

THE SEPARATION

by Glenn Hall
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Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God {2} which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, {3} concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, {4} and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. {5} Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, {6} among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ.

(Rom 1:1-6 NKJV)

Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, {20} "and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, {21} "whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

(Acts 3:19-21 NKJV)

THE DOCTRINE OF THE SEPARATION & THE RESTORATION

by Glenn Hall

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THE GOSPEL OF SEPARATION & RESTORATION

INTRODUCTION

Two themes run throughout the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God. These two themes may be called the doctrines of separation and restoration. They may also be called the doctrines of death and life, or sacrifice and resurrection. We see these two ideas throughout the entire Bible and we see them from the very beginning of God's revelation to man. Both doctrines appear many times even in just the first few chapters of Genesis and, of course, occur repeatedly after that. The doctrines culminate in the New Testament in the first and second comings of Christ. Jesus' death on the cross is the ultimate act of separation. His coming again with the clouds in power and glory will begin His ultimate act of restoration (insofar as His relationship to man is concerned).

{1} In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. {2} The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. {3} Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. {4} And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. {5} God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day. (Gen 1:1-5 NKJV)

God has revealed the Doctrine of the Separation from the very beginning, from the very first day of creation. The day that I first began to understand this doctrine, I was literally startled by the Holy Spirit. He showed me that the idea of separation exists in almost every verse of Genesis 1! The first time that I taught this subject to a group of men I asked the question at the end of the night, "What book of the Bible does it seem like we have been studying tonight?" Almost in unison they answered, "The Book of Revelation." I nodded in agreement. The really interesting thing, though, is that we had not even turned to the Book of Revelation all night. We had stayed almost entirely in the first chapter of Genesis.

We first learn of the separation by explicit terms in Genesis 1:4 which says, "*And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness*" (Gen. 1:4 NKJV). The word "divided" is the Hebrew word "badal" which is also interpreted as "separated" in other translations of the Bible. In fact, "separated" is the word actually used in the New International Version, the New American Standard Version and The Schocken Bible. As one studies the words "separated" and "divided" in Scripture he will find that the two are often used interchangeably and synonymously. Thus we see that the act of separating is the act of dividing a thing from something else. Based upon the principles of "first mention" and of "type-antitype"¹ in the Scripture, when we encounter words that speak of division or separation in the Bible we must attempt to interpret them in the light of the way the word is first used by God in Scripture.

As we study the doctrine of separation we will see that God always brings separation so that He may restore something. For example, Genesis 1:1 describes the initial creation of the heavens and the earth in these words, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*" Isaiah 45:18 tells us that God did not create the earth "tohuw," yet Genesis 1:2 tells us, "*The*

earth was tohuw tohuw (without form), and void....” The word translated “was” here is often translated “to become” or “to come to pass” in other verses. See, for example, Gen. 2:7; 4:3; 9:15; 19:26; Ex. 32:1. Thus, the earth became formless and void sometime after the original creation of Genesis 1:1.

This destruction of the earth, i.e. its becoming formless and void, is a type of separation from God. We know from other Scriptures that Satan caused this destruction by rebelling against God. All of the acts of creation that we see in Genesis 1:3 to Genesis 1:31 describe God’s restoration of the earth after Satan’s rebellion. The rest of the Bible concerns the restoration of man to God after Adam and Eve ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The Bible, therefore, concerns itself with the restoration of God’s creation from Genesis 1:2 onward.

The Scriptures give many more examples of separation than the initial separations caused by Satan and man. Some examples are negative, but many more are positive. The positive aspect often signifies sanctification unto God. The idea of sanctification means to be wholly set apart, or separated, for God’s use. As we submit to God and set ourselves apart to His uses, He restores us to the perfection found only in His Son, Jesus. Thus we see the link between separation and restoration in the plan of God. These twin concepts literally pervade all the Scriptures. By studying Biblical separation and restoration, we will encounter and come to understand many of God’s profound hidden mysteries. We will come to understand His purpose in creating man and our responsibilities toward our Creator.

CHAPTER ONE

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

Before we begin to study the teaching of the separation in detail, we must study three essential doctrines of Biblical interpretation, the principles of “first mention,” “type-antitype,” and “first the natural, then the spiritual.”

1) The Principle of “First Mention”

First we need to understand that every essential doctrine of God appears in the very beginning of the revelation of God, in the Book of Genesis. This, we will see, is especially true of the doctrine of the separation. Isaiah prophesied, {8} *“Remember this, and show yourselves men; Recall to mind, O you transgressors. {9} Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, {10} **Declaring the end from the beginning**, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure’* (Isa 46:8-10 NKJV). Isaiah tells us that God declares His purposes and plans for man from the very beginning. This is an extremely important truth to know if we are ever to understand God’s Word and walk in His truth. Isaiah tells us that God has prophesied through men His purposes for man from the very beginning of His revealed Word to man. Thus we find that God first mentions all critical prophetic truths in Genesis, His first book to man.

The principle of “first mention” simply means that we should examine the context and meaning of a word, phrase, or type of event the first time it appears in Scripture in order to understand how God uses that same word, phrase, or idea in His later revelation to man. Often a “first mention” of some idea or word is just a “seed” of the full truth that will later be revealed by Him. This principle is extremely important and will greatly help us understand the Word of God and discern the will of God. Again, Isaiah says, *“Behold, the former things have come to pass, And new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them.”* (Isaiah 42:9)

The prophet tells us that God reveals events and ideas before they occur in history. This, of course, is what most people understand prophecy to be. In its true sense, however, prophecy entails far more. According to Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary the word “prophecy” signifies the “speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God.” This present book does not forecast future dates of certain events; it attempts to communicate the mind of God regarding some crucial aspects of His will for man. Our goal is to encourage fellow believers to become an “Amen” people, people who agree with the plans and counsels of God. A spiritual understanding of these doctrines will prepare us to meet the eschatological events about to unfold.

2) The Doctrine of “Type - Antitype”

These seeds of truth, or “first mentions,” are often called “types.” The prophetic fulfillment of each type is called its “antitype.” Peter shows us an example of this in 1 Peter 3:21. The word translated “antitype” in the New King James Version is translated “like figure” in the King James Version and “symbolizes” in the New International Version. When an actual type first appears in Scripture its meaning is carried forward throughout the entire Bible. This

idea is similar to the principle of “first mention” in the Scripture. Both of these principals enable us to understand the true meaning of Scripture. Both principles will help us discern the spiritual and prophetic meaning of people, events, and things. This writer often uses the term “prophetic fulfillment” in place of the word “antitype.”

Two of the simplest “types” to discern which occur very often in Scripture are the “type of Christ” and the “type of blood sacrifice for sin.” We see both types repeatedly in just the first four chapters of Genesis. First, when Eve sinned by eating the forbidden fruit, Adam willingly gave his life for her by also eating of the fruit. He did not want to be separated from her because God had made them “one flesh” according to Genesis 2:24. Paul tells us that Adam was not deceived into eating the fruit as was Eve in 1 Timothy 2:14. He was not deceived into believing he would not die if he ate the fruit. Adam, therefore, chose Eve and, therefore, death, rather than obedience to God’s command. Adam, as the type, points to Jesus as the antitype. Jesus prophetically fulfilled the seed truth exemplified by Adam’s choice of death when He willingly shed His blood for all men’s sin. Paul even calls Jesus the second Adam.

*{45} And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. {46} However, **the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.** {47} The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. (1 Cor 15:45-47 NKJV)*

This passage sheds even more light on the type/antitype nature of Scripture by explaining that God first shows in the natural what he intends to do in the spiritual. Paul explains that Adam was a natural man, a man of flesh. He is the type of Christ as a flesh and blood man. He then tells us that the second (last) Man, Jesus, is a life-giving spirit. Christ, the antitype, is spiritual.

The other type readily seen in these first four chapters is the blood sacrifice for sin. Just after Adam and Eve sinned by eating the fruit, they found that they were naked. Sin, in some spiritual mystery, removed the light of God’s glory from their bodies. This disclosed their nakedness as something to cover up or hide. They tried to cover themselves with the leaves of a fig tree, but God did not find this sufficient. God Himself then covered them with the skin of one or more animals, thus shedding the animal’s blood. Genesis 3:21.

God thus shed the first blood in the world’s history. This typified blood sacrifice and that God required blood to cover man’s sin. Hebrews says, “*the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness*” (Hebrews 9:22). Therefore, although Adam and Eve’s sin initially separated them from God, this shedding of animal blood acted as atonement for their sin. In fact, the word “atonement” means covering, which describes exactly what God did with those first animal skins. The animal skin covering thus exemplifies, or is a type of, the covering provided for our sin. This animal blood sacrifice itself was a type, of course, and pointed to the future shedding of blood by Jesus the Messiah in time and history for the forgiveness of man’s sins. Since Jesus is the “lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8), this animal blood had immediate efficacy with regard to the relationship between God and man. The type affected the natural at this time because of the future historical act of Jesus. It was effective because, in the mind and plan of God, Jesus had already been slain from the very beginning. This means that the plan of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, before Adam was even created, called for the sacrifice of the Son.

The very next chapter of Genesis tells the whole story of shed blood again. God accepts

Abel's animal sacrifice because its shed blood acts to cover his sin. He does not, however, accept Cain's sacrifice of the fruit of the ground. Genesis 4:3-5. God looks immediately to His own son's shed blood to give meaning and efficacy to Abel's blood offering. We see in Hebrews 11:4 that He declares Abel "righteous" because of the animal sacrifice. This is why the Passover lamb was effective for the salvation of Israel from its institution in Egypt until its fulfillment in the generation of Jesus. On the other hand, God did not accept Cain's sacrifice of the fruit of the land. Why not? Because, according to Hebrews 9:22, without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin. Cain, instead of repenting and following the example of his brother, slew him. Abel shows the type of Christ again, where a righteous, sinless man (because of the animal blood sacrifice he had previously made) is slain by (for) the sinful man. Abel is the type in the natural. Jesus Christ is the prophetic, spiritual antitype, the fulfillment of the type. Cain, on the other hand, exemplifies the Judas spirit that we see typified in many other characters of the Scripture. The spirit of Judas is one of betrayal.

Paul explains the concept of type and antitype in detail in his book to the Corinthians:

{1} Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, {2} all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, {3} all ate the same spiritual food, {4} and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. {5} But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. {6} Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. {7} And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." {8} Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; {9} nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; {10} nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. {11} Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (1 Cor 10:1-11 NKJV)

In this passage Paul gives several examples of types that have prophetic implications. They are: 1) baptism in the cloud and in the sea - this points to Christian baptism proclaiming identification with the death of Jesus and the resurrection life in which a Christian can live by the power of the Holy Spirit, 2) spiritual food given by the Word of God, Jesus Himself, who accompanied them in the form of a rock - this foretells the living water Jesus announced to the woman at the well in John 4 and which is further explained by Paul in Ephesians 5:26. This speaks of food and water for the soul. It is what enables us to overcome the things of this world while in our bodies of flesh; and 3) death came to Old Testament believers through idolatry - the spiritual reality of this is the Christian believer's death of the soul that also comes through idolatry, by serving the creation rather than the Creator alone. The Exodus exposes the sin of idolatry in several ways, by actual worship of a physical idol, the golden calf, by sexual immorality, by speaking against Moses and God, and by grumbling and complaining against

God's plan for them. Idolatry today is often seen in the form of leavened (sinful and false) Christian doctrine and is spiritually known as "food sacrificed to idols."ⁱⁱ All of these sins in I Corinthians 10 represent sins that many Christians routinely commit and which will one day cost them their souls (not their spirits). The doctrine of soul salvation and death is discussed under doctrine 9) in the next chapter.

3) First the Natural, Then the Spiritual

We quoted Paul above wherein he said,

*{45} And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. {46} However, **the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.** {47} The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. (1 Cor 15:45-47 NKJV)*

This verse states a very important principle that God often uses with His people. He teaches us about spiritual things through natural phenomenon. He begins this process when are babies by giving us to parents. Parents stand "as God" to their babies. They appear to be all-powerful and they provide them with their basic needs of food, shelter, clothing, and love. Another example is that we humans depend upon natural food to sustain our lives. We hate to even go one day without food! If we go many days without it, we will die. Spiritually, we require the food of God, the blood and body of Christ, in order to survive. This represents the Holy Spirit and God's truth. Jesus said, "*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.*" (John 6:53)

Psalms 19 discusses this in detail.

{1} The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. {2} Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. {3} There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard. {4} Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, {5} Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, And rejoices like a strong man to run its race. {6} Its rising is from one end of heaven, And its circuit to the other end; And there is nothing hidden from its heat. (Psalm 19:1-6)

God tells us here that His creation itself "declares," or speaks, concerning His glory. Books have been written which describe how the constellations of heaven literally tell the entire story of man's history on earth, from creation to Jesus' death to His resurrection to the glorification of His saints.ⁱⁱⁱ A very interesting fact is that all of the ancient cultures of the world have the same or similar-meaning names for the major stars of the constellations. This points to the fact that the names and stories given to the constellations come from the same original source, namely from God to Adam and his descendants.

Likewise, God uses the story of creation in the Book of Genesis to reveal two things. First, it tells the literal story of the creation of the present world and visible universe. Second, the natural vision expounded here foretells or prophesies spiritual realities. The remainder of this book will deal with many of these spiritual implications.

CHAPTER TWO

GOD'S NATURAL REVELATION OF SEPARATION

{1} In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. {2} The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. {3} Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. {4} And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. {5} God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day. (Gen 1:1-5 NKJV)

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On the first day of creation we witness the separation of light from darkness. But, this is not all. We also see that, at the same time that God separated the light from the darkness, He divided the day into two parts, evening and morning. Notice that the Divine revelation stresses this division of darkness from light, or evening from morning, on each of the six days of creation! See Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, & 31. But observe this as well, there is no evening and morning mentioned on the seventh day. There is no division or separation on the Sabbath. This teaches that the separation God requires must be completed before the beginning of the seventh prophetic day, the seventh thousand years of man's existence on the earth, i.e., the millennial reign of Christ! Psalm 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8 comprise two clues concerning God's method of counting time in a thousand year period of time called a "day."

The division of evening and morning on this first day must have occurred because of the separation of the light from the darkness. This separation was not caused by the light or the absence of light from the sun and the moon, for these did not exist until the fourth day! The separation occurred because God called forth light to shine in the darkness in Genesis 1:3 and

then specifically called our attention to his separation of light from darkness. The New Testament clearly portrays light as truth and righteousness and darkness as evil lawlessness. John 1:5-9, 2 Cor. 4:6 & 6:14, Eph. 5:13-14, 1 Peter 2:9, 2 Peter 1:1, and 1 John 1:5-7 illustrate just a few examples of this.

{6} Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." {7} Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. {8} And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day. (Gen 1:6-8 NKJV)

On the second day of Creation God reveals something more about separation. The New American Standard and the New International Versions, for example, again use the word “separate” for their translations of the word “badal “ in Genesis 1:6- 7. Another version reads, “*God said: Let there be a dome amid the waters, and let it separate waters from waters! God made the dome and separated the waters that were below the dome from the waters that were above the dome. God called the dome: Heaven!*” (Gen. 1:6-8a, The Schocken Bible). The second day ends again with the declaration that it has been divided into evening and morning.

Then, on the third day, Jesus speaks forth multiple separations.

{9} Then God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so. {10} And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good. {11} Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth"; and it was so. {12} And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. {13} So the evening and the morning were the third day. (Gen 1:9-13 NKJV)

This time our Creator separates the water from the earth and “gathers” the water into seas. Now He has divided the seas from the earth. The idea of separation is even expanded on day three because the day’s work itself is separated into two parts. After the division of the seas and land God went on to make different (separate) types of plants, i.e., grass, herbs, and trees, that would all reproduce after their own “kind.” In the previous verses God specifically used the word “separate” or “divide.” Now he reveals the ideas of separation by new words or phrases like “*according to its own kind,*” by separating the day into two different *types* of activities, and by actually separating plants into different *classes*, like grass, herbs, and trees. In addition He creates the living things to reproduce after their own kinds, i.e., they are to remain separate, or distinct, in their existence. The specific implication is that each kind of tree or plant would and should be and remain separate from the other kinds. Each was created unique with its own unique “seed” within itself and God called it “good.”

This truth alone should convince believers of the evil of genetic engineering of plants and of the whole practice of cloning plants and animals. See Leviticus 19:19 and Deuteronomy 22:9. A quick application of this new revelation of separation should convince anyone to separate himself from such a career and from any business that engages in genetic engineering or cloning because it is clear that God created living things with the intent that they remain separate from other things of this creation in terms of their inherent genetic construction. This is why ALL OF HIS CREATION was commanded to reproduce after its own kind. (But, if you are not convinced yet, be sure to read this whole book!) Day three again ends with the separation of the day into evening and morning.

{14} Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; {15} "and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. {16} Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. {17} God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, {18} and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. {19} So the evening and the morning were the fourth day. (Gen 1:14-19 NKJV)

On day four we again find multiple separations in God's creation. Here, in the natural, we see God create the lights in the firmament to "divide (or separate) the day from the night." Verse 14. These lights, the sun, moon, and stars, were also created to separate days from days, seasons from seasons, years from years, and to separate the spiritual from the carnal by providing "signs." Signs are natural or supernatural events with prophetic, or spiritual, implications. This whole concept of "the separation" clearly has prophetic implications. This is why it has been largely hidden until now, the fullness of time at the end of this particular age. Verse 18 tells us that God made these lights specifically to divide the light from the darkness. Day four is also divided into evening and morning.

{20} Then God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens." {21} So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. {22} And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." {23} So the evening and the morning were the fifth day. (Gen 1:20-23 NKJV)

On the fifth day God creates two distinct and separate types of animals, fish and birds. Each lives and moves in its own separate environment, that of water or air. Additionally each type of animal, whether fish or bird, is to remain separate from the others of the same type and reproduce after its own kind. See verses 20-23. This is the significance of the phrase "according

to its kind” wherever it appears in the creation account. See Genesis 1:11, 12, 21, 24, & 25. These words denote another way that God makes known his mandate regarding separation.

Here we also see that God defines fruitfulness by reproducing or multiplying according to one’s own kind. This, of course, is how He also defines fruitfulness for Himself. God’s great plan among men is to reproduce Himself, according to His own kind. We will see this in greater detail on Day Six. The fifth day then ends, separated once more into evening and morning.

*{24} Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind"; and it was so. {25} And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. {26} Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." {27} So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. {28} Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." {29} And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. {30} "Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food"; and it was so. {31} Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.
(Gen 1:24-31 NKJV)*

On day six God creates the terrestrial animals and separates each according to its kind. Then He creates man as a totally different, or separate, type of creature in His own image. This pictures God’s own fruitfulness in that He brings forth a creation in His own image after His own kind! This idea carries extreme importance because it shows mankind God’s intent in creating him. We will soon discover that God’s plan even included the fact that man would eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. God could not reproduce Himself by creating a being that could only do good. Ultimately man had to understand both good and evil, like God, and independently desire to choose the good, like God. So long as man was created or “programmed” to only choose good, he could not be “like” God. This doctrine unfolds as we continue.

Next, He separates mankind into male and female. Finally, He separates mankind into a ruling class of creation by blessing them with dominion over the rest of creation. This final act of separation brings the concept of authority into view because God gave specific dominion authority to mankind at this time. At the end of the sixth day we again see God’s division of day into evening and morning.

God has our attention now, doesn't He? By showing us separation in the natural creation He has given us an object lesson concerning what He did in the spiritual realm in the first few verses of Genesis. Now we have insight to look more carefully at verses 1 to 4 of this first chapter of God's revelation to man.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FIRST TWO DAYS OF CREATION

Now we can see division even as early as Genesis 1:1. God created the heavens AND the earth. God divided creation into two parts, the earthly and the heavenly, or the natural and the spiritual. Verse 2 informs us that the earth was “without form and void.” Did God create it that way? Jeremiah 4:23 describes the beginning of a vision in which he beheld the earth “without form and void.” Was He looking back at its beginning? No, He was looking forward to the great day of the Lord of which Amos asked, “*Will not the day of the LORD be darkness, not light--pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness?*” Compare Amos 5:18-20 with Jeremiah 4:23-29.

In the following prophecy, however, Isaiah proclaims that God did not create the earth without form. He says, “*For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: `I am the LORD, and there is no other.`”* (Isaiah 45:18). The Hebrew word translated “vain” here is the word “tohuw” which is translated “without form” in Genesis 1:2. This verse from Isaiah could thus be translated, “For thus says the Lord, ... who did not create [the earth] without form.” This means, then, that when God created the earth in Genesis 1:1 He created it with form. This, however, is not how we find it in verse 2. Something must have happened between verse 1 and verse 2 then. But, what?

The next part of verse 2 gives us a clue: “darkness was on the face of the deep.” John the prophet wrote four thousand years later, “*This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all*” (1 John 1:5). If God just finished creating the heavens and the earth, would there be “darkness on the face of the deep (abyss)?” Since John declares that “*God is light and in Him is no darkness at all,*” I believe that Genesis 1:2 describes the abyss of the earth that occurred as a result of Satan’s rebellion against God which was, of course, part of God’s plan. There is no record in Genesis of Satan’s fall before he appears as a serpent to tempt Eve in Genesis chapter 3. He obviously must have rebelled before man’s creation. His rebellion, therefore, caused the principality of his dominion, the earth, to fall into ruin, i.e., to become formless and void. Remember that Satan is called the “god of this age” by Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:4 and that he had authority to give Christ the kingdoms of this world. See Matthew 4:8-9. The “darkness on the face of the abyss” was probably the spiritual manifestation of Satan in his ruined kingdom. The word “face” (Hebrew *paniyim*) here denotes the representation or personification of darkness, or evil. Ezekiel prophesied concerning this:

{13} You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes Was prepared for you on the day you were created. {14} "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. {15} You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you. {16} "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. {17} "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, That they might gaze at you. {18} "You defiled your sanctuaries By the multitude of your iniquities, By the iniquity of your trading; Therefore I brought fire from your midst; It devoured you, And I turned you to ashes upon the earth In the sight of all who saw you. {19} All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; You have become a horror, And shall be no more forever." " (Ezek 28:13-19 NKJV)

This passage describes Satan's original beauty, his subsequent iniquity and banishment from God, and his final destruction in the sight of men. We do not know how long Satan lived in his original perfection, but we can safely assume that it was longer than one day! When Paul calls Satan the "god of this world" who has "blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor 4:4 KJV), he refers to Satan in terms of blindness (darkness), and thus contrasts him with the light of Christ. Clearly the "darkness on the face of the deep" is a reference to Satan in his "defiled sanctuaries," his ruined, "formless and void" world.

And, already here in verse two we see another separation. Darkness is on the face of the abyss, but "the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." Verse two contains the Bible's first reference to "water" and here we see the Holy Spirit moving over the face of that water. Like the abyss, the water has a face, a representative appearance. Satan, I believe, was the face on the deep. Who or what is the face of the waters? Verse 3 tells us: "Then God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light." But, when God speaks, who is speaking?

{1} In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. {2} He was in the beginning with God. {3} All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. {4} In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. {5} And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. {6} There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. {7} This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. {8} He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. {9} That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. ... {14} The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. ... {16} From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. {17} For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (John 1:1-9, 14, 16,17 NIV).

I believe that the "face of the waters" refers to the face or personhood of Jesus Christ for

we see throughout the Bible that “water,” refers to Him. See Exodus 17:6; Numbers 20:8; 1 Cor. 10: 4; John 4:10, 13-14; Ephesians 5:26 and Revelation 22:17. Paul refers to this “face” in 2 Corinthians 4:6: “*For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*” (NKJV) Genesis 1:2, therefore, declares the spiritual separation between Satan and God, Who is represented by both the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ here. Note that the reference to both the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ, however, does not denote another separation. Instead, it points to a union, for the Spirit of God and the waters are working together. In the same way “darkness on the face of the abyss” points to the union of Satan and his dark, abysmal kingdom. As we study separation we will need to be aware of union as well as division, for the principle is that God calls us to separate from the ways of the world unto communion (union) with Him.

Jesus calls forth “light” in verse 3 and in verse 4 he separates the light from the darkness. Remember, this is the first time that God actually uses the word “separated” or “divided” in the Scripture. This, then, is where we need to pay close attention. Here we will find an important truth based upon the principle of “first mention.” The act of speaking in verse 3 is peculiarly the action of Jesus Christ as the Word of God through whom all things were created. His very first creative act in the restoration of the earth, which was destroyed by Satan’s rebellion, was to bring forth light. Immediately He separates the light from the darkness. There is no sun, no moon, no stars now. There is only the light of God and the darkness of Satan. Yet, the two are not co-equal, as they often appear in pagan religions, for even four thousand years after this event John tells us that “*the darkness has not understood*” the light. (John 1:5)

We see the second day of creation in Genesis 1:6-8. Here we see the waters separated and then fixed in their divided state by a dome called “heaven,” or the “expanse.” I believe this separation speaks of separation between the natural and the spiritual in man’s history. The division effected on this second day still remains largely a mystery because all of us still live in the natural world in bodies of flesh and blood. But, let’s try to understand some of the spiritual implications of this second day separation.

First, we know that water constitutes the single most critical element necessary for life, save air alone. Air, or oxygen, symbolizes the Holy Spirit. The Hebrew word for Spirit in the Old Testament is *ruwach* and means “wind” or “breath.” The Greek New Testament uses the word *pneuma* for Spirit and that word also means “wind,” “breath,” or “air.” Water itself is made of two elements, hydrogen and oxygen. Hydrogen has the atomic number 1 while Oxygen carries the atomic number 8. The number 1 in Scripture speaks of unity and of the one God. Eight is the number of new beginnings and of Christ. The number 8 must also relate to the Holy Spirit since oxygen forms the most essential part of the air that we breathe. Thus we see water representing God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Jesus prophesied through David concerning his death saying, “I am poured out like water.” (Psalm 22:14) In John 4 Jesus proclaims that He Himself is the water of “everlasting life.” (John 4:14). Clearly Jesus was the natural manifestation of spiritual water, that water that exists above the dome of heaven. John said that Jesus was the word made flesh in John 1:14. We might say that Jesus was also the spiritual water that became flesh. On the second day, God separated the natural from the spiritual waters by what we call heaven. The natural water, that is the water that we drink and of which we are made, remained below the expanse of heaven. The spiritual water, i.e. God, remained above the dome. God thus divided His creation into the natural and the spiritual on the second day.

So, having now studied some of the spiritual implications of the first eight verses of the

Bible and by applying the principle of “first mention,” **we should understand that the basic meaning of “the separation” is the God-ordained separations of light from darkness and of the spiritual from the natural.** This does not mean, however, that the natural world is inherently evil. Jesus came to earth and lived as a natural, flesh and blood, man, but He was not evil in any way. Through further revelation from the Scripture we will find that understanding this basic spiritual meaning of separation will lead us to maturity. We find that it is a type of the discernment of good and evil, of that doctrine for the mature believer we find in Hebrews 5:11-14. Believers must understand this critical doctrine in order to come to their fulness in Christ. This doctrine of separation is so important that God mentioned the idea in almost every single verse of the first chapter of the Bible!

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SEPARATION: GOD'S DOCTRINE OF SALVATION FROM THE BEGINNING (THE FIRST SEVEN DOCTRINES)

Now let's discover particular New Testament doctrines directly from Genesis. Most of us have been taught that God changed everything with the New Covenant, but we will find that all of the essential doctrines of the Gospel were taught hundreds, even thousands, of years before Jesus' death and resurrection. Paul explained this principle to Timothy when he said,

{16} All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, {17} that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Tim 3:16-17 NKJV)

“All Scripture” to Paul meant primarily, if not completely, the Old Testament. He was telling Timothy to use all of the Old Testament Scripture, as well as any writing from the Apostles known to be Scripture, in order to teach and train the believers. Pastors and teachers today, though, often cause us to despise the Old Testament or to believe it is somehow less inspired or binding than the New Testament. We often here statements such as, “The Old Testament just contains God's law and brings judgment. Grace is found in the New Testament alone!” Such statements contain grievous, heretical errors, as we will soon see. This and the next chapter summarize **eighteen major Biblical doctrines** we can discern from a careful study of Genesis chapters two through eleven.

1) The Doctrine of Sanctification

(Gen 2:1-3 NKJV) {1} Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. {2} And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. {3} Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

God sanctifies, or sets apart, the seventh day from the first six. He, therefore, separated the seventh day from the first six in a special way. The separation of the seventh day appears very peculiar because God made this division a **sign** to His people. He even instituted specific laws dealing with the seventh day, the Sabbath. Our Creator considers this separation so important that he made the penalty for violating the Sabbath laws to be death, the ultimate earthly punishment.

(Exo 31:13-17 NKJV) {13} "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you. {14} 'You shall keep

the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. {15} 'Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. {16} 'Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. {17} 'It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.'"

The reason given for the sign of the Sabbath was so “that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you.” Vine’s defines the Hebrew verb for sanctify, *qadash*, as “an act whereby, or a state wherein, people or things are set aside for use in worship of God; they are consecrated or ‘made sacred.’ By this act and in this state the thing or person consecrated is to be withheld from workaday use (or profane use) and to be treated with special care as a possession of God.”^{iv} In the New Testament section of his book, Vine says, “Sanctification is also used in the NT of the separation of the believer from evil things and ways. This sanctification is God’s will for the believer.”^v

To sanctify, then, means to separate from the things of the world unto God’s use. Not only was the Sabbath day separated from the first six days in the creation account, but the day itself was sanctified in order to convey the truth that each of us should be sanctified, or separated, totally to God. We see from this first mention of the word “sanctify” that it conveys the concept of separation to God.

The passage from Exodus above highlights the utter importance of our separation from the world. Twice here Moses pronounces the penalty of death for violation of the Sabbath laws. The extreme severity of this penalty rivals that of even the “abominable” sins of homosexual acts, idolatry, and witchcraft. See Lev. 20:13; Deut. 7:25-26; 12:30-31; 17:2-5; 18:9-14. This shows us the preeminence of two ideas carried through the entire written revelation of God. First, we see the overarching idea of our separation from evil and the ways of the world to the ways of God. Second, this sanctification results in our ability to enter into the Sabbath rest of God, Christ’s millennial kingdom wherein He will rule in righteousness for 1,000 years with His sanctified saints as His co-regents. The penalty of death for violation of the Sabbath laws points to the fact that those believers who refuse God’s word of separation will be refused reward and honor in the Kingdom of God. They will be relegated to “outer darkness” and “weeping and gnashing of teeth” at that time according to Jesus’ words in Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30 and Luke 13:23-30.

Sanctification is one of the two most important doctrines that receives special attention in Christian theology, the other being justification. Justification deals exclusively with the concept of spiritual salvation, of being “begotten of God” by faith in Jesus Christ. As a rule, however, most teachers fail to adequately discern between justification and sanctification. Justification deals with our spiritual salvation which is a once for all event that comes only by the completed work of Jesus Christ and has nothing to do with our own works. Sanctification, however, is a process that goes on throughout the believers life. It deals with the salvation of the soul (a life-long process that comes only by the process of allowing God to write his Law upon one’s heart).

It does not deal at all with the fact that Jesus' work provides eternal life to every single man and woman on earth.

Bible teachers often define sanctification as maturing in one's faith, and that is correct, so far as it goes. Vine very correctly states, "Sanctification is also used in NT of the separation of the believer from evil things and ways. This sanctification is God's will for the believer, 1 Thess. 4:3, and His purpose in calling him by the gospel, v. 7; it must be learned from God, v. 4, as He teaches it by His Word, John 17:17, 19; cf. Ps. 17:4; 119:9, and it must be pursued by the believer, earnestly and undeviatingly, 1 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 12:14." Most Christians, however, either do not understand the meaning of the word as described here by Mr. Vine or they believe that its reality is something optional for the believer. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Sanctification is perhaps the supreme goal of all Scripture. The separation of one's heart and life unto God in adoration, trust, worship, and obedience describes the end to which Christ Jesus means all of His instructions and dealings to take us. When God determined to make man in His image, He did not program him like we would program a computer. He did not magically make man always choose good. He planned that man would ultimately learn both good and evil, and, from the core of his being, ultimately choose the good every time. This is the final goal of sanctification.

These first three verses from Genesis 2 reveal the culmination of creation week. Here we see the seventh day sanctified by God and, therefore, separated as the most glorious and holy of all the days of creation. These three small verses from Genesis set forth in type the grand purpose of God's age-lasting call to sanctify ourselves for His use and to separate ourselves from all that speaks of darkness and evil and unto all that speaks of justice, righteousness, mercy, and love. Sanctification calls us to holiness before God.

2) The Doctrine of Rest and the Millennial Age

This seventh day is a sign, according to Moses in Exodus 31:13-17, quoted above. In fact, all seven of the days of creation point as types, or signs, of things to come. First, each of the seven days signifies a 1,000 year period of time, a millennial day in the history of man. Peter says, "*But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*" 2 Peter 3:8. Moses himself says, "*For a thousand years in Your sight Are like yesterday when it is past, And like a watch in the night.*" (Psalm 90:4) Speaking of the second coming of Christ, Hosea proclaims, "*After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight*" (Hosea 6:2) The prophet is clearly talking about one-thousand-year-long days. We should also take particular heed, therefore, since the second millennial day since Jesus was born has just ended. The third day prophesied by Hosea is upon us. This third day also coincides with the seventh one-thousand-year-long day since man's time began. Any way you look at history since the creation of man, we now live at the end of the sixth or the beginning of the seventh millennium since that time. We who live today will see many prophesies of Scripture fulfilled in just the next few years. The Bible calls this period of time we are now entering by many names, among which are the Millennium, the Tabernacles Age, and the Kingdom of God. This time, or age, is the prophetic fulfillment (antitype) of the seventh day of creation.

Ruling and reigning with Christ in the Millennium represents the prize or reward for the faithful servants of God to which the Scripture continually alludes. Consider carefully the following word from Hebrews:

{7} Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, {8} Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, {9} Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. {10} Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.' {11} So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'" {12} Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; {13} but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. {14} For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, {15} while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." {16} For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? {17} Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? {18} And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? {19} So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

{1} Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. {2} 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. {3} For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,' " although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. {4} For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works"; {5} and again in this place: "They shall not enter My rest." {6} Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, {7} again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," after such a long time, as it has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts." {8} For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. {9} There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. {10} For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. {11} Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. {12} For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

(Heb 3:7-4:12 NKJV)

Here the writer of Hebrews states some amazing things. First, the rest that God promised those Israelites who were escaping Egypt fifteen hundred years before Christ is the same rest He has promised Christians for two thousand years since Christ's resurrection. Second, God makes entering this rest possible through "the gospel." Third, according to verse 4:2, the gospel was preached to the Israelites 3500 years ago just as it is preached to us today! Fourth, it is possible for Christians to "come short" of this rest, just as it was possible for believing Israelites to harden their hearts and come short of it thousands of years ago. One thing should be pretty clear now. The term "the gospel" in Scripture means more than just believing in Jesus Christ for spiritual salvation. The gospel, therefore, must include all of the teachings God has revealed to us, including this doctrine of rest. Hebrews unquestionably teaches that Christians may shrink back from the Gospel's teachings and thus fall short of God's goal for us, the Sabbath rest. In fact, Paul himself calls the Gospel a mystery in Romans 16:25 and Ephesians 6:19. Who among us can claim to understand the mysteries of God? What does it mean for us to enter God's rest?

Remember that the language of the Bible is understood through the concepts of type and antitype. Moses discusses this rest that Israel missed in the Book of Deuteronomy, saying,

{18} "Then I commanded you at that time, saying: 'The LORD your God has given you this land to possess. All you men of valor shall cross over armed before your brethren, the children of Israel. {19} 'But your wives, your little ones, and your livestock (I know that you have much livestock) shall stay in your cities which I have given you, {20} 'until the LORD has given rest to your brethren as to you, and they also possess the land which the LORD your God is giving them beyond the Jordan. Then each of you may return to his possession which I have given you.' (Deu 3:18-20 NKJV)

"You shall not at all do as we are doing here today; every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes; {9} "for as yet you have not come to the rest and the inheritance which the LORD your God is giving you. {10} "But when you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies round about, so that you dwell in safety, (Deu 12:8-10 NKJV)

Here we see that, in the natural, the rest of God was Israel's inheritance in Canaan which was characterized by possession of the land and safety from their enemies. This is the Biblical type. The antitype is the possession of a spiritual land, the redemption of our spiritual bodies. See 1 Corinthians 15:34-58. The rest God wants to bring us, therefore, is the millennial rest, the great Sabbath rest where God's overcoming saints rule and reign with Him in glorified, spiritual bodies.

Genesis 2:1-3 links the Sabbath rest to sanctification and separation. Again, these verses serve as a type of doctrinal truth that we see over and over again in Scripture. Throughout the revelation of God we see that God demands His servants to separate themselves from evil as they sanctify (separate) themselves unto Him. Then we see that He always rewards those who will do

this. The ultimate reward will be ruling and reigning with Christ for one thousand years. But, this is only true if we succeed with the working out of our salvation. This is the prize of our high calling according to 1 Corinthians 9:24-25, Philippians 3:14; 2 Timothy 2:12, and Revelation 2:27 5:10, 12:5, 20:6, and 22:5.

The seventh day of creation prophetically pictures the seventh millennial day, the day of Christ. This is the thousand year period of time when Jesus will rule the world through His overcomers. Hebrews promises this day (thousand years) of rest to all God's children who obey Him. This promise is for those "sons of God" who constantly use the Word of God unto the separation of their soul and spirits and unto the discernment of good and evil. See Hebrews 4:1-12, especially verse 12 and Hebrews 5:9-14, especially verse 14. A later chapter examines these verses from Hebrews and "the Teaching about Righteousness" found there in great detail.

3) The Doctrine of Law and Sin

In Genesis 2:9 we see the identification of two specific types of tree, the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. In verses 2:16-17 God makes a distinction or separation between the two trees.

{16} And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; {17} "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Gen 2:16-17 NKJV)

God tells Adam he may eat of the tree of life and every other tree of the garden, but he is forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This is the second time recorded where God speaks directly to man. The first time He blessed Adam with dominion authority over the earth and all creation. The second time he commanded man with a "no trespassing" law.

God's commands to Adam and Eve put specific constraints upon them. His first command defined their authority over His creation. His second command declared a specific activity to be off limits. God's law always puts boundaries or parameters on man's choices or compels him to do certain things. God's law separates the world into two parts: that which is permissible to man and that which is not. In fact, there can be no sin until and unless there is a broken law. Law, therefore, must precede sin. Paul's Book of Romans explains these ideas in detail.

Another separation introduced here is that knowledge consists of two aspects, good and evil. In some mysterious way the forbidden tree worked to enable man to discern, or separate, between these two facets of reality. This means that mankind did not possess this knowledge of good and evil before he ate from the tree. Notice that God's law forbidding man to eat of this tree came before man sinned by eating it.

And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" (Gen 3:11 NKJV)

Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded

you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. (Gen 3:17 NKJV)

Genesis chapter 3 recounts the separation of man from God caused by his sin. Adam and Eve both ATE of the tree of which they were commanded not to eat. Some people have equated the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil directly with sin, or directly with law. By doing this they inevitably reach the conclusion that the law is evil. Some simply start any theological discussion with this wrong premise because they misunderstand the nature of law and grace. But, God does not equate the tree itself with either sin or the law. The law in view here forbids **eating** of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Eating of the wrong tree is the breaking of the law, which is the sin here, not the tree itself. This becomes especially clear when we consider Eve's words to the serpent: "*but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die'"* (Gen 3:3 NKJV). God did not command them not to "touch" the tree. Touching the tree was not a sin. Eating was the sin!

Some Bible teachers give the impression that God's law is evil or somehow equivalent to sin, but concerning the law and sin, Paul declares, "*What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet'"* (Romans 7:7). Law, therefore, should never be equated with sin. Rather, law defines sin! One cannot know sin unless he knows the law. This is why so few Christians today even know that they sin. They have been deceived into thinking that grace annulled the law. In Genesis 2:16-17 the law is defined as "*you shall not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*" The action proscribed by this law is that of eating. God declared that *eating* of the wrong tree would be the sin, not the tree and certainly not the Law that God would later reveal. The separation of the created world into two parts, that which man could eat and that which he could not eat represents the first prohibitive command given by God. This separation thus introduces us to law and sin.

4) The Doctrine of the Bride of Christ

{21} And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. {22} Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. {23} And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." {24} Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. {25} And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed. (Gen 2:21-25 NKJV)

God literally "divides" Adam in Genesis 2:21. He takes out one of his ribs and then forms woman from that rib. By this God divided or separated man into male and female. But, note that this is a separation unto union according to Genesis 2:24. No helpmate could be found for Adam among all the animals that God created on the sixth day, so he fashioned Chavvah

(Eve) to be his bride. God then took Adam's bride from his own body by an act of separation. The dividing of Adam's body is a type of the dividing of the Body of Christ when Jesus separates His bride from his own body (the church). In the same way that the first bride was taken out of Adam, the first man, so will the second Bride be taken out of the body of the second Man.

But, note that the Lord "made" the bride for Adam from the rib that came from the separation. Thus, there is separation and preparation of the bride before presentment to the bridegroom! This, too, is a type of the prophetic which was to come, and, indeed, which is now taking place. To explain the separation of man into male and female and the preparation of the bride, God says, "*Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become **ONE** flesh*" (Gen 2:24 NKJV, emphasis added). This separation of God, again, is unto union with Him.

Many examples of this separation of the bride from the people of God are seen throughout the Old Testament. We see Rebekah taken as the bride for Isaac from the very family of Abraham, Isaac's father. Abraham's servant, who found Rebekah for Isaac, represents the Holy Spirit who works today among the people of God to find and separate a bride for Jesus. The servant, like the Holy Spirit, clearly reveals to Rebekah's family, i.e. God's people, that God has sent His angel in advance to "take a wife for my son from my family and from my father's house." Genesis 24:40. Today the Holy Spirit goes forth separating the Bride from God's family for His Son. But, as did Rebekah's family, so does the Bride's family, the established church, say unto the Bride, "Let the young woman stay with us a few days, at least ten; after that she may go." The church does all in her power to prevent the Bride from wholly separating unto Christ, but she responds anyway with the succinct statement, "I will go." (Genesis 24:55, 58) The Bride acts totally by faith and grace, but the thing that sets her apart from the rest of her brethren is that she makes decisions according to God's will, for "the work of God is to believe upon Him whom He sent!" (John 6:29)

Later we see Ruth refuse to separate from the promises of God and return to Moab, from whence she had come, as did Orpah, her sister-in-law. Both Ruth and Orpah represent Christians who have come into the family of God. Moab typifies the world and Ruth refuses to go back there even at the insistence of her mother-in-law. She, therefore, fully separates from even her own mother and father. (Ruth 2:11) Orpah, however, submits to the temptation and partakes once more of the things of the world. Ruth represents the spiritual, and Orpah the carnal, believer. Soon after arriving in Bethlehem, the birth place of Jesus, Ruth gains the attention of Boaz, a type of Christ. Boaz commands her to glean only in his field. (Ruth 2:8) This typifies the command to separate from the things of the world and to cling to the narrow path of God, His field alone. Ruth does as she is told which points to the obedience of the Bride of Christ to the command of separation.

Just before Boaz chooses Ruth for his wife we see her wash herself, anoint herself, and put on her best garments. (See Ruth 3:3) All three things typify the way in which the Bride of Christ makes herself ready for marriage. She washes herself constantly in the Word of her husband. (Eph. 5:26) She fills herself with the Holy Spirit by walking in her beloved's ways versus the ways of the world. (Eph. 5:14-21) She dresses herself in the good, living works that He prepared in advance for her to do. (Eph. 2:10; Rev. 19:7-8) She, therefore, lives a life in contrast to that of many believers who defile their garments by their worldly ways of compromise and sin. (Rev. 3:4; 3:17-18)

Again, we also see the Shulamite in the Song of Solomon separate herself from the other "daughters of Jerusalem," i.e. the called of God. When Solomon comes to take her in his royal

wedding chariot the daughters of Jerusalem cannot understand why the king would take her instead of them. They cry out, “Return, return O Shulamite; Return, return, that we may look upon you.” Such will be the cry of the multitude of Christians left behind when they realize that the Bride of Christ has already been chosen by her Beloved. She tried to tell her fellow believers what would soon happen but they mocked her when she spoke. Thus, when they cry out “Return, return, so that we may understand why He took you and not us,” the Bride will respond as did the Shulamite, “Why should I return? What would you see in me that you did not see before? We are as two separate camps, you and I. I went to worship my Beloved outside the camp long, long ago. But you refused to love and believe the truth and would not leave the camp called Babylon when you were warned.” See Song 6:12-14; 2 Thes. 2:1-12; Hebrews 13:13-14; Rev. 18:4.

All of these historical narratives were given as examples, as types, so that Christians might understand spiritual realities (antitypes, i.e. prophetic fulfillment) and walk in the truth thereof as Paul warns in 1 Cor. 10:11-12. Remember, Adam had no earthly father or mother. Yet, even as early as Genesis 2:24 we see the teaching that the union of the Bride with her husband requires a separation from one’s father and mother, i.e. from the worldly ways of previous and current generations. *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”* The Bride of Christ, whom He is even now choosing, will consist of all those who willingly forsake (sell) all in order to be His disciple. She will indeed be the one who has left family and home, who left father and mother, to cling to the One she loves. Yes, she is the one truly separated from the ways of this world.

5) The Doctrine of Discerning Good and Evil (Judgment)

{6} So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. {7} Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. (Gen 3:6-7 NKJV)

Some things are hard to understand. For example, why did God create man if He knew that man would sin soon after his creation? And, why does God hold man accountable for that sin if He knew that man would sin? God also knew that man would eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, didn’t He? He knows everything, the end from the beginning. God is sovereign and does as He pleases. He also knew the result of man’s eating of the tree, that he would *“become like one of Us, to know good and evil”* (Gen. 3:22).

Man’s eyes were “opened” as a result of eating that unlawful fruit. This doesn’t mean that he could see the natural world for the first time, for Eve “saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes” before she ate of it. (Gen. 3:6) This opening of man’s eyes related to the moral and the spiritual, not the physical and the natural. Adam and Eve became moral beings when they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Immediately, “they knew that they were naked” and they knew that their nakedness had to be covered. (Gen. 3:7) They had seen that they were naked before, in Genesis 2:25, but then they were not ashamed.

In the New Testament we learn that the doctrine of discernment of good and evil concerns only the very mature. This becomes particularly interesting when we consider the fact that God

initially told mankind not to eat of that tree. Why, for example, does God even esteem this type of discernment? The Hebrews' writer could barely discuss this topic with his people. He said:

{11} [Melchizedek] of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. {12} For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. {13} For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. {14} 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 5:11-14 NKJV)

The same is true today. One usually cannot even discuss the Biblical doctrine of discerning good and evil, i.e. of judgment, without being called legalistic, arrogant, unloving, proud, self-righteous, and on and on. Today, as in the days of Paul; almost all Christians remain unskilled in the word of righteousness, and thus, remain babes in Christ. Let us determine to grow up now and redeem the time because the days are evil and the time is very short.

Melchizedek, whose name means “King of Righteousness and Justice,” is first introduced in Genesis 14:18. The Book of Jashur identifies Melchizedek as Shem, son of Noah. Most Christians believe he is an earthly manifestation of the preincarnate Christ. Regardless of his actual identity, it is no coincidence that the King of Righteousness and Justice also appears here in the passage that speaks of discerning good and evil. Mature Christians should be able to eat the meat of the Word of God. Then, by constantly using the Word, their senses should be so exercised that they can discern both good and evil. This means that they should be able to righteously judge the issues of life, but rarely can we find a Godly man competent to do justice, i.e., to judge righteously. To do justice means to separate between the good and the evil with a righteous understanding that can only be provided by God.

The teaching about righteousness includes the doctrine that one will **do the good instead of the evil** when he becomes capable of discerning between the two. The ability to do good comes about by receiving a new heart from our heavenly Father. Our new heart is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Hebrews explains this when quoting Jeremiah: *"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people"* (Heb. 8:10) None of us have as yet received an entirely “new heart.” We still walk about in bodies of flesh that remain subject to and do sin. Now, though, is the time to bring our minds into agreement with God.

All of us still retain parts of our old hard heart of unforgiveness and bitterness, but we are exhorted by Christ in Romans 12:1-2 to renew our minds by adhering to His Word and by refusing conformity to this world. If we do not obey His commands we will forever remain hard-hearted. God would say to the hard-hearted: *{3} "For thus says the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem: "Break up your fallow ground, And do not sow among thorns. {4} Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, And take away the foreskins of your hearts, You men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Lest My fury come forth like fire, And burn so that no one can quench it, Because of the evil of your doings."* (Jer 4:3-4 NKJV) Jeremiah prophetically warns Christians in words similar to those we see in the book of Hebrews.

We find the major theme of Hebrews in verse 5:13. It is the “*teaching (word) about righteousness*” which is defined in verse 14 as the Christian ability to “*discern between good and evil.*” The Greek word translated “discern” here is the noun form of the verb *diakrino*. Vines says that *diakrino* signifies “**to separate**, discriminate” and “to learn by discriminating.” He goes on to say that the word means “trying oneself, ‘discerning’ one’s condition, and so judging any evil before the Lord.” He also states that “regarding oral testimony in a gathering of believers, it is used of ‘discerning’ what is of the Holy Spirit.” The noun form, *diakrasis*, is used here in verse 13 to speak “of those who are capable of discriminating between good and evil.” In Rom. 14:1 the word has its other sense of decision or judgment....”^{vi} To discriminate means “to judge,” so this word literally speaks of judgment between good and evil.

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, therefore, typologically points to the ministry of Melchizedek, which is the ministry of justice and righteousness. It also speaks of the judgment (separation) of good and evil. These are the defining characteristics of the Teaching about Righteousness discussed in Hebrews. Separation, then, also speaks of the mature ability to discern (judge) between good and evil. Hebrews teaches us that one must exercise his senses by constant use of the meat of the Word of God before he can so judge. Most people do not do this and this explains why judgment of sin in the church rarely occurs today. It also further explains the doctrine of separation, this time in terms of discernment and judgment. Even man’s judgment and separation from God for originally eating of this tree points typologically to this prophetic discernment and judgment.

6) The Doctrine of Dead Works

{8} And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. {9} Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" {10} So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." {11} And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" (Gen 3:8-11 NKJV)

Sin separates man from the light of God’s presence and one of the first things that Adam and his wife did after disobeying was to deliberately hide themselves from the presence of the Lord. Man’s sin caused him to live in the darkness of Satan’s dominion rather than under God’s dominion of light. Sin, therefore, becomes a type of darkness. This brings to mind the words of Christ:

{33} “No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. {34} The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. {35} Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. {36} If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having

no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light” (Luke 11:33-36 KJV).

The Greek word *haplous* is translated “single” in verse 34 and speaks of unity of vision with the will of God. Vine says, concerning this word, “‘singleness’ of purpose keeps us from the snare of having double treasure and consequently a divided heart.” If man, therefore, seeks to understand God’s Word and walk in the light and truth thereof he desires unity with his maker and we say his eye is single. Adam’s sin of eating the forbidden fruit caused him to lose his singleness of vision. Sin changed Adam’s vision and caused him to look away and separate himself from God. His eyes were opened regarding moral truths, but instead of looking toward God he looked at himself and saw that he was naked. Then, he uselessly covered his loins with fig leaves. (Genesis 3:7)

Man’s futile attempt to clothe himself is the first Biblical example of dead works. A dead work is a “religious” work that is done out of man’s own ideas rather than God’s. James says, “*Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom*” (James 3:13). Earlier in his book James makes it clear that God only accepts works born of faith. And, Paul makes it clear that faith comes only one way, by hearing the Word of God. (Romans 10:17) This type of hearing is nothing less than the “revelation of the word” that one must have in order “to know” the Lord. We must take this to heart because there comes a day, and that day is soon, that Jesus will say to many Christians, “*I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!*” On that day many will find that the works of which they bragged to Jesus, saying, “*Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?*” were nothing more than dead works! (Matthew 7:22-23) Separation from God results in dead works. Dead works amount to nothing more than hiding oneself from the presence of God in the busyness of fleshly activity. (Genesis 3:8)

7) The Doctrine of the Curse (Age-lasting Judgment)

{12} Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." {13} And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." {14} So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. {15} And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel." {16} To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you." {17} Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. {18} Both thorns and thistles it shall bring

forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. {19} In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return." {20} And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. (Gen 3:12-20 NKJV)

After exposing the sin, God judges the three participants with three separate judgments. First, God curses the serpent and foretells that throughout history there will be war between him and mankind, and there has been. Man's history is one of continued war, disease, poverty, and torture, all gleefully bestowed by the father of lies. Then the Lord prophesies the final destruction of Satan by the Seed of the woman, Jesus Christ, in verse 15.

Next, God curses the woman with sorrow, pain in conception, and pain in childbirth. Then he separates the authority of the man and his wife and makes the man ruler over his wife. This is the curse that woman has tried to destroy by the strength of her own hand for six millennia. Feminism ultimately seeks to overturn God's curse by human means. This is the sin of Jezebel and a great sin among many, many Christian women (and men who permit it). These women demand the order that God established at the creation and seek to destroy God's curse of submission by their cunning wiles.

Finally, God judges Adam by cursing the very ground from which he was created, thus separating Adam from the earth. This curse dooms man to labor and pain as he ekes out his subsistence from the soil. But man, like woman, attempted to thwart God's curse from the beginning. He pursued a path of knowledge and invention outside of God's laws and without concern for his neighbor. Thus he pollutes his environment in the pursuit of wealth and leisure and he perverts God's creation by genetic engineering. Genetic engineering attempts to thwart God's command that a living thing reproduce only after its own kind.

God's three curses are types of eternal, or "age-lasting," judgment, a doctrine that the New Testament calls the milk of the Word in Hebrews 6:1-2. All three of these curses have already been age-lasting in that they have endured throughout all man's history, or the "human age," on earth. These curses are "eternal" in the sense that they last throughout the six (thousand year) days of the human age.

Through tradition and error we have come to consider God's punishment of disobedient men to be eternal, to last forever and ever, but this is not so. It has not yet been revealed how long God will punish unbelievers, including unbelieving, carnal Christians. We know from Hebrews 6:2 that it will be "age-lasting."^{vii} We see the antitype of the Genesis curses in the New Testament in Jesus' parables that warn of an "outer darkness" and in the Book of Revelation with respect to the "Lake of Fire." In His great mercy, however, in Genesis God immediately reveals to mankind His own solution to the curse and the way back into unity with Himself.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SEPARATION: GOD'S DOCTRINE OF SALVATION FROM THE BEGINNING (THE NEXT SEVEN DOCTRINES)

8) The Doctrine of Spiritual Salvation by the Blood of Jesus

Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them. (Gen 3:21 NKJV)

God did not accept Adam's covering of himself by his own dead work, but He would not allow Adam to remain uncovered. Therefore, He separated the skin of an animal from its body, thereby shedding the first blood on earth. This shed blood was a type of the blood of Christ. The blood of Christ is the antitype of the animal's blood, i.e., its prophetic fulfillment. When God saw the animal covering on Adam and Eve, He spiritually recognized it as the blood of His own son who was "slain from the foundation of the world." Revelation 13:8. This allowed the basis for a continued relationship between God and man. The blood sacrifice for sin is often seen in historical accounts from the Old Testament. The most prominent example is the blood of the lamb sacrificed on the night of the first Passover.

(Exo 12:1-14 NKJV) {1} Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, {2} "This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. {3} "Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth day of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. {4} 'And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. {5} 'Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. {6} 'Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. {7} 'And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. {8} 'Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. {9} 'Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire; its head with its legs and its entrails. {10} 'You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. {11} '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. {12} 'For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and

against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. {13} 'Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. {14} 'So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.

Notice that the blood is to be “a sign,” just as the Sabbath Day is to serve as a sign. This means that it signifies a prophetic truth. The shedding of the animal blood speaks of the spiritual salvation that comes through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. We should, therefore, think of Adam and Eve and also of all Israel after the first Passover as “saved” individuals, that is, as people who have believed upon the blood of Christ by faith for the forgiveness of their sins.

(Lev 17:11 NKJV) 'For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.'

9) The Doctrine of Soul Salvation

After providing forgiveness for sin God, separated Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden, and, particularly, from the Tree of Life:

(Gen 3:22-24 NKJV) Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"; {23} therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. {24} So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

We see from this passage that even the blood shed for Adam did not yet completely restore his relationship with God. Obviously a separation still existed between them. We see this because even though Adam’s sin was now covered by the animal blood (pointing to Christ’s blood), God still expelled him and his wife from the garden of Eden. Likewise, after faith in the blood at Passover, Israel was still judged and destroyed in the wilderness. Paul teaches us that these judgments fell upon Israel to teach and warn Christians not to partake of the same kinds of sins after we come to salvation (1 Corinthians 10:1-12)

Actually, Adam’s time of testing really began when he left Eden. Then he had to begin to learn to live by faith, learn to discern good and evil, and learn to choose the good. Adam and his sons Abel and Seth succeeded, but Cain failed this test. The question is, will we succeed in our walk of faith? And, what will be our fate if we only believe in the blood of Jesus for forgiveness of sins, but fail to understand and walk a sanctified life?

The Tree of Life represents (is a “type” of) the promise for those who sanctify themselves

by the Spirit of God. God gives this gift to all who obey Him. Jesus says:

(Rev. 2:7 NKJV) "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God"

(Rev 2:11 NKJV) "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death."

(Rev 2:26-27 NKJV) "And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations; {27} 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'; as I also have received from My Father..."

(Rev 3:5 NKJV) "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."

(Rev 3:12 NKJV) "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name."

(Rev 3:21-22 NKJV) "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. {22} "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Clearly, Christ reserves the Tree of Life, the Book of life, and co-dominion with Him only for those who "overcome!" The angel of Revelation declares,

(Rev. 22:14-15 NKJV) {14} "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. {15} For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie".

Here John describes the distinction between faithful and unfaithful Christians. Verse 14 blesses the overcomers while verse 15 describes men who lived the wicked lie. Concerning them James says,

(James 5:19-20 NKJV) {19} Brethren, if anyone among you

wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, {20} let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

This death of which James speaks is death of the soul, not the spirit. The separation from the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden, therefore, represents the potential loss of one's soul. Our soul can only be gained by overcoming according to Christ's rules, which means living one's life for Him, not for the things of this world. This is what Jesus means when He says,

(Mat 16:24-27 KJV) {24} If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. {25} For whosoever will save his life (soul) shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life (soul) for my sake shall find it. {26} For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? {27} For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

The Greek word translated "life" in verse 25 is psuche, the same word also translated in verse 26 as "soul." Vine defines psuche as the "heart, mind, soul." He says that the word "denotes 'life' in two chief respects, 'breath of life, the natural life,' ... (b) 'the seat of the personality.'" Jesus is saying, therefore, "Save your life for the things of this world and you will lose your soul. Lose your life for the things eternal and you will save your soul.

10) The Doctrine of The Carnal (Natural) vs. The Spiritual

We see from Genesis 3:9-19 and 4:3-15 that God still speaks directly to man even after Adam ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. This is because there is still ground for relationship by virtue of the blood sacrifice for sin, which speaks of spiritual salvation. God Himself shed the first animal blood which was a type of the blood sacrifice of Jesus. Spiritual salvation, effected by the blood of Jesus, brings with it a "clear conscience."

(Heb 9:13-14 NKJV) {13} For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, {14} 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?

God makes it clear to mankind, through Abel's accepted sacrifice, that He must have a blood (animal) sacrifice in order to accept man into His presence. Cain, however, will have none of it. God is showing through His demand for a blood sacrifice that He requires a man's true life (soul) to be separated from his physical existence. This is the meaning of the blood, the life (soul), being separated from the body. Rather than offering the sacrifice that God requires, which is a sacrifice that requires a separation of the life (blood) from the body, Cain kills his brother instead. This shows the separation among men, even saved men, which is caused by sin.

This is a picture in the natural of the separation of the spiritual from the carnal believer. Here is a description of these two types of believers:

(1 Cor 2:13-3:3 NKJV) {13} These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. {14} 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. {15} But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. {16} For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ. And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. {2} I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; {3} for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?

It is normal for a babe in Christ to be carnal. Such a one needs the milk of the Word in order to mature. But, it is abnormal and unhealthy when believers, after five, ten, twenty, or more years, still exhibit the carnal thoughts and attitudes of a babe in Christ. The picture of the carnal vs. the spiritual Christian is further illustrated by this parable in Luke:

{42} And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? {43} "Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. {44} "Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. {45} "But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, {46} "the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. {47} "And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. {48} "But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more. (Luke 12:42-48 NKJV)

Here in Luke we see the principle of the separation of Cain and Abel prophetically applied by Jesus in the teaching of the separation of the carnal from the spiritual Christian. The wicked servant in the parable above is a Christian. Just as Cain beat and killed Abel, so the

carnal, wicked Christian “beats” the spiritual, faithful servant of God. How? By unwarranted criticisms and by social and business ostracism. The carnal Christian holds on to sin and justifies his doing so while the spiritual Christian repents of sin and relies upon the power of the Holy Spirit to enable him to forsake the sin totally. The carnal Christian refuses to separate himself from the world’s pleasures, sinful relationships and the allure of mammon. The spiritual Christian comes out from worldly ways and maintains a life of holy separation to God. This separation of the spiritual from the carnal in the book of Genesis looks all the way forward to the end of the Bible, to the culminating Scriptures regarding the Doctrine of Separation.

*{14} Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? {15} And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? {16} And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." {17} **Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."** {18} "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty." (2 Cor 6:14-18 NKJV)*

And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues." (Revelation 18:4)

Paul and Jesus also teach us how we must ultimately relate to the Christian who refuses to grow up and continues doing the things of the world. Paul teaches us to separate ourselves from the “evil” Christian, saying,

(1 Cor 5:10-13 NKJV) {10} Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. {11} But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; not even to eat with such a person. {12} For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? {13} But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person."

Jesus makes it clear that such a separation must even reach to one’s own family if necessary when He says,

(Luke 12:49-53 NKJV) {49} "I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! {50} "But I have a baptism to

be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished! {51} "Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. {52} "For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. {53} "Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

He says that this kind of separation will be necessary just before His second coming. This is why Jesus tells the story of the faithful and wicked servants at the time of His second coming right before he says that He came to bring division (separation), not peace! Then He explains that His wicked servants should be able to discern the times, but that they cannot do so because of their hypocrisy:

(Luke 12:54-57 NKJV) {54} Then He also said to the multitudes, "Whenever you see a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, 'A shower is coming'; and so it is. {55} "And when you see the south wind blow, you say, 'There will be hot weather'; and there is. {56} "Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it you do not discern this time? {57} "Yes, and why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right?"

Finally, He warns those who refuse to repent of their sins and hypocrisy that not only will they be subject to separation in fellowship by His faithful servants, but also by Him when He judges them at His judgment seat:

(Luke 12:58-59 NKJV) {58} "When you go with your adversary to the magistrate, make every effort along the way to settle with him, lest he drag you to the judge, the judge deliver you to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. {59} "I tell you, you shall not depart from there till you have paid the very last mite."

In this final parable of Luke chapter 12 the adversary is the faithful Christian who has been slandered, reviled, or otherwise wronged by the carnal (evil) Christian. The magistrate is the "first in rank and power," i.e., Jesus Christ. As magistrate He is the Judge who delivers the evil Christian to His officer, who could be a powerful angel or, more likely, a glorified saint. The prison is the place of "weeping and gnashing of teeth" that Jesus warns believers about in Matthew 24:51. This warning from Matthew 24:51 culminates a parable which is quite similar to that of Luke 12:42-48. All three pictures, the weeping and gnashing of teeth, the casting into prison, and the beating with many stripes describe Christ's judgment and punishment of His own servants. The separation of the spiritual from the carnal is the Word of the Lord for all of his people RIGHT NOW. If we refuse to heed Christ's word of separation, then we will be punished by Him and we will miss the separations described next.

The Doctrines of 11) Faith, 12) Good Works, 13) the Rapture, and 14) the Second

Coming of Christ

The ultimate separation for a faithful person is described in Genesis 5:24. This is the separation of a man, Enoch, physically from the earth. The word that Christians use to describe such an event today is “rapture.” God literally raptured Enoch from the earth. Why? Because “Enoch walked with God.” Therefore, “God took him.” See Genesis 5:24. We are told twice in the short Genesis narrative about Enoch that he “walked with God.” Verse 5:22 says that he walked with God for three hundred years. Here is a man with singleness of vision. He has entered into unity with His creator and, as a reward, God took him to be where He is!

Enoch is one of just a few saints who appear in the Hebrews’ list of the faithful. Hebrews 11:5 says, *“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.”* The psalmist asks, *“What man can live and not see death? Can he deliver his life from the power of the grave? Selah”* Psalm 89:48. Think on it. Jesus said, *“Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.”* John 8:51. I believe this promise applies to all who faithfully obey Him, just as it did to Enoch.

Enoch’s qualification for his rapture or separation, therefore, rested upon his faith which was evidenced by his walk with God. The Book of James makes it equally clear that good works are the result of true faith. The phrase “Enoch walked with God” shows that he had come into agreement with God. They walked together as friends. Any work that he would have done on earth would have their origin in this relation and would be termed “good works.” Good works, based upon faith and being in agreement with God, qualify us for the rapture of which Enoch’s translation is a type. Today we call this the “firstfruits rapture.”

In the New Testament we also learn that Enoch specifically prophesied of Christ’s second coming, saying, *“Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, 15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him”* (Jude 1:14-15) Enoch, therefore, is also a type of those Christians who have “loved [the] appearing” of Christ and of all those who will receive the “crown of righteousness” seen in 2 Timothy 4:8. Since Enoch is clearly one of the “overcomers,” I believe that he will be among these saints. Now we see that the principle of separation is intimately connected with these four New Testament teachings: faith, good works, the rapture, and the second coming of Christ.

The Doctrines of 15) Grace, 16) Baptism, and 17) the Salvation of the Soul

The next separation is the divine separation of the righteous from the wicked by the waters of judgment in the days of Noah described in Genesis 6-7. Remembering that water speaks of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, we see that the flood speaks of judgment by the Word of God and is a type of the great tribulation that soon begins. Every person on the entire earth was destroyed (judged) except for Noah. Noah alone *“found grace in the eyes of the Lord.”* (Genesis 6:8) *“Noah was a just man, perfect in his generation.”* Like Enoch, Noah *“walked with God.”* (Gen. 6:9)

Because of grace, God delivered Noah and his entire family through the great flood, which, in the type, represents baptism *“which now saves us.”* (1 Peter 3:21) The salvation of which this speaks is “soul salvation,” not spiritual salvation as many believe. The Bible is clear

that spiritual salvation comes one way, by faith in Jesus Christ. We see this, for example, in Acts 16:30-31. We can add nothing to our spiritual salvation. Neither can we bring about spiritual salvation by our own will.

{8} For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, {9} not of works, lest anyone should boast. (Eph 2:8-9 NKJV)

We are, however, saved unto good works, for in the next breath Paul says, *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them”* (Ephesians. 2:10) Noah himself worked for many years (perhaps 120 years!) to receive the salvation of his own soul. *“Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did”* (Genesis 6:22) See also 1 Peter 3:20 and Genesis 5:32, 6:3, 7:5-6. By his good works Noah escaped the judgment that fell upon the entire world. By his good works he saved his soul (life) and the lives of his entire family. Noah, therefore, is a type of the faithful believer who will be taken by the Lord through the tribulation judgment. Jesus explains this in the next parable.

(Mat 24:37-42 NKJV) “But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. {38} “For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, {39} “and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. {40} “Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. {41} “Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. {42} “Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.”

Remember that the ones who were taken away in the flood were the wicked ones. Noah was simply taken through the flood. Similarly, I believe, God takes His overcomers through the tribulations of this world, including any final “great tribulation.”

Notice that Jesus commands us to “watch” for His coming here. This is exactly what the faithful servant does and he teaches others to watch as well. This is why the wicked servant reviles him. Knowing the future from the beginning, Jesus warns the wicked servant immediately, saying,

(Mat 24:43-51 NKJV) {43} “But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. {44} “Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. {45} “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? {46} “Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. {47} “Assuredly, I say to

you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. {48} "But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' {49} "and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, {50} "the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, {51} "and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The “master of the house” in verse 43 here represents church leaders and pastors who fail to watch for the coming of Christ. They refuse to, indeed they cannot, give those under their care “food (meat) in due season.” They are not equipped to preach or teach all of the mature doctrines of Christ, including the doctrine of separation. This doctrine teaches men to “come out from among them (the world and its ways) and be separate.” Noah’s separation from the world, therefore, shows us the doctrines of grace, works, baptism, judgment, and soul salvation in the type.

18) The Doctrine of God’s Judgment of the World (Babylon)

The Genesis record shows separation and judgment again soon after the flood, this time at God’s division of mankind by language and national territory at the tower of Babel.

(Gen 11:8-9 NKJV) {8} “So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. {9} Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth”.

Babel, of course, is the place where mankind attempted to “make a name” for themselves and to build a city “whose top is in the heavens.” (Gen. 11:4) This speaks of mankind proclaiming their name above God’s Name and of usurping God’s authority in the heavenlies. Remember God’s judgment upon Satan for the exact same thing before the creation of man, recounted in Ezekiel 28:13-19.

In addition, the tower of Babel was built and the judgment of God occurred at the time of the birth of Peleg. Compare the genealogies of Ham and Shem in Genesis 10. Genesis 10:25 reads, “*To Eber were born two sons, the name of one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided.*” At the judgment of Babel, not only was man’s language confused and multiplied, but he and his earth were also separated into distinct geographical locations, predetermined for each race of men. Recall that the tower of Babel was built in the land of Shinar (Gen. 11:2). The land of Shinar later became the territory of the great power of Babylon. See Daniel 1:2. Judgment, therefore, becomes powerfully connected with separation and Babylon!

Babylon itself serves as a Biblical keyword for two important principles, the secular world, including all of its worldly institutions, and the harlot religious organizations of the world. False, adulterous religion is described in Revelation 17:5 as “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” The world system is described in detail in Chapter 18 of Revelation. When the angel showed

John the harlot Babylon he was “astonished!” (Revelation 17:6). Why was John “astonished?” Because he saw the spiritual reality of the church at the end of the age. He could hardly believe that the Christian Church had perverted the doctrines of the faith to such an extent that she had become a harlot. But, how else can you describe a church that ordains practicing homosexuals as elders, pastors, and bishops? This is exactly like ordaining practicing adulterers, liars, and thieves to the ministry! How else can you describe a church whose sons and daughters abort their children of fornication and whose parents pay for it? How else can you describe a church whose couples divorce as readily as the world’s or whose parents send their children to the secular world for education? The harlot is a picture of the established denominational, charismatic, independent and Catholic churches at the end of the age. In fact, the wording of Revelation 17:5 seems to say that the Catholic Church is the mother harlot and all of the Protestant churches are her harlot daughters.

Think about it. How does your church stand on these doctrines of separation you have now come to understand? Does your church leadership teach you to be separate from the world’s ways? Here is a test. Has your church ever taught that to send your children to the world’s schools is sin? Does your church help to provide an option, besides verbally supporting the state’s schools, for those poor, single mothers who cannot stay home to teach their own children the ways of the Lord as the Bible commands? If not, then know that you dwell in a harlot church. Is your church ruled by one man, a little pope? Does your church refuse to speak out on important issues like the sin of abortion? Does your church refuse to speak on certain issues because they are afraid of losing their tax-exempt status? If you answered yes to any of these last questions, then know that you dwell in a harlot church.

Today God warns us from Revelation 18:4, “*Come out of her my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.*” If you refuse to come out of the harlot church and Babylonian world system then you will inevitably partake of their sins. God warns that if you partake of her sins, then you will also partake of her plagues, i.e., you will suffer the same judgments of God that the world and worldly churches will soon suffer. To come out of Babylon speaks forth the same thing as the words of Paul, “*Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord.*”

To summarize, the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis portray the doctrines of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in types. The specific New Testament doctrines foretold from the very beginning are these: 1) Sanctification, 2) Rest, 3) Law and Sin, 4) The Bride of Christ, 5) Discerning good and evil (judging), 6) Dead Works, 7) Eternal Judgment, 8) Spiritual Salvation by the blood of Jesus, 9) Soul Death, 10) Carnal vs. Spiritual Christianity, 11) Faith, 12) Good Works, 13) Firstfruits Rapture, 14) Second Coming of Christ, 15) Grace, 16) Baptism, 17) Salvation of the Soul, and 18) Judgment of the World. This, then, is the doctrine of separation in a nutshell: **The Christian must live a life of separation from the things of the world, including the worldly church system. Then, he will not be judged with the world and will live in union with God. Having been called out of the world he trains himself to discern between good and evil and to choose the good. Jesus said it even more simply, “You will serve either God or mammon.”**

CHAPTER SIX CALLED TO BE PILGRIMS

(Gen 12:1-3 KJV) {1} Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: {2} And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: {3} And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

The Call of Abram: Separation from the World

“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, ‘Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee’” (Gen. 12:1 KJV). God’s very first words to Abram ordered him to separate from the entire civilized world. God called him out of an advanced civilization with running water, soft beds, and dry homes to the life of a nomad, a camper. He did not even tell Abram where he was going. He just said, “Get up, and get out! I’ll tell you later where you are going!”

In the same way, God orders us Christians to get out of our own country, to get away from our own kindred and from our own father’s house, and to go unto a land that He Himself will show us. This word of God to Abram to leave his father’s house, therefore, is a type of the call that God gives to individual Christians today. But, it seems, we can only obey this call when the Word of the Lord is revealed to us in some manner similar to that revelation given to Abram.

2) The Revelation of the Word: Waters Separated from Waters

(2 Timothy 2:15 KJV) Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

There is only ONE way in which God reveals Himself to man and that is through His Word. Even His creation is a declaration of His Word.

(Psa 19:1-5 NIV) For the director of music. A psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. {2} Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. {3} There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. {4} Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun, {5} which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his

course.

Abram did not know God until God spoke to him. He probably knew about God, through oral or written histories or perhaps from teachings about the constellations, but he did not yet know God. Genesis 1:6 describes God's creative act of separating the waters from the waters. The waters clearly represent Jesus Christ and the separation of the waters is a type of the "rightly dividing" or separating of the word of truth. Rightly separating the word of truth leads to Godly separation in the believer's life, just as it did in Abram's. We might gain some understanding of these waters from these words by Paul:

*(Acts 17:26-28 NKJV) "And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, {27} "so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; {28} "**for in Him we live and move and have our being**, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.'"*

The words "in Him we live and move and have our being" bring to my mind a picture of fish swimming in the sea, or birds flying in the air. The idea conveyed here is that we exist in the waters, under heaven, of Jesus Christ, the creator of all things! We exist in His creation, and, therefore, according to John's gospel, we exist within the Word Himself. Recalling the words of Paul to Timothy to "rightly divide the word of truth" we see, then, that the separating of the waters in Genesis 1:6-7 also communicates the idea of understanding the waters, of comprehending the Word of Truth, of knowing Jesus Christ!

The Lord explains this idea of the revelation of the Word very clearly in the book of Samuel. Samuel's mother dedicated him to the Lord from his birth. She actually gave Samuel to the Israelite high priest, Eli, to raise as soon as he was weaned. Samuel, therefore, grew up in the tabernacle of the Lord, being directly taught and raised by Eli. Samuel ministered before the Lord at the tabernacle after his mother gave him to the Lord's service. In fact, the Scripture states that "the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the Lord." (1 Samuel 2:18-21) This would be similar to a "preacher's kid" growing up all of his life in "the church" or like many Christians who continue in a lifelong duty of Sunday morning "church" attendance. But, Samuel's religious training, just like that of most Christians, is still incomplete. He is a "babe" in the faith. Why? Because he does not yet "know the Lord." Look at Samuel's revelation.

(1 Sam 3:1-10 NIV) The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions. {2} One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. {3} The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. {4} Then the LORD called Samuel. Samuel answered, "Here I am." {5} And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So

he went and lay down. {6} Again the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." "My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." {7} Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. {8} The LORD called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. {9} So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. {10} The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

The key verse to understand is verse 7: “*Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.*” How can this be? Hadn’t Samuel ministered before the Lord for years, wearing his cloak of ministerial authority, his linen ephod? Hadn’t Samuel been directly taught by the most religious man in Israel, the high priest? Hadn’t Samuel grown up in the presence of the Lord? Yes, yes, yes. But, Samuel did not yet know the Lord. Neither do most of us. Why? Because the Word of the Lord has not yet been revealed to us. I pray that His Word will be revealed to you now as you read this if He has not been already. Pray for ears to hear and eyes to see, for spiritual ears and eyes come only one way, directly from Jesus Christ.

We must understand this. There are literally thousands, probably millions, of men and women who wear the trappings of the ministry to whom the Word of the Lord has never been revealed. There are millions more who sit under their false authority and religious bondage week after week. Yes, they believe that Jesus is the Christ and that He died for their sins. Remember, Samuel believed in the reality of God. He believed in the efficacy of the animal sacrifices for the sins of Israel. He believed the blood of the Passover lamb had protected Israel from the destroying angel in Egypt, just as all Christians believe that the blood of Jesus atones for their sins and makes a way into heaven. But, he did not yet know the Lord. Neither do most Christians. Get understanding. Get wisdom. Wisdom speaks to the Christian, my friend, she speaks to you and to me:

(Prov 1:20-33 NIV) Wisdom calls aloud in the street, she raises her voice in the public squares; {21} at the head of the noisy streets she cries out, in the gateways of the city she makes her speech: {22} "How long will you simple ones love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge? {23} If you had responded to my rebuke, I would have poured out my heart to you and made my thoughts known to you. {24} But since you rejected me when I called and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand, {25} since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, {26} I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you-- {27} when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm

you. {28} "Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me. {29} Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD, {30} since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, {31} they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes. {32} For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them; {33} but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm."

Today we see the poverty of everything called Christianity. We see Christians partaking of all the sins of the world. We witness the lawlessness of our times and perhaps we also partake of that lawlessness. Perhaps the Word of the Lord has not yet been revealed to you. If you believe that the Word of God has not yet been revealed to you, that you do not literally know that it is Jesus speaking to you when you read the Bible, then pray. Say, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening!" Then God will give you ears to hear and eyes to see His truth. Then the revelation of the Word will allow you to begin walking in the ways of the Lord, for "*faith comes by hearing and hearing comes by the Word of God.*" (Romans 10:17) This is the beginning of the waters being separated from the waters. They will continue to be separated so long as you seek God's help to rightly divide His Word and His Holy Spirit to help you walk in that Word!

3) Separating from the World

Like Abram, we too have been commanded to get out of our own country and away from our own kindred and father's house. God calls us to a heavenly country and a spiritual journey free of the legalistic and false religious constraints of our spiritual and natural fathers. Our "father's house" does not necessarily mean the physical home of our parents or even our natural relationship to our parents, even though it does imply this in many cases. To come out of our father's house means to come out of the institutions and ways of the world and to live in the knowledge that heaven is our true home. Hebrews instructs us here from the life of Abraham:

{8} By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. {9} By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. {10} For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. (Heb 11:8-10 NIV)

Concerning all the people of faith that God commends, Hebrews continues:

{13} All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. {14} People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. {15} If they

had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. {16} Instead, they were longing for a better country--a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them (Heb 11:13-16 NIV)

God, therefore, **will be ashamed to be called our God** if we are not looking and longing for that better, heavenly country. God will be ashamed to be called our God if we do not admit that we are aliens and strangers here on the earth. Paul says,

{3} You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. {4} No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. {5} And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. {6} The hard-working farmer must be first to partake of the crops. {7} Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things (2 Tim 2:3-7 NKJV)

Do we endure hardship as enlisted soldiers in the army of the Lord Jesus Christ? How so? Do we see ourselves as citizens and soldiers of a government other than that of the country in which we live? Are we engaged in the warfare that Jesus wages in this world? Or, rather than doing His will, are we entangled in the affairs, the politics, of this world? How about the politics of your church? The bottom line is this: do you and I serve God and obey His will for our lives or do we serve mammon (money, fame, power, lusts of the eyes, lusts of the flesh, pride of life)? Test yourself. What is the real motivation in your work, whether you work at a job outside the home or not. Is it to simply provide for your family, to obey the injunction of 2 Thessalonians 3:10, "If a man will not work, he shall not eat?" Or, do you work to satisfy your lusts for the things of this world, and always want more? If you say it is only to obey God, then do you turn down the job that clearly has an evil or ungodly purpose? Let me give you a personal example.

God called me to serve in the area of law as an attorney many years ago. He continues to give me revelation and understanding concerning how to do justice as an attorney. One recent lesson he gave concerns the taking of a bribe. Consider:

{14} The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless: "Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?" {15} He who walks righteously and speaks what is right, who rejects gain from extortion and keeps his hand from accepting bribes, who stops his ears against plots of murder and shuts his eyes against contemplating evil-- {16} this is the man who will dwell on the heights, whose refuge will be the mountain fortress. His bread will be supplied, and water will not fail him. {17} Your eyes will see the king in his beauty and view a land that stretches afar. (Isa 33:14-17 NIV)

and

A wicked man accepts a bribe in secret to pervert the course of justice. (Proverbs 17:23)

The Lord showed me that for an attorney to take a fee to effect an unjust cause in a court of law is to take a bribe with the intent to pervert the course of justice. I have always been very careful to accept only those cases that I believed were just causes, but this new revelation caused me to examine my caseload even more carefully. One case did not meet the test. I had been retained to represent a client against his ex-wife in order to get his alimony (maintenance) payments reduced or eliminated. But, I did not know the ex-wife's situation or why she was awarded maintenance in the first place. This meant that I did not know whether my client's position was just or not. The next day I sent him a full refund telling him I could not handle his case. My point is this: I want to qualify to dwell with Him Who is a consuming fire. So did Abram, for he heeded God's voice and by faith began a journey to a land that God would show him. There is a land that God will show us as well, if we will follow Him by faith. That land is called heaven and He has invited us to be His co-rulers in His kingdom.

Paul also teaches us in 2 Timothy 2:5 that an athlete is not crowned as the winner unless he competes according to the rules. Clearly Paul is not trying to give us a lesson about sports. He is telling us that we will not win the crown that God promises unless we live our Christian life according to God's rules. Later, in the same letter, he says, "*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 4:8 NKJV). Here we see that one of God's rules concerning the winning of the "crown," is that we must "love His appearing!" For twenty years this phrase went right over my head. If I had been asked about this anytime during those first years of my Christian walk, I'm sure I would have said that I do "love" His appearing. But, I would not have known what it meant. It's true meaning, though, is revealed in this verse:

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. {3} And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. {4} Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. {5} And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. {6} Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. {7} Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. {8} He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. {9} Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. (1 John 3:2-9 NKJV)

When one loves Christ's appearing it means that he gets himself ready to meet Him. It means that he purifies himself and endeavors to live a life of holiness, set apart totally unto God.

All sin is renounced, even the “little” hidden sins that no one knows about. This also is the meaning of being a pilgrim and a sojourner on the earth. It means that we cast aside the things of the world and cling instead to the things of God. Separation from the world is the cry of the angel in Revelation:

And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues." (Rev 18:4 NKJV)

Just before John was given the above Revelation by God, he wrote:

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. {16} 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. {17} And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17 NKJV)

Revelation 18 describes God’s judgment upon the entire world system, called Babylon the Great, at the very end of the great tribulation. God warns us that if we fail to separate ourselves voluntarily from the world, then He will judge us along with the world. If we share in her sins, then we will partake of her plagues. It is that simple. This command, in truth, is the very command that God gave Abram two thousand years earlier. It is the command that He gives to all of His saints, but most Christians do not obey Him. Most Christians emulate Abram’s carnal nephew, Lot, or worse yet, Lot’s wife.

Jesus warned us, ***"Remember Lot's wife. {33} "Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it"*** (Luke 17:32-33). Lot’s wife cared more about her worldly possessions, her life here on earth, than she did about the will of God for her life. When God’s angels were delivering her, Lot, and their two daughters from Sodom, she turned in remorse to view her lost worldly possessions. Immediately God judged her and turned her into a pillar of salt. She refused to voluntarily separate from this world because she loved the world and the things of the world.

{1} If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. {2} Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. {3} For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. {4} When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. {5} Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. {6} Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, {7} in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. {8} But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. {9} Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,

{10} and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him” (Col. 3:1-10 NKJV).

Of course, most people don't believe that they'll be turned into a pillar of salt like Lot's wife. Perhaps they can relate better to Lot.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SEPARATION OF THE CARNAL FROM THE SPIRITUAL

Genesis chapter 13 recounts the separation of Lot and Abram. This separation is a type of the separation that God ordains must occur between carnal and spiritual Christians. First, we see conflict arise between the servants of Lot and Abram. This represents a conflict between the ways of life of the carnal and spiritual Christians. When presented with evidence of the conflict the spiritual man, Abram in the type, declares that the two must separate from one another. Abram gave Lot the right to choose first where he wanted to live. In keeping with his carnal view of life, Lot moved down into the plain of Jordan, to the land of Sodom where there was plenty of wealth and plenty of wickedness. Abram went the other way, up into the hills of Hebron and there God appeared to him again.

Abram does not forsake Lot, however, just as spiritual Christians ought not utterly forsake their carnal Christian brethren. Abram separates from Lot, but when the Kings of the East attack Sodom and kidnap Lot and his family, Abram immediately calls up a small army and rescues Lot from the enemy. This, in type, is an example of what James means when he says, *“Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins”* (James 5:19-20 NKJV). And, as Jude explains, *“On some have compassion, making a distinction; {23} but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh”* (Jude 1:22-23 NKJV).

Spiritual Christians, then, ought to bear with carnal Christians as long as God provides the grace to do so, but there comes a time when God leads the spiritual to utterly separate from the carnal. That time occurs just before God’s judgment upon the wicked and is illustrated in type by several major events in Abram’s life. God explains this principle various ways, for example

:

“He who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.” (1 Cor. 2:15 NKJV)

{11} But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; not even to eat with such a person. {12} For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? {13} But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person." (1 Cor 5:11-13 NKJV)

The event leading up to Abram’s final separation from Lot is Lot’s capture by the Eastern Kings. This capture typifies the enslavement by the world of the carnal Christian. Abram’s brave rescue of Lot typifies the spiritual Christian who liberates a carnal Christian from besetting sins as described in James and Jude above. Even though Lot is Abram’s nephew this passage of Scripture clearly calls Lot Abram’s brother. See Genesis 14:14, 16. Following Abram’s victory two kings come out to meet him, the King of Sodom and the King of Righteousness and Justice, Melchizedek. Also, Lot would certainly still be with Abram at this time. The King of Sodom, as

ruler of the earth's major city of wickedness, typologically represents Satan. Melchizedek, on the other hand, is a type of Christ (actually the preincarnate Christ appearing in the flesh). Melchizedek represents King Jesus who will soon rule the world in justice and righteousness for one thousand years. This one thousand years is the millennial day of rest, the seventh and last of God's thousand-year days of man's history on earth, and that day begins very, very shortly.

The King of Sodom first comes forward, but his approach is intervened by Melchizedek. Then the priest of God Most High offers bread and wine to Abram, signifying the sacrifice of His own body and blood for men. Next He blesses Abram and God who delivered the enemy into Abram's hands. Notice that Lot is not blessed by Melchizedek although the New Testament makes a point of stating that he was "righteous," i.e., spiritually saved. (2 Peter 2:8) After receiving the blessing Abram gives a tithe, his firstfruits, unto the Lord.

Now the King of Sodom reaches Abram and offers him the spoils of war so long as Abram lets him keep all of the souls of men Abram has won back. This typifies Satan's strategy. He will give us wealth, so long as we give him our souls! But, Abram answers,

"I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, {23} "that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich'; {24} "except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion." (Gen 14:22-24 NKJV)

Abram takes nothing for himself from Sodom. He allows the king to take his own property, including the souls of men. This should be our response to Satan and all his minions in this world. Let us refuse the offer of unrighteous wages lest Satan brag that he made us, servants of the Most High, rich by his wealth. It is at this point that Lot has a choice. He could separate from the king of Sodom and stay with his spiritual brother or he can go back with him, back to the ways of the world. Lot chooses Sodom again.

The next time we see Lot is just before God destroys Sodom and Gomorrah. There is no record that Abram ever sees Lot again and this is a solemn warning. After Abram risks his life to deliver his nephew's soul from slavery, and Lot voluntarily submits to that type of slavery again, Abram has nothing more to do with him. Except to pray for him. This is why Abram, who has now been renamed Abraham by God, intercedes on behalf of Lot and any other righteous people in Sodom when God tells him He is about to destroy that land. See Genesis 18:22-33. Abraham had nothing more to do with his carnal brother, but he still considered him a brother and interceded on his behalf. The following passage typifies the deliverance of carnal Christians from the world just before God judges the entire world with fire during the second half of the great tribulation.

(Gen 19:1-8 NIV) The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. {2} "My lords," he said, "please turn aside to your servant's house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning." "No," they answered,

"we will spend the night in the square." {3} But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate. {4} Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom--both young and old--surrounded the house. {5} They called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them." {6} Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him {7} and said, "No, my friends. Don't do this wicked thing. {8} Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don't do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof."

This city of Sodom and all the men from every part of the city represent the world. Lot represents a carnal, but born again, Christian. Peter calls Lot a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men. He says, "that righteous man, living among [the Sodomites] day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard" (1 Peter 2:7-8). Lot was just like Christians today who live in the stress of a lawless, wicked time, but fail to separate themselves from the ways of the world. He especially represents the pastors and fathers of our day who truly believe that the Bible is the Word of God, but never learn to apply it to life. He is a type of the man who should know right from wrong, but is yet "unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe." See Hebrews 5:11-14.

The sad thing is that, although God gave us the testimony of Lot as an example, most Christians make the same mistake as Lot. First, Lot made his own decision to separate from a Godly man like Abram. Then, even after Lot had been taken captive by the world and was rescued by his righteous brother, he returned to the ways of the world once again. Some people reading this have already been warned of their carnal ways by spiritual Christians, but they have not heeded their admonitions.

Also, like Lot, most of us have been given virgins to protect. Pastors have been given their flock and fathers have been given their children. As unto Lot, God has appeared to us by revealing His Word, Jesus Christ. We have believed in Him and received the righteousness that is by faith. See Romans 3:21-22. But we have failed to discern the men of Sodom and we have willingly given our virgin sons and daughters to them to be raped, pillaged and destroyed. So, what do those men really represent? They represent the institutions, plans, and methods of the world. They represent our schools, our places of employment, our meeting places, and, yes, most of our churches. They represent the beast and the harlot riding it, Babylon the Great, of Revelation.

Many Christian pastors and fathers receive the LORD as their Savior, just as Lot received the angels, yet they send their own children into Sodom daily to be molested by the beast. This is what it means when Lot refused to send the two strangers out to be molested by the men, but instead offered his own virgin daughters to be raped and murdered. This is exactly what pastors do with their sheep and fathers do with their children. They pretend to protect them. They say that they love them and only want the best for them. But, they do exactly what the world says to do with them. Fathers send them to the beast's schools and pastors never say a word about it (in fact, most pastors send their children to Babylon's schools too); they allow them to date when

they are sixteen (or fourteen or less); they encourage (read “force”) them to leave their homes when they are eighteen years old in order to make their own way in the beast (world); they encourage (force) them to take jobs in the beast’s businesses so they can afford to rent their own apartments and buy their own cars; they benevolently pay for and send them to the beast’s most illustrious colleges.

What is the result? The virgins get raped and destroyed by the Satanic beast we know as the world. Professing Christians murder their own children and seem to not even be aware of it! Homosexual offenders and other perverts pound at our doors for our sons. They intrude into the beast’s schools with their curricula and the beastly establishment willingly accepts them. They parade their sin in all the beast’s public places. They overturn the set laws in order to make their ways legal and acceptable to all. And we bold Christians cry out, “No, you cannot have our sons. We will not let you take them and sodomize them.” Yet, all the while we send both our sons and our daughters to the beast’s schools and businesses. We pretend we are righteous; we pretend that our souls are vexed by the evil all around us. But, when it comes to raising our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord our God, we are more interested in personal peace and affluence than the ways of God. This is as true for the church elder, pastor, teacher, prophet and self-proclaimed apostle as for the new believer. Oh, that God would raise up true elders to stand and be an example in this wicked time!

What do you think God has to say about His people who act this way? A similar account in the book of Judges gives us the answer. There a Levite and his adulterous wife travel and spend the night with an old Ephraimite in the territory of Benjamin. The men of Benjamin have become as depraved as the earlier Sodomites. They bang on the home’s door and demand to have sex with the traveler. Instead of giving his guest to the Benjamites the old man offers his virgin daughter and the traveler’s concubine to them. Only the adulteress is sent out and she is raped to death by the wicked men. See Judges 19.

In this historical parable the Levite priest is a type of Christ and the old man represents the semi-faithful pastor, the babe in Christ, just as Lot did. He is willing to give his virgin daughter to the brutes outside his door. But, the LORD is not willing to give the virgin away. He only gives His unfaithful wife to the beasts outside. This adulteress is a type of the harlot Babylon in Revelation. Just as God allows the Benjamite beasts to destroy the harlot wife, so the beast of Revelation will be allowed to purge and destroy his carnal Christians who comprise Babylon the harlot. See Rev. 17:16.

We must understand that this is a prophetic picture for the church at the end of the age of grace, the church on the eve of the seventh Millennium. The virgin daughter here in Judges 19 represents the virgin bride of Christ, the members of the Philadelphian church of Revelation 3. Just as this virgin stayed in the shelter of the righteous priest (symbolizing the actual presence of the Lord), the overcoming Christians of God’s Church (Philadelphian believers) will be kept in the presence of God and protected from the great tribulation to come. *“Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth. I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown”* (Rev. 3:10-11). The virgin daughter represents all Christians who will be kept from the persecution and suffering of the great tribulation by what has become known as the firstfruits rapture.

Similarly, the adulterous bride represents the unfaithful Christians of Laodicea and those believers pictured by “that woman Jezebel” of the church of Thyatira. Just as she was thrown out to the evil doers, so will the unfaithful of God be thrown out to the world to be persecuted in

the great trial to soon come. This trial will be necessary to purge these believers of sin-stained lives. If we are unwilling to judge ourselves and separate ourselves willingly from the world system, then we force God to judge us. *“But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world”* (1 Cor. 11:31-32). Today is the day of repentance. We wait to repent and continue to sin at the risk of being judged like Jezebel! *“And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds”* (Rev 2:21-22 KJV).

Brethren, are you sending your children to the public schools? Are you encouraging your children to move out of your house when they turn eighteen? Are you allowing your teenagers to date? Are you making that big sacrifice to send them to that prestigious college? Why? Don't you know that to do so is to send your children into the very bowels of the Satanic beast called this world? Don't you know that to forsake your babies this way is nothing less than offering them to Chemosh as Israel did? When will you repent? When will you listen to the words of your God?

Again, what do you set before your eyes? Every blasphemous and adulterous movie and sit-com that comes through the air waves? The latest pornographic magazine or internet site? What do you allow your children to watch? What do you listen to? What are your children allowed to listen to? Who has authority over your child's room? Do you always know where your children are? When will you listen to the words of your God?

(Deu 6:4-9 NIV) Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. {5} Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. {6} These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. {7} Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. {8} Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. {9} Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

We listen to the many “prophecies” coming forth these days, but it is time to listen to the Word of the Lord from the Scriptures as it relates to our daily lives. We cannot live as we have in the past and expect all to go well. Hear the word of the prophets, *“Flee from Babylon! Run for your lives! Do not be destroyed because of her sins. It is time for the Lord's vengeance; he will pay her what she deserves”* (Jeremiah 51:6). *“Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes”* (Revelation 18:4-5). Brethren, it is time to leave the beast called Babylon. Leave your worldly possessions and desires before you have no choice. God rescued Lot in what is a type of the main harvest rapture. This rapture occurs in the middle of the tribulation, just before God begins to pour out his wrath on the world. His judgment of Sodom is a type of the final judgment by fire. Lot is a type of the carnal Christian who is saved by the “skin of his teeth, and is pictured in this passage:

(1 Cor 3:15-18 NKJV) If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer

loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. {16} Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? {17} If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. {18} 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.

Therefore, leave your adulterous and apostate churches and leaders! Leave your watered down, faithless Christianity! I do not say to leave the fellowship of the Godly saints, only the apostate leaders and brethren who refuse to obey Him who bought them. Drink of the holy and pure waters of God's Word, but go beyond carnal Lot and his wife. Do not give your virgins to the beast and do not live like they did, for God will hold you accountable and you yourself may feel the stinging in your flesh of the beast's mighty jaws.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE GOSPEL OF SEPARATION AND OBEDIENCE^{viii}

(Rom 1:1-6 NKJV) *Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, **separated to the gospel** of God {2} which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, {3} concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, {4} and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. {5} Through Him we have received grace and apostleship **for obedience to the faith** among all nations for His name, {6} among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ.*

SEPARATED TO THE GOSPEL OF PEACE WITH GOD (RECONCILIATION)

The gospel of God is the good news that through the blood of Jesus, God has reconciled man to Himself.

(2 Cor 5:18-21 NKJV) *Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, {19} that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. {20} Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. {21} For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

This reconciliation of man to God is the restoration of man's relationship to Him. This restoration begins when one believes that Jesus Christ died for his sins. When one receives this saving faith from God then he receives a down payment or "earnest" of his full restoration. This earnest is the seed of the Holy Spirit in one's own spirit, or heart, as Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 5:5 and Ephesians 1:13-14.

(Eph 1:13-14 KJV) *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, {14} Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

This passage from Ephesians shows that the implications of reconciliation, i.e. restoration, are utterly profound. What does it mean to say that we have only received an

“earnest” of the Holy Spirit? What is our “inheritance?” What is “the purchased possession?” These are questions that took me years to answer. Here are some quick answers to these questions. Currently, we do not possess the fullness of the Holy Spirit. We have only received an earnest or small deposit of the Spirit and, therefore, we are not yet perfected. Our inheritance, which we can despise as did Esau, is our potential position of authority in the Kingdom of God during the Tabernacles Age. The purchased possession is our glorified and immortal bodies. Only when we receive that glorified body will we receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit and be enabled to live a perfect and sinless life, a life that lives in absolute conformity to God’s law. This is the goal of our salvation. This is why the Scripture says that Jesus is the end (goal) of the Law in Romans 10:4. The word translated “end” is the Greek word “telos” which means “to set out for a definite point or conclusion,” or “the conclusion of an act or state.” Christ is the prophetic conclusion of the Law. Those who believe in Him set out for the definite point or conclusion of the law, which, as Romans 10:4 says, **is righteousness**.

Many preach this gospel of reconciliation with God, but then abuse the gospel’s simplicity by teaching that it “did away” with God’s law. They teach this because they have believed the many false traditions of the church and her ministers. They have not studied the Word for themselves. Thus they become lawless and render the Word of God useless. To them and their disciples the salt of God’s Word has lost its flavor. It is good for nothing, says Jesus, not even to be thrown on the dunghill. Those who teach and believe the doctrine of lawlessness will be called “least in the Kingdom of Heaven,” says Jesus in Matthew 5:19. These, as we see in Hebrews 10:39, are also those who draw back to the destruction of their own souls.

We will study all of the above theological concepts as we proceed, so don’t lose heart if you are not yet familiar with or if you disagree with any of these ideas! A mark of humility is the willingness to change even one’s long-held doctrinal opinions.

DEATH: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SEPARATION

(Luke 14:33-35 NKJV) "So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. {34} "Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? {35} "It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

To forsake all that one has is to die to oneself. Throughout the Bible God teaches us to die to our own desires. Jesus Himself died on the cross to enable us to forsake the things of the world. This is how we experience the separation that God requires. Only then can we partake of His restoration. Either we choose to die now to the desires and lusts of our self-serving flesh and our idolatrous pursuit of mammon, or we will taste the literal death of our souls later. We must choose death just as Jesus did. This is the beginning of the overcoming Christian life. Everything begins with the death of Jesus on the cross. Unfortunately, for us this is not a once for all choice. Like Paul, we must learn to “die daily.”

Jesus likens our life to a grain of wheat, saying, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life"* (John 12:24-25 NKJV). He also says,

(Luke 9:23-26 NKJV) *"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. {24} "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. {25} "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? {26} "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels."*

The Greek word *psuche* is translated "life" in the above scriptures and its literal meaning is "soul." Jesus promises profound rewards for obedience to His commands. He also issues solemn warnings regarding disobedience. Many people fear death, but our Lord told us long ago, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death"* (John 8:51). If we choose to obey Him now, therefore, we will save our souls and we will never see death. But, if we follow our own lusts and the temporal pleasures of this world we will ultimately lose our souls (lives) and we will see and experience death.

Christ teaches this principle of death, i.e. separation, throughout Scripture. There is a paradox at work within this doctrine, however. To experience death is to come into the knowledge of God. For example, when God pronounces judgment through his prophet Ezekiel upon Israel, her surrounding neighbors, and, prophetically, upon those whom these nations represent, He terminates every declaration with this assertion: *"Then they (the nation God will destroy) shall know that I am the Lord!"* What He is saying is that all people will come to know God in the midst of their judgment, i.e., in the reality of their literal, physical death, if they do not know Him before that time.

Our dilemma is this: do we willingly choose death now, while we live, so that we may know Him and, hence, truly live? Or, do we make Him kill us in judgment before we will ever learn to know Him? *"And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder"* (Mat. 21:44). Let us, brethren, be counted among those that freely fall upon the rock which most builders continue to reject. The Doctrine of the Separation teaches us how to experience death now, before we suffer age-lasting loss later.

The entire Bible trains us to be "separated to the gospel ... for obedience to the faith" of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Many of today's Christian teachers, pastors, and church prophets and apostles teach little about obedience and know nothing about this separation. I recall one prominent, world-renowned teacher and father to one of the major "prophetic" movements explaining that **God told him not to teach obedience** to His commands because his people were not ready to hear that! Many churches, filled with divorce and carnality, bear the fruit of such error.

Obedience, though, flows out of the elementary teaching of Christ. To believe upon Jesus and to hunger for His truth is to desire to obey Him. Yes, Jesus really is serious about obedience when he says, *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."* (Matthew 28:18-20)

Here Jesus explicitly tells us that to Him belongs **all authority**. Oh, that we would understand God's authority and our duty to acknowledge it! How often we fail in this life because we refuse to set aside our emotional wailing and accept His righteous Word on a matter.

How many, for example, have developed an emotional attachment for a man or woman who is not their spouse, but have not extinguished the smoldering flame that can lead to lust, adultery, and disaster? Don't they remember the wisdom of Solomon?

It will save you also from the adulteress, from the wayward wife with her seductive words, who has left the partner of her youth and ignored the covenant she made before God. For her house leads down to death and her paths to the spirits of the dead. None who go to her return or attain the paths of life. Thus you will walk in the ways of good men and keep to the paths of the righteous. For the upright will live in the land, and the blameless will remain in it; but the wicked will be cut off from the land, and the unfaithful will be torn from it. (Proverbs 2:16-22)

Don't they believe the warnings of the Prophets?

Another thing you do: You flood the Lord's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. You ask, "Why?" It is because the Lord is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. Has not the Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. "I hate divorce," says the Lord God of Israel, "and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment," says the Lord Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith. You have wearied the Lord with your words. "How have we wearied him?" you ask. By saying, "All who do evil are good in the eyes of the Lord, and he is pleased with them" or "Where is the God of justice?" (Malachi 2:13-17)

If we will only obey the Lord we will escape the pain that comes from falling into sin and disgrace. If we refuse to teach separation from this world's ways and obedience to the Word of God, then we do not preach the same Gospel that Jesus and His Apostles did. Then we do not teach "the faith."

OBEDIENCE TO THE FAITH

John, the beloved apostle, knew Jesus perhaps better than any other man. We know him as the apostle of love, mercy, and grace, for it is John who said, "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16). He also wrote, "We should love one another" (1 John 3:11). Yet, it is this same John who went on to define love this way: "And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands" (2 John 1:16). Christian love, then, is not emotional feelings. It is active obedience to the will and commands of Christ.

Another apostle, Peter, defines the gospel in terms of obedience. He proclaimed, "*For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not **obey the gospel of God?***" (1 Peter 4:17) We must understand that Peter wrote these words to believers, to Christians. The opening of his first letter declares that "God's elect," the individual members of Christ's Church, were "**chosen ... for obedience to Jesus Christ.**" (1 Peter 1:1-2)

Hebrews carries the same holy Word saying, "*[Jesus] became **the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him***" (Hebrews 5:9). Does this imply that Christ is **not** the source of salvation for all those who do **not** obey Him? Yes, but the salvation in view here is that of the soul, not the spirit. Over and over again the Scriptures teach that being born of the spirit ("begotten of God", or becoming "born again") is once for all, but salvation of the soul goes on throughout one's life and is characterized by separation to the gospel and obedience to the faith! This entire book deals primarily with the salvation of the soul versus initial spiritual salvation because this is what Christians now need to understand.

Paul wrote much concerning obedience to God. Like the author of Hebrews (which was perhaps Paul), Paul declared a gospel which called "*people from among all the Gentiles to the **obedience that comes by faith***" (Romans 1:5). Later he proclaimed that Christians are called as "*slaves ... to **obedience, which leads to righteousness***" (Romans 6:16). To the Corinthians he boasted of the obedience which accompanied their "*confession of the gospel of Christ*" (2 Corinthians 9:13). Then he went on to say that Christians should "*take captive **every thought** to make it **obedient** to Christ*" (2 Corinthians 10:5). He warned that the Lord "*will punish those who do not know God and do not **obey the gospel** of our Lord Jesus*" (2 Thessalonians 1:8).

CHRISTIANITY IS A PRACTICAL WAY OF LIFE, NOT AN ESOTERIC RELIGION

Now let's get practical. What, exactly, must Christians obey? I do not intend to exhaustively recount the principles and commands of all Scripture here, but I will discuss some of the precepts which our Lord Jesus wants us to obey. Jesus Himself presents many of His commands in the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 5:13-16 he instructs us to carry His truth into all of society. He tells us to be "salt" and "light" to the world so that men may "*see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*" We use salt to season our food, to make it taste good. Likewise, Christians are to season society. We make it good in a moral, tangible, and real sense. Light illuminates all things. The light of God's word, when taken into the darkness of society, illumines evil so that men may choose the good and learn to praise their Creator. Showing others what is good can actually lead to the salvation of their soul. Peter put it this way, "*Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.*" 1 Peter 3:15.

In Matthew 5:17-20, Jesus tells us to obey and to teach obedience to all of the laws of the Old Testament. (We need to understand this in the light of all Scripture, realizing that some laws, such as those relating to animal sacrifice, foods, and other ceremonial laws have been modified by the New Covenant). The rejection of God's law is the gravest error of our generation. We do so in complete disregard and disobedience to Christ's own command and to the destruction and perversion of our society.

In the remainder of Matthew 5, Jesus expounds laws relating to murder, adultery, divorce, oaths, revenge, and enemies, making the New Covenant requirements of God even stricter than

those under the Old Covenant. For example, not only should we not murder under the New Covenant, we should not even become angry with a brother. Rather than just keeping from sexual sin, we should not even look upon another with sexual, lustful thoughts. Jesus is teaching us that He is concerned about the inner man. It is not enough to do that which is right in the sight of men. Our hearts must be changed, for it is out of our hearts that our mouths speak and our bodies act. In other words, **we must want to obey the commands of Christ** out of love for Him and out of a desire to please him. In this sense the precepts of our Lord are harder and more exacting than even the law of Moses! **Who, then, can be saved?**

In Matthew 6 Jesus cautions us to do our giving, praying, and fasting secretly, not for the approval of men. Then He advises us to serve God instead of money and to trust in God's provision rather than worrying about how we will work everything out. Next, in Matthew 7, Jesus tells us not to judge others unless we ourselves are willing to be judged, for only the righteous can judge righteously. He gives us the "golden rule" in Matthew 7:12 and, finally, in 7:21 He strictly warns, *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but **only he who does the will of my Father** who is in heaven."* Clearly Jesus is talking about a reward here that is other than our salvation by faith in Him alone!

Jesus, of course, is not the only one in the New Testament who gives us specific rules to obey. So do His apostles. Paul, having written much of the New Testament, stresses obedience to God's requirements throughout his letters. Romans, for example, unlocks the key to the life of obedience in that it shows that the true Christian life is a life led by the Spirit of God. Paul writes, *"Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness"* (Romans 6:19). In chapter 8 he tells us that those who are led by the Spirit submit to God's laws and please Him. In chapter 13 he charges us to *"put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, **not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy"*** (Romans 13:12-13).

Paul appears especially severe to the Corinthians when he warns, *"I am writing you that **you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat"*** (1 Corinthians 5:11). This follows his grave admonition: *"Do you not know that **the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God"*** (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). The apostle wanted no Christian to be misled: **if you want to inherit the rewards of God, then sin is not an option. Obedience is the only choice.**

In his second letter to the Corinthians he instructs Christians to lead a life marked by separation from the wicked acts of unbelievers and to live a pure, sinless life (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 13:2-10). To the Galatians he writes of the sins which disqualify one from partaking of the kingdom of God. Then he describes the fruit of the Holy Spirit and of those who walk in obedience to Him (Galatians 5:16-26). He teaches the Ephesians to imitate God in holiness of living and to get rid of *"even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity..."* (Ephesians 4:17-5:20). The apostle instructs the Philippians in holy, obedient living, saying, *"Finally, brothers, **whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things"*** (Philippians 4:8). He tells the Colossians to "put to death" their sinful behavior and to walk in the virtues of the Lord (Colossians 3:1-4:6). Paul urges the

Thessalonians to "live lives worthy of God" and commends them for receiving "the word of God" (1 Thessalonians 2:12-13). Finally, he directs Timothy and Titus regarding holy manners of the Christian life. These instructions are so detailed they even speak to the dress of women (1 Timothy 2:9) and the specific qualifications of Church elders (1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1:6-9).

Paul makes it abundantly clear, though, that we will never do these things in the power of our flesh. We can only obey by being led of the Holy Spirit, by spiritually apprehending the life and truth of Jesus Christ. We can only please God by setting our minds on the things of the Spirit and by walking "according to the Spirit" by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans chapters 6 through 8 deal with these theological concepts in depth.

THE GOSPEL OF SEPARATION

Paul speaks his clearest word of separation to the Corinthians:

{14} Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? {15} And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? {16} And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." {17} Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." {18} "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty." (2 Cor 6:14-18 NKJV)

The Biblical doctrine of separation is the teaching of God concerning the distinction between the spiritual and carnal Christian. **This day we stand at the end of the age of grace, the end of the church age, and at the dawn of the years of judgment leading to the establishment of the Kingdom Age.** We see the leaven of false doctrine (food sacrificed to idols) completely permeating all that is called the church. See Matthew 13:33 and this author's book entitled *When We Awake*. Now we see the sad reality prophesied by Paul to Timothy:

{3} 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; {4} and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. (2 Tim 4:3-4 NKJV)

Most of today's Christians believe that they are "rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing." But, Jesus warns those with this attitude that you "do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked." Revelation 3:17. Yes, we live now in the era of the Laodicean Church. This separation of the spiritual from the carnal is the teaching that explains what the prophets meant when they said:

{17} Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." {18} "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty." (2 Cor 6:17-18 NKJV)

{4} And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. (Revelation 18:4 NKJV)

This, then, is the great goal of Scripture: God's people must separate themselves from the world's ways as they learn to obey the Word of God. This is the teaching of God through every one of his prophets: Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Malachi, Jesus, His apostles, and all the rest. And, to help us understand this truth, God communicated the doctrine of separation from the very beginning. This is that mysterious doctrine comprising the holy word named "The Teaching about Righteousness" in the New Testament.

*{9} And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, {10} called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek," {11} of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. {12} For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. {13} For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in **the word of righteousness**, for he is a babe. {14} 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 5:9-14 NKJV)*

PART THREE

THE SEPARATION (DISCERNMENT) BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL:

(THE TEACHING ABOUT RIGHTEOUSNESS)

Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. {19} And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; {20} And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all. (Gen 14:18-20 NKJV)

And, once made perfect, he (Jesus) became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him {10} and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek. {11} We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. {12} In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! {13} Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. {14} But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. (HEBREWS 5:9-14 NIV)

How is it that virtually the entire visible body of Christ has become more like Lot than like Abraham? Why is it that Christians refuse to separate from the things of the world as the Scriptures command? There are at least two major reasons. One is that almost no pastor, teacher, prophet, or apostle dares to preach anything beyond the milk of the Word. To preach meat requires the exercise of discernment and the implementation of judgments. Almost all of today's leaders fear even the idea of judging for, after all, isn't it wrong to discriminate? The truth is that they fear to step on the tither's toes, lest the sinning Christian leave with his feelings hurt and his pockets still full of money. They serve mammon, not God. Therefore, they will not even bother to try to understand the Book of Hebrews and its "teaching about righteousness."

The second major reason that Christians refuse to separate from the world is that they believe they have the "grace" to stay in it. Christians these days believe they have the grace to do all sorts of things that earlier saints would never have dreamed doing. They often excuse their behavior and wicked disobedience by saying that the Scriptures were originally written to a different culture and that the same expectations are not made of them. (This is why women no longer have to wear head coverings in church meetings, you see.) Whatever the reason for disobedience is, however, most Christians reduce the entire Bible, including and especially the Book of Hebrews, to weak milk and apply all of its warnings to unbelievers, rather than to the (hopefully) sincere Christians to whom it was written.

The teaching about righteousness from Hebrews 5:14, however, contains the meat of the

Word of God. So long as we refuse its sustenance we remain mere infants in our understanding and our communion with God. “Infantile” certainly describes a church more interested in its building programs than with teaching its people to walk in holiness before God, separated from this world’s idolatry. Understanding the teaching about righteousness, though, will help us to understand other teachings for the mature believer, like the salvation of the soul and the firstfruits rapture. Walking in its truth will also keep us from experiencing the judgments of which Hebrews warns.

We know that Jesus consistently teaches His purpose and plans in Scripture. He means what He says. All of Scripture speaks authoritatively to the Christian life. Throughout the Bible Christ teaches the very basic truths of the world He created, and especially these two: righteousness and justice. These two truths are so important that He literally calls them the “foundation of God’s throne.” See Psalm 89:14 and Psalm 97:2. The name “Melchizedek” itself actually means King of Righteousness or King of Justice, and, hence, Melchizedek is the King of Righteousness and Justice. See Hebrews 7:2. We may be assured, then, that no accident caused the mysterious Melchizedek to appear historically only in Genesis 14 and then reappear in the New Testament exactly and only at that place that introduces us to “the teaching about righteousness.” (Except for the prophetic statement about Melchizedek in Psalm 110:4, quoted in Hebrews) Genesis 14, you will recall, details the important story of Melchizedek and the separation between carnal and spiritual believers as seen in the lives of Lot and Abram. When Melchizedek reappears in the Book of Hebrews, the Doctrine of the Separation is given a specific name, the Teaching about Righteousness.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK

(Heb 1:8-9 NKJV) *But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; **A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom.** {9} **You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness;** Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions."*

(Heb 5:6-8 NKJV) *As He also says in another place: "**You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek**"; {7} who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, {8} though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.*

In this verse from Hebrews chapter one, God the Father speaks to God the Son and tells Him that His throne shall last forever. Moreover, the scepter of His Kingdom shall be a scepter of righteousness. And why? Because Jesus, God the Son, loves righteousness and hates lawlessness. We must see and understand this relationship between righteousness and lawfulness. To be unrighteous is to be lawless. To be righteous is to be perfect, lawful in all one's ways. And it is exactly because Jesus loves righteousness and hates lawlessness that His Father is pleased to anoint Him as King.

This introductory verse from Hebrews quotes Psalm 45, verses 6 and 7. This psalm begins in tribute to the great King and uses words reminiscent of the Song of Songs to describe Him. Song of Songs describes the relationship between Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom, and she who would be His Bride. Here in Psalm 45 we see the Bridegroom who is also a great King.

(Psa 45:2-4 NKJV) *You are fairer than the sons of men; Grace is poured upon Your lips; Therefore God has blessed You forever. {3} Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One, With Your glory and Your majesty. {4} And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, and righteousness; And Your right hand shall teach You awesome things.*

Here God the Son is gracious, blessed forever by the Father. But, He is also mighty, glorious, and majestic. Truth, humility, and righteousness describe His prosperous rule, for the law was given through Moses, but both grace and truth (the law) came through Jesus Christ. See John 1:17. Verse 9 of this psalm introduces us to the King's Bride, the Bride of Christ. She is clothed in gold which represents the purity of God. She has been purged of all dross, all sin, and "stands" in the presence of the King in "gold from Ophir." Then she speaks to us who would also be the Bride of Christ:

(Psa 45:10-11 NKJV) *Listen, O daughter; Consider and incline*

*your ear; Forget your own people also, and your father's house;
{11} So the King will greatly desire your beauty; Because He is
your Lord, worship Him.*

The Bride announces the innermost thoughts of her King. She says, “Listen, my daughter, my fellow believer. Open your spiritual ears. Pray for God to give you understanding and believe that He will. Now, consider and do not forget what I am telling you. Make choices that demonstrate that you have truly heard my words. I speak to you that very word that God spoke to Abram so long ago, ‘Get out of your country, from your family, and from your father’s house, to a land that God Himself will show you!’ Then, and only then, after you have separated yourself from the idolatry of the world, will the King, my King, greatly desire your beauty. For only after you decide to obey Him and free yourselves from the sins that bind you will my King purge your dross and dress you with gold as I now am. Come now! Worship the King because He is your Lord! Offer yourselves a living sacrifice and He will raise you up to show you what you must do.” The Queen calls for separation. Can you hear her?

Now the King’s Father announces the prize awaiting all who will hear and obey:

*Instead of Your fathers shall be Your sons, Whom You shall make
princes in all the earth. {17} I will make Your name to be
remembered in all generations; Therefore the people shall praise
You forever and ever. (Psa 45:16-17 NKJV)*

The First Warning

The Book of Hebrews announces the coming of the great King who will be remembered and praised forever. It takes us at once to many places in the Old Testament that prophesy concerning Him. It reminds us of our destiny to become His chosen Bride and His chosen princes who will rule the earth with Him. This is the **great salvation** that Hebrews discusses. But, then, immediately the book strikes us with its first warning:

*Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we
have heard, lest we drift away. {2} For if the word spoken through
angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience
received a just reward, {3} how shall we escape if we neglect so
great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the
Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, {4} God
also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various
miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?
(Heb 2:1-4 NKJV)*

“Therefore we must?” Saying “must” to a Christian is pretty risky business these days. The very word smacks of “legalism” and doesn’t sound like “grace” at all. Who is “we” anyway? It is we to whom God has “spoken” in these last days “by His Son.” according to Hebrews 1:2. It is we who have “heard” the Word of God according to verse 2:1. It is we who might “neglect so great a salvation” as that described in Psalm 45 warns verse 2:3. Yes, “we” are

us Christians, so “we must” not be deceived into believing that this and the four other major warnings of Hebrews deal with the unsaved. Each one contains admonitions for the born again believer, not the unregenerate natural man who could never understand the warning to begin with.

And what is this “so great” salvation of which he boasts? Hebrews 2:5 tells us that this salvation concerns “the world to come.” Hebrews chapter 3 explains that this salvation deals with the very dwelling (house, or tabernacle) of God. In chapter 4 we learn that this salvation has to do with the sabbath “rest” of God, which is the Kingdom of God, the thousand year reign of Christ, that all of Scripture points to. Chapter 5 teaches that this “great” salvation relates to the reign of Christ “according to the order of Melchizedek,” to Christian maturity and to the discernment of good and evil.

Clearly, Hebrews does not refer to the salvation known as being “born again” or spiritual “regeneration.” Once that supernatural birth occurs, it is done. We can’t get un-reborn and we can’t get spiritually unsaved, not even if we want to. This great salvation of which Hebrews speaks is that salvation which deals with the soul of man, that is, with his mind, will and emotions. See 1 Thes. 5:23. It is salvation that can be lost or won depending upon our freedom of choice according to Matthew 16:24-26. Ephesians 2:8 and Romans 9 makes it clear that man has no freedom of choice regarding his spiritual salvation. Hebrews speaks of the salvation that promises rule and reign with the Mighty One for all those who overcome. See Revelation 3:21. On the other hand, it is a salvation that we can neglect to the gnashing of our teeth or the actual perishing of our souls. See Hebrews 2:1-3; 3:7-4:13; 6:4-8; 10:26-31; 12:25-29; 2 Thes. 2:10; 2 Peter 2:12; Rev. 3:5; Mat. 24:51; 25:30; Luke 12:46.

The Second Warning

{7} Today, if you will hear His voice, {8} Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, {9} Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. {10} Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.' {11} So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.' {12} Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; {13} but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. {14} For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. (Heb 3:7-14 NKJV)

Hebrews now takes us to the wandering Israelites after they refused to believe God and conquer the land of Canaan. We must comprehend that all Israel was saved at this time. “*For indeed the gospel was preached ... to them.*” Hebrews 4:2. They had sacrificed the lamb and placed its blood over their doors at that first Passover. Their sins were covered and the death angel passed over them. An Israelite here is a type of a saved person, then, although disobedient. They represent Christians who will not be allowed to enter into the Kingdom of God. Hebrews 3:19 says, “*we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*” Just as Israel, except for Caleb and Joshua, did not enter into Canaan because of unbelief so will a Christian be kept out of

the Kingdom of God because of unbelief.

Hebrews chapter four teaches us to “be diligent to enter that rest” of God. Through the Scriptures, both Old and New, we understand that the rest of God is the sabbath day rest. Further, we understand that the sabbath given to Israel was a “sign” that pointed to the millennial day of rest, that thousand years when Jesus will reign as King over the earth. The sabbath given to Israel was a type of the millennial day. See Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 31:13-17; 2 Peter 3:8; Rev. 20:6. This explains why the penalty for disobeying the laws of the sabbath were so great, i.e. death. This physical death pointed to the potential perishing of one’s soul. All of these things demonstrate in type the significance of striving to enter through the narrow door, thus qualifying to rule and reign with the King of Kings. This is no small honor and nothing to take lightly. This is that “so great salvation!”

Separation of the Soul and the Spirit

And now the Lord tells us how we may win our souls and how we may escape the error of Israel: *“The Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”* Here we see the Doctrine of the Separation again. The Word of God, we learn, is able to separate the soul from the spirit. The question for us is this: when will that separation occur? Now, when we voluntarily let the Word separate us? Or, at the judgment seat of Christ when we have no choice? See 2 Cor. 5:10.

But, do not dismay if you find that you are not yet living in the perfection that Jesus requires. Hebrews next comforts us with the reality that Jesus now serves as our High Priest in the order of Melchizedek. See Hebrews 4:14-5:6; 7:1-28. His is a throne of grace as well as of righteousness and justice. Through Him we *“obtain mercy and find grace to help in our time of need,”* those times when we fail. Because Jesus lived and died as a man of flesh and blood He sympathizes with our weaknesses and makes intercession for us when we confess our sins to Him. This is true grace and each of us has access to all of the grace we require, so long as we do not use this grace as a license to sin. See Jude 4. This is the *“grace of God that brings salvation ... to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ...”* (Titus 2:11-13 NIV)

Now, though, Jesus has become “the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.” See Hebrews 5:9. Brethren, obedience is not grace, but it is accomplished by grace. If we have to obey Christ to obtain this “eternal salvation,” then it is by works and not simply a gift of grace. This salvation, then, speaks of something other than that which most of us have known. This speaks of the salvation of the soul, and now we have also come to Melchizedek.

The Book of Hebrews introduces us to Jesus as the King who shall rule after the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek’s name itself speaks prophetically of God’s eternal plan. It tells of Jesus who shall rule the earth as the King of Righteousness and Justice. Yet, before the author can explain these things he must first introduce us to the “teaching about righteousness.” He must warn us to be weaned from the milk and to grow into maturity and so, He says,

{11} We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. {12} In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the

elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! {13} Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. {14} But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. (HEBREWS 5:11-14 NIV)

We will not discuss the milk of God's Word here, but will attempt to go on to the meat. First, though, we must understand one thing. If we have not been "constantly using" God's Word in our lives, i.e. reading and meditating on it daily, then we may find ourselves utterly unable to distinguish good from evil and, hence, to understand this vital doctrine. We will also find ourselves unwilling to "go on to perfection" as Hebrews 6:1 exhorts and thus find that God Himself will not even permit us to understand this important doctrine. See Hebrews 6:3. We do find, therefore, that few people understand the meaning and ramifications of righteousness and justice these days. To do so requires one to understand God's Word and in particular, God's law, and we all know that the law is done away with by Christ, and to be devoutly ignored, don't we? Or, do we?

Christians Today are Immature and Dull of Hearing

And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, {10} called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek," {11} of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. (Heb 5:9-11 NKJV)

Now we come to the meat of Hebrews and, in fact, the entire Word of God. The writer first admonishes his readers for their inability to understand his teaching. He rebukes them for having become "dull of hearing." Again, he is not saying that they have become deaf and cannot hear external sounds. He speaks of spiritual hearing and his words mean the same as those of Jesus when he says, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." See Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22. This is also that of which Jesus speaks when He says,

*{17} "For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light. {18} **Therefore take heed how you hear.** For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him." (Luke 8:17-18 NKJV)*

But we have not taken heed of how we hear and we have not taken seriously our responsibility to wash ourselves with the Word of God. Yet this is the means that God has given us to become sanctified, set apart, separated unto His good use. See Ephesians 5:26. We have refused to "receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save our souls." (James 1:21) We have not seriously asked Jesus to open our spiritual ears so that we can hear spiritual truth. We have not asked God to open our spiritual eyes and to apply eye salve so that we can see spiritual reality. See Rev. 3:18. Therefore, we are those to whom Hebrews speaks who have become "dull of hearing." Many who read these words have been saved ten, twenty, forty years,

yet who among us is skilled in the “teaching about righteousness” of which Hebrews speaks? Yes, we are those that “seem” to have something, but even what we think we have will be taken away.

(Rev 3:14-19 NKJV) *"And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: {15} 'I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. {16} 'So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. {17} 'Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'; and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked; {18} 'I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. {19} 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.'"*

Most Christians dwell in the Laodicean Church at the end of the age, the church that all of Scripture prophesied would be devoid of “the faith” when Jesus returns. See Luke 18:8; 2 Peter 2:1-22; Jude; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-9; Rev. 2:20-23; 3:2-5; 3:14-19. But, individuals dwelling in that church still have a little, a very little, time to repent, to come out of their apostate churches, and to become overcomers who will inherit the promises of God.

{20} "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. {21} "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. {22} "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (Rev 3:20-22 NKJV)

Christians Have a Very Little Time Left to Mature: The Third Warning

{4} For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, {5} and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, {6} if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame. {7} For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; {8} but if it bears thorns and briars, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned. (Heb 6:4-8 NKJV)

Brethren, we must understand that his warning applies to us believers, not to the

unregenerate. The unsaved do not “become partakers of the Holy Spirit.” The non-Christian does not “taste the good word of God and the powers of the age to come.” These words apply specifically and only to the born again believer. This passage warns us that the disobedient Christian to whom much was given “*is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.*” This sinning Christian, though, is not cursed. He does not suffer everlasting fire, but he only escapes through the fire. He is, therefore, punished. His spirit will live, but his soul will perish. See 1 Cor. 3:11-15; Rev. 21:8; Hebrews 10:39; James 5:20; 2 Thes. 2:10; 2 Peter 2:12; 3:9; Jude 11; Matthew 16:24-26. Hebrew’s third admonition addresses those who have progressed spiritually past the milk of the word. The warning is severe. Are we really sure we want to proceed on into mature knowledge of the Holy One?

The Ministry of Melchizedek

(Heb 7:1-4 NKJV) For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, {2} to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace," {3} without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually. {4} Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils.

Melchizedek has no father and no mother. He has “*neither beginning of days nor end of life.*” He is “*like the Son of God.*” Who could he be? Since he is obviously eternal in nature and is like the Son, we have three options: He is either the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit. Since no one has ever seen the Father, then He is either the Son or the Holy Spirit. Since the Son is God in the flesh, I believe that Melchizedek literally is God the Son, Jesus Christ. Therefore the idea of being “according to the order of Melchizedek” does not mean that Jesus Christ is a priest “according to the order of Jesus Christ,” but that Jesus Christ is a priest according to the order of what Melchizedek represents. That is, Jesus serves as the Priest-King of justice and righteousness.

Justice and righteousness, therefore, describe the New Covenant over which Jesus mediates. See Hebrews 8:6. To understand this in its fullness is to understand the teaching about righteousness, the teaching prophesied by Jeremiah:

{8b} "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; {9} "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. {10} "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

{11} "None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. {12} "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." (Heb 8:8b-12 NKJV)

Hebrews 9 next explains in detail the necessity of Christ's sacrifice and the work His blood accomplished by that one sacrifice. It describes how the tabernacle, its furnishings, and the animal blood sacrifices were types of the heavenly things and of Jesus' own sacrifice. The main points this chapter makes, as far as this study is concerned, are that His blood "*cleanses our consciences from dead works to serve the living God*" and "*puts away sin.*" See verses 14 and 26. The chapter ends with this statement: "*To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.*" Hebrews 9:28b.

We know that not all Christians "wait for" Jesus to return. We know that many Christians do not see their salvation as something future, something beyond their initial forgiveness of sins. The salvation here in Hebrews 9:28, therefore, refers once again to soul salvation. We will soon turn our attention to the righteousness and justice that Melchizedek represents, but first we must understand how righteousness and justice describe and define the character, the very heart, of God.

The Elohim

I also believe that the Order of Melchizedek is the priesthood of the elohim.

God (elohim) standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods (elohim). How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah. Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked. They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course. I have said, Ye are gods (elohim); and all of you are children of the most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes. Arise, O God (elohim), judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations. (Psalms 82:1-8)

The elohim are the spiritual overcomers of Revelation 2-3. We can easily see the correspondence between the elohim of Psalm 82 and the overcomers by comparing that Psalm with the overcomers from the Church of Thyatira. "*And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star.*" Revelation 2:26-28

We see in Psalm 82 that the elohim someday will arise to judge the earth and inherit the nations. Likewise, Revelation 2:26-28 states that the overcomers will be given power over the nations so that they can rule them with a rod of iron. The Order of Melchizedek, elohim, and overcomers all describe the ruling spiritual priesthood of the earth.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE HEART OF GOD

After removing Saul, He made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do' (Acts 13:22).

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.

*But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law he meditates day and night.*

He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers (Psalm 1:1-3).

*"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices--mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected **the more important matters of the law--justice, mercy and faithfulness.** You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former" (Matthew 23:23).*

Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart who will lead you with knowledge and understanding (Jeremiah 3:15).

DAVID, A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART, TEACHES ABOUT RIGHTEOUSNESS

King David's all-consuming passion was to please God. The Scripture calls him a man after God's own heart. It is written that David obeyed God perfectly, except in the case of Uriah the Hittite (See 1 Kings 15:5). He pursued God with all his heart and extravagantly expressed his love for Him. David, of all men, knew the heart of God and what it took to please Him. In the Biblical books of Kings and Chronicles every righteous king of Judah was compared to David in words like these: "He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father David had done" (2 Chronicles 29:2). Truly, here was a man who knew God! What can this man tell us about knowing and pleasing Him?

Since the book of Psalms contains many of David's own writings, it is the key to understanding David's heart and mind. The very first psalm, for example, presents a clear picture of this man whom God esteems. Here King David traces the walk of the man who would seek the heart of God. He tells us that rather than partaking of life with the wicked, sinning mocker, the man after God's heart delights in the laws of his Creator. This man meditates upon God's word, God's law; he assimilates it into his own life. He learns how to discern between good and evil and choose the good. Thus, he builds a foundation for immortality using the eternal precepts of God. David tells us that the one who does this, the one who diligently searches out and applies the laws of God, bears fruit throughout his life. He is a man who truly prospers.

Many of the following psalms laud the righteous life built upon God's laws. Psalm 2, for

example, warns the rulers of the earth not to throw off God's righteous precepts and statutes. He established these laws as a restraint against evil in society. He made them a model for all the nations, but today the kings of the earth, and even those called by Christ's Name, scoff at His righteous decrees as if they were something overly burdensome. In their place these men have erected legal protections for every form of perversity. God scoffs at them in return and warns of their impending judgment. He warns of the day when Christ Himself will rule them with a rod of iron and dash them to pieces, like broken pottery, unless they turn in repentance toward Him (See Psalm 2:9).

Psalm 19, another psalm of David, gives tribute to the glory of God, and it, too, focuses on God's eternal laws. First, David declares the wonders of God's creation and of how it speaks of our holy God: "*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge*" (Psalm 19:1-2). After describing how God's creation gives glory to its maker, David moves on to tell of the specific revelations God gives to His prophets:

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. (Psalm 19:7-11).

Here is David's secret for becoming a man after God's own heart: to sit at the feet of God, reading and meditating upon His Word, and understanding that this Word is "perfect," even to the "reviving of the soul," i.e. the salvation of the soul. This man learned that all of God's statutes are trustworthy and that they can even make the simpleton wise. He learned that these precepts are so right, so good and true, that they bring joy to one's heart and light to one's eyes. God's laws are so sure, so certain, that one can build an eternal life upon them! Although spiritual life is not gained through obedience to God's law, for we all are sinners, once we have obtained new life through Christ our Lord, that life is to be built upon the precepts of God's holy requirements. Remember, Peter declared that all Christians were "***chosen ... for obedience to Jesus Christ***" (1 Peter 1:1-2).

Further, understanding God's laws brings one into a holy fear of Him who requires obedience to them. This fear, though, is pure and endures forever. It marks the man of humility who, like David and his teacher, Moses, seeks to please his God. This servant of the Lord knows that God's laws are more precious than gold, sweeter than honey, and lead to the greatest reward of all, the blessing of God. David desperately wanted to please his God and ends this beautiful song crying, "***May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer***" (vs. 14). These are the characteristics of David and, indeed, of any man who truly seeks God's own heart. David's son, Solomon, also demonstrated this in his Song of Songs.

The Song of Songs is a song of the intimate relationship between the "beloved" and her "lover." Many recognize it as a hymn of worship describing the relationship between the

committed Christian and his Lord or between the Church and Jesus Christ. I believe the song clearly demonstrates the passionate relationship between Christ and His beloved bride, the one for whom He paid the ultimate price. It is a hymn of the heart of a man or woman who seeks the heart of God and desires to be His beloved bride for eternity.

In the Song of Songs, Solomon often uses the same imagery to describe Christ, the "Lover," which his father, David, had used to praise the virtues of Christ's laws. In Song of Songs 5:1, for example, the Lover says, "*I have eaten my honeycomb and my honey,*" while in Psalm 19:10 David sings that the Lover's laws are "*sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.*" Solomon continues as the Beloved saying, "*My lover is radiant and ruddy, outstanding among ten thousand*" (vs. 5:10). His father had previously written, "*The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes*" (Psalm 19:8). And so it is throughout the Psalms of David. David often extols the virtues of God's laws and obedience to them in language which is just as fitting when describing the holy love of a man and his wife, of Christ and His Bride.

Then, in Psalm 37, David summarizes the **theme of all Scripture** when he cries, "***The mouth of the righteous man utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks what is just***" (vs. 30). This speaks to the very heart of the godly man. Proverbs says, "*A wise man's heart guides his mouth, and his lips promote instruction*" (Proverbs 16:23). Jesus Himself proclaimed, "*The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks*" (Luke 6:45). **Thus, David sums up the Teaching about Righteousness, with its emphasis on righteousness and justice, in one verse!** Then he immediately penetrates to the very core of the matter, the contents of the heart of the righteous man: "***The law of his God is in his heart; his feet do not slip***" (Psalm 37:31).

Next, in Psalm 40, David applies this standard to himself and to the Messiah who would come:

*Then I said, "Here I am, I have come-- it is written about me in the scroll. **I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.**" I proclaim **righteousness** in the great assembly; I do not seal my lips, as you know, O Lord. I do not hide your **righteousness** in my heart; I speak of your **faithfulness** and **salvation**. I do not conceal your **love** and your **truth** from the great assembly (Psalm 40:7-10).*

When David repented of his adultery with Bathsheba, he admitted to God, "*Surely you desire **truth** in the inner parts ; you teach me **wisdom** in the inmost place*" (Psalm 51:6). In Psalm 101, David composed a song of the theme of Scripture and how he would apply it to his life:

*Of David. A psalm. **I will sing of your love and justice;** to you, O Lord, I will sing praise. I will be careful to lead a blameless life-- when will you come to me? I will walk in my house with a blameless heart. I will set before my eyes no vile thing. The deeds of faithless men I hate; they will not cling to me. Men of perverse heart shall be far from me; I will have nothing to do with evil (Psalm 101:1-4).*

David longs for his Lord to come to him, just as the Beloved in the Song of Songs longed for her lover to come to her, just as you and I should long for His appearing! And, how does Christ respond? ***"You have stolen my heart, my sister, my bride; you have stolen my heart with one glance of your eyes"*** (Song of Songs 4:9).

Next comes Psalm 119, the longest of all the beautiful Psalms. Here we have what has been described as "a little Bible." Although the Psalm itself does not say that David wrote it, it clearly portrays the heart of the great king. Men of God throughout the ages have highly esteemed this one psalm. So, what is the wonder and beauty of this "pearl" of the Scriptures? A careful reading shows that it clearly reveals the heart of the man who loves and seeks his God and does so completely in terms of God's law and the concepts of righteousness and justice.

Psalm 119 is an acrostic poem of alphabetical arrangement. Each of its 22 stanzas begins with a consecutive Hebrew letter and each stanza contains eight verses, with virtually every verse proclaiming the glory of God's laws. Throughout Scripture the number eight speaks of Christ and new beginnings. The pilgrim who meditates on this psalm will certainly find the heart of his Savior and embark on new spiritual journeys!

This Psalm, like Psalm One and the Sermon on the Mount, begins by invoking blessings upon the man and woman committed to God. It immediately relates this commitment to one's desire to *"walk according to the law of the Lord."* Such a man is "blameless" before God, says David (vs. 1). Verse 2 repeats the blessing, saying, *"Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart,"* again linking blessing and God's law. In this verse, David also combines the ideas of obeying God's statutes with seeking Him with all one's heart.

We learn as Christians that we *"must walk as Jesus did"* (1 John 2:6). In fact, John declares that anyone who even claims to be a Christian must walk in the ways of Jesus. In 1 John 2:7, he tells us that this is not a new command; instead it is an old one: *"Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard."* What is this old message? It is the message of all Scripture (See 2 Timothy 3:15-17), and, in particular, of Psalm 119. It is the message that they who love their God are the ones who truly ***"walk in His ways"*** (vs. 3), who ***"walk according to the law of the Lord"*** (vs. 1). David then recounts that it was God Himself who *"laid down precepts that are to be fully obeyed,"* again referencing His law (vs. 4).

Then, after praising the virtues of him who walks in God's ways, David cries out concerning himself, *"Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying your decrees!"* (vs. 5). He wants to fully obey his God. He does not want the slightest waver in his life; he wants to "set his face like flint" as he seeks to serve his master. Realizing that he does not perfectly obey, however, he repents before his maker: *"Then I would not be put to shame when I consider all your commands"* (vs. 6). David feels the shame of his sin, but he also knows the grace and love of God and, so, he lifts his voice in adoration of the King of kings: *"I will praise you with an upright heart as I learn your righteous laws"* (vs. 7). Finally, although he does not yet live a perfect life, he makes up his mind to do the best he can: ***"I will obey your decrees; do not utterly forsake me"*** (vs. 8).

Such is the wonder, such is the beauty of the 119th Psalm. All 176 verses explain the heart of the man after God's own heart: *"I have sought Your face with all my heart...."* (vs. 58). Each verse reveals what must reside in such a heart. **They demonstrate over and over again how one must love the ways, the laws, of God in order to please Him, in order to truly love Him with all one's heart.** Then, in the 17th stanza, David virtually identifies the law with His

Lord, the final object of his obedience and adoration:

Your statutes are wonderful; therefore I obey them. The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple. I open my mouth and pant, longing for your commands. Turn to me and have mercy on me, as you always do to those who love your name. Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me. Redeem me from the oppression of men, that I may obey your precepts. Make your face shine upon your servant and teach me your decrees. Streams of tears flow from my eyes, for your law is not obeyed (Psalm 119: 129-136).

The following verses from Psalm 119 show where justice and righteousness stand in God's heart:

(Psa 119:7 NKJV) I will praise You with uprightness of heart,
When I learn Your righteous judgments.

(Psa 119:40 NKJV) Behold, I long for Your precepts; Revive me
in Your righteousness.

(Psa 119:62 NKJV) At midnight I will rise to give thanks to You,
Because of Your righteous judgments.

(Psa 119:106 NKJV) I have sworn and confirmed That I will keep
Your righteous judgments.

(Psa 119:121 NKJV) I have done justice and righteousness; Do
not leave me to my oppressors.

(Psa 119:123 NKJV) My eyes fail from seeking Your salvation
And Your righteous word.

(Psa 119:137-138 NKJV) Righteous are You, O LORD, And
upright are Your judgments. {138} Your testimonies, which You
have commanded, Are righteous and very faithful.

(Psa 119:142 NKJV) Your righteousness is an everlasting
righteousness, And **Your law is truth.**

(Psa 119:144 NKJV) The righteousness of Your testimonies is
everlasting; Give me understanding, and I shall live.

(Psa 119:149 NKJV) Hear my voice according to Your
lovingkindness; O LORD, revive me according to Your justice.

(Psa 119:160 NKJV) **The entirety of Your word is truth,** And

every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.

(Psa 119:164 NKJV) Seven times a day I praise You, Because of Your righteous judgments.

(Psa 119:172 NKJV) My tongue shall speak of Your word, **For all Your commandments are righteousness.**

EXAMINE YOUR OWN HEART

The Apostle Paul wrote that we should test ourselves by our obedience to God's Word: *The reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything* (2 Corinthians 2:9). David was not afraid to test himself by God's holy word. Psalm 18 is a striking testimony to this. Here he says:

*The Lord has dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me. For I have kept the ways of the Lord; I have not done evil by turning from my God. **All his laws are before me; I have not turned away from his decrees.** I have been blameless before him and have kept myself from sin. The Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight. To the faithful you show yourself faithful, to the blameless you show yourself blameless, to the pure you show yourself pure* (Psalm 18:20-26).

This is the heart of David! His Psalms are the cries of the one who would truly seek God with all of his heart and would therefore be able to love God with all of his heart and soul and mind. The man who loves God seeks after God's own heart. He recognizes the virtues of His eternal laws and makes up his mind to obey them. If only today's Christian leaders would hearken to these words! Worldly counsel has so crept into the Church that it has become difficult for many to discern the truth from the error. Christians no longer learn to judge sin and to separate themselves from evil friends and influences. The result is that we do not even recognize the present peril and our current sins. We sleep in the light of God's Word while we walk in the darkness of man's sin. We confess that we love God with a holy passion, yet all the while, we keep blaspheming His Name and casting His righteous decrees beneath our feet. We have become dull sheep heading toward the slaughter, toward the violence of war and great tribulation. We are certainly like those to whom the Lord spoke in Hebrews 5:11 who have become "dull of hearing."

O, that we would become faithful Christians who do not do evil by turning from God's decrees. O, that we would put his statutes before us and never turn away from them. Then, of us it would be said, *"We have been blameless before Him and have kept ourselves from sin,"* for passion for God is evidenced by obedience to His Law (See Psalm 18). But instead, we gather to ourselves teachers who tell us that we can never free ourselves from sin and that obedience to God's demands is mere legalism. Thus, we cloak ourselves in the sins and cares of the world, not

knowing that in Jesus and by the Holy Spirit there really is hope for a life of purity and godly works of service, a life of which our Father would say, "Here is a man after my own heart!"

CHAPTER EIGHT

RIGHTEOUSNESS: CHRIST'S GREATEST COMMAND

And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, {10} called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek," {11} of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. {12} For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. {13} For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. {14} 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 5:9-14 NKJV)

Hebrews' Fourth Warning

*The Lord is exalted, for He dwells on high; He will fill Zion with **justice and righteousness**. He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is the key to this treasure (Isaiah 33:5-6).*

Isaiah here reiterates the essential teaching of the Proverbs: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Isaiah expands upon Proverbs to reveal that the fear of the Lord is the "key" to the "rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge" found only in the Lord who dwells on high. In addition the Lord will "fill Zion with justice and righteousness." Most Christians, however, do not fear God. Therefore they are not wise and they do not have knowledge of soul salvation, justice, or righteousness. They seem to only know that God is their Daddy, their Abba, and they have been told that their Daddy, because of His grace, will never spank them. They have believed a lie and they have willingly believed it because they have not loved the truth. Let us now go on to this knowledge of the truth, but beware of Hebrews' fourth warning (the first three are found in Hebrews 2:1-3; 3:7-4:13; 6:4-8):

(Heb 10:26-31 NKJV) For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, {27} but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. {28} Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. {29} 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? {30} For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will

judge His people." {31} It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

The Greatest Command

When Jesus was asked which of God's commands was the greatest, He answered: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:37-40) In answering this seemingly simple question, Jesus made the incredible statement that all theology, all understanding of Scripture, rests upon His answer. When He used the phrase "all of the law and the prophets" He meant all of the revelation of God contained in the Holy Scriptures, i.e. all of the Old Testament. He also answered that there is not just one "greatest" commandment; there are two. Why, though, did Jesus give the Pharisees two commands in answer to their question instead of one?

Like Moses in Deuteronomy 6:5, Jesus first summed up the commandments of God into the succinct statement, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." The Pharisees were testing Jesus and knew that this was the correct answer. Yes, God is first, says Jesus. He is before all, He created all, and He is to be loved and worshiped by all of His creation. So the command to love God is first and therefore "greatest." But man's relationship to other men is also important to Him. These relationships are so important, in fact, that Jesus calls our duty to love one another like the first command. He therefore made the two commands equal in authority and moved beyond Moses, for the law came through Moses, but both grace and truth (law) came through Jesus Christ. See John 1:17 and compare with Romans 2:20 and Psalm 119:42. Jesus did not give the Pharisees one greatest command, as they expected; He gave them two.

Man, however, cannot love God in the way that Jesus described in his own, worldly strength. This is the teaching of both the Old Testament and of Jesus Christ, for, as Paul said, quoting the prophets:

As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know." "There is no fear of God before their eyes" (ROMANS 3:10-18).

Jesus came to earth and died for man in order to give man a clear conscience so that he could have a loving relationship with God, rather than one of alienation and fearful expectation of everlasting judgment. The Scripture and all man's experiences show that the ability to love God does not come naturally, out of one's natural or carnal being. Love of God that God can receive must be born of the Spirit and issue from one who has been born again. Jesus said, "A

time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth" (JOHN 4:23-24). It is utterly impossible for a mere man to love God with all his heart and soul and mind. Only the man filled with the Spirit of God can offer this love to God. Certainly, then, salvation is necessary to fulfill this law of Christ.

What does it mean, though, to really love God? Several times in Scripture Jesus dealt with first principles of God's truth. One of these Scriptures is Matthew 6:33 where He says, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." By saying that these are the "first" things to seek in one's life Jesus brings them to the preeminent level of His greatest commands. For Him to say "Seek first..." and also "The greatest commandment..." is to say they both attain to the greatest priority in His view, and thus become synonymous ideas. Obviously, in Matthew 6:33, Jesus is not telling us to do something that is prior to or different from the greatest commands; He must be shedding spiritual light upon them. In Matthew 6:33 Jesus pairs concepts just as He did when asked about the greatest command. He says that the very first thing His disciples ought to seek are 1) God's kingdom, and 2) God's righteousness. It should be obvious now that one of these things to seek first will relate mainly to loving God and the other to loving man.

The prophet Isaiah provides one major clue for understanding which is which when he says, "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: `Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily. {17} Also I will make justice the measuring line, And righteousness the plummet; The hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, And the waters will overflow the hiding place'" (Isa 28:16-17 NKJV). First, Isaiah prophesies that Christ Jesus will be the foundation stone for the life of all true believers. Next he says that God "will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line..." (Isaiah 28:17). Since the plumb line is used by a master builder to determine perfect vertical straightness, the prophet creates the allusion that righteousness should characterize the earth to heaven, or vertical, relationship between God and His people. Furthermore, the metaphor forms a picture of uprightness or straightness before the Lord. This is one of many clues that "righteousness" relates to the command to love God and justice relates to our command to love our neighbor as ourselves. This neighbor to neighbor love should be characterized by acts of justice toward one another.

But, how can a mere man obtain this uprightness before God? And, how can we love our neighbors with deeds of justice? Isaiah gives us the answer when he says, "So this is what the Sovereign Lord says: `See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed.'" (Isaiah 28:16). We learn in 2 Peter 2:6 of the New Covenant writings that Jesus is this "precious cornerstone." Isaiah was telling us hundreds of years before He was born that our Savior Jesus Christ would "make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line..." in us, the redeemed. Our challenge is to allow Him to do this in each of our lives. "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; {13} **for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure**" (Phil 2:12-13 NKJV).

One further point to glean from Isaiah's words is that God's judgments, illustrated by "hail," reveal the sins in our lives. God's hail will "sweep away the refuge of lies" in our hearts if we will but repent. But, we can't repent if we do not know what to repent of. Thus the "waters" that "overflow the hiding place" speaks of God's Word. When we allow His Word to

enter us as the water of life that it is we will find that the waters (Word) will overflow and fill all of our hiding places. The Word will reveal all of our "hidden" sins so that we can repent of them. We will also become open to God, unable, even unwilling, to attempt to hide from His presence anymore. Jesus calls this abiding in His Word. If we do this, He says, then the truth (His Word, His Law) will make us free. See John 8:31-32. Many of us are bound by demons of sin because we will not clean ourselves with the water of God's Word every day. Pray for ears to hear.

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS

Certainly, one of the first concepts that a new Christian learns is that Jesus Christ died for our sins and that because a man believes in, i.e. has faith in, Christ's atoning death, he is declared righteous before God. In theological terms righteousness is said to be "imputed" to the believer at the time of his salvation. Paul tells us in Romans that the most fundamental revelation of the gospel is a righteousness from God. He says, *"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith'"* (Romans 1:16-17).

The new Christian understands that he no longer has to work and strive to be accepted by God, but that by virtue of his faith in Christ's work he is approved by God and *"justified freely by His grace"* (ROMANS 3:24). He knows that, *"the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness"* (Romans 4:5). Clearly, these ideas constitute some of the essential elements of the doctrine of faith in God from the "elementary teachings" of Hebrews 6:1-2. They teach us that faith leads to "a righteousness from God."

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IS BASED UPON CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30).

It is this receiving of Christ's righteousness that establishes our relationship with God and cleanses our consciences from dead works. As Hebrews 9:14 says, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Once a Christian receives this clear and undefiled conscience he can begin to obey God, or **answer** God's demands. Now we can understand 1 Peter 3:21 (NKJV), There is also an antitype which now saves us; baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." We see that baptism is among the first of the Christian's answers of obedience to God's demands. **The salvation, then, of 1 Peter 3:21 cannot be spiritual salvation that comes by faith, but soul salvation that comes by works.**

In addition, if we possess a clear conscience by faith, then we are able to begin a relationship with God and learn how to love Him. Paul says, "Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father'" (Galatians 4:6). Thus, we Christians can love God as a child loves his father. We can do so because we have

obtained the righteousness that is by faith. In truth, it is only the righteous man who can really love God with all his heart and soul and mind because it is only the righteous man who has a new heart and soul and mind by virtue of his new life in Christ.

THE PROPHETS FORESAW WHEN MEN WOULD LOVE GOD WITH THEIR WHOLE HEARTS

When Jesus issued His first command, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind," He was also saying that men must be born again to ever relate to God. His hearers knew that they could not love God with their whole hearts by themselves. They would have remembered the words of their prophets such as those found in Jeremiah 31:31-34 and these from Ezekiel:

{30} "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says the Lord GOD. "Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin. {31} "Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? {32} "For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord GOD. "Therefore turn and live!" (Ezek 18:30-32 NKJV)

{23} "And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD," says the Lord GOD, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. {24} "For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. {25} "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. {26} "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. {27} "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. {28} "Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. (Ezek 36:23-28 NKJV)

"THE TEACHING ABOUT RIGHTEOUSNESS " VS. "IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS"

But anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness (Hebrews 5:13).

Now it should be clear that the "Teaching about Righteousness" from Hebrews 5:13 must be conceptually and actually different from "imputed righteousness," or being "credited" with

righteousness by faith alone. Otherwise, why is it that the very first thing one learns when becoming a Christian is that he is declared righteous by faith, but Hebrews 5:11-14 says that this "Teaching about Righteousness" is "for the mature." Hebrews also claims that a Christian who only understands imputed righteousness is "still an infant." Christians, therefore, must understand this distinction between the "gift of righteousness" given to a believer by virtue of grace and faith and the "teaching about righteousness" attained by the believer by "constant use" of the Word of God. **If we fail to see this distinction we will never mature and we will never understand food sacrificed to idols.**

Paul, of course, understood this teaching and he instructs us in its doctrines throughout his books. He begins Romans, for example, by explaining the concepts of justification by faith and the accreditation of righteousness. In chapter six he begins to explain what our faith demands of us. He first states that we should stop sinning. By the end of chapter eight Paul tells us **we can indeed stop sinning** by following the lead of the Holy Spirit. But it is in the midst of chapter six where one finds an important lesson concerning the Teaching about Righteousness.

HOLINESS

In Romans 6:15 Paul asks if Christians should continue to sin because they are no longer under the jurisdiction of the Old Covenant. "No!" he says, because we are to be slaves "to obedience, which leads to righteousness." We are to offer the parts of our body "in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness" (See Romans 6:16-19). Notice that the emphasis upon righteousness is not upon its being a once for all gift given by God at the time of salvation, as was the case earlier in the book of Romans. Rather, Paul emphasizes an active, continuing obedience to the Word and will of God which "leads to righteousness." In this sense the word "righteousness" as used by Paul in Romans 6 has a different meaning than what we first might give it. It has moved beyond the spiritual gift that comes by faith to a literal and physical "obedience" which leads to a real righteousness "leading to" holiness. By "real" I mean temporal actions of righteousness that can actually be seen by others.

Holiness itself is a term often used these days, but without the requisite teaching necessary to establish it in reality in the believer's life. Holiness can only be obtained when one offers his body and mind in slavery to righteousness. Clearly, this differs from one's initial conversion experience. Paul describes this idea when he says, *"Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose"* (Philippians 2:12-13). The Holy Spirit works in us to enable us to obey God and become holy. The Teaching about Righteousness asks the hard questions: "What is this obedience of Romans 6:16? Why and what should Christians obey?"

THE CRUCIAL QUESTION

The first question, as to why we should obey, is answered by Philippians 2:12-13. We should obey in order to "work out our own salvation." This sounds strange to most Christians because we all know that salvation is by grace and faith, not works. It is true that spiritual salvation is by grace and faith. See Ephesians 2:8-9. But, we are saved unto "good works" which God specifically prepared in advance for each believer. See Ephesians 2:10. Doing these good works is how we work out our own salvation, and the salvation of which Paul speaks here

in Philippians is the salvation of the soul, not the spirit. See 1 Peter 1:9; James 1:21; and Hebrews 10:39.

John the Apostle gives us a starting place concerning how to obey when he says that to love God one must "obey His commands" (See 1 John 5:3). This takes us back to Jesus, Who in turn refers us to the commands of Moses, back to the law. Yet, all of Scripture shows that man alone and unaided cannot fulfill the commands of God. The whole history of man is filled with the stories of his tremendous failure to obey and love his Creator. The entire history of Israel, the nation specifically chosen and nurtured by God, is a history of disobedience to His commands. It is clearly a history of anything but loving God and yet it was to that very people that God revealed Himself through word and deed. **How, then, can one do now what most people throughout history before Christ could not do? How can one love God with all his heart, soul, and mind, especially when, as John says, that requires that one obey God's commands?**

GOD'S ANSWER: THE PROPHETIC DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A Christian can obey God's commands by living "in accordance with the Spirit" (See Romans 8:5-14). The Holy Spirit, who lives inside the Christian, leads and moves the believer to forsake his sins in repentance and, in place of those sins, to obey God's commands. Peter taught that in conjunction with the need for repentance, the Christian must realize that he needs a new heart - one upon which God has written His eternal laws. Man now must understand that he needs a new Spirit to empower him to turn from evil and do good. He needs the Holy Spirit to indwell him. Peter experienced and taught the doctrine of righteousness foretold by the ancient prophets:

I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God. (Ezekiel 11:19-20).

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the Lord. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people" (Jeremiah 31:33).

Ezekiel and Jeremiah looked ahead by the Spirit to a time when God would make a new covenant with men. This would be a time when men would be able to fulfill their part of the agreement because they would receive "a new heart" and "a new spirit." This new heart would be written upon by the law of God. At the same time God would "put [His] law in their minds" and cause the Holy Spirit to move His people "to follow [His] decrees and be careful to keep

[His] laws." Ezekiel and Jeremiah were looking ahead to the New Covenant which Jesus Christ initiated by His life, death, and resurrection, yet they spoke of that time in terms of "righteousness," "justice," and "law." So do all who desire to love God with all their heart and soul and mind.

RIGHTEOUSNESS AND THE LAW

Now we understand why the first of Jesus' two greatest commands reiterates the law of Moses, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." This is not one of the Ten Commandments, as one might expect. Rather, this command is the summary of the first five of the Ten Commandments. Those commandments are:

Exodus 20:3 *You shall have no other gods before me.*

Exodus 20:4 *You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. Exodus 20:5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.*

Exodus 20:7 *You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His name.*

Exodus 20:8 *Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.*

Exodus 20:12 *Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.*

All of the first five commandments of Moses deal with man's relationship with God. They define our relationship to Him, giving us specific guidelines to follow. The fifth command at first seems to be out of place with this group, but, upon further reflection, clearly belongs. One's mother and father stand in the place of God to a child. It is the duty of a mother and father to raise their children in the fear and teaching of the Lord and to provide for all of their needs. Parents stand in the place of God to their children when they are young and as they grow up in wisdom and maturity they, in turn, are to honor their parents for the key role they played in their lives. Parents can either lead children to or from God. This vertical God-to-man relationship, this "plumbline," is defined by the first five commandments and is known by the one word, "righteousness."

These five commands put flesh upon the skeleton of Jesus' command to love God with all one's heart. They describe for us what such love requires. To really love God, then, does demand obedience to some specific commands, doesn't it? Jesus said, "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him" (John 14:21). This knowledge enables

us to move beyond a nearly meaningless concept of love which is all too prevalent in today's churches. A momentary failure to fully obey these laws does not mean that we do not love God. The laws, however, do represent the standard of what it means to love God with all one's heart. As we yield to the Holy Spirit and walk in the light He yields we will be enabled to fully obey these commands of Moses as well as the more stringent commands of our Lord Jesus Christ. As we obey by His power within us, we will literally become righteous, just as Jesus is righteous. Remember, "when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John 3:2b) To be righteous is to be "like Him."

CONCLUSION OF CHRIST'S FIRST COMMAND

The Hebrews knew that a time was coming when God would do a new thing, a time when He would send His Messiah to Israel. Jesus was that Messiah and taught, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Coming to the Father and loving Him with all one's heart and soul and mind, therefore, can begin to happen only through faith in Jesus Christ's saving sacrifice for our sins. But, our love for God is not complete and cannot end there. Imputed righteousness is "useless," say the apostles, if not combined with obedience to God's Word which "leads to righteousness." (See 1 John, James and Romans 6:16) As Jesus said, "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (Matthew 7:19). Our faith must include loving those things that God loves, like David did. This especially includes loving God's law.

Remember, Jesus said, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." (Mat 6:33 NKJV) and He said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments." (Mat 22:37-40) Two different things cannot both be first so chapters six and twenty two of Matthew do not teach two different doctrines. God's "righteousness" of Matthew 6:33 relates to the first of Christ's greatest commands, loving God. "God's kingdom," then, must relate to the second command, loving men. Christ's first command to love God and its relationship to righteousness and law is only the first half of the Teaching about Righteousness. Now we will see that the second half of this mature doctrine consists of Christ's second command.

CHAPTER NINE

JUSTICE: CHRIST'S GREATEST COMMAND

THE APOSTLES, LIKE CHRIST, TEACH US TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR

The apostle John explains in his first epistle exactly why Jesus had to give two "greatest" commands. John carefully teaches that the Christian is to love God and love his brother. He tells us that this love for men will be shown by outward expressions, such as by providing for one another's physical needs. Finally, he goes so far as to say, "*If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen*" (1 JOHN 4:20). He is saying that one cannot fulfill Jesus' first great command if he does not fulfill the second one. James, brother of Jesus and leader of the church in Jerusalem, puts it even more bluntly:

(James 2:14-17 NKJV) What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? {15} If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, {16} and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? {17} Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

Thus all three, Jesus, John, and James, make the dual commands to love God and to love men co-equal. The two commands, then, are like two distinct rails of the same track. They are parallel, they run together, and they always lead in the same direction.

James writes very clearly about the two-fold nature of Christ's command. His book deals entirely with the salvation of the soul, not the spirit. James demands a righteous life from his disciples, saying: "*Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*" See James 1:21 NKJV. He preaches to believers and focuses on practicing righteousness by virtue of the Word of God "implanted" in you WHICH IS ABLE TO SAVE YOUR SOUL! He makes it crystal clear that good works must follow salvation by faith if we are ever to obtain the salvation of our souls.

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does (JAMES 1:22-25).

James does not leave his lesson here, however. He berates Christians who rest on their faith or their "spiritual" exercises of praise and prayer alone as if that is all they need to do to please God. He attacks such a false and presumptuous life forcefully:

But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder. You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone. In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead (JAMES 2:18-26).

James and John show us, then, that we cannot love men according to Christ's second command unless we are willing to literally do something for them.

JESUS TEACHES ABOUT JUSTICE

Another verse which helps us understand Christ's greatest commands is LUKE 11:42 where Jesus exclaimed, *"Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, **but you neglect justice and the love of God.** You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone."* Here, again, Jesus has paired two most important principles. He chastises the religious Pharisees for neglecting justice and the love of God. Again, since Jesus specifically prioritizes two ideas dealing with the relationship between God and his servants, it follows that they, too, describe His greatest commands. This verse, taken in the context of all Scripture, shows that justice relates to the second command, loving one's neighbor.

If one truly loves his neighbor it means that he will act justly toward him in all matters. As Jesus said in MATTHEW 7:12, *"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the law and the Prophets."* By saying that "this sums up the law and the prophets," Jesus has made the "golden rule" and the two "greatest commands" of MATTHEW 22:37-40 equivalent, for in MATTHEW 22:40 Jesus said, *"All the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments."* The word pairing that Jesus employed shows that justice specifically relates to loving one's neighbor while righteousness deals with loving God. Now we realize that if one truly lives righteously before God he will do justice to his fellow man.

In fact, Noah Webster, in his dictionary of 1828, included justice toward men as one of the definitions of righteousness. Consider ISAIAH 28:17 again: *"I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line."* We see clearly that **justice is the measure of our relationship with men; righteousness is the standard of our relationship with God!**

JUSTICE AND THE LAW

Just as Jesus' first greatest command, the concept of righteousness, relates to the first five commands of Moses, so His second command, to do justice, relates to the second five. Paul said exactly this to the Romans: "*The commandments, 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not covet,' and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'*" (ROMANS 13:9) Jesus said the same thing in MATTHEW 7:12 and 22:40 when He proclaimed that his greatest commandment summed up the law and the prophets.

The second group of five commands given by God to Moses are:

Exodus 20:13: *You shall not murder.*

Exodus 20:14: *You shall not commit adultery.*

Exodus 20:15: *You shall not steal.*

Exodus 20:16: *You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.*

Exodus 20:17: *You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.*

Notice that each of this group of commandments deals with man's relationships with man. Each instructs us as to how we ought to treat others. Notice also that Paul quotes these same commands in Romans 13:9. He does this because these commands explain the golden rule of doing unto others as we would have others do unto us and, therefore, bring revelation to Jesus' own teachings. They tell us how to live practically with other men. In a word, they teach us what it means to do **justice**.

GOD'S JUSTICE IS PRACTICAL!

It means something now when we read the word of God telling us to "Love your neighbor as yourself," doesn't it? It means, for example:

"Don't build a factory upstream from someone who uses the water too, unless you prevent your factory from polluting the stream. To pollute the stream would kill the fish and ruin the clean water. This evil act would steal from those others who justifiably rely on the river, a violation of the eighth commandment."

It also means, "Do not divorce the wife of your youth. To do so would be to cause great emotional harm to her and your children. It would show that you do not really love her or your children and that you do not really love your 'brother.' Such an action proves that you do not really love God. Adultery proves the very same thing."

Understanding the second half of the Teaching about Righteousness, then, puts meat on the bones of the elementary teachings of Christianity. It makes Christian life real, not just some esoteric religious life concerned only with endless frivolities.

THE GRACE HERESY

Now we see that the moral law of Moses actually defines love and the teaching about righteousness. Yet the whole concept of God's law as it relates to Scripture and theology is probably the most misunderstood of all Biblical doctrines. Most Christians living on the verge of Christ's millennial kingdom would rather live a life of carnal pleasures than even consider that

God's law is relevant to their walk with Him. Of these Jude's prophecy has become so true: *"For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Jude 4, NKJV). A more literal translation that helps illuminate this verse would be: *"For certain men have settled [into the Church] without notice, who long ago were prophetically sealed for judgment, ungodly men, **who turn the grace of our God into sinful habits**, thus contradicting and rejecting the sole authority of God, our Lord Jesus Christ"*

This one verse expresses in simple detail that terrible error known today as "the grace heresy." The grace heresy takes the grace of God and turns it into a license to sin. Many Christians today believe they have grace to sin, but they do not have the grace to judge sin, either in themselves or in others. They have this "grace" to sin, they think, because the law "was done away with" and therefore cannot constrain their wicked behavior. Isaiah prophesied about them almost three thousand years ago: *Let grace be shown to the wicked, Yet he will not learn righteousness; In the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly, And will not behold the majesty of the LORD.* (Isa 26:10 NKJV)

Grace has truly been shown to the wicked. It was shown to you and to me. Everyone is born wicked and a wicked person becomes a Christian only by the grace of God. But, Isaiah prophesied that the wicked would not learn the righteousness of God even though God poured grace upon them. Even in "the land of uprightness," a land like the United States used to be, the wicked man who was saved by grace would continue to "deal unjustly" with others. Even though he went into his church week after week and year after year he would "not behold the majesty of the LORD." Why? Because he refused to meekly receive the Word that God had implanted in him when he first believed. He refused to love the truth. Therefore God has sent him a powerful delusion so that he will believe the lie. See 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. This is where we find ourselves today, at the end of the Age of Grace and at the dawn of the seven years of judgment known as the Great Tribulation.

It is of these wicked Christians that Jesus plainly speaks:

"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. {18} "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. {19} "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. {20} "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."
(Matthew 5:17-20, NKJV)

It is amazing how deceived even true Christians can be, isn't it? Jesus stated in very clear language, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law....," yet most Christians teach that He "put an end to," i.e., destroyed, the law. They will defend this position to their death, it seems, based upon this verse: "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Romans 10:4). The truth, however, is that the word "end" in this verse means "to set out for a definite point or goal" or "the ultimate prophetic conclusion of a state of being." See

Strongs Concordance. Romans 10:4 therefore means, “Christ is the ultimate prophetic fulfillment and state of being [which was prophetically pointed to or implied by] the law [in order to bring] righteousness to all who believe.” In other words, the law is a type of righteousness! **The prophetic fulfillment of the law is the righteousness that can only be realized by faith in Christ implemented in merciful acts of justice to our neighbor.**

CHAPTER TEN

THE FOUNDATION OF GOD'S THRONE

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you (PSALM 89:14).

Clouds and thick darkness surround him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne (PSALM 97:2).

(Heb 1:8-9 NKJV) *But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom. {9} You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions."*

God's throne is the symbol of His authority. Scripture often pictures the throne of a king as a great and awesome place, as the very seat of power and authority. For example, when Pharaoh raised Joseph into a position of leadership he said, "*You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you*" (GENESIS 41:40). Pharaoh was saying, in essence, "Concerning Egypt, I am and will still be greater than you, Joseph, that is, in terms of ultimate authority and power. This is so because I, not you, will sit on the throne."

As the Lord described the king who would eventually reign over Israel He said, "*When He takes the throne of His kingdom, He is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests, who are Levites.*" (DEUTERONOMY 17:18) God was saying that when a king takes authority as king and begins to rule in the power of that authority, he must write down God's law. Notice the implication of authority, rule, and power in the phrase, "*When he takes the throne of His kingdom.*" Also, see how God's law was essential to the king's rule.

The Book of Revelation could be called the "Book of God's Throne," for it contains more references to God's throne than any other book of Scripture. In fact, John uses the phrase "the throne" as a virtual synonym of God Himself. Consider the following verses from the end of John's book:

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from His presence, and there was no place for them (REVELATION 20:11).

And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books (REVELATION 20:12).

Those two verses demonstrate that the concept of God's throne includes the power and authority to render eternal judgment. The three below show the virtual identification of the throne with God Himself.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God himself will be with them and be their God (REVELATION 21:3).

He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then He said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true" (REVELATION 21:5).

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb (REVELATION 22:1).

The bare words of PSALMS 89:14 and 97:2, quoted above, make clear that righteousness and justice are the foundation of this throne we see in Revelation. Other Scripture teaches that the throne of a king symbolizes his authority, majesty, and power. It signifies the rule of the king. The throne is literally a symbol of the very essence of kingship. The image of the throne of God pictures the ruling authority of the King of the universe. It epitomizes His rule, His power, His authority, His literal claim to be worthy of all praise and worship!

The Revelation of John even pushes the concept further by identifying the throne with God Himself. Righteousness and justice, then, as expressed in the introductory Psalms above, comprise the foundation of God's kingly rule. The verses speak of the basis of His unlimited authority and power. These two concepts disclose two fundamental, but separate, aspects of God's person. "Righteousness" and "justice" name the qualities God desires and demands exist in every one chosen to rule and reign with Him.

The following story of two great Hebrew kings illustrates the concepts of justice and righteousness and kingly rule. When God appeared to Solomon early in his reign, He told him to ask for whatever he desired. Solomon's answer was this:

*"You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and **righteous** and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day. "Now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant **a discerning heart** to govern your people and **to distinguish between right and wrong**. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?" (1 KINGS 3:6-9 [emphasis added]).*

Note that the word Solomon used to describe his father, David, was "righteous," a term which connotes loving God with all of one's heart. We know that David was considered a "man after God's own heart." Of David it could truly be said that he loved the Lord with all of his heart, soul, and mind. David walked in the way of the LORD, obeying all of His commands, with

just one exception, for which he repented. *"For David had done what was right in the eyes of the LORD and had not failed to keep any of the Lord's commands all the days of his life--except in the case of Uriah the Hittite"* (1 KINGS 15:5). This is why God promised that David's dynasty would never end:

"As for you, if you walk before me as David your father did, and do all I command, and observe my decrees and laws, I will establish your royal throne, as I covenanted with David your father when I said, 'You shall never fail to have a man to rule over Israel.' (2 CHRONICLES 7:17-18).

Solomon himself asked for a heart of discernment which could distinguish, or separate, between good and evil. God was pleased with his request and answered him,

*"Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for **discernment in administering justice**, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be"*

(1 KINGS 3:11-12, emphasis added).

We see, then, that David and Solomon were known by the words "righteousness" and "justice," respectively. First, God developed His own relationship with a man who loved Him and was willing to obey Him; then He anointed the man's son to work out this relationship in a worldly setting with the tools of justice. Righteousness and justice were to be the foundation of Israel's throne, just as it is of God's! The teachings of Christ bring this foundation to the whole world!

*So this is what the Sovereign Lord says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed. **I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line....**" (ISAIAH 28:16-17)*

Both of the words "justice" and "righteousness" above define God's law. The meaning of the verse from Isaiah is this: Just as a measuring line measures a horizontal distance, so should justice be the measure of our horizontal relationships, i.e., man to man. And just as a plumb line determines vertical straightness, so should righteousness characterize the relationship between each of us and God. Finally, just as righteousness and justice form the foundation of God's throne, so do these two attributes form the foundation of God's law and of what it truly means to love our neighbor!

(Matthew 23:23) *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone."*

(Isa 42:1-4 NKJV) *"Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. {2} He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. {3} A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth **justice for truth**. {4} He will not fail nor be discouraged, Till He has **established justice in the earth**; And the coastlands **shall wait for His law**."*

(Isa 51:7 NKJV) *"Listen to Me, you who know **righteousness**, You people in whose heart is My **law**: Do not fear the reproach of men, Nor be afraid of their insults."*

(Romans 3:21-22a NKJV) *But now the **righteousness** of God apart from the law is revealed, being **witnessed by the Law and the Prophets**, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe... (This relates to spiritual salvation)*

(Romans 10:4 NKJV) *For Christ is the end (ultimate prophetic goal) of the **law** for **righteousness** to everyone who believes. (This relates to soul salvation)*

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE PROPHETIC PURPOSE OF LAW

Long ago I learned from your statutes that you established them to last forever (Psalm 119:152).

If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are detestable (Proverbs 28:9).

Whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:19).

For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. {2} For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. {3} But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. {4} For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. (Heb 10:1-4 NKJV)

The sacrificial and ceremonial regulations of the Old Testament law were taken away by Christ in order to establish the New Covenant. See Hebrews 10:9. Jesus, however, did not take away or annul the heart of the law. See Matthew 5:17-19; 23:23. In fact, the law is a “shadow of the good things to come,” i.e., it is a type of true justice and righteousness that will be fully implemented in the millennial Kingdom of God by a rod of iron. See Hebrews 1:8; Psalm 2:9; Revelation 2:27; 12:5; 19:15. We must understand this or we will never be able to apprehend the meaning of God’s Law. We will forever call good evil and evil good, the teaching about righteousness will elude us, and we will never ascend to rule and reign with our Master.

Many Christians today miss the relevance of justice and righteousness in the will of God because they misunderstand the place of the Law in God’s heart and plan. They misunderstand the gospel as saying that the law of God is now irrelevant and, in fact, dangerous. This is not what the gospel teaches. In MATTHEW 5:17-20, Jesus Himself taught that the law will never become obsolete. Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, and Hebrews do not teach that the moral law is obsolete as some declare, but that salvation is not, and never has been, through the law. We have already seen that salvation by the blood occurs as far back as Genesis 3. Before Jesus died for our sins in history, God required man to show this salvation by enforcing the ritual sacrifice of animals. This part of the Old Testament law was declared void and this is what Hebrews chapter 10 teaches, but the New Testament differentiates between moral and sacrificial (ceremonial) law, and NEVER declares the moral law void.

Rather, all of Scripture teaches that the law (both moral and sacrificial) is a tutor leading one to Christ. It also teaches that the moral law defines sin so that the people of the earth can know the difference between good and evil. It is incumbent upon all men, the Scriptures say, to still obey the moral law. How else could there even be anything named “sin.” If there is no law, there can be no sin. Christ’s Word also teaches that God has given us His moral law as a

standard by which the nations can make their own just laws (See 2 TIMOTHY 3:16; DEUTERONOMY 4:6-8; ROMANS 3:31, 7:7, 8:3-4; and GALATIANS 3:24 for example). The Book of Hebrews severely warns believers about continuing sin:

(Heb 10:26-27 NKJV) For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, {27} but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.

The Teaching about Righteousness, therefore, upholds the moral laws of God and of His Christ. It teaches that both Old and New Testament law is relevant unless specifically or impliedly repealed by New Testament scripture. All of God's prophets declare the same thing: **The man who would have God's heart must obey God's law!**

Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, but those who keep the law resist them (PROVERBS 28:4).

If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are detestable. (PROVERBS 28:9)

Also, remember David's heart for God's law. Look at the **very first** psalm, for example:

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.

***But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night.** He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.*

Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

(PSALM 1).

Have God's moral standards changed? Is it now true that God **does** bless the man who walks in the counsel of the wicked? If not, then how am I to know who is wicked and who is not? Is there some objective standard by which I can know who is wicked? If not, then how can I know who is wicked? Of course there is a standard by which to judge wickedness! It is called God's law!

What of those things in which we are to take pleasure? Is it now forbidden, wrong, or a foolish waste of time for me to **delight** in God's law? Is it stupid of me to **meditate** in this "age of grace" on His commands and decrees? If so, then why do we keep this and other psalms as part of our Bible?

Every verse of Psalm 119, the longest psalm in the Bible, praises the wonders of God's law. All 176 verses exalt the virtues of His "wonderful" decrees. This psalm instructs the Christian pilgrim in how "to keep his way pure" before the Lord. Consider the implications of just the third stanza:

Do good to your servant, and I will live; I will obey your word. Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law. I am a stranger on earth; do not hide your commands from me. My soul is consumed with longing for your laws at all times. You rebuke the arrogant, who are cursed and who stray from your commands. Remove from me scorn and contempt, for I keep your statutes. Though rulers sit together and slander me, your servant will meditate on your decrees. Your statutes are my delight; they are my counselors (PSALMS 119:17-24).

Here we see several important truths regarding God's law. First, the law contains "wonderful things." That's different, isn't it? Most of us have heard somewhere that God's law is "harsh," something to be wary of, and, certainly, nothing very "wonderful." But, the Lord wants to **open our eyes** so that we can see the wonderful truths in His laws!

Next, we learn that because we are "strangers" on earth, i.e., "not of this world," we ought to seek out God's commands. Earth is not our "mother," nor our eternal home, so we do not derive our basic presuppositions regarding life, law, and government from her. We need the wisdom of God, therefore, for insight into these matters. Jesus said, "*Seek, and you will find.*" The psalmist prayed, "*Lord, do not hide the wisdom of your commands from me*" (Psalm 119:19).

Third, we learn that the concept of God's law is huge, almost all-encompassing. In this same Psalm David says, "*To all perfection I see a limit; but your commands are boundless.*" (vs. 96) David longed to know God's statutes. His very soul was **consumed** with seeking them out and knowing their meanings. Are His laws now unimportant, unworthy of our longing or pursuit?

Then, he declares that those who neglect, despise, and stray from God's laws are "arrogant" and "cursed" of God (See Psalm 119:21). What of those who do the same today? Has God changed His mind? No, Christians who despise the law will be called "least" in the Kingdom of God says Jesus in Matthew 5:17-19.

Finally, although adherence to God's law brings "scorn and contempt," by civil and ecclesiastical rulers, the man of God determines that the only right way is to keep, meditate upon, and delight in God's laws. "*God's decrees are my counselors,*" David proclaims. Who or what are your counselors as you try to discern right from wrong in this pagan age of wickedness?

Besides the writers of Psalms and Proverbs, there are the prophets who spoke regarding God's promise to give His Spirit to people **so that** they would **obey God's law**. The prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel specifically foretold a time when God would both write His laws upon the hearts and minds of men and impart His Holy Spirit to men in order to move them to obey those laws. (See JEREMIAH 31:33 and EZEKIEL 36:26-27). These are specific promises regarding the reality of the new life which Jesus Christ provided. These prophets foretold the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Listen to Jeremiah prophesy about the New Covenant!

"The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It

will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them, " declares the LORD. "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more" (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

One of the great wonders of the New Covenant is that God writes his laws on our hearts and minds! The apostle Paul provided the theology of these prophecies in his book to the Romans. Chapters 6-8 in particular describe the Christian realities of Jeremiah's prophetic utterances. ROMANS 8:5-14 reveals the crux of the matter:

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit, who lives in you. Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation--but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God (ROMANS 8:5-14).

In these and prior verses Paul tells us that the carnal Christian cannot submit to God's law, but that the spiritual man can do so. He teaches us that we can obey God's commands by submitting to the Holy Spirit who lives within us once we are born again, for *"by the Spirit [we] put to death the misdeeds of the body."* In short, we become able to obey God's laws.

Paul teaches that we are not only able to obey God, but that we **must obey** God if we seek to save our lives (souls). For, *"if you live according to the sinful nature,"* he says, *"you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live."* We know that even the most faithful Christian dies physically, so Paul must be speaking about the possibility of losing one's soul because of disobedience. Remember, even Jesus warned that not all who call

Him "Lord" would enter the Kingdom of Heaven: *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but **only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven**"* (Matthew 7:21, emphasis added). Let us, then, listen attentively to the warnings of God's prophets.

The Kingdom of Heaven describes the rule of Christ when He establishes His kingdom during the millennial seventh day. Only those Christians who voluntarily lose their lives for Christ's sake and only those Christians who teach the wonders of God's law will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. See Matthew 16:24-26; 24:45-51; 5:17:19. Ruling and reigning with Christ for 1,000 years in His kingdom describes the "saving of the soul" in Scripture, while being cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth describes the losing of one's soul. Compare Matthew 25:21 & 23 with 25:24-30.

Consider Christ's words concerning the law again from Matthew 5, and do not take His teaching lightly. Unfortunately Christ's words somehow do not convince many who cling to the "grace heresy." The grace heresy is simply the teaching that the coming of God's grace in the New Covenant abolished His law and that the law, therefore, is uninstructional for Christian doctrine. Here, Jesus specifically says that anyone who breaks one of the least of God's commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven. This is pretty clear, isn't it?

Evidently not, for, again, some teach that Jesus was not talking to Christians. They say He was speaking to a future thousands of years away when He would set up his physical, earthly kingdom. I believe that even to suggest that Christ's words are irrelevant to the Christian life is the height of hypocrisy and/or unbelief. If one cannot even apply Christ's teachings, of what use is any of the Bible? Such teaching strips God's inerrant word of all authority and meaning. It emasculates our faith, ripping off all relevance to life.

Let us apply some basic logic to Christ's words. First, He tells us to not even consider the possibility that He came to abolish the law or the prophets. In Jesus' day the phrase "the law and the prophets" was the way that one referred to all of the Old Testament Scriptures. See Matthew 22:40. Jesus was saying that He did not come to destroy the teaching of the Old Testament; He came to fulfill it. But, those who twist the Scripture proceed to argue that when Jesus fulfilled "the law and the prophets" that the law, if not the prophets, ceased to be relevant! This is to argue that Jesus abolished them - a direct contradiction of His very words!

Jesus, however, foresaw the future mental gymnastics of men. He explains Himself fully. He says, in essence, that until the end of time, not even the least part of the Law will be abolished. This would seem to be clear enough, but Jesus then issued a stern warning: *"Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven."*

The fact is that Jesus certainly thought that God's laws were and would remain relevant. Christian leaders at the end of the age of grace face the prospect of being least in the Kingdom of Heaven because they have derogated God's laws and perpetrated the grace heresy. When one considers the words of the Psalmists, the Prophets, the Apostles, and our Lord, one thing becomes crystal clear - God's law is important and we ought to heed it. Paul prophesied about today's teachings that deny the wonder and relevance of God's law, saying,

(1 Tim 4:1-2 NIV) *The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. {2} Such teachings come through hypocritical*

liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.

(2 Tim 4:3-4 NIV) For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. {4} They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

Jude said the same thing even more strongly:

(Jude 1:4 NIV) For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

Brothers and sisters, let us practice and teach the things that are of God so that we may be assured a place in His kingdom! Let us hope to be among the faithful servants of Matthew 24:45 and let us hope that we will not hear Him command us to take the "least" position of authority in His Kingdom, or even worse, say, "*I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoer!*" (Matthew 7:23). Now we see that God's law constrains man; it puts boundaries or parameters on his choices. God's law separates the world into two parts, that which is permissible to man and that which is not. The doctrine of separation teaches us to respect and to love God's law.

What About the Non-moral Laws Not Repealed in the New Testament?

One of the most common Old Testament laws still obeyed by many Christian denominations is that of not trimming one's beard. I know of no New Testament writing that mentions this, so is it still binding upon us? How can we know?

Paul made it abundantly clear in Galatians that Christians should not become circumcised in order to become a Christian. He said that if one did so, "he is obligated to keep the whole law." (Gal. 5:3) Simple rules of language teach us that this implies that one who does not submit to circumcision as a religious rite is **not** obligated to keep the whole law. What follows in this chapter may be the best example of the distinction between moral and ceremonial law in the Bible. Paul clearly teaches that Christians are "not under the Law," (5:18), yet in the same breath he declares that we must not use that freedom from the Law as "an opportunity for the flesh." (5:13).

Paul then teaches that Christians who walk by the Spirit will not gratify the desires of the flesh. He tells us that the works of the flesh are evident and include sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. (5:19-20 Here Paul lists moral aspects of a person's nature. Would trimming or not trimming one's beard fit under any of these categories of moral failures?

Another law that some Christians obey is to wear tassels somewhere upon their clothing. Again, ask yourself whether the wearing of tassels does or does not fit under one of the categories of immoral fleshly activity listed by Paul. Other laws that some Christians still obey include keeping the various festivals of the Old Testament, like Passover, Pentecost, or

Tabernacles. Paul clearly teaches that these do not have to be observed and certainly should not be obeyed as a criteria for one's salvation or relationship with God. The same is also true of the Sabbath day, but the issues there are far more complicated. The reason that this becomes complicated is because Hebrews chapters three and four appear to say that Christians are still obligated to keep the Sabbath day rest. It is true that Christians must enter the Sabbath rest of God, and it is also true that it can be very helpful to keep a one-day Sabbath per week, but Paul also teaches freedom with respect to the Sabbath day. Personally, my family and I observe a weekly Sunday Sabbath, but if my ox is in the ditch, I have no problem working on that day. I have absolute freedom to do what I believe needs to be done on the Sabbath day so long as I am walking according to the Holy Spirit.

It appears to me, therefore, that many of the laws that are not specifically mentioned again in the New Testament are not binding upon Christians. Under the analysis above I believe these laws to be ceremonial and ritualistic, not moral. Many of these laws served to prophetically illustrate the concept of separation, that is, sanctification unto God. In the new covenant this separation is to be internalized and to become part of the fabric of our being. In the new covenant God writes his law on our hearts. Ultimately, elohim, that is, overcomers, act morally because they are moral. This is why the elohim are not under the law. They are the law, they are justice, they are righteousness, they are mercy, they are truth, they are....

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE DOCTRINE OF JUDGMENT

Judgment is one of the most difficult of all concepts for people to grasp, including Christians. This is true because judgment requires an understanding of God's requirements, God's law.

What business is it of mine to judge those outside the Church? Are you not to judge those inside? (1 CORINTHIANS 5:12).

JUDGE NOT LEST YOU BE JUDGED

Once church leaders understand the Teaching about Righteousness and the application of God's law they will learn how to judge sin in their own lives and in their families, friends, and churches. The Church's responsibility for judging its membership is an essential doctrine of the Teaching about Righteousness. Most leaders have mistaken the scripture which says, "judge not lest you be judged" to imply that Christians may not judge others, period. Some leaders go so far as to say that such judging proves that the judge is simply "intolerant" of others and liken him to the most wicked of men, like Hitler.

Jesus Himself is the one who said, "*Do not judge, or you too will be judged*" (See Matthew 7:1). Many people, therefore, quote this statement as **the** doctrine of judging. The problem is that most people do not put the quote in its context and then expound the entire passage. Here is the entire relevant passage concerning judging from Matthew's gospel:

*"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? **You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye** (MATTHEW 7:1-5).*

Contrary to popular opinion, Jesus is not making a sweeping denunciation of judging others in this passage. He does condemn **hypocritical** judgments here, but he also teaches his hearers the **proper method of judging** sin in others. Jesus is saying that if anyone does accept the task or authority to judge another's conduct he must examine himself strictly before he does so. This is because a man who judges another guilty of a sin who is himself guilty of the same or similar sin is a "hypocrite" and is subject to the same judgment as the one he adjudges "guilty."

Paul teaches exactly the same thing in the Book of Romans. He begins his book by stating that those Christians who judge others of sin, but are guilty of the same sins, are inexcusable and will suffer the wrath of God unless they repent:

(Rom 2:1-5 NKJV) *Therefore you are inexcusable, O man,*

whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. {2} But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. {3} And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? {4} Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? {5} But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God....

Paul also teaches Christians not to judge others about “disputable things,” i.e. those habits or peculiarities of personal taste that God has not condemned. See Romans 14:1-15:7. But, he never teaches Christians to ignore God-revealed sin in their brothers’ lives. “*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not!*” (Romans 6:1-2a).

Yes, the warnings are serious to any in the Church who would be judge, but Paul says that we ought to be able to appoint “*even men of little account in the Church*” to judge:

If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the Church! I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? (1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-5).

Today, men who consider themselves of “large account” will have nothing to do with correcting and judging those under their leadership. They seem satisfied instead to hold sway over infant Christians who never grow beyond the milk of the word. Rather than being afraid to judge sin in ourselves and others, we should be eager to learn how to do so in a righteous way, for Paul declares that “*the spiritual man makes judgments about all things*” (1 Corinthians 2:15). Jesus says that once we are willing to make judgments about all things and judge sin in ourselves by taking the plank out of our own eye, then we will see clearly enough to remove the speck of sin from our brother's eye.

Paul was a man who dealt drastically with his own sins. He writes, “*I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize*” (1 Corinthians 9:27). Thus, he was able to say, just as we each should someday be able to say, “*Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present*” (1 Corinthians 5:3). He goes on, “*What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?*” (1 Corinthians 5:12). His answer is clearly, “No, it is not your business to judge those outside the church, i.e., non-Christians. Yes, it is your business to judge those inside the church,

i.e. Christians. Most of the church, however, has this completely backwards. We rail against the sins of the world and never speak a word of correction to those in the church who practice the same things. If we do speak words of correction we rarely bring a judgment, and we almost never excommunicate the sinning Christian as Scripture commands.

James is another apostle who writes about judging others. In his book he declares, "*My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: **Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins***" (JAMES 5:19-20). Remember, James is written to Christians. The "sinner" here is a Christian sinner. The "death" the Christian sinner faces here is the destruction of his soul, not his spirit. Jude teaches the same thing: "*And on some have compassion, making a distinction; {23} but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh*". (Jude 1:22-23 NKJV).

You can only "turn back" or "save" someone from their sin if you are bold enough to confront their sin. Remember, says Paul, "*we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad*" (2 CORINTHIANS 5:10). Would we rather get a warning from a brother, or a punishment from God?

JUDGMENT IN THE CHURCH

Christians may judge other Christians, then, but that they must do so very carefully. God would say to all who fear to judge righteously, grow up! Set your hearts upon spiritual maturity and learn the wisdom of God pertaining to justice and righteousness. There is too much division and sin in God's house. The time is now to hear the word of the Lord respecting judgment in the House of God:

*I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people-- not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing you that **you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler.** With such a man do not even eat. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the Church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. "*Expel the wicked man from among you*" (1Cor. 5:9-13).*

What could be clearer than this? Paul says "*you must not associate*" with anyone who claims to be a Christian who is sexually immoral, greedy, an idolater, a slanderer, a drunkard, or a swindler. This means that those who partake of these sins should be **excommunicated** from the Church. But, we Laodicean-era Christians too quickly pass over these six words as if they do not apply to us or those we know. We only call someone "sexually immoral" if he gets caught in the act of adultery or a homosexual relationship. We don't hold them accountable for the pornographic images they routinely view on television, hit movies, magazines, and the internet. We never judge them for the filthy jokes and lewd innuendoes they listen to day after day on network sit-coms or those course jokes they themselves tell.

Similarly, most of us do not judge Christians for the greed that their workaholic schedules, fast lives and many possessions betray. Neither do we correct the brother or sister that constantly gossips about (slanders) others. We may judge the drunk or the drug addict (because the world does), but what do we say about the rich Christian business man who sells the worthless product or tries to get all the Christians he knows into the latest pyramid scheme? Aren't most pastors and Christians more interested in his tithes and being a friend of the rich brother? Isn't money the real reason why no one judges sin in the church? We want the tithe and we do not want to be sued for excommunicating anyone. Sounds like we serve mammon instead of God, doesn't it?

I think the Bible teaches that each church should have its own group of members that judges any verified charge of wrongdoing. This same group should judge both the elders who lead the church and the other members. At least one elder should be a member of the group. Judgment should not waiver because of the gifting or leadership of a person, but should be based on the Word of God. It is time once again for the Church to take up its responsibility regarding judging, *"for it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?"* (1 PETER 4:17). Once we practice judgment in our own midst, we will begin to see a church of purity emerge. We will see ourselves as a holy people and that, too, will be how the world perceives us, rather than as the hypocrites they see today. Then we will walk in true authority and our words will be honored as genuine and true. But, will many Christians at the end of the age repent and judge with righteous judgment before our Lord Jesus Christ comes again? Jesus Himself does not think so, saying, *"Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"* (LUKE 18:8).

JESUS WAS "A FRIEND OF SINNERS!"

Jesus always required repentance even though He was known as a "friend of sinners." Jesus did not come to earth to "party" with sinners or to just "be their friend." He came to offer them an escape from sin and from the eternal judgment it would bring. When He was criticized for spending time with the most sinful people of society, Jesus replied, *"I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance"* (LUKE 5:32). He never implied that someone who was caught up in a sin was justified in doing it because he was an abused child or grew up in a discriminatory, harsh environment or a "dysfunctional" family. His message was always the same: *"This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem"* (LUKE 24:46-47). Jesus Christ taught that one must repent of his sins in order to gain the forgiveness of men or God: *"If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him"* (LUKE 17:3). When confronted with the woman caught in adultery he did not condemn her to death. He had no jurisdictional authority yet in this world. He did not condemn her or punish her in an eternal sense. She had not died yet. He told her to "go and sin no more." He judged the sin and told her to repent. He did not overlook the sin. See John 8:1-12.

Men and women who remain unrepentant of any acts which the Bible clearly defines as sin must be judged by Church leadership and excommunicated until they do repent! Consider the words of Paul once more:

*But now I am writing you that **you must not associate with anyone***

who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the Church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. Expel the wicked man from among you (1 CORINTHIANS. 5:11-13).

How often do we accept the unrepentant sinner in our midst without so much as a rebuke, much less excommunication? It is time to stop playing church. Are we God's house? Are we Christ's body? Are we a royal priesthood? Then let us act like it! Let us train ourselves to discern good from evil, do the good, and judge the evil in our congregations! Once we can do that we will be wise enough to hold positions of leadership and authority in God's Kingdom.

LEGALISM AND JUDGMENT

There are many Christians who refuse to judge sin in members of Christ's Church because they lump most of life under so-called "gray" areas, i.e., those ethical issues of life for which they believe the Bible offers no authoritative counsel. It is true that there are many activities of one's life to which God's word does not directly speak. Paul called these "disputable matters." Respecting these Paul said, *"Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters"* (Romans 14:1).

As you read Romans 14 or 1 Corinthians 10, you will see that Paul considered "disputable matters" such things as whether or not to eat meat versus just vegetables, whether one could eat any kind of meat, such as pork or other "unclean" animals, whether one could eat meat sacrificed to an idol, or whether or not one could drink wine with a clear conscience. Paul counsels that we ought not judge others based upon their beliefs and practices concerning such things. Not only should we not judge our brother or sister concerning these, we should not partake of them if our doing so would defile their conscience or cause them to stumble in their own walk with the Lord. We may do some "disputable matter" privately, however, so long as *"whatever you believe about these things [you] keep between yourself and God"* (Romans 14:22a). Paul concluded, *"blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves"* (Romans 14:22b).

Most of life, however, is not made up of "gray" areas or disputable matters. It is possible to know from the principles and laws of God's Word whether or not most activities are wrong or right. Those fearful of judging, however, warn us that it is "legalistic" to judge many areas of life, like watching pornographic, coarse, or violent television and movies, listening to evil music, or sending our children to public schools. The charge of legalism has been a great tool of the devil. Like always, he took a truth of God and twisted it. Many Christians, charged with being legalistic, are cowed into silence.

It would be legalistic for me to say, "It is sin for you to watch any television whatsoever." The fact is that it is not necessarily a sin for me to watch television. If I carefully choose what I set before the eyes and ears of myself and my family and watch only that which edifies us, then I do not sin. If, however, I do not discern between good and evil films and watch any lustful or blasphemous program, then I do sin and I may be righteously judged by another for my behavior. If someone is addicted to trash television, good counsel would be for that person to get rid of his television set, at least until he has been freed from his sin. If such a person refuses

to follow such counsel and continues to watch unseemly programs, then it is not legalistic to judge his television watching as a sin and to hold him accountable for that sin. The same argument applies to listening to satanic, blasphemous, or seductive music and for watching most movies.

How can I say this? By understanding and obeying Ephesians 5:3-7:

*But among you **there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person--such a man is an idolater--has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them*** (Ephesians 5:3-7).

Christians need to learn to apply God's word to all areas of their lives, even to their "entertainment." I remember a well-known Christian brother tell the story of how he loved to watch the first Indiana Jones movie. During the third or fourth time he watched it he distinctly heard the Holy Spirit say to him, "Do you think I enjoy watching this?" Brothers and sisters, let us learn to discern good and evil ourselves, judge the evil, and do the good. Let us learn to take the logs out of our own eyes. Then we will not need to be judged by God or men and will insure our inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God! But if a man will not learn to judge himself by God's Word, then God has ordained that the Church hold the man accountable and judge the persistent sin in his life. And when this, too, fails, then all that is left is the final judgment before the seat of Christ. Remember, though, "*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*" (Heb 10:31 NKJV)

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

SEPARATION AND THE TEACHING ABOUT RIGHTEOUSNESS

*So this is what the Sovereign Lord says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed. **I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line....**" (ISAIAH 28:16-17a, emphasis added).*

Let's now consider several primary concepts of the Word of God which comprise the Teaching about Righteousness. Think of a cross, the very symbol of Christianity. Let the vertical pole, which points from earth to heaven or from man to God, represent the "righteousness" aspect of this mature doctrine. First, we understand that Christ died so that man could have a relationship with his Father based upon imputed righteousness, and thus be accepted for all eternity by the Almighty. When one believes upon the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins God the Father credits righteousness to him. Righteousness, thus, establishes our relationship with God and cleanses our conscience. Now remember how God's moral law defines righteousness and makes it a living reality in the believer's life. Let righteousness be represented by the vertical pole of the cross, pointing from man to God.

The horizontal bar of the cross points from man to man. Think of this pole as representing the "justice" aspect of the doctrine. Jesus died for man so that man might have a righteous relationship with God, which in turn results in a just relationship with other men. Justice, then, defines the proper relationship between men. The teaching of Jesus to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" helps us to understand the meaning of justice and it, too, is defined by God's law.

Now, add to the vertical pole the words "grace" and "faith" and remember EPHESIANS 2:8, "*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God*" and ROMANS 1:17, "*For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.'*" Surely grace, faith and righteousness are integrally linked in God's purposes for man and all three concepts combine to define our relationship with Him which begins when we are spiritually reborn by faith in Jesus Christ. Another word we can add to the vertical pole is justification. Justification has been defined by some theologians as "just as if we had not sinned." The Biblical concept of justification deals with our new and pure relationship with God when we are born again by faith in Christ.

The meanings of the phrases "righteousness," "grace," "faith," and "justification," and "spiritual salvation by faith in Christ," therefore, all shed light on each other and help us to understand their full meanings. These words describe the initial relationship between God and man, but they do not allow us to fully understand it. They do not cross the hurdle of defining and helping us to understand Christ's first command to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind. Only when we add the "teaching about righteousness" of which Hebrews 5 speaks can we understand true righteousness and all that God requires in our relationship with Him. The basic terms listed above name only the milk of the word; they do not describe the reality of loving God with all our heart. The teaching about righteousness does that.

Similarly, consider the horizontal bar and the words "justice," "law," "works,"

"sanctification," and "salvation of the soul." The Biblical concept of sanctification is often considered to be a progressive work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. We are said to be sanctified more and more to the Lord as we yield more and more to God's Spirit in obedience to His commands. "Sanctification" describes the working out of our [soul] salvation in fear and trembling by doing good works of justice. To sanctify something means to set it apart, or separate it, for use by God. Sanctification, therefore, describes the necessary separation that God requires in our lives. Jesus prayed for our separation from the world as follows:

(John 17:14-19 NKJV) *"I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. {15} "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. {16} "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. {17} **"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.** {18} "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. {19} "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, **that they also may be sanctified by the truth.***

The Teaching about Righteousness, then, is the teaching of the two commands of Christ, of loving God and loving men. It gives life to that word "sanctification" that we have always heard, but never understood. It is the doctrine of actual righteousness worked out here and now by obedience to God's truth so that we may please God and realize the salvation of our souls. It is the teaching of good works in conformance with God's word, which includes God's laws. It lays the foundation for ruling and reigning with Christ for one thousand years.

The teaching about righteousness enables us to discern good and evil and to choose the good. This is the doctrine that allows and even commands that we judge sin in ourselves and in our brethren. As Paul said, *"Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? {3} Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?"* (1 Cor 6:2-3 NKJV). This teaching is the essential message of the Gospel because it is this which prepares us to rule and reign with Christ in the Kingdom of God.

Now we have come full circle. We arrive again at Genesis 1:2-4 and 3:16-17. We see that the grand strategy of God all along has been to prepare a people, separate unto Him, that knows how to discern between good and evil and to choose the good. This is what it means when John proclaims, *"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. {3} And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure"* (1 John 3:2-3 NKJV). This is the ultimate separation, the one that God has yearned for man to learn: the ability to discern (separate) between good and evil and to choose the good. This is the Teaching about Righteousness (the Doctrine of the Separation) and now we know why it is only for the mature.

God's plan, from the beginning, was to prepare a Bride for His Son. Such a Bride had to be *like Him*. She could not be a harlot, lusting after the scent and scenes of Satan. She had to be pure, but she also had to know the difference between good and evil. It was not enough simply to create a being that would always choose good by design. This is not like God. He did not even create the angels that way. The Bride had to be someone that would choose good because

good was the best way, the only way, even if she were surrounded by evil and even if it meant she had to leave her own mother, father, or country. The Bride had to be someone who loves righteousness and does justice, no matter the cost, just as her Husband does

Today the Bride finds herself awash in a sea of evil, but she still cleanses herself daily by God's Word. The Bride knows evil. She sees it all around her, but she refuses to participate in it. She doesn't need to study it, either. Because she knows God's Word, she knows evil when she sees it. She separates herself and her family from it instead. She raises her children distinct from the world, and alone, for few will join her. Yes, the Bride knows evil, but she chooses the good, and by the power of the Most Holy Spirit within her, she does what is right even in this wicked time. She is the exalted woman who made herself ready for her beloved. She is arrayed in fine linen, all of her righteous works. See Revelation 19:7-8. She is the one who overcomes this world because she dared to separate when everyone else said, "stay with us." She is the one who will ascend with Jesus onto His throne and rule with Him throughout the millennium in His glorious Kingdom. See Revelation 3:21. *"And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely"* (Rev 22:17 NKJV).

PART FOUR
THE SEPARATION
and
THE END OF THE AGE

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? {46} "Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. {47} "Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. {48} "But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' {49} "and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, {50} "the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, {51} "and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mat 24:45-51 NKJV)¹

¹Please see the author's book *When We Awake*

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

SEPARATION & LAWLESSNESS TWO SIGNS OF CHRIST'S COMING

*(2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 NKJV) Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, {2} not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. {3} Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away [apostasy] comes first, and **the man of sin** is revealed, the son of perdition, {4} who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. {5} Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? {6} And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. {7} For **the mystery of lawlessness** is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. {8} And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. {9} **The coming of the lawless one** is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, {10} and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. {11} And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, {12} that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

Paul tells us in these verses that Jesus Christ will not return again until two great signs occur. (I) The first sign, that of apostasy, is three-fold. (a) The first aspect of apostasy will be a great falling away from the truths of God's Word. This results in the world-wide harlot form of Christianity that we presently see. (b) Then, recognition of the harlot causes obedient Christians to separate from the spiritual whore, from the established church system. (c) This separation will culminate in the ultimate act of separation, that of the firstfruits rapture by God Himself! (II) Paul then forecasts the revealing of the Man of Sin, the man of lawlessness, as the second major sign. Both signs comprise a great mystery that has not been understood until very recently.

Paul, in fact, sums up the signs and all that accompanies them as the "mystery of lawlessness." Webster's dictionary defines mystery as "a religious truth that man can know by revelation alone and cannot fully understand." This definition is wonderfully accurate, for the natural mind cannot apprehend the things of the Spirit and Paul's words above are spiritual. The Mystery of Lawlessness can only be understood by spiritual revelation. Although I have some understanding of it, what even I have can only be understood if the Holy Spirit opens one's eyes to see. Pray for the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation before you begin. I have prayed this prayer for many years, but it was not until recently that I understood....

The Mystery of Lawlessness

Most Bible teachers consider the Man of Sin mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 to be only the one end-time antichrist. The apostle John wrote, *“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. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.”* He also said, *“Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist who denies the Father and the Son”* (1 John 2:18,19,22). The apostle makes it clear that this coming antichrist is not some new phenomenon, for many have already come. Paul says that this man of sin is part of a mystery and that the **Mystery of Lawlessness** is already at work. I believe that another identity of the antichrist who is to come will be revealed when we solve the Mystery of Lawlessness.

The term lawlessness basically means without law, but its Biblical meaning is far greater than this. As used in the Scriptures the term lawlessness means to be without God’s holy and revealed eternal law. The mystery of lawlessness that was already at work in Paul’s day was the leaven of turning away from God’s law, His standard of righteousness and justice. The leaven has slowly, but surely, spread throughout all mankind, including into most of His people. This is also the leaven of sin and explains why Paul so forcefully told the Corinthians to remove the sinner from their fellowship. See 1 Corinthians 5. *“A little leaven leavens the whole lump,”* he said. Indeed, the leaven of lawlessness has leavened this lump called humanity. In many of our churches the leaven is the heresy of grace without law or love without accountability. In other churches the leaven is legalistic righteousness or standards of conduct based upon man’s measure, not God’s. *“I don’t smoke, I don’t chew, I don’t go with girls who do.”* This is not God’s law; it is man’s, and he has made thousands of others that have kept God’s people in chains.

The leaven among other Christians is simply a denial of the inerrant Word of God. These have no truth in which to believe. The foundation of God’s authority rests upon His own declared Word. The Holy Scriptures contain that Word, yet almost all of mankind, including most believers, willingly turn away from it. In doing this we turn away from God’s government, the Kingdom of God itself, for God’s law embodied as righteousness and justice is the foundation of His throne, i.e., the foundation of his rule and authority. See Psalm 97:2 and 89:14. Only a remnant of obedient believers is left.

Natural Signs of Lawlessness

At this point I want to write about some of the things I have seen over many years as a lawyer and lawmaker that make me believe that we live in the days of the man of lawlessness. One of the most important signs was the O. J. Simpson murder trial. Everyone knows that he murdered his ex-wife and her friend. Some lawless people are pleased with the verdict, but, nevertheless, they do know that he is guilty. This trial is a sign to us because it clearly shows the culture of a lawless world and its legal system. We saw highly paid attorneys trick twelve men and women into voting “not guilty.” Some of these attorneys teach others that this is their legitimate job and is a wholesome part of “justice!”

The Simpson verdict is not a fluke. It does not portray a rare result in our “justice”

system. The United States Supreme Court over a period of decades has so perverted law and order in our country (by legalizing abortion, for example) that this kind of result is common. The cause, however, does not lie only with the Supreme Court. It lies with all who help corrupt the system. Attorneys who know their clients are guilty should not try to fool twelve jurors into believing they are innocent. This is not the job of an attorney. An attorney may legitimately try to mitigate the legal harm to a client, but to formulate lies that fool the jury is the basest form of deceit. To receive legal fees as payment to use one's talents to pervert justice equates to taking a bribe. The Simpson case showed the entire world the state of justice and the law in America.

American injustice is further seen in another case with which I am very familiar. As a legislator I had the opportunity to draft and help pass a law to prevent state trial judges from letting certain convicted felons out of prison after only 120 days. This power was called the 120 day call-back rule. My law was passed to prevent judges from giving early probation in serious cases, particularly child sex offenses. Yet, since that law came into force in 1996, I have heard of numerous times that a judge has "called back" a serious offender after only 120 days.

For example, a middle aged man was convicted of repeatedly sodomizing a young teenage boy who lived with him and his family. A jury found the man guilty and recommended a 20 year prison sentence, which the judge ordered. After only 120 days, however, the trial judge let him out of prison, supposedly under the 120 call-back rule. Yet, both the conviction and the implementation of the probation came after my law went into effect. I wrote a letter explaining the new law to the judge, but to no effect. I called the local prosecutor. She did not return my call. I wrote a letter to the prosecutor and copied the State Governor and leaders of the State legislature. Nothing happened. After this early probation the man again had homosexual relations with at least one boy under age eighteen. A probation revocation hearing was had and the judge refused to put him back in prison. Finally, after repeated probation violations the man was incarcerated again. What is going on? The Mystery of Lawlessness is being revealed.

Again, in 1996 I learned that the local Division of Family Services was actively recruiting homosexuals to serve as foster care parents. I drafted legislation to prevent such destructive persons from adopting or serving as foster parents and introduced it for consideration by the 1997 General Assembly. The Speaker of the House assigned the bill to a hostile committee, one that he knew would kill the bill. I attempted to get my own political party to make the bill a caucus issue. That idea was turned down. My bill was deemed "too controversial" among other things. A "conservative" member of my own caucus even worked with the opposition to make sure that my bill could not be added as an amendment to another adoption bill being considered. One would think that passing a law to prohibit adoption and foster care by homosexuals would be a simple matter in our "Christian" society. Who would have ever guessed that even conservatives would work behind the scenes to prevent it from becoming law. What is going on? The Mystery of Lawlessness is being revealed.

Then, there is the golden idol called public education that teaches our children everything but the truth. Our kids can go to school and learn how to use drugs and guns, have sex, wear condoms, get abortions, that homo-sex is ok, that men evolved from animals, and any number of other evils. They learn just about everything except reading, writing, and arithmetic. The last thing these schools would ever teach is that God's laws are eternal and His way is the way to eternal life. Yet most Christian parents send their own kids to these schools and all but a very few federal and state legislators send much of our earned income (taxes) to fund these false religious shrines. What is going on? The Mystery of Lawlessness is being revealed.

Perhaps the most profound sign of lawlessness can be seen in the actions of President Bill

Clinton. As the chief law enforcement officer and the head of government of the United States, he perverted justice by lying under oath. He further perverted justice by saying that his lies were justified because the lies were only about sex. He turned the legal system into the lawlessness system.

Consider how completely his lies and the impeachment debacle fulfill 2 Thessalonians. First, as with O.J. Simpson, everyone knows that the President is guilty of many things of which he has been accused. The list is numerous and well known but the basic four allegations are these: 1) adultery (sex outside of marriage), 2) lying under oath, 3) taking campaign contributions from the Chinese, and 4) treason, i.e., providing military secrets to the Chinese by relaxed trade rules and allowance of espionage. The relationship to 2 Thessalonians is that although people KNOW that Clinton did these things, they BELIEVE the LIE that he did not. People truly know in their hearts that this President works wickedness as the ruler of the world's greatest empire, but they prefer to believe that he is gracious, compassionate, and just misunderstood (he's just a poor victim of child abuse, we are told). They willingly believe the lie that the accusations are part of some "vast right wing conspiracy." Why? *"Because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."* (2 Thes. 2:10b-12).

I could write about dozens of similar examples of lawlessness and you could add to my list. I'm sure you see the picture, though. It is a picture of man without law. All of these examples of lawlessness exhibit manifestations of the delusion prophesied by Paul. They are further described by John in his picture of Babylon the Great in Revelation 17-18. "Babylon the Great," like lawlessness, is another mystery. The term is a spiritual code-word for the entire world system from which the whole Bible warns us to separate. Even more signs of Christ's soon return appear within Babylon the Whore.

Lying Signs and Wonders: The Spiritual Signs of Lawlessness

Many will disagree with what I have written here. Deception, apostasy, idolatry and harlotry all characterize the prophesied end of the age, however, so take heed before you recklessly criticize. I write this that those who possess God's Spirit within will hear His Word and become obedient to His command. Beloved, this is the last minute of the last hour. It is no longer just the last hour as John wrote. See 1 John 2:18. It is time for the slumbering virgins of Christ to awaken and be filled with the oil of God, as Jesus tells us in Matthew 25. Those who continue to sleep will sleep through the return of Christ for His Bride and be thrust unaware into the darkness of the DAY OF THE LORD, the Great Tribulation. This writing sounds a warning to the people of God. *"Blow the trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the LORD is coming, For it is at hand"* (Joel 2:1).

Paul said the Day of the LORD *"will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition"* (2 Thes. 2:3). Both have occurred and are still in process as I write. Also, he says, *"The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, {10} and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved"* (2 Thes. 2:9-10). These signs and lying wonders have also come to pass and are yet continuing. The lying signs and wonders usually take the form of supernatural manifestations

that gullible people believe to be the work of God. At this time we see people all over the world hungering for supernatural events, so much so that they fail to judge the events by the Word and Spirit of God. They run to churches where they hear that spiritual things are happening. They want that “spirit,” that “power,” that “anointing,” they learn about, but they fail to judge the fruit of the spirit before they partake. They have the means to judge, but they fail to use it. They have failed to study and know the written revelation of Jesus, the Word of God. *“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”* (Hebrews 4:12).

The latest, and probably most dangerous lying sign to date, is the so-called “Renewal” or “Toronto Blessing” movement. The things going on at the Brownsville Pensacola Assembly of God are the same. I have personally seen the fruit of this spirit in several local charismatic churches, in one of which I was a member for over four years. Many articles and books have been written concerning the supernatural phenomena occurring in these churches, so this writing will not go into great detail about the meetings of these groups. Instead, I will focus on several manifestations common among those who have gotten caught up in it.

First, it is well known that one of the things that often occurs is that participants of the meetings take on characteristics of animals. I have heard accounts of people acting like lions, dogs, and chickens from many varied sources. The question has to be asked, “Would God manifest His presence among us by making us assume the mind of a beast?” The Biblical answer is clearly and unequivocally “NO!”

Here are some scriptures that show that God would not be moving on His people to cause them to act like common beasts: *“Then he was driven from the sons of men, his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses”* (Daniel 5:21, NKJV). The NIV version reads, *“He was driven away from people and given the **mind of an animal**”* The psalmist Asaph writes, *“When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered, I was senseless and ignorant; **I was a brute beast before you**”* (Psalm 73:21-22). Jude tells us that the term “brute beast” speaks of the natural mind, not the spiritual mind. See Jude 10. When John saw the man of sin in his vision of the Day of the Lord he described him as a beast:

(Rev 13:1-2 NIV) *“And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And **I saw a beast coming out of the sea**. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. {2} The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority.”*

The sea often represents mankind as a whole in the Scriptures, so here is a picture of a beast arising from mankind with Satan giving him his power. Is there any more fitting manifestation of Satan’s spirit, then, than that of a beast?

Another common occurrence of those deceived by this “renewal” move is that its adherents become dogmatic about “getting out of the mind.” The devil has used a very clever trick in this deception. The Bible does instruct Christians to have the mind of Christ and to

renew their minds of flesh by the Holy Spirit. So, on the one hand it is a good thing to get out of a fleshly mind. But, this is not the emphasis in this movement. Rather, the emphasis of the “blessing” is not to question the manifestations of the spirit involved. Participants are exhorted to eagerly accept whatever the spirit wills and to not quench this spirit by analyzing or criticizing it with their minds. These instructions deliberately cause the participants to fail to judge the spirit’s fruit by the Word of God. In so many words they are instructed to become zombies. Those who fail to follow their instructions are called legalistic and made to feel as if they have truly missed the present move of the Holy Spirit. This “getting out of the mind” is a very great deception. It is actually founded on the lawlessness of the grace heresy because it attacks with the dirty word, “legalism.” It’s author is none other than the dragon himself.

Concerning using our minds, the Word of God says: *“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind”* (2 Timothy 1:7). By accepting this doctrine of demons to stop using their minds men have literally abandoned the knowledge of God. God will judge them: *“Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done”* (Romans 1:28). Rather than abandoning our minds, Christians are to have a mind that is a slave to God’s law. See Romans 7:25. Further, our mind is to be controlled by the Holy Spirit, not a counterfeit spirit. See Romans 8:6. Paul teaches that we are to be *“transformed by the renewing of our mind”* so that we can test and approve God’s good, pleasing, and perfect will. See Romans 12:2. Brethren, the Holy Spirit would not do to our minds today what He did to Nebuchadnezzar’s mind twenty-six centuries ago in judgment. In that day God turned the king’s mind to that of a beast in judgment. Turning the mind of a Christian to a beast’s today would be anything but a “blessing.” Beware the false teacher who tells you to turn off your mind and encourages you to follow whatever spirit he manifests.

The Great Separation (Apostasia)

What we see today in the “Blessing” and other false moves of the evil spirits is part of the first aspect of the Great Apostasy spoken of in 2 Thes. 2:3. Various translations of the Scriptures call the apostasy different things, but the clear message conveyed by all of them is that there will be some great falling away from the truths of God just prior to the revelation of the Man of Sin and the coming of the LORD Jesus Christ. Can there be any doubt that this is actually occurring as you read this? Consider the churches you know. Consider the sins in which Christians routinely walk. Consider the difficulty that you personally have conveying truth to another Christian. These are the carnal believers who refuse to obey the truth of God. I am not writing to them. They do not have ears to hear. I am writing to you who know that you walk in the doctrine of Christ. The end of all things is near and only the remnant on the narrow path will hear the words of Christ, obey them, and so save their souls.

Brethren, I believe that the great falling away is happening right now and that it has been going on for some time. How else can you describe churches that do not excommunicate brazen sinners, but instead ordain them as pastors, elders, or bishops and charismatic churches that fall on their knees and howl like beasts? How can you describe thousands upon thousands of churches that fail to speak out against the repulsive lawlessness of our day? If this is not apostasy, then the word has no meaning. Paul says that the Man of Sin is revealed at the time of this great falling from God’s truth. After that the Day of the Lord comes. Look up, for Christ’s coming is at hand.

The Greek word translated as apostasy in many Bibles is generally interpreted to mean a defection or falling away from truth. This word “apostasia,” though, is the verb form of the noun “apostasion.” Apostasion is used three times in the New Testament and is translated as “divorcement” each time. Strong’s defines this word to mean “something separative.” Surely, a divorce between a husband and wife is among the most grievous and profound of all separations. Concerning this marriage between a man and a woman Jesus said, *“they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate”* Matthew 19:6. The verb “apostasia” used in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, therefore, speaks of separation as well as apostasy from the faith. We could even translate “apostasy” as “separation from the faith.” I believe Paul meant more than even this, however.

I believe that Paul implies that a manifest separation of Christians from the world will precede the revealing of the man of lawlessness. Remember his words to the Corinthians:

(2 Cor 6:17-7:1 NKJV) Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." {18} "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty." Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

We have already seen what this separation from the world means for us who obey Christ. This aspect of apostasia, the separation, defines one of those end-time signs to be seen just before the great tribulation and the second coming of Christ, and it leads to an even more controversial separation.

Today there exists a huge “camp” in the world known as Christianity. This camp comprises Babylon the Great and consists of myriad types of churches: Catholic, denominational, charismatic, and independent. Most of these churches have separated from the true faith. Many still preach salvation by the blood of Jesus, but they preach little else that Jesus, the apostles, and prophets taught. They left “the faith” described in Scripture and now teach the doctrines of demons and men. Many cling to demonic manifestations as miracles from God. This huge “camp” is Babylon the Great, harlot religion. This explains why most visible churches look so much like the world. This also explains why Paul exhorts Christians to “go forth to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no enduring city, but we seek the one to come.” Hebrews 13:13-14.

Paul teaches us that “all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” 2 Timothy 3:12. When one truly desires to live in righteousness and justice before God he will usually find that he must separate from his church because it has left the faith. When he does this he will suffer persecution from other believers, just as Jesus suffered at the hands of the self-righteous Jews. Yes, when one desires to live godly in Christ Jesus and therefore separates from the camp, he will find that other Christians force him to bear the reproach of his decision. Few risk this ostracism and forced shame that comes from whole-heartedly obeying Christ. This is what Jesus means when He says the following: *“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. {27} “And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple”* (Luke 14:26-27 NKJV).

Now we see that the “apostasia” speaks of separation from the faith (which is the common definition of apostasy) by the disobedient, separation from the world system by obedient believers, and, ultimately, separation from the harlot church system (which is also part of the world) by those who love the truth. Harken now to the Word of the Lord: “*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.*” Hebrews 12:25.

False Shepherds and the Great Deception

The evil spirit behind lying signs and wonders floods today into many Christian churches. Churches that have willingly accepted these lying spirits stand guilty of sin before God and they will pay a penalty. God allows them to be deceived because they have not loved the truth and given themselves in obedience to it. See 2 Thes. 2:10.

God wrote his truth in His Word, the Bible, and it is embodied in the person of Jesus, the Messiah. The verses and books comprising both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible teach God’s truth. Yet, the churches have violated His laws and have taught His people that they are null and void, to be ignored and even blasphemed. The great deception sweeping the churches is possible because the people have no means of defense or offense. The shepherds do not provide them with the helmet of (soul) salvation. And, they hand their people broken swords. The people do not stand guiltless before God, however, because they can read the Bible and pray for ears to hear on their own.

Jeremiah prophesies concerning the shepherds of today’s churches and the soon coming reign of Him Who rules with a rod of iron:

(Jer 23:1-10 NKJV) *"Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!" says the LORD. {2} Therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel against the shepherds who feed My people: "You have scattered My flock, driven them away, and not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for the evil of your doings," says the LORD. {3} "But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. {4} "I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking," says the LORD. {5} "Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper; And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. {6} In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. {7} "Therefore, behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that they shall no longer say, 'As the LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,' {8} "but, 'As the LORD lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had*

driven them.' And they shall dwell in their own land." {9} My heart within me is broken Because of the prophets; All my bones shake. I am like a drunken man, And like a man whom wine has overcome, Because of the LORD, And because of His holy words. {10} For the land is full of adulterers; For because of a curse the land mourns. The pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up. Their course of life is evil, And their might is not right.

Yes, Jeremiah speaks to the common pastor of today's apostate churches. They shoulder much of the blame for the state of God's church, as do the self-proclaimed prophets who wander from sea to sea across this earth, feeding off of the poor in spirit. This true prophet warns us concerning these false ones:

*(Jer 23:11-32 NKJV) "For both prophet and priest are profane; Yes, in My house I have found their wickedness," says the LORD. {12} "Therefore their way shall be to them Like slippery ways; In the darkness they shall be driven on And fall in them; For I will bring disaster on them, The year of their punishment," says the LORD. {13} "And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria: They prophesied by Baal And caused My people Israel to err. {14} Also I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem: They commit adultery and walk in lies; They also strengthen the hands of evildoers, So that no one turns back from his wickedness. All of them are like Sodom to Me, And her inhabitants like Gomorrah. {15} "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets: 'Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, And make them drink the water of gall; For from the prophets of Jerusalem Profaneness has gone out into all the land.'" {16} Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless; They speak a vision of their own heart, Not from the mouth of the LORD. {17} They continually say to those who despise Me, 'The LORD has said, "You shall have peace" '; And to everyone who walks according to the dictates of his own heart, they say, 'No evil shall come upon you.'" {18} For who has stood in the counsel of the LORD, And has perceived and heard His word? Who has marked His word and heard it? {19} Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD has gone forth in fury; A violent whirlwind! It will fall violently on the head of the wicked. {20} The anger of the LORD will not turn back Until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart. **In the latter days you will understand it perfectly.** {21} "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran. I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. {22} But if they had stood in My counsel, And had caused My people to hear My words, **Then they would have turned them from their evil way And from the evil of their doings.** {23} "Am I a God near at hand," says the*

LORD, "And not a God afar off? {24} Can anyone hide himself in secret places, So I shall not see him?" says the LORD; "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the LORD. {25} "I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in My name, saying, 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!' {26} "How long will this be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies? Indeed they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart, {27} "who try to make My people forget My name by their dreams which everyone tells his neighbor, as their fathers forgot My name for Baal. {28} "The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream; **And he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully.** What is the chaff to the wheat?" says the LORD. {29} **"Is not My word like a fire?" says the LORD, "And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? {30} "Therefore behold, I am against the prophets,"** says the LORD, "who steal My words every one from his neighbor. {31} "Behold, I am against the prophets," says the LORD, "who use their tongues and say, 'He says.' {32} "Behold, I am against those who prophesy false dreams," says the LORD, "and tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies and by their recklessness. Yet I did not send them or command them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all," says the LORD.

Many "prophets" these days bolster and lift up the false "blessing" movement and wicked political leaders like President Clinton. If they cannot discern the spirit behind these things, then how can they discern the Holy Spirit? How, then, can they be true prophets of God?

The Two Men of Creation

(1 Cor 15:45-58 NIV) "So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being" ; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. {46} The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. {47} The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. {48} As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. {49} And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. {50} I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. {51} Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- {52} in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. {53} For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. {54} When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been

swallowed up in victory." {55} "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" {56} The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. {57} But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. {58} Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

The first Adam is the natural man. The first Adam represents the man of the flesh, man without the Holy Spirit and man without God. The first Adam is the corporate total of all men who possess not the Spirit of Christ. This is the man of sin. When we understand the Mystery of Lawlessness we will see that the Man of Sin, on one hand, represents all of mankind outside of Jesus Christ. All cultures and countries on the earth have progressively moved to a state of lawlessness. Total anarchy results from complete lawlessness. But the world will not see anarchy on the whole. Instead, it will witness totalitarian rule under THE Antichrist. The Antichrist is one particular man who represents the other hand of the man of sin. The Man of Sin, therefore, is also one single man. He is the beast that comes out of the sea. See Revelation 13:1-18.

The second Adam, or second man, is Jesus Christ. The second Adam also speaks of the body of Christ, those who believe that Jesus died for their sins. Only two men exist in all creation, Adam and Christ. This is the lesson of Hagar and Sarah and their sons Ishmael and Isaac. The first woman and her son represent the natural man, Adam. The second two are types of Christ. The first is the natural; the second the spiritual.

Paul teaches about the two men of creation just before he expounds upon the second coming of Christ. This second coming can happen only after the man of sin is revealed, says Paul in 2 Thessalonians. A principle that God has put into place in creation is first the natural, then the spiritual. First, the natural man, the man of sin will be revealed. Then Jesus will be revealed when He comes again. God now reveals this natural man as unredeemed corporate humanity. Mankind as a whole is lost and lawless. Mankind en masse, therefore, represents one aspect of the man of sin. This corporate, wicked man will soon willingly receive the Antichrist as its world ruler. The antichrist is the other aspect of the man of sin. When his sinful nature is fully revealed then God will reveal the spiritual man. This is the Son of man and of God, Christ and His body.

Sitting as God in the Temple of God

One of Satan's greatest deceptions has been to get Christians to focus only on natural Israel and speculation concerning a natural temple being rebuilt there. Many Christians believe that the building of the temple in Israel is among the first "final" steps in the culmination of all things. They believe this because 2 Thessalonians 2:4 says that the man of lawlessness "*sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*" Others have hypothesized that the temple itself does not have to be built, but that sacrifices must again be offered at the place where the original temple stood. I believe that this idea comes because many see that the end is at hand, but they also see that no physical temple now exists.

But, is a physical temple in Jerusalem the only thing that Paul was talking about? What, really, is God's temple? Jesus and the apostles repeatedly made it clear that God's temple is the

body, soul, and spirit of the human being. *“Destroy this temple and in three days I will cause it to rise again,”* said Jesus in John 2:19, speaking of his death and resurrection. Paul said in 1 Cor. 3:16, *“Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”* In 2 Cor. 6:16 he wrote, *“For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.”* In Ephesians 2:19-21 he says, *“ Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord....”*

Regarding mankind, first came the natural man, Adam. After him came the spiritual man, Jesus Christ. It is even so with the temple of God. First was the natural physical temple in Jerusalem in which God dwelt before Israel was removed in judgment from the land. With the coming of Christ God made His home in the renewed spirit of man. The day will come when antichrist defiles a new temple in Israel, but Paul also speaks of the temple called man here in 2 Thessalonians.

We already see lawlessness taking up residence in this temple called man. Many people also consider church buildings to be temples to God, although this is not Biblically correct. Because of the Great Apostasy, we now see demonic manifestations in people within church buildings. This lawlessness within man is Satan sitting as God in the Temple of God. Satan sits in, with, or beside both unbelievers and Christians (who **really are** the temple of God). They themselves sit in today’s so-called temples to God, the church buildings. Sitting within this temple called man, Satan moves man to ever greater acts of wickedness and lawlessness. He is even now preparing mankind, including many Christians, to willingly embrace the endtime Antichrist when he is soon revealed. All who accept the Antichrist will do so because they refused to love the truth in order to save their souls (not their spirits). Therefore God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the Antichrist’s lies and accept his authority. Please re-read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12.

Summary

Paul prophesied that two major signs would take place just before the second coming of Jesus the Messiah. They were that the Great Separation (apostasy) would occur and that the Man of Lawlessness would be revealed. We now see apostasy from the gospel in full bloom in the world’s churches. We also see God’s obedient people separating from both the world and the harlot church. And we see the Man of Sin, all of mankind, display his humanistic power and pride. This corporate man readies himself to receive Antichrist as his king. Surely, Jesus comes soon.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

SEPARATION AND THE FIRSTFRUITS RAPTURE^{ix}

Overview of the Firstfruits Rapture

Many Christians do not watch for the coming of Jesus Christ. If you ask them they will say that they do, but when you really start to talk about it or examine their lives you will find that most do not. They have become comfortable in this world. Their roots go down deep. I recently told a fellow Christian that I believed that Jesus would return “very soon.” He smiled and answered, “Boy, I hope not!” He works as an investment consultant. I guess he’s making so much money in today’s rising stock market that things are just too good for him to start thinking about heaven.

Jesus, though, is coming soon and He is coming for His Bride. She will be pure and radiant, having cleansed herself of the defilement of this world. She will have done those things her betrothed husband required of her. She will have willingly separated herself from this world. When Jesus comes He will look for ripened wheat, wheat whose roots have already dried, whose heads are bowed, and who long to be harvested by Him. He comes first to harvest His firstfruits, for not all the wheat is ready yet. The remaining wheat must be ripened in the hot summer sun of tribulation under antichrist. He does this in mercy so that none of us miss His gracious rewards.

The doctrine of the firstfruits rapture is another Biblical mystery. Only those who love the truth will understand it. Only those who seek the Kingdom of God as if they were hunting for an incredible hidden treasure will find it. Jesus says, *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.”* Matthew 13:44. This treasure speaks of our rewards in the kingdom of heaven, not the spiritual salvation we find here on earth. This eternal treasure comes only to those Christians who obey the words of Christ, but most believers only concern themselves with digging for earthly treasure. James warns us even now:

(James 5:1-5 NKJV) Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you! {2} Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. {3} Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. {4} Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. {5} You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter.

The doctrine of the firstfruits rapture appears mainly in types found in the Old Testament and in the parables of Jesus. Paul’s reference to it is largely hidden, but it does appear in great detail in the letters to the seven churches found in the Book of Revelation. Even Jesus’ model prayer makes reference to it: (Mat 6:13 KJV) *“And lead (i.e., bring) us not into temptation (i.e., tribulation or the hour of trial), but deliver us from (the) evil (one) (i.e., the Antichrist).”* In this prayer Jesus tells us to pray for His Kingdom to come and to pray that we will not be led into the

great tribulation. James tells us that God will not lead us into evil (James 1:13-14), but He will bring us into the “hour of temptation,” the Great Tribulation, for living unfaithful lives. Jesus promised the Philadelphian believers, *“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.”* Revelation 3:10. The word “trial” here is the translation of the Greek word, “peirasmos,” the same word translated “temptation” in Matthew 6:13.

Jesus gives another example of praying to escape the Great Tribulation in Luke 21:36, saying, “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things (i.e., the tribulation period previously discussed in Luke 21:8-35) that shall come to pass, and to stand before (i.e., in the presence of) the Son of man.” The context of this verse is the escape, the separation, for “worthy” Christians just before the onset of the tribulation period. Jesus warned the disciples (which means us who believe) to watch for His coming and pray always to be allowed to escape the terror of tribulation. He also tells us to pray to be worthy to stand in His presence. This speaks of coming before Him at His judgment seat free of known sin, with our garments clean through repentance and good works. See Revelation 19:7-8.

God planned, however, that the majority of the Church would not awaken to the reality of the firstfruits separation until it too late to escape the tribulation. This becomes clear through understanding the prophetic Scriptures dealing with the end times. We have already seen that Jesus, Paul, Peter, James, Jude, and John all prophesied concerning the leavened, sinful state of the Christian Church at the end of the age. I believe this corresponds with God’s method for choosing His Son’s Bride. He predetermined who would sit in the highest positions in His Son’s Kingdom.

The Parables of Jesus

The Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24 and 25) contains Jesus’ answer to the question, “What will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24:3) The discourse divides into three sections, each directed to specific groups of people. The first section, Matthew 24:4-31, speaks directly to Jews who will be living in Israel at the time of the Great Tribulation. Only those in Judea, for example, can flee to the mountains of Judea. See verse 16. The second section, Matthew 24:32-25:30, instructs Christians through the use of parables. Jesus used parables to teach his disciples prophetic truth, saying, *“To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that ‘Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand’”* (Luke 8:10).

How was it that His disciples had “been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God?” They knew no tricks or magic formulae. Jesus simply told them the meaning of His stories. The same is true for us today. We do not see and we do not understand because we do not ask Him for revelation. Parables contain hidden mysteries of the Kingdom of God. Those mysteries can only be understood when God reveals them to us. We cannot understand the Word of God by our own minds. The Word is spiritual. Our minds, until totally renewed, are flesh. When we try to understand parables in our flesh, by our own reasoning, we will not learn God’s hidden secrets. We must ask Jesus for ears to hear and eyes to see. That is our one and only hope! Pray now before you read the first parable.

(Mat 24:32-36 NKJV) *“Now learn this parable from the fig tree:
When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves,*

you know that summer is near. {33} "So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near; at the doors! {34} "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. {35} "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. {36} "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only."

We know the "fig tree" in Scripture represents Israel. See Joel 1:7. Jesus cursed the fig tree because it bore no fruit and it shriveled up. See Matt. 21:19. Jesus cursed Israel because she bore no fruit for God. Instead, she fought against Him. Jesus' curse prophetically represented her judgment, implemented by the Romans in 70 A.D. The fig tree (Israel) remained withered for the next 1900 years. Then, in 1948 at the end of an age, the fig branch became tender again when Israel was reborn as a nation. After that time, in wars against her enemies, she put forth leaves by taking new territory. We should know, then, that summer is near. The generation that saw these things will see the return of Jesus Christ. Now is the time to understand the next parables.

(Mat 24:37-44 NKJV) "But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. {38} "For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, {39} "and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. {40} "Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. {41} "Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. {42} "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. {43} "But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. {44} "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

The coming of Jesus described in these verses is a secret. It will be like in the days of Noah. Noah preached about the coming flood for years, but no one believed him. They thought he was foolish. So, they just went on with their everyday business, eating, drinking, and marrying. Then, suddenly, it began to rain. They did not know the day or the hour that the rain would begin. The timing, to them, was a secret. So will it be a secret to those who do not watch for Jesus to return. Noah, however, knew the secret. God told him exactly when to prepare the ark and when to get into it. See Genesis 6:14; 7:1-5. So does He do for His servants today, instructing them through his true prophets: "Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

Next Jesus describes what this secret coming will be like. "Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left" (Matthew 24:40-41). The men and women here work together. There is no reason to consider one man or woman is a Christian and the other is not because this

parable occurs at the beginning of a series of parables whose actors are clearly Christians. Also, parables are specifically given for Christians. Both men and both women in Matthew 24:40-41 are, therefore, Christians. One believer is taken secretly and the other is left behind. This is the firstfruits separation. Listen now! Immediately after telling us about this secret rapture, this separation, the Lord orders us to watch! He did not explicitly tell us the date of His return. He hid it, just as he hid the treasure of the Kingdom of God.

Then, in the next parable, He warns church leaders, the masters of the house. He tells them that if they had known exactly when this secret rapture would occur, they would have been ready. They would not have awakened one morning to find part of their church missing. Instead, they would have watched, as did the faithful who disappeared secretly. He ends this parable with another warning concerning readiness. Jesus now speaks a parable directly to his Church leaders:

(Mat 24:45-51 NKJV) *"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? {46} "Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. {47} "Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. {48} "But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' {49} "and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, {50} "the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, {51} "and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

This parable clearly identifies the “master of the house” from the previous parable. We see, though, that there exist two types of servants, one faithful and wise and the other wicked. Both are servants of THE Master. The faithful and wise servant provides “meat in due season.” This means he teaches the mature Word of God at the appropriate time, especially the word concerning the soon return of Christ and all that that requires of a believer. This servant will be blessed at Christ’s secret coming. He will be made a co-ruler with Christ over ALL of His goods.

The evil servant, on the other hand, mocks the teaching of the wise servant saying, “My master is delaying His coming.” In fact, Jesus calls this mocking and ridicule a “beating” of his fellow servant. The wicked servant also “eats and drinks with the drunkards.” This means that he becomes overly concerned with the affairs of the world. He ends up, therefore, walking in the counsel of the wicked and sitting in the seat of mockers. See Psalm 1:1. Peter describes these evil servants as saying, *“Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation”* (2 Peter 3:4).

Then comes the separation. *“The master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour he is not aware of, and will cut him in two* (cut him asunder, i.e. separate him from the faithful) *and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”* (Matthew 24:50-51). The words “cut him in two” is rendered “cut him asunder” in the King James Version. This is exactly how the separation of the prophets Elijah and Elisha is described in 2 Kings 2:11. Elijah here serves as a type of the firstfruits

rapture, with Elisha representing those who go into tribulation. Immediately when one finds that he did not live a life of faithfulness before God he will begin to weep and gnash his teeth. He will also weep and gnash his teeth when he suffers tribulation under the power of antichrist. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Now Jesus moves on to another parable.

(Mat 25:1-13 NKJV) *"Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. {2} "Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. {3} "Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, {4} "but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. {5} "But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. {6} "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' {7} "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. {8} "And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' {9} "But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' {10} "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. {11} "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' {12} "But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' {13} "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming."*

There can be no doubt but that the ten virgins in this parable represent born again believers. Every single reference in Scripture to a virgin refers to a person or group belonging to God. The very first reference to the word "virgin" in Scripture relates to Rebekah, who became the wife of Isaac. Rebekah is clearly a type of the Bride of Christ. The law of "first mention," therefore, depicts a virgin as one in a special relationship with God. See also Judges 19:24 and Isaiah 7:14 for more pictures of the five faithful "virgins." Israel, of course, typologically speaks of the five unfaithful "virgins." See Jeremiah 14:17 and 18:13. Nevertheless, all ten are virgins. All ten belong to God. All ten are spiritually saved by the blood of Jesus. But, five take no oil with them when they go to meet the Bridegroom.

Oil represents the Holy Spirit as we see throughout the Bible and in 1 Samuel 16:13, in particular. Five foolish virgins know that Jesus is coming again, but they do not prepare and do the works necessary for becoming His Bride. The five wise virgins, however, "took oil in their vessels." They were filled with the Holy Spirit. They lived in such a way as to not grieve the Holy Spirit. The Christian teacher Lyn Mize prepared an excellent study on the Greek words comprising Matthew 25:5. He believes that the correct interpretation of the Greek is, *"But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all **beckoned or slept.**"* Christian virgins, then, will either beckon for the Lord to come as they diligently watch for Him, or they will become deadened to spiritual realities (sleep) because they refuse to separate from the world.

Verses six and seven tell us that a "midnight cry" goes forth just before Jesus returns for His Bride. All virgins hear the cry, even the foolish ones. Then they sense the urgency of being filled with the Holy Spirit and "trim their lamps." This speaks of preparing themselves

spiritually. But, the foolish realize they do not have enough oil to be able to stand in the presence of the Holy One. They go to the wise and ask for some of their oil. The wise reply, "No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves." This extra oil comes by good works. This is how the Bride adorns herself. See Revelation 19:8. The foolish virgins do not have enough time to do these good works before Jesus arrives. "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding, and the door was shut." This is the firstfruits separation. The open door for the wise virgins is that door described in Revelation 4:1. "Come up here!" in that verse is the rapture call of Christ. This is also the open door promised the faithful Philadelphians.

This is now the third time in three different parables over 24 consecutive verses that Jesus has told us about the firstfruits separation. Don't you think we should pay attention?

After The Separation, the foolish virgins cry out, "Lord, Lord, open to us!" But He answers, "Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you." He utters exactly those words of which He warned in the sermon on the mount, but so few of us have heeded them:

(Mat 7:21-27 NKJV) "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. {22} "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' {23} "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' {24} "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: {25} "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. {26} "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: {27} "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

He ends this parable of the virgins with another strong warning to watch for His coming. (Verse 13) Then He continues with another parable to Christians. This next one, in Matthew 25:14-30, describes events for those Christians (the five foolish virgins) who must go through the tribulation. Even then there will be levels of rewards to His servants.

Here we see that the very best of the three servants in Matthew 25:14-30 was only found "faithful over a few things" whereas the faithful and wise servant of Matthew 24:45 is made "ruler over all His goods." It is also important to note that the "wicked and slothful servant" of the three servants of Matthew 25 is not separated (i.e., cut asunder) like the "evil servant" of Matthew 24:48. Instead, he is cast into outer darkness.

This outer darkness is a position outside of the rule and reign of Christ's Kingdom. The judgment will be implemented at the Judgment Seat of Christ after the rapture of the remaining Christians in the middle of the tribulation period. The only Christians taken in the separation are the "faithful and wise," so there is no negative reward meted out at the separation other than being cast "into great tribulation" (Rev. 2:22), being caught unawares and missing the separation

(Rev. 3:3), or being rejected when the separation takes place (Rev. 3:16). Separation is an action taken when Jesus removes His bride and her court from the earth, and rejects or disqualifies the main body of the Church.

Jesus will remove His hand of protection from the main body of the Church when He separates faithful from unfaithful Christians and takes His bride and her court to heaven. This is because the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit or God's powerful angels will be withdrawn just after the separation. See 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7. All of those believers who are left behind, i.e. the main body of the Church, will then be turned over to Antichrist. Antichrist will wield totalitarian authority during the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period. Daniel prophesies concerning this time as follows:

(Dan 7:25 NKJV) He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time. (i.e., 3 ½ years)

John describes the rapture of these saints who were left behind as follows:

*(Rev 7:9-17 NKJV) After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, {10} and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" {11} All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, {12} saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen." {13} Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" {14} And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "**These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.** {15} "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. {16} "They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; {17} "for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."*

In His great mercy, God allowed these disobedient saints to be refined in the fires of persecution so that they, too, could partake of His heavenly rewards. In the tribulation they learned obedience, washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Jesus addresses His warnings in Matthew 24 and 25 to believers before the seven year tribulation period begins. He now warns us about the coming separation. He tells us that

watchfulness is the prerequisite to be one of those who are taken to be with Him. Jesus also clearly prophesies that the "master of the house" will be taken by surprise, and his house, or church, will be "broken up." The "master of the house" represents leaders of the Church and the house is the household of faith, the church. The house will be "broken up" or separated, and that which is valuable (i.e., the Bride and her court) will be taken away when Jesus comes at the firstfruits rapture. Jesus clearly tells us that the leaders of the Church will not be aware of the time when He comes. They will not even be watching.

Jesus will come like a thief in the night, and part of the household of faith will be taken. He warns us repeatedly in the Olivet Discourse to watch, to be ready, and to be doing His will when He returns. He tells us that He comes at a time when the church does not expect Him. Now we see the many signs of His coming, but the Church ignores them, seemingly more interested her new building plans or her next big event. Her leaders will be greatly surprised when the separation occurs, and those faithful Christians who are watching, ready and prepared are taken to be with the Lord.²

The Separation in Old Testament Types

The first type of the firstfruits rapture is Enoch. Enoch presents a very simple, straightforward picture. The Bible says, "Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him" Genesis 5:24. Hebrews tells us a little bit more:

(Heb 11:5-6 NKJV) 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 pleased God. {6} But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Enoch walked with God by faith. He believed that God is and, therefore, he diligently sought Him. Enoch, by his faith and works based on that faith, "pleased God." Then, God "took him." God separated, or raptured Enoch, from the rest of mankind. Enoch represents the firstfruits of all mankind taken to be with God. Let us also believe God and seek Him as for hidden treasure! Perhaps, then, He will take us too!

Christian Lyn Mize has been gifted by God with the ability to understand many prophetic implications of the Scriptures. He has uncovered three profound Old Testament types of the firstfruits rapture that I will now share in his own words from his article which is entitled "The Separation." The first type comes from the Song of Solomon.

(Song 6:10-13 NKJV) Who is she who looks forth as the morning, Fair as the moon, Clear as the sun, Awesome as an army with banners? THE SHULAMITE {11} I went down to the garden of

2I have recently come to believe that what I term the "firstfruits rapture" here is called the glorification of the sons of God in the Scriptures. I do not have time right now to develop this. I do deal with it somewhat in my new book entitled *When We Awake*, but God is still bringing revelation concerning this. I refer readers to the writings of Stephen Jones concerning this doctrine. He has far more revelation about it than do I.

nuts To see the verdure of the valley, To see whether the vine had budded And the pomegranates had bloomed. {12} Before I was even aware, My soul had made me As the chariots of my noble people. THE BELOVED AND HIS FRIENDS {13} Return, return, O Shulamite; Return, return, that we may look upon you! THE SHULAMITE What would you see in the Shulamite; As it were, the dance of the two camps?

Lyn suggests the following translation and interpretation of these verses:

Who is this who looks down like the dawn, beautiful as the moon, pure as the sun, set up as the chief one?

"I had gone down to the orchard of nut trees to see the blossoms of the valley to see whether the vine had budded or the pomegranates had budded. Before I knew what was happening, my soul set me upon the lead chariot of the princely people."

"Return, return, O Shulamite! Return, return, that we may gaze upon you. What is so special about the Shulamite? To be placed in the company of the sacred courts."

Lyn writes, "The meaning of Song of Solomon 6:10-13 is an enigma to Bible scholars. It should be well-known that it is the bride referred to in verse 10, and it is she that is talking in verses 11-12, after she has been separated and taken to be with her "Beloved.. In verses 11-12, the Bride is reminiscing about when she was taken by the Bridegroom and set up in the lead chariot of the King. She remembers that she had gone down to the garden to see how the fruits of the valley were doing. This is very important since it is the Bride who tends, feeds and nourishes the flock of the Bridegroom. In an instant she was set upon the King's chariot and whisked away before she knew what had happened. Four times she was beckoned by the people to return so they could look upon her to see what was so special about her. Of course, she could not and would not return, since she was with the King among the sacred courts in the heavenlies."

He goes on, "The primary theme in the Song of Solomon is the bride and the Bridegroom, and their love for each other. The book goes into great detail describing the bride's beauty, which is an internal beauty that springs from her faithfulness to the Bridegroom. Her skin had become darkened because she had worked in the vineyard as keeper (Song of Solomon 1:5-6). The bride of Christ is faithful in her works as well as her worship, and in her longing for the return of the Bridegroom. The bride will be separated out of the Church before the main body of the Church is raptured. ...

"The reason these four verses in the Song of Solomon are an enigma is that they are describing the separation of the bride of Christ, and the reaction of those who see the bride taken away. The main body of the Church did not see anything special about the bride, but the Bridegroom is able to look upon the heart, and He saw something very special about the bride. In verse 11 it was her soul or her life that made her worthy to sit up in the chariot of the King. In verse 12 the Hebrew word for armies has a figurative meaning of sacred court. When the remainder of the Church was on the earth calling for her return, so they could look at her in order

to see what was so special about her, she was among the sacred court in the New Jerusalem with her Beloved.

“The word Shulamite is simply the feminine form of the name Solomon. Thus, it means Solomoness or Mrs. Solomon. Since Solomon is a picture or type of Christ, the Bridegroom in the Song of Solomon, Shulamite is a type or picture of the bride. She is the one who is most like Christ in behavior and character. She does not represent all Christians or the whole Church, since all Christians are not conformed to the image of Christ in this life. Only the bride knows Christ intimately and the power of His resurrection, since she has died to self and renewed her mind to be like the mind of Christ. The leaders of the organized church on the earth do not see anything special about Shulamite. They see her as being very plain and unworthy of any special favor. This is the reason they call for her to return in verse 13, so they can look upon her and see what was so special about her to the Bridegroom.

Next, Lyn discusses the importance of Daniel as a type of the firstfruits rapture, saying, “A very important and comprehensive type in the Old Testament for the separation is Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. A significant theological mystery in the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego concerns the whereabouts of Daniel at the time of their persecution, when they are cast into the fiery furnace. The following Scripture is an Old Testament type that provides the same information as the faithful and wise servant and the other three servants described in Matthew 24:45-51 and Matthew 25:14-30.

(Dan 2:48-49 KJV) Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. {49} Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

“Daniel is a type of the faithful and wise servant who is separated from the other three servants. He is made ruler over the whole province of Babylon, which is a type of the world. Daniel has already been glorified, just as the four living creatures and the 24 elders in Revelation are, and he is now sitting "in the gate of the king". Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, just as the three servants in Matthew 25:14-30. However, they are subjected to persecution by the world just as Christians will be persecuted during the first half of the tribulation period. Just as the three churches of Thyatira, Sardis and Laodicea are cast into tribulation and the fiery trials of the tribulation period, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are cast into the fiery furnace. Because of their faithfulness, they come out of the fiery trial with their garments unsinged and intact. The only thing that burned from them was their bonds. Their garments are typical of a believer's works, and the bonds are typical of the old flesh nature. The fiery trials and tribulations have gained them rewards for their faithfulness, and purged them of their old flesh natures.

“The entire time that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were being tried, Daniel was sitting in the gate of the king. The king is a type of Jesus Christ. The gate of the king is the seat of authority or the place of rulership. It is the throne room of the king. Therefore, Daniel is a type of the Philadelphia church that is taken in the separation to be with the Lord Jesus Christ. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are types of the churches of Thyatira, Sardis and Laodicea who are required to go through the fiery ordeal of the tribulation period.

“The difference between Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is given in the following verse: (Dan 1:8 KJV) *But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.*

“It was Daniel who purposed in his heart that he would not become caught up in the things of the world just as the faithful and wise servant did not eat and drink with the drunken (Matt. 24:49). Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego followed the example of Daniel, but there is no mention of them purposing in their heart to remain undefiled. Another distinction between Daniel and these three is found in the following Scripture: (Dan 1:17 KJV) *As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.*

“All four are children of God just as all the Church are the children of God, and all four had "knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom," just as the whole church has understanding in the basic doctrines of salvation. However, "Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams." Daniel is typical of those Christians who understand the deeper truths of Scripture in regard to the coming kingdom and the prophetic interpretation of Scripture. Therefore, Daniel is a type of those Christians who are knowledgeable of coming events, especially the return of the Lord Jesus Christ for His bride. Consequently, those Christians typified by Daniel will be sitting in the gate of the king (i.e., gathered around the throne in heaven) at the same time that the remainder of the Church typified by Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego will be undergoing the fiery trials of the tribulation period.”

Lyn also has prophetic understanding concerning the explicit type of firstfruits rapture found in the account of Elijah and Elisha. He says, “The primary Old Testament type for the Separation is Elijah and Elisha walking along together when they were separated by a fiery chariot--a picture of discriminating judgment--and Elijah was taken up by a whirlwind into heaven. It is important to note that Elisha immediately rent (i.e., tore) his clothes, which is a symbol of repentance. It is also highly significant that Elisha refused to talk about the coming separation between Elijah and himself. This is like a great majority of the Church today who refuse to talk about the fulfillment of prophecies and the return of the Lord. Thus, they are failing to watch for the return of Jesus, and they will be left behind just like Elisha.

“The details of Elijah's translation contain very important truths about which Christians will be taken and which will be left at the Separation. In Elijah, we have a model of readiness for the Lord's return. Step by step he walked with God: "the Lord hath sent me to Bethel"; "the Lord hath sent me to Jericho"; "the Lord hath sent me to Jordan" (2 Kings 2:2). In the midst of a decadent people, Elijah was creating nurseries of devotion and study in the schools of the prophets. He was boldly witnessing for God without fear, and he was waiting for God without fainting. Suddenly, in a moment of time, Elijah was separated from Elisha, the fledgling prophet, and he was carried into heaven by a whirlwind. In the miracle of translation and the holiness that made that miracle possible, Elijah did more for the maturation of Elisha and the sons of the prophets than he had done in his whole life.

“It is important to note that the Lord told Elijah to anoint Elisha as his successor before Elijah was taken. When Elijah found Elisha, he was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen. Elisha was a very rich man, which is an indication of where his heart was at the time of his commission as a prophet. It is also significant that the sons of the prophets at both Bethel and Jericho attempted to talk to Elisha about the coming translation of Elijah, but Elisha said "Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace" (2 Kings 2:3,5). Elisha is telling them not to speak about it. Both of these

facts about Elisha provide a picture of the Christian who will be left behind after the Separation. Numerous Christians have spent their lives seeking after wealth and material possessions instead of the things of God. They are uncomfortable about studying or talking about Bible prophecy, and especially the soon return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“The refusal to speak about the return of the Lord is the norm in the Church today. Christians do not want to hear about Bible prophecy and the return of Jesus Christ. Three and one-half years in great tribulation will likely change this attitude among the majority of Christians. The hot summer sun will cause the wheat left for the main harvest to die from the roots up, and the golden pods of grain will mature rapidly. Numerous Christians still have their roots sunk deeply into the earth, and no pods of grain have yet appeared. The fires of the tribulation will mature those Christians who are still babes in Christ, with the result that many will reign and rule with Jesus Christ in His kingdom.

“When Elijah was raptured, he and Elisha were walking along two together when *“there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven”* (2 Kings 2:11). It is not coincidental that the “evil servant” in the Olivet discourse who was not interested in nor concerned about the coming of the Lord was also “cut asunder” at the time of the Lord's return (Matt 24:50-51).”

Following are some of the key New Testament doctrinal statements concerning the firstfruits rapture. Most Bible teachers do not understand the meaning of them because they have not seen the reality of the firstfruits rapture. Once God reveals this and the doctrine of the salvation of the soul to a believer many difficult verses suddenly come alive. In order to understand the following verses we must remember one of the most basic hermeneutical principles of Bible study set forth by theologians. This principle states that a word, phrase, sentence or passage of Scripture should always be taken literally unless the context clearly reveals that it should be taken figuratively. Consider this verse by Paul:

(Phil 3:8-14 NKJV) Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ {9} and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; {10} that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, {11} if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. {12} Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. {13} Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, {14} I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

First, we must see here that Paul diligently works to attain a special prize, “the resurrection from the dead.” This is not the immortal life that Jesus promises all who believe in Him. If it were, why would Paul say, “not that I have already attained” it? Haven't we who

believe already attained new life? Haven't we been born again? Of course we have. Paul talks of a "better resurrection!" See Hebrews 11:35.

We need to examine the Greek construction in this passage from Philippians in order to understand it. Paul uses two different words that are translated "resurrection" in verses 10 and 11. The first word, *anastasis*, occurs forty times in the New Testament is almost always translated simply as "resurrection." The word Paul uses in verse 11, however, is "*exanastasis*." He added the prefix "ex" to the word, which means "out." Paul tells us here in Philippians 3 that he diligently presses on in Christ in order to attain to this "out-resurrection." Just as the general resurrection from the dead is a literal resurrection of believers in Christ, so must this "out-resurrection" be a literal, "better" resurrection for overcoming Christians.

The entire chapter of Hebrews 11 lists those believers who attained the "honor roll" of faith. These believers willingly separated from the world, even if it meant physical death. The following verses sum up the teaching regarding this willing separation:

*(Heb 11:35-40 NKJV) Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, **that they might obtain a better resurrection.** {36} Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. {37} They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; {38} **of whom the world was not worthy.** They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. {39} And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, {40} **God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.***

Hebrews 11:35 speaks of a "better resurrection" reserved for those "of whom the world was not worthy." This better resurrection is the "out-resurrection," the "something better for us" who willingly separate from ungodliness unto obedience to the living God.

Peter, too, makes veiled reference to this hidden teaching. He writes, (2 Pet 1:10-11 NKJV) "*Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; {11} for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*" Peter clearly implies here that if we do not diligently make our call and election sure, then we may indeed "stumble." In that case we cannot expect an "entrance [to] be supplied to [us] abundantly." This abundant entrance is a literal entrance into the Kingdom of God and represents the prize of our calling. It is that which diligent Christians seek through their patient endurance, exhibited by faith and good works.

Jesus describes this particular entrance as the narrow gate, or door, when he admonishes:

(Luke 13:24-28 NKJV) "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. {25} "When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do

not know you, where you are from,' {26} "then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' {27} "But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' {28} "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out.

This passage describes exactly the same thing that Jesus discusses in Matthew 24:45-51; 25:1-13; 7:21-23. There should be no question but that these “workers of iniquity” are Christians who fooled themselves into thinking that they did the works of God when all the time they served only the world and their own selfish ends. We must repent now and seek the Lord while it is yet day, for the night comes quickly “when no one can work.” See John 9:4.

I will end this chapter with another quote from Lyn Mize’s article, “The Separation,” that describes how 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 fits into the doctrine of the firstfruits rapture.

(2 Th 2:1-12 NKJV) Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, {2} not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. {3} Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, {4} who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. {5} Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? {6} And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. {7} For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. {8} And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. {9} The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, {10} and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. {11} And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, {12} that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Lyn writes, “The ‘day of Christ’ in verse 2 is the Rapture of the Church. This is confirmed by verse 1 which gives the definition of the ‘day of Christ’. The meaning of a word or phrase in Scripture, as well as any writing, is determined by the context. The Thessalonians had been told that the rapture had already occurred and they were in the day of the Lord. Paul wrote to them to alleviate their fears and to explain when the rapture would occur. Paul very clearly and succinctly told the Thessalonians that the day of Christ (i.e., the Rapture) would not occur until

three distinct and separate events occurred. These three events are the apostasy, the revealing of Antichrist, and Antichrist establishing himself in the temple and claiming to be God. The rapture of the church is clearly and definitively stated by Paul to be in the middle of the tribulation period, since this is the time that Antichrist will establish himself in the temple and claim to be God. Of course, Antichrist will reveal himself at the beginning of the tribulation, immediately after the "apostasy."

"The apostasy is a definite, distinct and clearly identified event that will take place, and all Christians will recognize the exact time that this event will transpire. The apostasy is not a process of something that transpires over a long period of time, such as a falling away from the faith or a rebellion against God. The revealing of Antichrist and his establishment in the temple are also events that will be clearly identified as taking place at a certain moment in time. Paul gave the Thessalonians three distinct and recognizable events that would take place before the Rapture would occur. It would be ludicrous for Paul to give the revealing of Antichrist as an event to watch for if the whole Church were going to be in heaven at the time.

"The apostasy is probably the most misunderstood event in the Bible, because of the gross mistranslation of the transliterated Greek word *apostasia* as "falling away." This same Greek word is used five times in the New Testament in Mark 10:4; Matt. 19:7; Matt. 5:31; Acts 21:21; and 2 Thess. 2:3. It is translated "divorcement" in the first three, "departure" in the fourth, and "falling away" in the fifth. Divorcement or departure would be an accurate translation, but falling away is completely without merit. A better translation according to the above Scriptures would be "separation." The following is the definition of divorcement straight out of the American Heritage Dictionary: di·vorce·ment - n. Complete separation.

"Divorcement would also be a highly appropriate translation of *apostasia*, as in the first three instances, since it is a time that Christ will "put away" those in the Church who have been unfaithful."

Now we see *apostasia* in its full light. Only God could merge so many ideas into one single word. First, the *apostasia* is the separation from the faith of Christ (the full teaching of the doctrines of the Gospel) by the majority of believers. Second, *apostasia* represents separation of obedient Christians from the world system. Third, it represents the separation or divorcement of these Christians from the harlot church system. Fourth, it represents Christ's judgment, or divorcement, upon the apostate church which is evidenced, fifth, by the separation of the overcomers from this world in the firstfruits rapture! This final aspect of *apostasia* is the sign that warns of the immediate emergence of Antichrist and tribulation at his hands.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

HERE A POPE, THERE A POPE

(Rev 2:12-17 NKJV) *"And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: {13} 'I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. {14} 'But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. {15} 'Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. {16} 'Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. {17} 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.'"*

This passage from the Book of Revelation reveals two specific heresies that have dominated the Christian Church since early times, namely, the doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitans. Chapters 22 to 25 of Numbers describe the doctrine of Balaam. We must see first that Balaam really is a prophet of the Lord. He actually speaks the words of God. See Numbers 22:8-9; 18-19. Clearly, though, Balaam is a compromised prophet for the Lord spoke to him as follows when he attempted to get God to curse His people for money: *"And the Angel of the LORD said to him, 'Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to stand against you, because your way is perverse before Me.'"* This is interesting indeed. Here is a prophet of God whose "way is perverse before" God. Could the same be said of any of today's prophets?

We see in Numbers that the heresy of the doctrine of Balaam may be defined as this: it is when a person who who presumes to speak for God attempts to use the Word of God for personal gain. God had already told him, concerning the acceptance of Balak's bribe and his request that he curse Israel, *"You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed"* (Number 22:12). Yet, upon Balak's second attempt to bribe him, Balaam again goes to God with the request to curse His people! Balaam, therefore, exalts money over God's Word. He shows himself a prophet who serves mammon before God and as such is a type of the carnal Christian. Paul makes this exact distinction and comparison to the Corinthians when he says,

(2 Cor 2:14-17 NKJV) *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. {15} For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among*

*those who are perishing. {16} To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things? {17} For we are not, as so many, **peddling the word of God**; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.*

Those “being saved” in the above passage are those spiritual Christians who love the truth and determine to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling before God. Those “perishing” are those carnal Christians who refuse to love the truth and thus become deluded by deception. Paul says that his teaching is the “fragrance of His knowledge.” Yet this fragrance is to the carnal believer the “aroma of death” and to the spiritual “the aroma of life!” Further, unlike those who cling to the doctrine of Balaam by “peddling the word of God” for a profit, Paul speaks the word of God in sincerity “in the sight of God in Christ.” Although Paul had authority to ask for compensation for his teaching, he told the Thessalonians for example,

(2 Th 3:7-10 NKJV) For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; {8} nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, {9} not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us. {10} For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.

Paul was more willing to work with his hands in order to meet his needs than to expect or ask others to pay him for preaching the truths of God. He made himself an example of the principle that each man must work for his bread. This is exactly opposite the doctrine of Balaam.

The teaching of Balaam goes even beyond this, however. Balaam and those who follow him willingly sacrifice on the altar of Baal, on the altar of demons. See Numbers 22:39-23:4 and following. For a profit the false prophets of God today travel the world to any church that will pay them. They attend large conferences. They preside over lying sermons that keep God’s sheep in the Nicolaitan pens of presumptuous popes. Today the altar of Baal represents the whore of Babylon who perverts God’s Word. These altars describe church stages where demonic manifestations are exalted as the miraculous works of the Holy Spirit. Balaam, says Revelation, teaches God’s people to eat those things sacrificed at the altar of Baal or any other idol. He does not teach the people to discern between the holy and the profane, between good and evil. He does not teach them the doctrine of righteousness (Hebrews 5:11-14) and of separation from this world. Balaam does not separate between the carnal and the spiritual, but teaches that all are alike in Christ by grace alone. He also throws away all but a pre-chosen few of the Bible’s many verses.

But the doctrine of Balaam goes yet further. Balaam represents any Christian teacher who speaks deliberate lies in God’s name. Balaam “falls down with eyes wide open.” See Numbers 24:4 and 24:16. Balaam sees and knows the truth, but he falls from grace and speaks the lie. Although Balaam could only speak the Word of the Lord to bless Israel when under the anointing of the Holy Spirit (see his prophecies in Numbers 23:7-10; 18-24; 24:3-9; 15-24), he gave specific counsel to King Balak of Moab regarding how Israel might be defeated. He

counseled Balak to use his women as prostitutes to seduce the men of Israel, thus bringing sin and judgment into the camp of Israel. See Numbers 31:16. The false prophets of the Order of Balaam act very similarly today.

And how do they do this? By counseling and teaching the people of God to continue in their adulterous relationships with the world. They never forbid God's people from sending their children to the shrines of Baal throughout the land, the public schools. They never teach Christians that to serve in government is to serve in Satan's kingdom and to "become entangled in the affairs of this life." See 2 Timothy 2:3-7. They never admonish their people to stop eating Babylon's filth that she serves in her movies, her television, her music, her books, and her pictures. No, how could he? To speak like this means that he could never receive the silver and gold that Balak, the prince of this world, provides. And how does Satan provide all of this booty but through those sheep who sit willingly deceived under Balaam's deception? But the end of both the false prophet and his flock is to perish by the sword as did Balaam in Numbers 31:8. Here Jesus prophetically describes that punishment awaiting the false, although Christian, prophets (including pastors and teachers willingly propagating false doctrines): *"He who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more"* (Luke 12:48)

In summary, the doctrine of Balaam is threefold. First, it describes the believer that attempts to use the Word of God for personal profit. He exalts money over God's Word, thus serving mammon rather than the Lord. Second, Balaam refuses to teach the doctrine of the separation of the carnal from the spiritual believer, thereby bringing all he touches into the profane, into that sacrificed to idols. Third, he deliberately deceives the people of God by speaking things he knows are not true and holy. And why? So that all those he controls will continue in his grasp and will continue to pay his salary. Mammon remains Balaam's god.

Now we come to the doctrine of the Nicolaitans of Revelation 2:15. The only other place in the entire Bible that this word occurs is Revelation 2:6. Yet, Jesus says that He "hates" the practice of the Nicolaitans. This word apparently means the practice of establishing a priestly order in the church, which in turn defines and controls a "laity." This was of course one of the great evils that Martin Luther fought against in the Protestant Reformation. The Pope and his hireling priests often taught the people in a language that the people could not even understand. They also set themselves up as the sole teachers of Biblical truth. Thus they introduced destructive heresies like the worship of Mary and the selling of indulgences. An "indulgence" was the practice of the priest demanding payment in advance for forgiveness for a sin that a person intended to commit. They also taught a works-based salvation of the spirit. Martin Luther correctly led a revolt against these wrong doctrines, but neither he nor those who followed him destroyed the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.

Hence Luther's, Calvin's, and others' new "Protestant" Christian faith carried with it certain longstanding errors, chief of which was the tragedy of setting up a pope in every local church. Today we call these little popes "pastors." If you will search the Scriptures, however, you will never see the title "pastor" applied to any person whatsoever. We see that some men, like Paul, Peter and Matthew were called "apostle," some, like Judas and Silas (Acts 15:32) were called "prophet," some, like Philip and Timothy (Acts 21:8; 2 Timothy 4:5) were called evangelists, some, like Peter and John (1 Peter 5:5; 2 John 1:1), were called elders, but NO ONE in all of Scripture is ever called a pastor. Why not? Because they were too rare? I doubt it.

Although the word "pastor" is typically seen only one time in all of Scripture, in

Ephesians 4:11, the Greek and Hebrew words for pastor are usually translated “shepherd.” The King James Version, however, translates the Hebrew word “ra’ah” eight times as “pastor” in the Book of Jeremiah. This shows us that a pastor should be one who “shepherds” others. And what is it, exactly, that a shepherd of God’s people ought to do? Jeremiah teaches this role very clearly. First, a shepherd should know the Lord and handle His law with skill and precision. Second, the shepherd should feed the flock that God has given him with the knowledge and understanding of God. This “knowledge and understanding” represents the bread, or meat, of the Word of God. God Himself graciously feeds the shepherd with this bread when he diligently seeks to know God. See Jeremiah 2:8; 3:15; John 6:35-51. **Simply, then, a pastor (shepherd of God’s people) should learn to know God by feeding on His Word himself. Then he will be able to lead the people that God has given him to a similar knowledge of God and His Word.** The goal of such shepherding is described in Ephesians 4:12-13:

(Eph 4:12-16 NKJV) for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, {13} till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; {14} 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 of deceitful plotting, {15} but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head; Christ; {16} from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

But, just as Jeremiah prophesied thousands of years ago, God’s shepherds then, as now, failed this simple command. The prophet proclaims:

(Jer 10:21 NKJV) For the shepherds have become dull-hearted, And have not sought the LORD; Therefore they shall not prosper, And all their flocks shall be scattered.

Notice the similarity of this prophetic word to that spoken in Hebrews 5:11. Becoming “dull-hearted” here describes the same carnal spiritual condition that the writer of Hebrews applies to his readers. Those Christians had become “dull of hearing.” Both phrases characterize the spirituality of the person who does not regularly seek to know God, primarily through prayerful study and application of His Word. Following are more of Jeremiah’s oracles concerning God’s shepherds:

(Jer 12:10-11 KJV) Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness. {11} They have made it desolate, and being desolate it mourneth unto me; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart.

(Jer 22:22 KJV) The wind shall eat up all thy pastors, and thy lovers shall go into captivity: surely then shalt thou be ashamed and confounded for all thy wickedness.

(Jer 23:1-5 KJV) Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD. {2} Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD. {3} And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. {4} And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD. {5} Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

Pastors today have become as those Jesus describes to His disciples in Matthew 23. We know that Catholic priests are called “Father” by their people and Jesus says, “*Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.*” (Mat. 23:9) Just before that, though, He says, “*Do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.*” (vs. 8) Jesus describes these teachers thus:

(Mat 23:4-7 KJV) For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. {5} But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, {6} And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, {7} And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

“Pastor! Pastor!” What does this sound like to you? Isn’t this what we have grown accustomed to all these years? Isn’t this the position to which some of us even aspired? I know I did! For years I wanted to be “the pastor” of the big church in the suburb! I thought that was the epitome of spiritual life. Now I know how proud and vain my personal aspirations were. I could have been (and pray that I am not) one of those to whom Jesus cries “Woe!” But, Jesus calls us to be a servant of all and humble, never exalting ourselves. Behold now how Jesus hammers the pastors of His day with the Word of God and consider how they speak to us today!

(Mat 23:13-33 NKJV) "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. {14} "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees,

hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation. {15} "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. {16} "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.' {17} "Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? {18} "And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.' {19} "Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? {20} "Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. {21} "He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it. {22} "And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it. {23} "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. {24} "Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! {25} "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. {26} "Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. {27} "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. {28} "Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. {29} "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, {30} "and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' {31} "Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. {32} "Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. {33} "Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?

Doesn't this describe many pastors and leaders today? Brethren, I certainly do not mean to speak against the many Godly men who truly lay their lives down for their people and who diligently seek to know God so that they can speak the true Word of God. But, I do speak a word against those who shut up the kingdom of heaven against men by denying that ruling and reigning in that kingdom is the reward of good works done in righteousness; and against those who steal tithes from the widows' hands to line their pockets and build their empires; and against

those who travel around the world at the poor's expense to make one more proselyte of false doctrines; and against those who neglect the weighty matters of the law, namely justice, mercy, and faith; and against those lawless hypocrites who display a pretend righteousness, but who daily fill themselves with all manner of lusts and evil; and against those who honor God's true prophets with their lips, but deny their words with every action. Yes, my words condemn the pastors of Babylon the Great and every teacher of the harlot religion that plagues this whole earth.

The sin of the Nicolaitans is the clergy/laity dichotomy that God never intended, but that has prevailed in the church for centuries. It is the heresy that keeps men and women locked in their pews, preventing them from walking in the works that God prepared in advance for them to do. With this teaching, men hold the souls of God's people captive, never allowing a chance of escape, for according to them, to escape is to leave the fellowship of the brethren. Who has this kind of courage? Who dares to leave his church, indeed, who dares to leave all the churches of Babylon? For if you even think of leaving won't men call you "sinner?" Isn't that thought itself based upon the "evil," deeper one that declares, "Our leaders are wrong!?" And don't our leaders always tell us, "Do not touch My anointed ones, And do My prophets no harm," as they piously exhort us to not be like the "accuser of the brethren?" They struggle and exhort only to keep themselves in positions of influence and power. See 1 Chronicles 16:22; Psalm 105:15; Revelation 12:10.

This is truly a horrible thing contemplate, but could our leaders really be wrong? Could they really be deceived? Worse yet, could it be that they are not really "anointed" with the Holy Spirit, nor are truly prophets or apostles like they always told us? Could they really be hypocrites, mere wolves in sheep's clothing? And, even if they are, do you and I really have to obey that "hard" Word of God and actually stand up to them?

After years of searching and praying, of crying out to God, and of testing many leaders and their rotten fruit, I have to answer, "Yes, Yes, Yes!" Your leaders could be, and probably are, all of the above. Yes, we must honor God even above our earthly leaders. We live at the very end of time and the harlot that John saw two thousand years ago now exists. The question is: will you stay inside her or will you come out of her as God commands? This seems almost too strange to be true, doesn't it? Could what we know as God's church really be a whore? **We must remember, though, that when John saw the harlot he was astonished!** See Revelation 17:6. So was I and so will you marvel when you see the church as she actually is.

What do we do then? Do we just drop out of our churches and hide in our homes? Yes and no. We do quit attending apostate churches, but we do not hole up alone in our homes. The Bible teaches us to "not forsake the assembling of ourselves together." It also teaches us to beware this tendency especially "as you see the Day approaching?" See Hebrews 10:25. Why do you think that God gave us this warning "so much the more as you see the Day approaching?" Because He knew the corrupt condition that would exist in the churches as the great and terrifying Day of the Lord closed in. He knew we would face apostate leadership in the Harlot Babylon and He knew that it would be difficult to find like-minded Christians at the end of the age. But, He wants us to find them (or make them through exhortation!) nevertheless. God is serious when he gives us any warning and He is particularly serious here, for immediately after commanding continued fellowship He exclaims, "*For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, {27} but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries*" (Heb 10:26-27 NKJV). So, what do we do?

We continue studying the Word of God. We pray that God will bring us like-minded friends. We prepare ourselves to teach and walk in the truths of God's Word. We meet in small groups in each other's homes exhorting one another in God's truth as we see the Day of Christ approach. We praise and worship God together. We meet each other's needs. In short, we stop hiding our true selves from each other as we did in our old "happy" churches. (A "happy church" is a church where the pastor, usher, and/or deacon greets every member with a smile, asks each how they are doing, and waits for the mechanical smile and response of "Great!" (or "Blessed, brother!") although the incoming person could really be doing as lousy as sin. Then each member obediently takes his pew and waits until next week to get happy again!) We stop the hype of always preparing for the next big event (except Christ's coming). We put an end to the ceaseless building programs. We stop trying to win souls by acting like them. We simply meet together in small groups, teach God's Word, and worship Him. And we trust that when God has added too many believers to attend in our homes that He has prepared another brother to lead the next house church. Then we divide, like every healthy body's cells, and continue doing God's Word.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

SEPARATION and THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

Judgment inevitably leads to a separation. This is especially true at the end of the age, just before Jesus returns for His Bride. Let's look at four aspects of separation. First, we will look at an example of separation within the body of Christ in the local church setting. Next, we will study the prophetic command to separate ourselves from the world and the things of the world. Then we will examine Jesus' command to separate from other Christians who refuse to separate themselves from the world in light of His soon coming. Finally, we will see the ultimate separation, where Jesus separates the wise Bride from the foolish virgins.

Corinthians and Ananias and Sapphira

Remember, Paul commanded the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 5 to excommunicate the local believer who engaged in an immoral sexual relationship. This expulsion of the "wicked man" from the body of believers is an example of separation, or severing of relationship. In the case of Ananias and Sapphira, God did the separating. Ananias and Sapphira were both Christians. Together they conspired to turn over part of the proceeds of a land sale to the church elders, but to tell them that they were turning over the full amount. They wanted their Christian peers to think they were holy! But, Ananias and Sapphira each fell over dead as he or she told that lie to the church leadership. Peter pronounced God's judgment just before each died, saying that they had committed the sin of lying in their hearts to God. See Acts 5:1-11.

The example of Ananias and Sapphira serves as a type of God's true order for the church. God himself separated these saved hypocrites from His holy Church. Separation is the God-ordained method of maintaining Godly authority and structure in His Church, but it has been largely ignored or misused over the past two millennia. This is no surprise to God, of course, for he predicted through his prophets that the end of the church age would be a time of great apostasy and wickedness, even (and especially) in the Church. See 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:1-9; James, 2 Peter 2:1-22; Jude, Revelation 17.

Paul commands forced expulsion from the local church for a purpose. First, refusing to allow an unrepentant brother entry into the church meeting keeps order in the church. He will not be around to lead anyone astray or to prey upon the unsuspecting. A second goal is to cause godly sorrow in the impenitent one for the sins he has committed. This would, hopefully, soon cause him to repent. The final goal of the corrective separation is to restore a sinning Christian to a right relationship with and in the Church. See 2 Corinthians 2:5-11. If a sinning Christian refuses to learn from this worldly correction and separation, then, ultimately, his flesh will be given over to Satan and he will suffer the separation and loss of his soul from his spirit. His spirit will be saved, but he will suffer eternal loss by this separation. See 1 Corinthians 5:5; James 5:20; Jude 1:23; Rev. 3:5; 21:8; 22:15.

Separation from the world

Christians rarely correct the sinner in the way commanded by Paul. Church leaders fail to separate unrepentant sinners from amongst them because they themselves refuse to separate from the world's ways. They also fail to teach God's word of separation. They fail, therefore, to

walk in the moral authority that allows them to judge sin in their midst. They cling, oh so tenaciously, to that one doctrine, “judge not, lest you be judged.” They do not want to be placed in a position of having to judge because they themselves do not want to be judged. But they forget that the Scripture also teaches, “*For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged*” (1 Cor. 11:31).

Christians, therefore, do not escape God’s judgment simply because they refuse to judge another Christian. Refusing to judge righteously betrays one’s refusal to walk in the accountability that God requires. Paul completes the thought in 1 Cor. 11:32: “*But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.*” In other words, judgment by God is a certainty. We will be judged by the Lord at His judgment seat, the ultimate purpose being that we will not be condemned with the world.

Surely this whole matter of God judging us at some future time has been confusing to many reading this. What of grace? you have asked over and over again. Are we not all saved by grace? Well, yes and no. Our spirits are saved by grace, through faith, and this faith is not even produced by ourselves. See Ephesians 2:8-9. Our souls, however, are not saved until we have run and completed the race that God has prepared for each of us. This is why Paul said to “work out your own salvation in fear and trembling,” and proclaimed that he had not yet attained to his reward in Christ. See Philippians 2:12; 3:8-16. Note that he focused on a Christian’s **obedience** in these passages rather than the initial work of God that brings spiritual salvation by His grace.

Paul, James, Peter, Jude and the author of Hebrews all clearly portray the salvation of the soul as an ongoing process in the believer’s life that is accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit in doing the works of obedience which God prepared in advance for us to do. See Ephesians 2:10. Hebrews repeatedly warns believers concerning the precarious state of their souls. See Hebrews 2:1-3, 3:7-14, 4:11-12, 5:11-14, 6:4-12; 7:25, 10:26-31, 12:1-2, 25-29, 13:17.

James, likewise, teaches us to “lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls” (James 1:21). James is clearly not talking about simply believing in Jesus Christ unto spiritual salvation. He is talking about what comes after that, just as Peter is when he proclaims that the goal of our faith is the salvation of our souls. See 1 Peter 1:9. Although Jude wanted to write his fellow Christians about their “common salvation,” that is their spiritual salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, he found it necessary to write them about contending “earnestly for **the faith.**” See Jude 3.

“The faith,” thus, is a biblical phrase used to encompass the totality of Christian doctrine, the truths of God’s Word. He was writing especially to people of this generation, to those who Paul warned “*will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires ...will heap up for themselves teachers; and [who] will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables*” (2 Timothy 4:3-4). Jude and Peter both sternly warn believers about the false teachers that will come in the last days and will so pervert the way of truth that the truth itself will be blasphemed among men. See 2 Peter 2:2 and all of chapter 2; Jude 4-19. They taught that a multitude of Christian teachers (false teachers, but still Christians) would so pervert the truths of the faith that it would cause people in general to speak against the revealed Word, or truth, of God.

This is surely where we find ourselves today. Almost no one teaches the truth contained in the Bible. Although this book, “The Doctrine of the Separation,” contains clear Biblical teaching, I expect that most who read it will end up speaking against it. They many actually end up blaspheming the truth because they have been taught error for so long that they cannot now

discern truth. Or, they may believe that they already have all of the truth! Perhaps this is one of the sins of the five foolish virgins. Until they knew that the Lord was coming perhaps they believed that they had all of the truth that there was or that they needed. When, they awoke to the Lord's actual and imminent return, however, they cried out to their brethren, "Give us some of your oil!" But then it was too late. Acquiring enough oil takes time and hard work. It comes by more than that initial faith and grace you received from God when you believed. It takes more than doing time in your pew each Sunday or making that occasional visit to the nursing home as well. Perhaps you have been taught that your church or your pastor teaches all of the truth that you will ever need to know. Perhaps you, then, quit looking for truth.

If you find yourself ready to speak against this word, then I exhort you to call upon God to open your ears to hear and your eyes to see. Only Jesus can give the spiritual revelation one needs to discern these words. Do not be so proud as to think that you can discern it in your own strength and wisdom. This is the presumptuous sin of the Pharisees. When I first read some of these things of which I write, I did not believe them. But, my spirit was stirred by the humility of the man who first taught some these truths to me. Therefore I went to the Scriptures for months (after having already studied the Scriptures daily for twenty years) to see if these things were true. God showed me that they were indeed true. He gave me new revelation of Hebrews 4:12, "*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*"

Yes, the Word of God divides even the soul and the spirit! Paul also makes this clear in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 which says, "*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 uses the word "sanctify" here which we have seen means "to separate." This sanctification, or separation, of the spirit and soul by the word of God is necessary in order for one's soul to "be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Hebrews 4:12 and 1 Thessalonians 5:23 both speak of the salvation of the spirit and the soul, two distinct organs of man. Thessalonians also mentions the body, which references the truth that a soul under the authority of a man's spirit has power to control his body and, therefore, put off the wicked deeds of the flesh. Fruit can only be seen by the actions of a body. Compare Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:8-9; Mat. 7:17-19; Luke 6:43-44; John 15:1-8; Rom. 6:21-22; 7:4-5; and Heb. 12:11.

Jesus underscores the importance of soul salvation in Matthew 16:24-27, "*Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. {25} "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. {26} "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? {27} "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."* Anyone that wants to save his soul must be willing to give up the things, even the good things, of this world. This comes about only one way, by separation from the world.

Jesus shed much light on this truth in the famous sermon on the mount. He said,

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. {25} "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you

will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? {26} "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? {27} "Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? {28} "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; {29} "and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. {30} "Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? {31} "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' {32} "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. {33} "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. {34} "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (Mat 6:24-34 NKJV).

The fact is that most Christians get this wrong from the start. For some reason we believe that we **can** serve both God and mammon. But, what is mammon? The simple answer is that mammon is “money.” More completely, mammon is “wealth personified,” or the “deification of things that you want.” **Mammon, in essence, is idolatry.**³ It is pursuing the created thing rather than the Creator. I know so many Christians who began well. They were men and women of little or no account. They lived a life of worldly pleasure while a youth. Then they believed in Jesus, were baptized in the Holy Spirit (made part of the one body of Christ - see 1 Corinthians 12:13), repented of their sins, and began to mind their own business rather than only sensual lusts. But, then, something strange happened. They became so enamored with the successes God had given them that they began to work for ever more worldly possessions. They replaced the will of God with the cares of this life. They can now be described as the seed that fell among the thorns. See Matthew 13:7 & 22. They ended up serving mammon instead of God, but they were and are still Christians. Now they refuse to pick up the daily cross that Jesus has for them. See Luke 9:23-26. The result, unless they repent? *“Whoever desires to save his life will lose it”* and *“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?”* See Matthew 16:25-26.

Separation from the Church

Why do you think that the prophet John was so startled and amazed when he beheld the great harlot in Revelation 17:6? Because he beheld that which is known as “the church” at the end of the age. He saw the church in its final stage, a harlot church on the eve of its destruction. And this is the time we live in today. That is why the word (rhema) of the Lord right now is, *“Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues”* (Rev

³Please see the author’s book *When We Awake* in order to understand how pervasive Christian idolatry is.

18:4 NKJV).

God calls His sheep, His obedient ones, out of the institutional church. No more are we to be trodden down by the willful errors of sinful men who lust for worship. No more must we bear their yoke of "judge not, lest ye be judged." No more must we give credence to their cry, "forsake not the assembling of yourselves together." We will assemble in our homes in our little churches and we will worship the King in the beauty of His holiness. We will forsake the ever-larger building programs, but we will build up one another in the love, fear and admonition of the Lord. We will greet one another with a psalm, a hymn, a doctrine, and a word of encouragement. We will all participate as we are built up in our Savior Jesus Christ, the one and only Son of God.

On the other hand, we will not share in the sins of the apostate end-of-time church. We will not repeat her false doctrines and we will not listen to her lying spirits. We will not receive her false prophets and false apostles. We will not sacrifice our children to her literal fornication and her spiritual adultery. We will not follow her lead into the institutions or the teaching places of this world. We will separate ourselves from her. Therefore, we will not share in her plagues.

The Final Separation

For us who dare to separate the unrepentant sinner from ourselves, ourselves from the world, and ourselves from the harlot church, there awaits a final separation. This is the separation of the firstfruits. This is the separation for the faithful servants of Matthew 24:36-51. Jesus Himself will separate us from this wicked world in the firstfruits "rapture" the glorification of the sons of God. See Matthew 25:1-13. Jesus Himself will come just before the great, prophesied tribulation, and steal His Bride away. This is the separation of the five wise virgins in Matthew 25:1-13.

The Bride is she who prepared for her Master. She made herself ready. She is dressed in fine, white linen. Her dress is undefiled and He Who loves her comes for her any moment now. The Holy Spirit has prepared her for six thousand years, specially for the Son. She discerns between good and evil and chooses only the good. If she makes a mistake in her choices she quickly finds her error, repents, and, therefore, cleanses her white garment. She embodies the Teaching about Righteousness. She has separated herself from all that defiles and has entered into unity with Him Who made her, with Him from Whom she came, with Jesus her Savior, her Lord, her Master, her Beloved Husband.

*(Rev 22:10-21 NKJV) And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. {11} "He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still." {12} "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. {13} "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." {14} **Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.** {15} But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.*

*{16} "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." {17} **And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.** {18} For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; {19} and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. {20} **He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! {21} The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.***

iI discuss these principles of “first mention” and “type-antitype” in detail in Chapter 2.

iiFor a full discussion of the doctrine called “food sacrificed to idols” please see this author’s book *When We Awake* (Publish America, 2003)

iiiSee E. W. Bullinger, *The Witness of the Stars* (Grand Rapids, MI, Kregel Publications, 2000) and E. Raymond Capt, *The Glory of the Stars* (Muskogee, OK, Hoffman & Artisan, 1976)

ivW. E. Vine, *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary* (Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1996), p. 210
vId., p. 545

viVine, p. 171.

viiSee Stephen E. Jones, *Creation’s Jubilee* (Fridley, MN, God’s Kingdom Ministries, 1991)

viiiChapter One is very complex in that it gives a very short summary of what unfolds throughout this Book. If you disagree with or do not understand this chapter, do not lose heart. So long as you humbly ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes and ears and read the Scriptures and what I have written here, you will discern the truth.

ixI now see the “rapture” differently than when I wrote this chapter. It will not look like what most of us have been taught. Nevertheless, the principles in this chapter remain relevant for study and application.