of the Pilgrims and Puritans. They had a humanistic and rationalistic dream for America. The movement for a secular New World was also being driven by a secret Masonic/Illuminati agenda putting key men in high places to enact changes slowly and in little steps. We cannot put too much emphasis on this but a secret agenda for a secular, (or pseudo-Christian), New World Order was there right at the very beginnings of America. It remains with us to the present day. The Masonic symbol indicating the plan can be seen on the U.S. dollar bill. The pyramid, symbolizing this great effort to forge a New World Order, even has the number 1776 written on the foundation stone....

Have the secularists really taken over in America? Some would say they have, or that they are about to take over. The cultural milieu is now predominantly pagan. And the dream for the future of the New World is no longer a Christian dream. Secularists are moving to have the words, "under God" plucked from the Pledge of Allegiance and the words, "In God we trust" struck from the 5 cent coins. They too have big dreams for America and the New World....

THE FUTURE GREAT DANGER FOR THE PURITANS

There is no doubt that the overt plan of secularists is to promote a secular nation and a secular 'global village' or New World Order. But this is not a real danger for true Christians. They understand that this must come to pass at some point in time. They know all about it. And they prepare their hearts for it and for the witness it will call for. It is no different to what our brothers and sisters face in the persecuted church abroad.

Christian believers do better under persecution in China than we do in the West living in materialistic affluence. If secularism is not the problem then what is the real danger? The real danger for the Puritans is compromise. This is essentially what Balaak told Balaam. The dark powers cannot touch the people of God. Not unless they step over the line and compromise with the powers of this world. The dark powers intend to draw the Puritans away from their focus on Christ. They want to entice them into a meaningless dialogue, then into a political turmoil that achieves nothing, and finally into a hopeless battle that ends in defeat....Will they eventually succeed in drawing the Puritans into that epic future mega deal of the end-time? God forbid! Let the Puritans rejoin the ranks of the Pilgrims if that offer ever comes before them. A great political disaster awaits the unwary people of God. - Dan.9:27....

What do the 'Christian Right', the Puritans of today, think of all this? Well this is what is a real concern to the Pilgrims who are watching all this unfold. Their Puritan friends do not seem to be aware of the danger of spiritual compromise. Of course they are quite rightly very exercised about the onward march of secular humanism in America. In fact they are extremely angry about it. They see this as a betrayal of the true Christian intent of the American founding Fathers. They say that the true destiny of America has been hijacked. Now, with the nation coming into pagan hands a new course has been set.

The Puritans of today are indeed rising up against this threat. They are sending out a clarion call from the pulpits, on Christian radio and television and also on the internet. The word is that 'unless Christians in America 'rise up and retake the system' we are all lost' They are responding prayerfully and politically to the onslaught of secular and pagan darkness. They are pouring into the breaches. They are raising their voices in the political and judicial arenas in a heroic attempt to stem the flow of this incoming evil tide... What will happen to the Puritans? That remains to be seen. They will most assuredly come to the greatest trial they have ever faced....

**PURITAN PRIORITIES.
SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM?
OR PERSONAL DEVOTION AND THE GOSPEL OUTREACH?**

No one doubts the raw power of Christian America. But let us take stock of devotional matters for a moment. If the Puritan media spokespersons of today are directing their concern outwardly towards others in the political and judicial areas are they also directing that same critical eye inwardly toward themselves? Are they judging themselves? Do they critique their own Christian family in America with the same zeal that they judge others? Are they looking at their own hearts? Is their own house, the Church in America, in order? This is where the Puritan family begins to get a little quiet. Their original goal was to purify the Church of England. Back in the late 1500's when the Puritans emerged, they had wanted to 'purify' this new national church which King Henry had established for them. They wanted to bring it into line with Biblical Christianity, free of the trappings of the medieval church from which it had come. Back in those days they demonstrated a determined zeal to reform their church.

If the so-called 'Christian right' in America are today's Puritans then they may be slipping a little. Because it seems that they see the enemy as being **outside** the church. The boogey-man is 'out there' in the secular realm rather than inside the church in the spiritual realm. It would appear that today's Puritans may have lost some of that classic Puritan capacity for inner reflection and self examination. Issues of inner holiness before God are not considered as important nowadays as the political agenda. Their focus is mainly on wrestling with those secular dragons out there in the outside world. The fight against 'those secular humanists out there' has become more important than attending to their personal walk in devotion to God. This is a cause for some concern. Why has this happened?

Listening to Christian radio and Christian television it seems that amidst all the political activity the perfecting of the Church in America in Christian doctrine and practice has not been a priority. This essential part of the divinely appointed Puritan task has been toned down. Is this a result of the dominant role of the 'electronic church' and their marketing of the message for the masses? They did this of course for good business reasons. To stay on the air they have to maintain their popularity, and they must do so in an increasingly profane church 'body politic'. Here the big church and big Christian media monopolies have been handed an impossible task. They must maintain at least the appearance of being a company of saints committed to walk in holiness. As evangelicals and fundamentalists they have always upheld in the pulpit the necessity of a life 'separated unto God'. But as an ally to a bank or a political party they they must be 'practical' here. As a matter of political pragmatism they must not become too 'exclusive' lest they 'lose the consensus' and their political pull in the halls of temporal power. The big religious systems, Puritan systems notwithstanding, have found it necessary to 'tone down' their exclusivity in devotion to Christ, lest they lose what united front they have been able to cobble together. Like the ecumenical Christians who have already compromised themselves with the worldly powers, (and left wing politics), the Puritans are heading down the very same path. They are talking a lot lately about 'unity'. But they are not defining who that unity is with or where that covenanting might lead the Puritan branch of the evangelical family.

Nevertheless, these are good businessmen. They know that the widest possible inclusiveness means the more contributions will be sent in and the hence best bottom line. They depend on these contributions to stay on the airwaves. As we see them today it would seem that the goals and the passion of the Puritans have not changed all that much in the past 400 years. Their quest for a 'pure Christianity' and a 'holy nation' has not changed since they signed the original compact on board the Mayflower. They still fully intend to see that America becomes a 'nation under God'.

THE PURITAN SPIRIT AND THE 'LAST CRUSADE': THE NEW MILITANCY EMERGING IN THE CHURCH.

Here is the thesis of this article. That same Puritan spirit seen in England in the days of the English Civil War is still with us today in America. Their Puritan zeal is still just as fiery hot. Just a few years ago the so called "religious right" impeached President Bill Clinton for 'moral failure'. I submit to you that once again this was the Puritans at work. Such a thing would never happen in Europe or any other nation in the world for that matter. Christian activists are on the warpath. These Christians are angry! Road rage is now being superceded by religious rage. In many of the churches the preaching has become strident, the drums of war are in the sanctuary and 'warrior praise' goes up before the altar... Church services in many quarters are becoming loud and raucous. Christians are being drawn back into the mode and ethic of the warrior monks seen during the crusades. Is this the "last crusade" being preached?. It is the contention of this writer that Puritan Christians are alive and well in America today. They just do not wear the name 'Puritan' on their sleeves anymore than their cousins from the former British Empire would own the name 'Victorian'. They would say that the age of the Puritans is over. Nevertheless those Puritan goals have not been reached. Not by a long shot. And the Puritan agenda is still quite evident in society today. It has not changed in 400 years. They are still totally committed to bringing in a pure Christian society upon this earth by faith and by the hard work Puritans are renowned for.

How are Puritans different from their Pilgrim brothers and sisters? Well for one thing they are not too impressed with the call for Christians to 'turn the other cheek' or to just 'take up their cross and follow Christ'. Nor do you hear Puritans speak much of 'entering into the fellowship of Christ's sufferings'. They are happy to see their task accomplished in the holy flows of Christian ministry yes, but they are also willing to use force to achieve their goals if necessary. They are not ones to talk much about 'the patience of the saints'. Nor are they inclined to wait around for the return of the Messiah to see His Kingdom established. They want it now! Even if their task becomes a global undertaking our Puritan friends are prepared to tackle it head on. Not happy with the quiet evangelism of the heart and the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by missionary activity and support of native missionaries abroad, their focus is on America. They want to set something in motion that is more than just the Gospel outreach. They want to control the whole church-state system, not only nationally but on an international scale...

Will the Puritans take government or corporate assistance for their ministries if it is offered? That remains to be seen. But like the Jesuits of the older church or the British Victorians they do believe that with a powerful church-state collusion they can bring in the "Kingdom Now" much more quickly and decisively than their missionary outreaches can do it. They will claim it by faith, champion their authoritarian church leadership, and lay hold of their earthly power under God. To their mind the Christian church has been given the dominion in this age. So they fully intend to be the ones to bring it in. What is more, they plan to wrap this all up **before** the second coming of Messiah. What Christians need to do, (they say), is to 'rise up' and 'seize the moment'. This dominion, they truly believe, is theirs for the taking. They consider it to be their "manifest destiny".

No one doubts their sincerity. And no one can deny that the Puritans are leaving their mark on English and American history. The Puritan dream continues. We see it pass on from the days of Oliver Cromwell, and the rise of English parliament in the 1600's and the English Civil War. The dream of Christian dominion in this present age did not die in England with Cromwell. It came over to America by ship with the Puritans. Its first document was penned on board the Mayflower. It was there that many Pilgrims joined the ranks of the Puritans. It was then, and is now, a dream of the Kingdom of God on earth. Can it be established in the New World under a God fearing church-state leadership. This is an interesting question. Many Puritans currently believe this can and will be done... They believe that the Kingdom of God is in the church now. This present church age is the millennium (or so they believe). The Kingdom of God is due to be fully established here on earth by the church and **before** Messiah returns. This is the crux of Dominion Theology. Dominionists also believe that God is finished with the Jewish nation. According to them, all the covenants and promises God had with Israel have now passed on to the church....

THE FUTURE OF THE PURITANS.

What lies out there in the future for the Puritans? Certainly they will not let go of their dream of an earthly 'nation under God'. Surely they will never compromise their beliefs in the exclusivity of the Christian faith as the ecumenicals have done. But we can be sure that this will be precisely what they will be asked to do. Being the politically engaged Christians that they are, is there a very real danger that they might enter into negotiations for a leading role in the emerging New World Order?... Will they turn from their politicking and take the path of quiet witness? Will they join the Pilgrims on the highway of holiness?

This is an interesting question. After all, many of the Pilgrims crossed over and signed on with the Puritans when they signed the Mayflower Compact did they not? Will the Puritans cross over and join the Pilgrims next time? Or will they take up the sword and adopt a patriotic military stance against their future arch enemy?....

As for the Puritans we should harbor no doubts about their continuing zeal. Nor should we doubt their willingness to finish the course set before them. Right from their early beginnings they regarded their life in God as a great adventure. It would seem that the Puritans are already up onstage. And in some future year they will come to the glorious climax of their history. And there they will embrace their destiny....

Do all evangelical Christians go along with the Puritan dream of a global church-state colossus bringing in the Kingdom of God? No they do not. Apart from the liberal Christian and ecumenical church tradition, (which we shall not discuss here), there is another group of evangelicals who have no faith whatsoever in any deals the established church might make with the princes of this world. They are especially wary of any covenant that looks even remotely like being the end-time 7-year deal that the angel Gabriel told Daniel about in Daniel 9:27. They place their Christian zeal first and foremost in the spreading of the Gospel. The support of missions abroad is the main focus of their activism. They are also prepared to make whatever peaceful witness they are called upon to make, even if it costs them their very lives. These are a group of Christians we might call the Pilgrims. Pilgrims agree with their Puritan brethren that the present state of western Christendom is perilously compromised. However, they would not go along with their Puritan/crusader course of political action. Not at all...."

(end of quotes from)

PURITAN HISTORY; PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

An essay by Gavin Finley M.D.

September 2003

(A note of personal thanks to brother Gavin for allowing me to condense and print this article for this newsletter. I do encourage you to read the entire essay on his website as it contains a wealth of historical data on this subject.)

<http://endtimepilgrim.org/puritans.htm>



A FEW CONCLUDING THOUGHTS...

There are two brands of Christianity in America today. They are (1) "the Puritan way" that is embraced by the majority of American Christians and (2) "the Pilgrim way" followed by the minority. A.W. Tozer once said, "Do not be fooled by the majority, for history proves that the majority has always been wrong." The story of the children of Israel in the wilderness exemplifies that point. The majority of Christians in this country are being swept up in the fervor of modern-day Puritanism. However, the Word of God will show you clearly that the foundation of Puritanism is not pure religion.

The apostle James tells us that the mark of "pure and undefiled religion" is (1) "to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and (2) "to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (Jm. 1:27). The Puritan pathway is one of seeking to "remove the spots from the world" while the focus of the Pilgrim pathway is "to keep oneself unspotted from the world." These are not the same objectives. The first is futile ideology while the latter is perfect theology.

The Pilgrim pathway can be likened to the man Jesus singled out as “a wise man” who built his house upon the rock (Mat. 7:24-25). Jesus clearly identifies “the rock” as consisting of “these sayings of mine.” Then He contrasts this wise man to a “foolish man” who built his house on a foundation of “sand.” Obviously, the sand represents the “sayings of men” that are opposed to the sayings of Christ. God has given us His Word so that we could make a clear distinction between “the sayings of Christ” and “the sayings of men.” The apostle John clearly warns the believer, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone into the world.” (1 Jn. 4:1). John went on to say that, “they are of the world. Therefore they speak as of 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. 4:5-6). It is my firm conviction that “the Pilgrim way” is the spirit of truth but “the Puritan way” is the spirit of error. Puritanism is misguided zeal just as it was for the Jewish zealots in Paul’s day of whom he warned, “For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge” (Rom. 10:2). Modern-day Puritans such as brother Gavin describes in his article are full of zeal but, we must judge, not according to knowledge. Among Jesus’ sayings is, “My Kingdom is not of this world...My Kingdom is not from here” (Jn. 18:36). Yet, the modern-day Puritans are pursuing madly after an earthly kingdom to make it into the Kingdom of God just as did their Puritan forefathers. Is this “building on a rock” – “the sayings of Christ?” No, it is building upon “the sayings of man” – “sand!” what will happen to this “house?” Jesus said, “...it fell. And great was its fall” (Matt. 7:26).

Consider the Puritan cause against abortion raging for over the last 35 years with little or no progress. Have we learned nothing from the futile attempt of previous “Puritans” who brought about the legislation of the prohibition era in the 20’s? What was the result of “banning liquor by legislation?” It produced boot-leg liquor and fueled the coffers of the Mafia. If the Puritans of today could reverse “Roe vs. Wade” by legislation, what would be the result? Abortion would go underground and would kill mothers as well as babies. We cannot legislate morality on immorality! We cannot “remove the spots from the world.” Rather, we are to “keep ourselves unspotted from the world.” Paul tells us, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...” (Rom. 12:2). We are not to “conform the world” but rather not “be conformed to it.”

The Puritans want the unalienable rights of “Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness” in an earthly kingdom. This is sand theology. The Pilgrim way is to pursue the Kingdom of God in its present manifestation of “righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17). It is the Christian who “serves Christ in these things that is acceptable to God” (Rom. 14:18).

There is another contrast that Jesus makes between “the wise and the foolish” other than what is stated in Matthew Chapter 7. It is in the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Mat. 25:1-13). Jesus states that He will take the wise virgins and leave the foolish virgins behind. The Book of Proverbs makes great comparisons between what constitutes “the wise and the foolish.” Consider this footnote from the Amplified Bible pertaining to the meaning of “a fool”:

“the word “fool” in the Old Testament seldom, if ever, is used to describe the feeble-minded, imbecile, idiot, or moron. Rather, it always has within it the meaning of a rebel, especially against God and the laws of order, decency and justice...”

Certainly we cannot accuse most modern-day Puritans of breaking God’s laws of “order, decency and justice.” But are they not rebelling at other portions of God’s Word such as pursuing an earthly kingdom in spite of the otherwise clear “sayings of Christ?” If they continue to rebel, God may do to them what He did to Israel, “...and He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul” (Psm. 106:15). Perhaps God will leave behind the foolish (Puritan) virgins for the “earthly kingdom” that so consumes their hearts!

Unless modern-day Puritans repent of such ideology and become biblically-based “Pilgrims,” they are in danger of becoming just as duped as were the German Christians who politically helped Hitler rise to power at the expense of the Jews. If you read brother Gavin’s article carefully you know that he, like me, is warning believers in this country that America is the “New Roman Empire” rather than the “New Israel” that the early Puritans believed it to be. If the politically-based Puritans of today are not careful, they may be involved in propelling to political power the last great “Caesar” of the coming revived-Roman Empire!



Think carefully about what Jesus uses to confront some of His followers that hear what He says to them, but fail to follow through with doing what He says. To shed light on why Jesus posed the above question to some of His followers, one only need to consider the meaning of the title "Lord":

LORD (KURIOS)- "SUPREME IN AUTHORITY, LIFE-CONTROLLER, MASTER OF ALL..."

If they call Him, "Lord, Lord", then they should understand what that title requires. If He is "Lord", then He is "supreme in authority" over them, He is their "life-controller", He is the "master of all" those who follow Him. After all, Jesus is called "Lord" 673 times in the New Testament. Compare that statistic to another title Jesus bears, that of "Savior." Jesus is only identified 27 times in the same New Testament as "Savior." Why then, we must ask, do we tend to gravitate toward thinking of Jesus primarily as "Savior" instead of "Lord"? Does that not imply that we are guilty of "majoring in the minors" and "minoring in what should be the majors" concerning the emphasis scripture places on who Jesus Christ is?

The answer to this imbalance must lie in what emphasis we are being taught by men rather than what the Word itself emphasizes. If I see Jesus addressed as "Lord" 673 times in the reading of the New Testament compared to only 27 times identified as "Savior", I must conclude that His "Lordship" must be a higher priority than the fact that He is my "Savior." All one really needs to do is read carefully the passages of scripture that present God's plan of salvation and you will see that the "Lordship" of Jesus Christ is an integral part of that salvation message. Here are four examples of what you will find:

"...THAT IF YOU CONFESS WITH YOUR MOUTH THE LORD JESUS AND BELIEVE IN YOUR HEART THAT GOD HAS RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, YOU WILL BE SAVED... FOR THERE IS NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN JEW AND GREEK, FOR THE SAME LORD OVER ALL IS RICH TO ALL WHO CALL UPON HIM. FOR "WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED." Rom. 10:9

"...BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND YOU WILL BE SAVED..." Acts 16:31

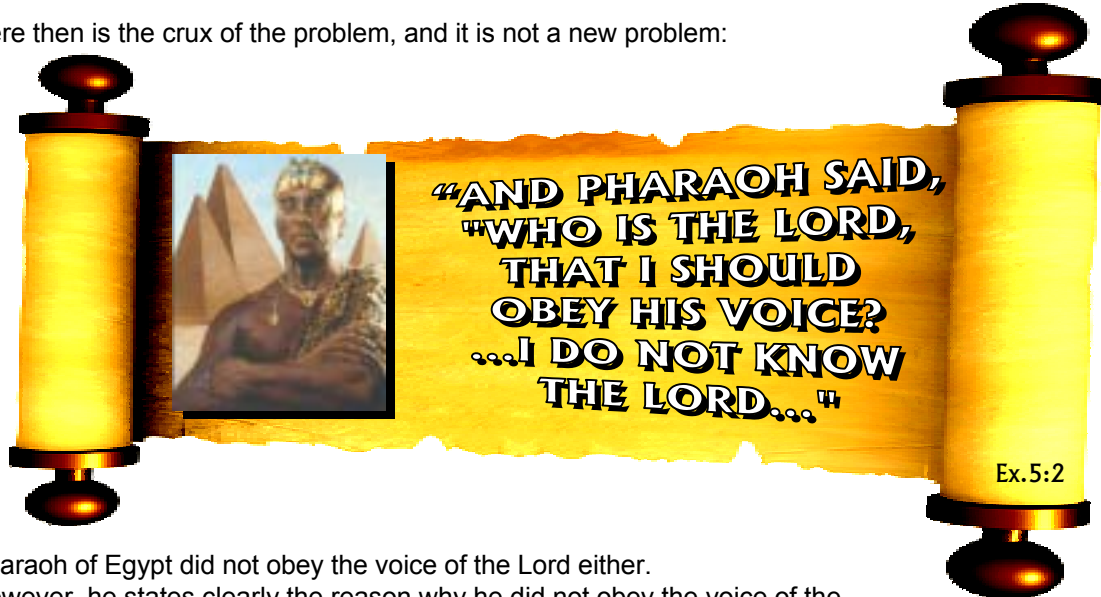
"...WE ALSO EAGERLY WAIT FOR THE SAVIOR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST..." Phil 3:20-21

"PAUL, AN APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST, BY THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD OUR SAVIOR AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, OUR HOPE..." 1 Tim 1:1

Look at the crux of the problem:

1. Scripture places great emphasis upon the "Lordship" of Jesus Christ rather than the isolated fact that He is our "Savior." ("Lord"-673 times. "Savior"-27 times)
2. In spite of the above emphasis of scripture, most of Christianity presents Jesus only as "Savior."
3. In describing "salvation" in scripture, the Word clearly states that it is "the Lord" who saves us.

Here then is the crux of the problem, and it is not a new problem:



Pharaoh of Egypt did not obey the voice of the Lord either.

However, he states clearly the reason why he did not obey the voice of the Lord: **"I DO NOT KNOW THE LORD..."**

I believe Pharaoh's stated reason is the same reason that some of Jesus' followers did not obey Him as well, even though they tritely called Him, "Lord, Lord", they didn't have a clue what that really meant. They merely knew Him as their savior from sin, but not as Lord of their life in its fullest meaning:

LORD (KURIOS)- "SUPREME IN AUTHORITY, LIFE-CONTROLLER, MASTER OF ALL..."

Instead of properly stressing the fact that it is "the Lord", the one who is "supreme in authority, life-controller and Master of all" those who are to follow Him, the modern-day version of the gospel is misrepresented as "God has a wonderful plan for your life." Instead of placing proper emphasis upon what you need to give up in order for Christ to be "Lord" in your life, it is rather presented as what "God is going to bring into your life" once you simply receive Him as Savior. We are told emphatically that He is going to "heal your marriage, heal your diseases, heal your finances prosper you, provide for you, protect you, etc. Friend, that is not what it means to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"! God may indeed do some of those things for you as you walk with Him, but that is not the theme of "the gospel." Embracing His Lordship will change your life, but it will be you that must initiate the necessary change from living a self-centered, self-serving way of life. You are now required to "get off the throne" and allow the Lord Jesus Christ to take over ruling and reigning in your life from now on! This is true Lordship at work! Jesus sternly warns about calling Him, "Lord, Lord", but not obeying what He commands us:

**"BUT WHY DO YOU CALL ME
'LORD, LORD,'
AND NOT DO THE THINGS WHICH I SAY?"**
Luke 6:46

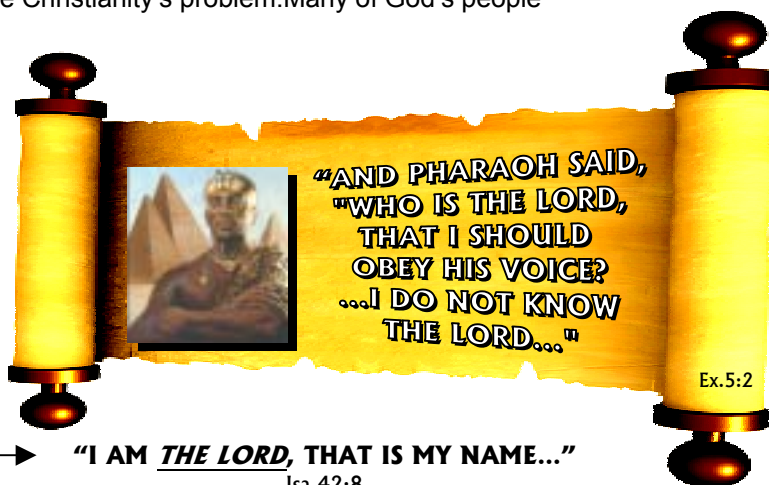
**"NOT EVERYONE WHO SAYS TO ME,
'LORD, LORD,'
SHALL ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN,
BUT HE WHO DOES THE WILL OF MY FATHER IN HEAVEN...
...I WILL DECLARE TO THEM, 'I NEVER KNEW YOU; DEPART FROM ME,
YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS!'"**

Matt 7:21-23



Ancient Pharaoh's problem has become Christianity's problem: Many of God's people
"DO NOT KNOW THE LORD."

Upon making that statement of ignorance from Pharaoh's lips, "The Lord" God Almighty systematically begins to pour out upon Pharaoh and his kingdom ten severe plagues of judgment to demonstrate to him "who the Lord is". Neither do we lack for a clear definition of who "the Lord" is. Isaiah the prophet gives us this revealing proclamation about the name of the Lord.



**"FOR THE LORD IS (1) OUR JUDGE,
 THE LORD IS (2) OUR LAWGIVER,
 THE LORD IS (3) OUR KING;
 HE (the Lord) WILL (4) SAVE US"**
 Isa 33:22

Isaiah goes on to identify what is the supreme name by which God Almighty identifies Himself. It is "The Lord." Isaiah proceeds further by giving us four revealing clarifications as to the meaning of the name of the Lord.



This is a picture of a wall in our old church building upon which I displayed visually the content of Isaiah 33:22. I kept this visual there for the 40 years that we occupied that church building. I wanted it to be a constant reminder to both the people and to myself of what the biblical meaning is of the title of Jesus Christ as, "the Lord."

Shown below is a snapshot of the main wall in my present new study located adjacent to our public meeting room in our new location.

Like the original in our old building, I placed this new bigger display also to serve as a constant reminder to myself as well as to those in our congregation just "who is the Lord."



HOW IT READS:

(TOP TO BOTTOM)

This passage from Isaiah reads from the top down. However, this is not how it works out in the life of a saved person.

**Isaiah 33:22****HOW IT WORKS:**

(BOTTOM TO TOP)

Rather we find that this passage works progressively from the bottom to the top because our first encounter with "the Lord" takes place by the act of salvation. We first encounter who "the Lord" is when we embrace the call to be saved.



You must not divorce the aspect of the Lordship of Jesus Christ from the fact that He is our Savior. It is like the old secular song about "love and marriage" going together like a "horse and carriage-you can't have one without the other." If you understand that concept then you can see why all the passages about "salvation" contain references to "the Lord" Jesus rather than the isolated truth that He is our "savior". You can't have one without the other. Hear this clearly: It is "the Lord" who saves us:

"...THAT IF YOU CONFESS WITH YOUR MOUTH THE LORD JESUS AND BELIEVE IN YOUR HEART THAT GOD HAS RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, YOU WILL BE SAVED... FOR "WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED." Rom. 10:9

**"FOR THE LORD IS OUR JUDGE,
THE LORD IS OUR LAWGIVER,
THE LORD IS OUR KING;
HE (the Lord) **WILL SAVE US"****
Isa 33:22



So then, it is "the Lord" ("supreme in authority, life-controller, Master of all") who saves us by forgiving our sins. We need to hear that carefully. It isn't just Jesus "our Savior" who saves us, but it is "the Lord" who saves us, and He does so with a purpose. The Lord saves us in order that we can now meet Him as "King Jesus" (another expression of His Lordship in our life).

King Jesus has a kingdom under His authority into which we are now placed. This kingdom does not exist just in eternity, but right now, by the act of salvation, we enter into living a new life in a new kingdom. Paul the apostle reminds us of this important aspect of our salvation in saying:

"...GIVING THANKS TO THE FATHER WHO HAS QUALIFIED US TO BE PARTAKERS OF THE INHERITANCE OF THE SAINTS IN THE LIGHT. HE HAS DELIVERED US FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS AND CONVEYED US INTO THE KINGDOM OF THE SON OF HIS LOVE, IN WHOM WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS." Col 1:12-14

Notice in the passage above, Paul, in speaking of the act of salvation, not only emphasizes the truth that, "we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins", but also ties this act of salvation to simultaneously being "delivered out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of the Son of His love."

**"FOR THE LORD IS OUR JUDGE,
THE LORD IS OUR LAWGIVER,
THE LORD IS OUR KING;
HE (the Lord) **WILL SAVE US"****
Isa 33:22



Can you see that there is a progression taking place here beyond the initial act of salvation? This progression is systematically detailed by the prophet Isaiah. Yes, the Lord indeed saves us, but in doing so, He translates us out of the kingdom of darkness and into a new kingdom, the Kingdom of God!

Get this point: Jesus not only saves us, but He also places us into His kingdom. "The Lord" ("supreme in authority, life-controller, Master of all"), the very one active in saving us, now becomes "our King"! As King over His Kingdom that leads us right into the next aspect of His Lordship over us. →

**"FOR THE LORD IS OUR JUDGE,
THE LORD IS OUR LAWGIVER,
THE LORD IS OUR KING;
HE (the Lord) WILL SAVE US"**
Isa 33:22



Every "king" has a kingdom over which he rules. How does he rule? By means of governing laws. "The Lord" Jesus now becomes to every follower of His, "our Lawgiver." His laws are designed to govern His people in His kingdom.

Wait a minute! Is not the new covenant a covenant of grace and not law? Not according to the Word of God. Here are the terms of the new covenant:

Little known is the fact that there are three terms specified in the New Covenant which reveal God's objectives for the recipients (presently, the church). We've only been taught one term namely, "grace."

The word translated as covenant ("b'rith") means "to bind". An old hymn is entitled "blessed be the tie that binds". However, for the most part, God's people have only been taught one-third of that binding agreement.

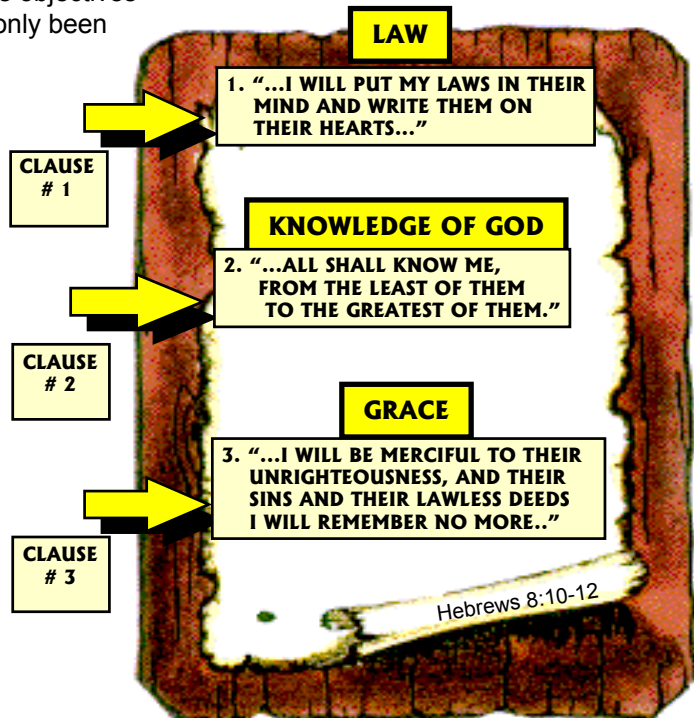
They hold to that which binds God to "...be merciful to their unrighteousness, and...their sins and their lawless deeds... (to) remember no more" (Heb.8:12). Theologically, we have condensed this concept to the term "grace". However, the covenant places an equally binding obligation upon the people of God to allow Him to "...put His laws in their mind and write them on their hearts..." (Heb.8:10). This concept can be condensed to the term "law".

Can we get away with selectively picking out "grace", but then to discard the "law" term of the covenant?

If we, as God's people, do not diligently search out the biblical balance between the subjects of law vs. grace, there is going to be a multitude of saints who will be ashamed when God Himself confronts us in eternity with the remainder of the contents of the New Covenant!

Paul's great argument in his epistles is that, "by the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified...Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law." (Rom 3:28-31) How is "the Law" established by faith? Paul is simply stating that we cannot be saved ("justified") by keeping the Law. However, he refuses to "throw the baby out with the bathwater", but rather goes on to balance that statement by declaring that the people of God who are saved are called to keep God's Law! That is why there is "the Law" clause added, "I will put My Laws in their mind and write them on their hearts." Hear this too: it is not Mosaic Law of which Paul speaks, but of a new and broader set of laws instituted by Jesus Himself as "our Lawgiver."

Jesus makes a comparison between "Old Testament Law and New Testament Law" in His dissertation found in Matthew Chapters 5, 6, and 7. You must read the continuity of these chapters for it is a vivid depiction of Jesus as "our King" describing Himself now as "our Lawgiver." Jesus opens various topics with this repeated saying, "You have heard that it was said...but I say unto you (see Matt. 5:27,31,33,38,43) In these chapters Jesus compares Old Testament Law to His New Testament Law designed to govern the subjects of His new Kingdom. If you follow His many comparisons you will quickly see that His New Testament Laws are more demanding than what was contained in the Old! He is certainly not supporting the false idea that New Testament grace has replaced all of God's Law. Yes, the Old Mosaic Law is done away with, but it is replaced by a new set of Laws from King Jesus, "our Lawgiver." Law does not save us, but rather is designed to sanctify us as a different people living in a different kingdom!



**"FOR THE LORD IS OUR JUDGE,
THE LORD IS OUR LAWGIVER,
THE LORD IS OUR KING;
HE (the Lord) WILL SAVE US"**

Isa 33:22



Isaiah gives us this fourth and final depiction of "who is the Lord" in the life of a believer. The One who "saved us" is "the Lord." He has become "our King" and we live in His Kingdom on earth. As such, "the Lord, "our King" becomes "our Lawgiver" supplying us with righteous laws for a righteous people.

And finally, we add the fourth manner in which Jesus is "the Lord". This time "the Lord has become "our Judge." When we finally step into eternity we are going to meet "the Lord" as "our Judge. The One who "saved us" is "the Lord." He has become "our King" and we live in His Kingdom on earth. As such, "the Lord, "our King" becomes "our Lawgiver" supplying us with righteous laws for a righteous people. Finally, we add the fourth manner in which Jesus is "the Lord". This time "the Lord has become "our Judge." Paul gives emphatic emphasis upon the necessity for every believer to cultivate that final office of "the Lord" ("supreme in authority, life-controller, Master of all").

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

2 Cor 5:9-11

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

FOR IT IS WRITTEN:

**"AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME,
 AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL CONFESS TO GOD."
 SO THEN EACH OF US SHALL GIVE ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF TO GOD."**

Rom. 14:10-13



Each one of us, as a follower of Christ, has an eternal date with Christ "the Lord" in His role as "our Judge." This is not a judgment for our sins for Christ has already received that "judgment" on our behalf by means of the exchange performed by "the Cross." Paul reminds us:

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

2 Cor 5:21-6:1

Rather, the Judgment Seat of Christ is a judgment unto rewards to be received by the faithful believer. Paul, about to be beheaded, uses himself as an example in saying:

**"FOR I AM ALREADY BEING Poured OUT AS A DRINK OFFERING,
 AND THE TIME OF MY DEPARTURE IS AT HAND.
 I HAVE FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT, I HAVE FINISHED THE RACE, I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH.
 FINALLY, 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 4:6-8

"The Lord", will sit as "the Righteous Judge", and will evaluate to what degree each of us has embraced the Lordship of Christ in our lives. Has "the Lord" who saved us also become "our King?" Has "the Lord" become "our Lawgiver"? Have we allowed Kingdom Laws to govern our lives on earth? Have we been faithful submissive servants to the King and His Kingdom Laws? These are the areas of judgment that Christ "the Lord" will use to measure the level of our faithfulness on earth. Shall we hear Him say:

**"WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT; YOU WERE FAITHFUL OVER A FEW THINGS,
 I WILL MAKE YOU RULER OVER MANY THINGS. ENTER INTO THE JOY OF YOUR LORD."**

Matt 25:21-22



DO I
KNOW
THE LORD?

143

**"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



1. DO I KNOW **THE LORD** JESUS CHRIST AS MY **SAVIOR** ?

The answer is yes if you can look back and enumerate the various changes He has brought into your life since you accepted Him. Lordship is measured by how much we give over to Him, not by how much we receive from Him. Lordship produces measurable repentance in the life of the born-again sinner. We immediately begin to bring forth "fruits worthy of repentance" (Acts 26:20). Lordship produces a tangible life filled with evidence of "diligence, clearing of yourselves, indignation against sin, Godly fear, vehement desire, zeal, vindication (making things right)" (2 Cor. 7:11).

2. DO I KNOW **THE LORD** JESUS CHRIST AS MY **KING** ?

The answer is yes if you truly live like you have been "translated out of the power of darkness and into the Kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. 1:13). The answer is yes if you are no longer a "friend of the world" (Jam. 4:4). The answer is yes if you are "transformed rather than conformed" (Rom. 12:2). The answer is yes if you confess to be "a stranger and pilgrim on earth" (Heb. 11:13). The answer is yes if we plainly declare "Here we have no continuing city for we seek the one that is to come (Heb. 13:14). The answer is yes if we declare "for our citizenship is in Heaven, from whom we eagerly wait for the savior the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20). The answer is yes if we confess as did Jesus, "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).

3. DO I KNOW **THE LORD** JESUS CHRIST AS MY **LAWGIVER** ?

The answer is yes if you embrace the beatitudes of being "poor in spirit, mourning, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, merciful to others, pure in heart, a peacemaker." The answer is yes if you do not hate your enemies, you do not commit adultery in your heart, your yes is yes and your no is no. The answer is yes if you "turn the other cheek, even if they sue you. The answer is yes if "you love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who persecute you. The answer is yes if "you seek first the Kingdom of God, lay up treasures in heaven, refuse to serve two masters, avoid judging others from a position of hypocrisy, do not bear false witness, do not take oaths and obey the golden rule of treating others exactly as you desire to be treated." All these things are the laws of the Kingdom of God (Matt. 5,6,7)

4. DO I KNOW **THE LORD** JESUS CHRIST AS MY **JUDGE** ?

I will allow King Solomon, the wisest man, to answer that question for us:

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

Ecc 12:12-14

Pastor Randy Shupe

APOSTOLIC MISSIONS

promoting



**JESUS
CHRIST**

and **HIS
CHURCH**

as the

"LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

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IN LIGHT OF
THE WORLD-WIDE PANDEMIC,
HAVE WE ENTERED

"THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS"

PROPHESED
BY JESUS,



"...A MAN OF
SORROWS..."

...ACQUAINTED
WITH GRIEF."
Isaiah 53:3



"NOW AS HE SAT ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES, THE DISCIPLES CAME TO HIM PRIVATELY, SAYING,
"TELL US, WHEN WILL THESE THINGS BE? AND WHAT WILL BE THE SIGN OF YOUR COMING,
AND OF THE END OF THE AGE?"

AND JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID TO THEM:

"TAKE HEED THAT NO ONE DECEIVES YOU.

FOR MANY WILL COME IN MY NAME, SAYING, 'I AM THE CHRIST,' AND WILL DECEIVE MANY.

AND YOU WILL HEAR OF WARS AND RUMORS OF WARS.

SEE THAT YOU ARE NOT TROUBLED; FOR ALL THESE THINGS MUST COME TO PASS,
BUT THE END IS NOT YET.

FOR NATION WILL RISE AGAINST NATION, AND KINGDOM AGAINST KINGDOM.
AND THERE WILL BE FAMINES, PESTILENCES, AND EARTHQUAKES IN VARIOUS PLACES.

ALL THESE ARE THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS."

"A MAN OF SORROWS"

"...A MAN OF
SORROWS..."

"...ACQUAINTED
WITH GRIEF."
Isaiah 53:3



"HE HAS NO FORM OR
COMELINESS;
AND WHEN WE SEE HIM,
THERE IS NO BEAUTY THAT WE
SHOULD DESIRE HIM.
HE IS DESPISED AND REJECTED
BY MEN, A MAN OF SORROWS
AND ACQUAINTED WITH GRIEF.
AND WE HID, AS IT WERE,
OUR FACES FROM HIM;
HE WAS DESPISED,
AND WE DID NOT ESTEEM HIM."

Isa 53:2-3

"HE WAS IN THE WORLD,
AND THE WORLD WAS MADE THROUGH HIM,
AND THE WORLD DID NOT KNOW HIM.
HE CAME TO HIS OWN, AND HIS OWN
DID NOT RECEIVE HIM."

John 1:10-12

"FOR DOGS HAVE
SURROUNDED ME;
THE CONGREGATION OF THE
WICKED HAS ENCLOSED ME.
THEY PIERCED MY HANDS
AND MY FEET; I CAN COUNT
ALL MY BONES. THEY LOOK
AND STARE AT ME.
THEY DIVIDE MY GARMENTS
AMONG THEM,
AND FOR MY CLOTHING
THEY CAST LOTS."

Ps 22:16-18

The secular world likes to use this negative descriptive cliché: **"IT TAKES ONE TO KNOW ONE."** It is often cynically used to describe a person that is a thief, a fraud, a hypocrite, etc. However, I want to use this phrase in a positive way to enforce the fact that Jesus is most qualified to describe a coming prophetic period which He called, "the beginning of sorrows." **"IT TAKES ONE TO KNOW ONE"** describes Jesus, who lived His life on earth as "a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief." As such, He is fully qualified to describe vividly for us what will constitute a terrible and difficult period of time on earth just prior to the coming seven years of Tribulation. He refers to this pre-tribulation events as "the beginning of sorrows."



"NOW AS HE SAT ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES,
THE DISCIPLES CAME TO HIM PRIVATELY, SAYING,
"TELL US, WHEN WILL THESE THINGS BE?
AND WHAT WILL BE THE SIGN OF YOUR COMING,
AND OF THE END OF THE AGE?"
AND JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID TO THEM:
"TAKE HEED THAT NO ONE DECEIVES YOU.
FOR MANY WILL COME IN MY NAME, SAYING,
'I AM THE CHRIST,' AND WILL DECEIVE MANY.
AND YOU WILL HEAR OF WARS AND RUMORS OF WARS.
SEE THAT YOU ARE NOT TROUBLED;
FOR ALL THESE THINGS MUST COME TO PASS,
BUT THE END IS NOT YET.
FOR NATION WILL RISE AGAINST NATION,
AND KINGDOM AGAINST KINGDOM.
AND THERE WILL BE
FAMINES, PESTILENCES, AND EARTHQUAKES
IN VARIOUS PLACES.
ALL THESE ARE THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS."

Matt 24:3-8



The verses above describe "the beginning of sorrows" in which certain events take place **prior** to the beginning of the seven years of tribulation. Matthew Chapter 24 in its entirety certainly include the seven years of tribulation, for Jesus singles out the event that marks the middle of the seven years of tribulation, "the desolation of Abomination" by Antichrist (Matt. 24: 15). Just as there is this specific delineation of the middle of the tribulation given, I believe that Jesus uses "the beginning of sorrows" to describe certain events that **lead up** to the seven years of tribulation. It is an important point to make a distinction between the Tribulation itself and the events that occur just prior to the Tribulation. "The beginning of sorrows" contain descriptive words of Jesus that were meant to be understood in order to be properly applied. I am often quickened by what is recorded about the spiritual sensitivity possessed by "the sons of Issachar":

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

"The beginning of sorrows" were given by Jesus to enable His church to also "understand the times" so that they too would "know what the church ought to do." Recognize "the beginning of sorrows" and you will know how close the Tribulation is for it should not come upon God's people unaware (1 Thess. 5:1-4).

The premise upon which this newsletter is built is that "the beginning of sorrows", of which Matthew 24:3-8 speaks, describe an unknown specific period of time, known only to God Himself, in which certain events as illustrated below, lead mankind right up to the very door of the dreaded seven years of tribulation prophesied in detail by the Book of Revelation. Jesus speaks of this Tribulation to come with this sober warning:

"BUT TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES, LEST YOUR HEARTS BE WEIGHED DOWN WITH CAROUSING, DRUNKENNESS, AND CARES OF THIS LIFE, AND THAT DAY COME ON YOU UNEXPECTEDLY. FOR IT WILL COME AS A SNARE ON ALL THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE FACE OF THE WHOLE EARTH.

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

It is the seven year Tribulation period described above that Jesus gives warning to His disciples that they must watch and pray that they "be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass." It is **NOT** the period of time He referred to as "the beginning of sorrows." This period of trial, the precursor to the tribulation, will require God's people to safely make it through these events. To do so, it will require believers to be girded up with perseverance, endurance, fortitude, and determination which only comes by means of holding a clear vision of what to expect.

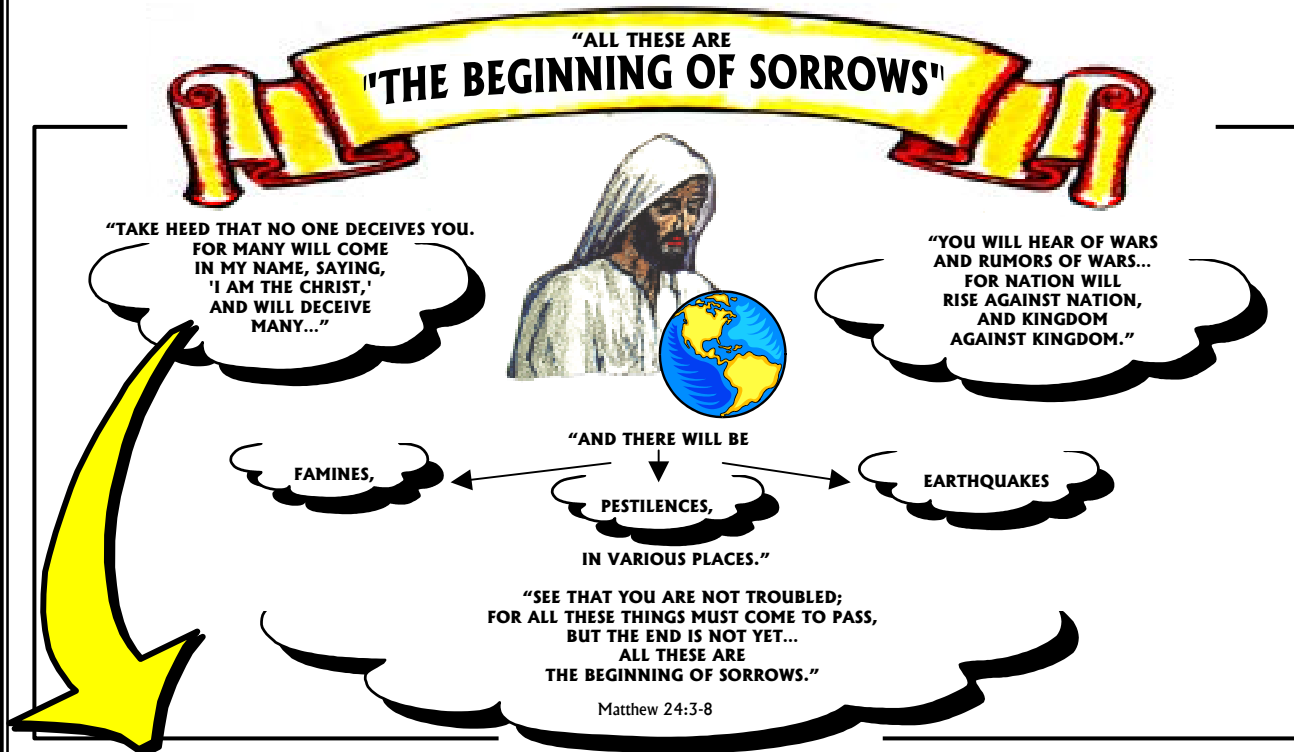
For God's people, I do not believe that we will merely skate safely right up to the door of the Tribulation without experiencing any stressful tribulation. We are not promised protection from **ALL** tribulation, but rather from **THE** Tribulation which contains the outpouring of the wrath of God! (see 1 Thess. 5:9). The "beginning of sorrows" is designed to be a stern wakeup call for all mankind, but especially for the people of God! "The beginning of sorrows" is a call to repentance while there is still time to do so. God's wrath is coming and He does not want His people to be included in its severe judgments.



Matthew 24:3-8

Christianity has been lulled to sleep with the heavily-emphasized promise of the pre-tribulation rapture event suddenly taking out all believers to safety just prior to any and all tribulation taking place on earth. Therefore events such as listed below become unexpected catastrophic happenings that may indeed catch God's people in an ill-prepared state. "The beginning of sorrows" is designed to produce "Godly sorrow" which leads to repentance (see 2 Cor. 7:10). Do not misunderstand what I am saying: Jesus HAS promised the faithful saints to escape the coming Tribulation. I do believe and teach strongly in a pre-tribulation rapture. However, we are talking about events PRIOR to the rapture, namely, "the beginning of sorrows." Jesus is telling His people what to look for as signs of His soon coming. These are events that are to take place PRIOR to the Rapture and the beginning of the Tribulation! Although not "The Tribulation" itself, these are certainly events containing tribulation and pressure that God's people should be prepared to see, and by God's might, survive. As a statement of encouragement, Jesus states clearly:

"...NOW WHEN THESE THINGS BEGIN TO HAPPEN, LOOK UP AND LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, BECAUSE YOUR REDEMPTION DRAWS NEAR." Luke 21:28



1. DECEPTION OF THE RELIGIOUS-

We are not talking about the rise of religious cults here. Rather we are considering the ever-increasing deception taking place within Christianity itself. First of all, note Jesus states this deception will come from within the ranks, from people who readily confess that "Jesus is the Christ." From this position of trust Jesus warns "many" will proceed to "deceive many." Consider this descriptive prophetic warning from Jeremiah the prophet:

"FOR AMONG MY PEOPLE ARE FOUND WICKED MEN; THEY LIE IN WAIT AS ONE WHO SETS SNARES; THEY SET A TRAP; THEY CATCH MEN. AS A CAGE IS FULL OF BIRDS, SO THEIR HOUSES ARE FULL OF DECEIT. THEREFORE THEY HAVE BECOME GREAT AND GROWN RICH. THEY HAVE GROWN FAT, THEY ARE SLEEK; YES, THEY SURPASS THE DEEDS OF THE WICKED; THEY DO NOT PLEAD THE CAUSE, THE CAUSE OF THE FATHERLESS YET THEY PROSPER, AND THE RIGHT OF THE NEEDY THEY DO NOT DEFEND. SHALL I NOT PUNISH THEM FOR THESE THINGS?' SAYS THE LORD. 'SHALL I NOT AVENGE MYSELF ON SUCH A NATION AS THIS?'" Jer 5:26-29



Who cannot see that the prophet Jeremiah gives vivid warning against deception in the pulpit by those who "lie in wait" to "set snares", "set a trap" with the purpose to "catch men." Note that "their houses are full of deceit." By such deceit they, the preachers of prosperity, have "become great" and "grown rich", "grown fat", and are "sleek" operators within the house of the Lord. Truly "they prosper" financially through their deceit while ignoring the biblical cause of the fatherless, the needy and the poor. Are such not ripe for judgment by God Himself?

"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, EVEN DENYING THE LORD WHO BOUGHT THEM, AND BRING ON THEMSELVES SWIFT DESTRUCTION. 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

"...THAT WE SHOULD NO LONGER BE CHILDREN, TOSSED TO AND FRO AND CARRIED ABOUT WITH EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE, BY THE TRICKERY OF MEN, IN THE CUNNING CRAFTINESS BY WHICH THEY LIE IN WAIT TO DECEIVE."

Eph 4:14-15

"FOR AMONG MY PEOPLE ARE FOUND WICKED MEN; THEY LIE IN WAIT AS ONE WHO SETS SNARES; THEY SET A TRAP; THEY CATCH MEN. AS A CAGE IS FULL OF BIRDS, SO THEIR HOUSES ARE FULL OF DECEIT. THEREFORE THEY HAVE BECOME GREAT AND GROWN RICH. THEY HAVE GROWN FAT, THEY ARE SLEEK; YES, THEY SURPASS THE DEEDS OF THE WICKED; THEY DO NOT PLEAD THE CAUSE, THE CAUSE OF THE FATHERLESS YET THEY PROSPER, AND THE RIGHT OF THE NEEDY THEY DO NOT DEFEND. SHALL I NOT PUNISH THEM FOR THESE THINGS?' SAYS THE LORD. 'SHALL I NOT AVENGE MYSELF ON SUCH A NATION AS THIS?'"

Jeremiah 5:26-29

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



Ponder carefully the above warnings God gives to His people pertaining to the deceitful operation of false teachers being allowed to work their deceit in the house of God. Notice Jeremiah speaks a warning from God, "Shall I not punish them for these things?" says the Lord. "Shall I not avenge myself on such a nation as this?" We must ask, "How widespread are the charlatans in the house of the Lord? How widespread is the "faith for prosperity" gospel message? How widespread is "the hundredfold return" (the covetous give to get) message in the house of the Lord? How widespread is the false gospel of Calvinism? (select salvation only to those sovereignly chosen by God-all others are doomed by God's sovereign choice). Is this selective "gospel" not a character assassination upon God Himself? How widespread is the false teaching of "unconditional eternal security"? (once saved always saved). Answer these questions and you will understand God's pending judgment upon His own people, those both in the pulpit and in the pew. Paul prophetically warns:

"FOR THE TIME WILL COME WHEN THEY WILL NOT ENDURE SOUND DOCTRINE, BUT ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN DESIRES, BECAUSE THEY HAVE ITCHING EARS, THEY WILL HEAP UP FOR THEMSELVES TEACHERS; AND THEY WILL TURN THEIR EARS AWAY FROM THE TRUTH, AND BE TURNED ASIDE TO FABLES." 2 Tim 4:3-5

If you have digested all that I have stated so far, then let us now add an important principle about God from the Book of Hebrews. This principle sets the stage for why God brings upon the world "the beginning of sorrows" just prior to the coming of the Tribulation, God's wrath being poured out upon the world:

"SEE THAT YOU DO NOT REFUSE HIM WHO SPEAKS. FOR IF THEY DID NOT ESCAPE WHO REFUSED HIM WHO SPOKE ON EARTH, MUCH MORE SHALL WE NOT ESCAPE IF WE TURN AWAY FROM HIM WHO SPEAKS FROM HEAVEN, WHOSE VOICE THEN SHOOK THE EARTH; BUT NOW HE HAS PROMISED, SAYING, 'YET ONCE MORE I SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO HEAVEN.' NOW THIS, 'YET ONCE MORE,' INDICATES THE REMOVAL OF THOSE THINGS THAT ARE BEING SHAKEN, AS OF THINGS THAT ARE MADE, THAT THE THINGS WHICH CANNOT BE SHAKEN MAY REMAIN. THEREFORE, SINCE WE ARE RECEIVING A KINGDOM WHICH CANNOT BE SHAKEN, LET US HAVE GRACE, BY WHICH WE MAY SERVE GOD ACCEPTABLY WITH REVERENCE AND GODLY FEAR. FOR OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE." Heb 12:25-13:1

The principle that the apostle Paul describes above is this: God fully intends to "shake from heaven" all things on earth that are man-made, "the things of men", which they have created as substitutes for the things originally created by God. In other words, man replaces what God created with their own creation. This is what has happened wide-spread in the church, the house of the Lord. What God created it for, man has replaced it with his own self-serving substitute. Covetousness has replaced prayerfulness in the house of the Lord. We have seen this before. Jesus entered the Temple of God in His day and with whip in hand, turned over the money tables with which they bought and sold, saying to them, "It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'" (Luke 19:46). Saints of God, has the church reversed this evaluation of the house of the Lord down through the ages? If He was to suddenly appear in your church, what words would He say to those inside? Would He consider it a "house of prayer" or "a den of thieves"?

Let us consider another example. God Himself instituted and ordained the building of the House of the Lord. He commissioned Solomon to carry out this work first started by his father King David:

"THUS SOLOMON FINISHED THE HOUSE OF THE LORD AND THE KING'S HOUSE; AND SOLOMON SUCCESSFULLY ACCOMPLISHED ALL THAT CAME INTO HIS HEART TO MAKE IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD...THEN THE LORD APPEARED TO SOLOMON BY NIGHT, AND SAID TO HIM: "I HAVE HEARD YOUR PRAYER, AND HAVE CHOSEN THIS PLACE FOR MYSELF AS A HOUSE OF SACRIFICE.

WHEN I SHUT UP HEAVEN AND THERE IS NO RAIN, OR COMMAND THE LOCUSTS TO DEVOUR THE LAND, OR SEND PESTILENCE AMONG MY PEOPLE,

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

NOW MY EYES WILL BE OPEN AND MY EARS ATTENTIVE TO PRAYER MADE IN THIS PLACE. FOR NOW I HAVE CHOSEN AND SANCTIFIED THIS HOUSE, THAT MY NAME MAY BE THERE FOREVER; AND MY EYES AND MY HEART WILL BE THERE PERPETUALLY."

2 Chron. 7:7-11

Of the two verses stated below, the church knows well only one of them:

"I HAVE HEARD YOUR PRAYER, AND HAVE CHOSEN THIS PLACE FOR MYSELF AS A HOUSE OF SACRIFICE.
WHEN I SHUT UP HEAVEN AND THERE IS NO RAIN, OR COMMAND THE LOCUSTS TO DEVOUR THE LAND, OR SEND PESTILENCE AMONG MY PEOPLE,



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

However, it is an incomplete and unclear message without this first half of the message being vitally attached to it.

"...AND THERE WILL BE PESTILENCES..."

The context in which God promises to "heal their land" (His people's land), is threefold: (1) from no rain on the land (2) from locusts devouring the land, (3) from pestilence sent by God in the land.

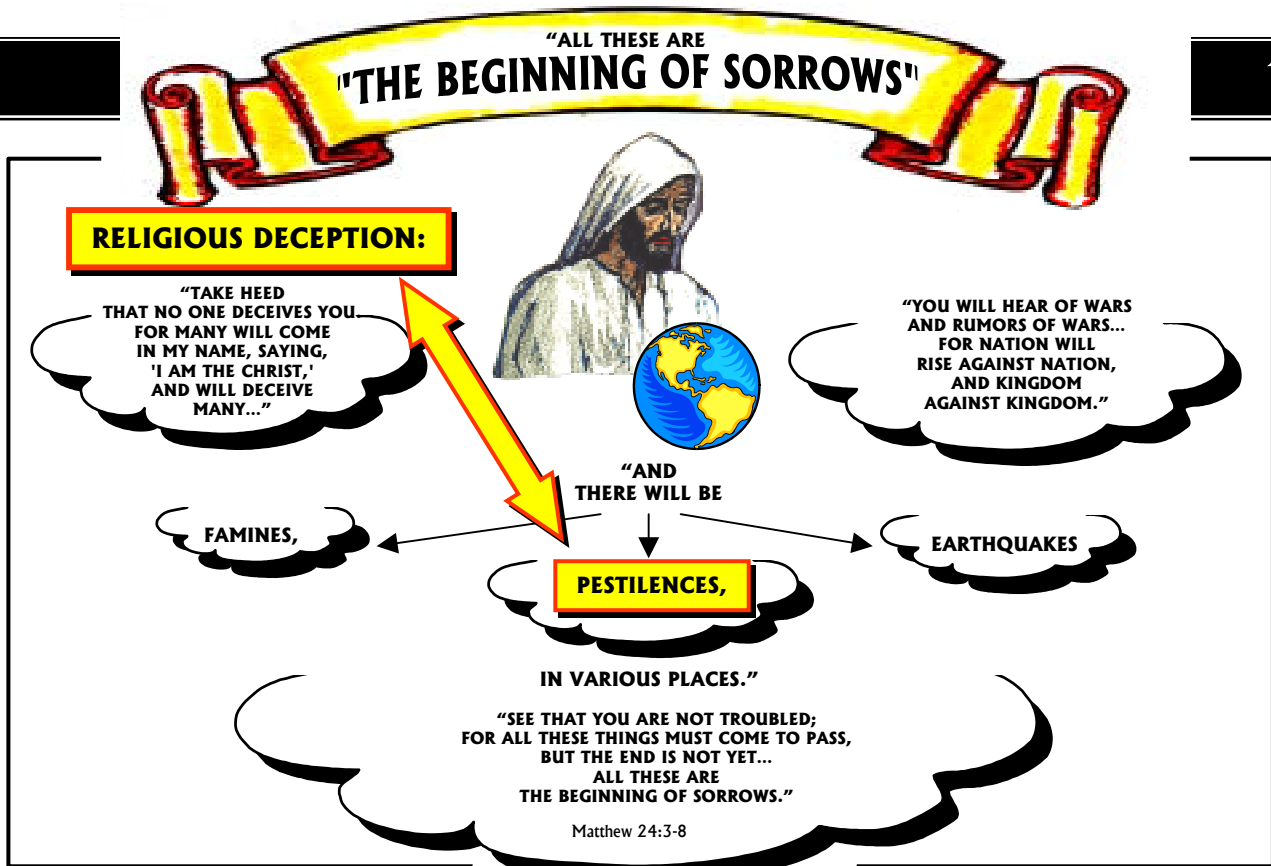
Think about it: when God no longer considers the house of God as a "house of sacrifice" in His sight, then He strikes the land in which His people dwell with either no rain, locusts, or He sends **PESTILENCE** among the people in the land. Can it be dear saints of God, that the present world-wide pandemic of pestilence known as Covid-19, is a wakeup call to the people of God due to the ongoing spiritual deterioration of "the house of God"? What is God looking for from His people? It is stated in the verse: "to humble themselves, pray, seek His face and turn from their wicked ways." Then He will heal their land of the severe pestilence that is afflicting them.

Covid-19 has emptied stadiums, auditoriums, restaurants, schools and even churches. Let us discuss that last example, "even churches." Here in America there is an ever-increasing outcry being leveled against government authorities that the act of closing churches due to the Covid-19 pandemic is a violation of religious freedom, a violation of the First Amendment of the Constitution. No question that in liberal states like New York, California and Michigan there have indeed been extreme suppression of churches under the banner of Covid-19 concerns while allowing gambling casinos and liquor establishments to gather uninhibited. However, have you thought about the possibility that God Himself may be allowing this injustice to the churches because He is not pleased with what has been going on within His churches? Could it be that what appears to be governmental oppression on religion may be coming from God Himself? Is God perhaps allowing even more pressure upon His people because of their sins? Read once more what God records as a warning to His own wayward people:

"WHEN I SHUT UP HEAVEN AND THERE IS NO RAIN, OR COMMAND THE LOCUSTS TO DEVOUR THE LAND, OR SEND PESTILENCE AMONG MY PEOPLE,

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

2 Chron. 7:7-11



What I have presented to you so far is just one scenario that describes what constitutes "the beginning of sorrows." We have considered one aspect of those sorrows, namely, "pestilences." Covid-19 certainly qualifies as a "pestilence." Such a small word, but as we have seen in 2020, such a big problem! This "pestilence" has altered life on the whole planet. However, the word Jesus' uses is not singular, but plural. It is "pestilences." That implies that there will indeed be more to come under the banner of "the beginning of sorrows."

I have sought to show you the root-cause of "pestilences" upon the Christian. I tied this word "pestilence" to the root-cause event that Jesus describes in His list of "sorrows." We pondered the biblical aspect of pestilences being sent by God Himself, even upon His blood-washed churches. We saw that if Christians allow deception to reign within the confines of the church, God will send them pestilence until they "humble themselves, pray, seek God's face, and turn from their wicked ways, then God will hear from Heaven forgive their sin and heal their land" from the pestilence He allowed to strike them. If this premise is true, (and I believe it is), then we, the church, have a big part in smiting this pestilence in our midst. It will not be done by isolating oneself from it till it passes over, nor will it be conquered by the wearing of masks nor by staying six feet apart, nor will it be smitten by taking a new vaccine. The cure is repentance.

Covid-19 itself is not a respecter of persons. It is busy striking randomly all of mankind on the face of the whole earth. Certainly we have learned that this pestilence originated from one of Satan's evil empires on earth. This time it was China. However the real culprit behind this virus is "the destroyer" Satan himself. However, know this also: what Satan means for evil, God will work for good (see Gen. 50:20).

God has a marvelous way of using Satan's ways that produce sickness, disease, death and destruction and bringing forth from these ways a new path of healing, life and restoration to all of mankind. Indeed, the pressures of life are the very agents God will use to turn the hearts of the afflicted unto Himself.

"SEEK THE LORD WHILE HE MAY BE FOUND, CALL UPON HIM WHILE HE IS NEAR. LET THE WICKED FORSAKE HIS WAY, AND THE UNRIGHTEOUS MAN HIS THOUGHTS; LET HIM RETURN TO THE LORD, AND HE WILL HAVE MERCY ON HIM; AND TO OUR GOD, FOR HE WILL ABUNDANTLY PARDON."

"FOR MY THOUGHTS ARE NOT YOUR THOUGHTS, NOR ARE YOUR WAYS MY WAYS," SAYS THE LORD. "FOR AS THE HEAVENS ARE HIGHER THAN THE EARTH, SO ARE MY WAYS HIGHER THAN YOUR WAYS, AND MY THOUGHTS THAN YOUR THOUGHTS... SO SHALL MY WORD BE THAT GOES FORTH FROM MY MOUTH; IT SHALL NOT RETURN TO ME VOID, BUT IT SHALL ACCOMPLISH WHAT I PLEASE, AND IT SHALL PROSPER IN THE THING FOR WHICH I SENT IT." Isaiah 55:6-11

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