

A grayscale photograph of a long, straight road lined with tall, thin trees. The road is shrouded in a thick mist or fog, creating a sense of depth and mystery. In the far distance, a small, dark silhouette of a person is walking away from the viewer down the center of the road. The overall atmosphere is quiet and contemplative.

# A ROAD LESS TRAVELED

Stanley J. Dorsy

Just God's Word Publishers

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## **A Road Less Traveled**

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# Foreword

God has spoken so many wonderful things in His Word and has driven holy men to new heights in their understanding and knowledge. Yet for all the knowledge and wisdom that God has given, many today are still uncertain of what has been said about the many issues that are perceived as being hidden in holy scripture. And so this book has been compiled so that those who peruse its pages may walk away with answers to the many questions they have had about what God gave to Paul that was to be given to those with ears to hear and eyes to see.

This book, is to say the least not for the casual reader or for the faint of heart, but will bring each person who is willing to read it to a whole new relationship with God. It may anger some at times and at other moments cause you to leap right out of your skin and announce 'that's it, I knew the answer had to be there somewhere.' Whatever your reaction is there is one thing for certain, you will never be the same after reading it.

The writings of Paul unveils what has been hidden from those who have become part of a modern system of worship that promotes strange ideas of who God is and what He has done and is doing for mankind.

Paul takes on the many different issues that deal with the life of those who choose to follow God as he looks at the whole picture of Israel's history and brings it together with Christ being the foundation of everything. This may seem to be a over simplistic summary of the revealing of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, but for those who read the entire book they will see just how the whole story comes together to form a picture of the Kingdom of God that would fill the world with the Glory of God and bring about a new creation that would show to the world the power and majesty of God living in His people.

We hope you are blessed as you read *A Road Less Traveled*. It will change your life and the way you think about the God's plan for His children.

—Just God's Word

Publishers of *The Spiritual Journey into Eternity*, *The Body as One*, *Pulling Back the Veil* and *Levitical Lies and Liturgy*.

## Romans 1

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, **who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.** Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

Paul was **called**; chosen by God not by man. There was no laying on of hands, no licensing to preach the gospel, no prayer of dedication, no forms to fill out and no school to attend for graduation with honors or degrees. Paul's call to apostleship as well as Christ's disciples was from God, to call people to salvation. It was a call based upon a knowledge of Jesus Christ, as to His earthly nature and His inheritance of holiness through his connection to His Father. And through His obedience based upon faith He was made perfect through His suffering, just as those who follow Him; who obey and hear His voice.

***Heb 2:10-18** In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises." And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again he says, "Here am I, and the children God has given me." Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

Paul's call went to the Gentiles. A call to obedience... an obedience that comes from faith. But what faith?

**Faith** NT:4102 pistis (pis'-tis); from NT:3982; persuasion, i.e. credence; moral conviction (of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher), especially reliance upon Christ for salvation; abstractly, constancy in such profession; by extension, the system of religious (Gospel) truth itself: - assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity.

Faith that is built on a moral conviction, the truthfulness of God, does not mean to believe in “a truth” but to believe in God and His Word. To believe in God is not built on blindness or blind faith, but is built on the knowledge of His Word. Anything not of that knowledge only leads to destruction.

***Hos. 4:6** ...my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children."*

For too long many of God's people have been lead through the dark with only a surface understanding of His Word. This is all too evident when asked to give a reason for their beliefs. Studies have been conducted; news journalists have brought Christianity into the spotlight, and have shown over and over again the lack of understanding or knowledge of what so many claim to believe.

It is high time, yes, past time, for the people to know why they believe what they say they believe. Either they agree with God's Word, or they don't.

To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how

constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.

I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong- that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.

I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome.

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."

Righteousness from God is revealed in His Word. Paul could not say it more clearly. The type of ignorance that many reveal in their knowledge of God's Word is not righteousness from God, because righteousness can only come from knowing God's Word. We must therefore understand His Word and claim the promise that if we seek this knowledge that God will reveal it to the heart-felt seeker.

**John 14:12-14** *I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.*

The promise is as true for us as it was for Paul or anyone else. We must claim it and work with God as the apostles did.

*The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.*

*For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.*

Psychology, sociology, philosophy, science, evolution, medicine, religion, transcendental meditation, channeling, etc., etc, we have our gods; and with these gods we do not need God. We have explained our shortfalls and it has nothing to do with good and evil but is left to neurosis, psychosis, mental illness and our need for more medication and hours of meditation. And if that is not good enough, we will use the findings of science to show it to be just a natural occurrence through the studies of our genetic make up. No God and No devil. (This is what so many believe.)

But there is a price to pay and it will be the greatest price mankind can pay for ignoring all of the evidence that God has given of His Love and of His magnificent Power. All for the sake of pleasing themselves, they will take eternal death over eternal life, lies over the truth, damnation over salvation. And today the thoughts of man, the sciences of man, pervade humanity and God is replaced for their so-called wisdom.

*Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator, who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.*

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. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

This can't be a picture of the true church of God. None of these things ever happen in church. Paul must have lost his mind. This must have been in his day not in ours. This could never be speaking of God's church; where His people, full of His Love, come together and worship together in FULL harmony. Ah yes, the Black church meets in full harmony, the Hispanic church meets in full harmony, the White church meets in full harmony, the Asian church meets in full harmony, the Methodists meet in full harmony, the Baptists meet in full harmony, the Presbyterians meet in full harmony, the Catholics meet in full harmony, and on and on it goes. (With one voice they all speak in disunity, and by their works they show just who their father really is.)

## ***Romans 2***

*You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?*

'Never condemn the church, it says it right here! SEE!! For if you condemn it, you are condemning yourself.'

But wait, the church believes it has the right to judge its members, This is confusing! So are we or aren't we to judge each other? If we are to judge then what is it that we are to judge and just what is judgment?

All good questions. But let's let God answer them.

### **Judging**

***Matt. 7:1-5*** "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."

***Luke 6:37-38*** "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

But under this ruling every disciple and apostle is condemned. Their scathing accusations against religious adultery and murder done in the name of God were both relentless and said in a manner of what we today would condemn someone else for doing! Did they do this against the direct command of God to not do it? Did Christ Himself sin when He rebuked the church and its leadership? No, He did not and neither did the disciples!! But what is so often missing at this point is the knowledge that Christ was not condemning the person, but was condemning their actions.



Then we can see that there is a definite difference between calling sin by its right name and condemning someone to eternal death. You and I could never condemn anyone to eternal death even if we were to try because we are not God and God Himself does not do that. There is only One Power that holds life and death in His hand. And no matter how much we try to convince ourselves that having the ability to kill someone is what constitutes control of life, we are only fooling ourselves. God is the One in control and only He holds the power of life in His hands.

Somehow we have come to the place where we believe that WE are the masters of our fate, the controllers of our own destiny. This philosophy is repeated the whole world over by great and small, rich and poor and is falsely preached from church pulpits. Self-awareness, self-esteem, self-enrichment self-empowerment and self-achievement have taken the place of denying self and letting God take control.

### **Judging what or whom?**

*1 Cor 10:14-15* By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

*John 5:30* Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say.

Our judgment is only to distinguish between right and wrong. This kind of judging is not in condemning another but to know if what they speak is the Truth. But this can only be done if one is wise in God's Word. Ignorance will only cause the one who is judging to judge falsely.

*But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God "will give to each person according to what he has done." To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are **self-seeking** and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For God does not show favoritism.*

The false church is the first to suffer the reality that God has left them to their own destruction. All too late they realize that nothing was hidden from the eyes of God. All of the arguments behind closed doors and out in the open, all the money laundering and embezzlement of the funds the people gave to what they thought was the work of God, all of the murdering and false witnessing done in the name of God and all the manipulation of Scripture to enslave the people in a prison of lies, with these the church (she) has filled her cup with the blood of the saints and she will cause all who will not listen to the truth, great and small, rich and poor, to worship the beast and its image.

*All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.*

Christ said that if you live by the sword you die by the sword. Another way to say it is that what you live by, you will die by. Many live by death and will die with death. Some live by hate and they die with hate. In other words it is such futility to waste time and effort on those things that do nothing to cause anyone to receive Eternal Life. But by false pretenses and lies, most would rather stay blind, deaf and dumb when it comes to making eternal decisions. Yet a choice must be made, either we love God and want to be His people or we will serve a system that ends in death.

*Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and brag about your relationship to God; if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law; if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth-you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? You*

*who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."*

*Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised. If those who are not circumcised keep the law's requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker.*

In today's language it would be said this way: "Now you, if you call yourself a Christian; if you rely on the law and brag about your relationship with God; if you know His will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law; if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind (those who you have determined do not know what you supposedly know about God), a light for those who are in the dark, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself since you show by your own actions that you are in need of such infantile teaching and are obviously unable to grow up in the Word? You who preach against stealing, do you not steal from the people who give to help God's cause but instead line the church coffers to buy whatever you desire? You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you not commit adultery by lying with your enemy? You who say you abhor idols, do you not rob God's temples (His people) and then replace what you have taken with lies and unholy fire kindled by your own flames?

You who brag about the law, do you not dishonor God by breaking the law when you do such evil things? Nothing is hid from God. All the secrecy and dirty deals done behind closed doors and the false authority you claim as leaders of the people, none of this is hid from God! As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

Calling yourself a Christian and doing 'good works' has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you were not one at all. If those who are not called Christians keep the law's requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were Christians? The one, who is not a Christian physically and yet obeys the law, will condemn you. Yes, you, who, even though you have the written Word of God are a lawbreaker."

*A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.*

"A man is not a follower of God if he is only one outwardly. Nor is calling yourself a Christian merely outward and physical. No, a man is a child of God if he is one inwardly; and being a follower of God is having God in your heart by the Spirit, not by holding a Bible in your hand or attending church. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God."

## **Romans 3**

What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew (any denominational name may apply) or what value is there in circumcision (**doctrines or outward appearances**)? Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God (**the scriptures, and to whom much has been given, much is required**).

What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge." But if our unrighteousness (**our sins and shortcomings**) brings out God's righteousness more clearly (**His loving kindness to me even though I know that I'm sinning**), what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.) Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world? (**Good question! So if that were true, He couldn't, He must save the whole world, past, present and future.**) Someone might argue, "If my falsehood enhances God's truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner? (**Another good question! You can't be condemned if your sins make God look good**)" "Why not say-as we are being slanderously reported as saying and as some claim that we say-"Let us do evil that good may result"? **Their condemnation is deserved.**

What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? **Not at all!** We have already made the charge that Jews (any denominational name may apply.) and Gentiles (**everyone else**) alike are all under sin. 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, (Is this really true? There is no one who loves God? Is all mankind lost, for have not all sinned and come short of the glory of God? So what's the use? We are all lost!)** 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 (**love**) of God before their eyes."

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

With this knowledge we know that the law is only for those who sin. Therefore it is needed for them to bring them to a consciousness of their disobedience. But for those who love God and walk and talk with Him as their friend and live within His kingdom and obey His every Word, the law has no bearing on them (for they need no reminder of what to do that is right for they do it naturally because God lives in them.) On the other hand, the Jews had been given the law through Moses but it did not benefit them, it was GIVEN TO THEM to bring them back to the same relationship that father Abraham had with God, and there is this further note; **the law was not given to anyone else!** God did not give His law to any other nation, tribe or people. As well meaning as it may be to many who demand of others obedience to this law, it was not given to them nor was it given to give to others.

***Rom 9:3-5** For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.*

The law given to Israel was only part of a larger picture. It was a prophecy that spoke of a Promise to come, that would lead all men to the throne of God, where there is no need of a reminder to do what is right because they would live in God's Kingdom and they would love the King.

***Gal 3:19-20** What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator. A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but God is one.*

The nation of Israel, Abrahams descendants had repeatedly disobeyed the voice of God and refused Him as their king. Their sins were laid bare through the law, but even they would not repent. Instead, they crucified and murdered the Heir, the Only Son of the vineyard Owner and mistreated and killed those sent to them.

**Matt 21:33-46** *"Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit. 'The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said. 'But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.' So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. 'Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?' "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end," they replied, "and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time." Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures:*

*"'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? 'Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed.'" When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them.*

**1 Thess 2:14-16** *For you, brothers, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches suffered from the Jews, who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to all men in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last.*

God spoke of these disobedient people throughout His Word.

**Lam 4:2-3** *How the precious sons of Zion, once worth their weight in gold, are now considered as pots of clay, the work of a potter's hands! Even jackals offer their breasts to nurse their young, but my people have become heartless like ostriches in the desert.*

**Rom 1:28-32** *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. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.*

Israel had become the holders of every foul, unclean and hateful bird. Vultures fed on the walking dead and slavery was just a normal part of their lives. They would not accept life, but just wanted their own way. The people had become like sheep without a Sheppard to lead them.

**But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.** There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

But has He punished the dead? No! God judged sin, not the sinner, and our Savior and Lord, by dying on the cross, PROVED to the universe that God loves His creation. He showed that His Love is far greater than Satan's accusation that God the Father is stingy and arbitrary in His rulership and that He does not mean what He says.

Christ revealed the true Law of God and what it meant to be obedient, even to the death of the cross. He showed what faith really was and just how all must live that faith in their life if they are going to be called *children of God*.

*Where, then, is boasting?* (There cannot be any. Anyone who boasts of keeping God's law and that they are obeying the Word of God by doing so, is unaware of God's form of obedience that comes by faith...faith that is born out of a relationship with Him that goes beyond ink and paper or stone.) *It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. Is God the God of Jews* (any denominational name may apply) *only? Is he not the God of Gentiles (world) too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. Do we then nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.*

Many try to make this say that God destroyed the law that He wrote with His own finger. But nothing could be further from the truth!! And the only way that anyone can arrive at that conclusion is to believe what they have been told rather than what God has spoken on this very subject.

**Matt 5:17** "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who is the very spoken Law of God, came and lived out those things spoken in the book about Him. Not one word, not one stroke and any pen would or could be changed of what had been spoken about Him. He came to FULFILL it; and step-by-step in every way possible, He unveiled how the church had painted a false picture of the True Law of heaven and just how the leaders had made the law of stone (the ten commandment law, kept in the arc of the covenant in the most holy place of the Levitical temple and inferior to the gold that represented His character) appear to be holy in the sight of the people. No longer did they look to God for life for they held that the law of Moses was life. They had turned the picture backwards. Jesus came and put it back in its rightful place. But for those who KEPT the law and for those who today KEEP the law and maintain the doctrine of its demand over mankind, to these people the understanding of God's Word was/is very hard and the faith of God has eluded so many for so long because they demand to see God through law.

## ***Romans 4***

*What then shall we say that Abraham (And Christendom calls Abraham their father), our forefather, discovered in this matter? (What a good question. Just what did Abraham discover about this point of law vs. Law?) If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about-but not before God. What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."*

Just what does it take to be righteous in God's eyes? **BELIEF!!!** As someone has said: 'One day we will learn to trust the Word of God in that it means just what it says.'

**Mark 16:16** *Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*

Yes, it is that simple and yet so hard. Simple because it is written plain enough for anyone to see, but hard because to believe has been interpreted by so many to mean everything from believing that the light will come on when you flip the light switch, to obeying church doctrine and the many laws of man even when it does not agree with what God has spoken. Belief is not just a simple little thing people do by going to church every week or what happens when you turn on the light switch in a dark room, instead it is a desire to do whatever it takes to follow God and to hear His voice in the clearest tones. This is a place where excuses, biases, opinions, hatreds and traditions, doctrines and culture no longer play a role in a person's life. But this has proven to be virtually impossible for most. Satan has convinced almost all the world of a false way to God that allows the believer to feel comfortable while not being required to change their life from falling down/sinning to living in victory. A false picture has been painted of

an easy salvation that does not come by faith but instead is dependent upon what a person does with hope that in the end (at the time of judgment) each one will have done enough good for God to look on them in love and forever wipe away any negatives that might be found.

*Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."*

God's Love is a Gift, no-one can earn it by doing anything. *Not by might nor by power, but by His Spirit and blessed is the one whose sins are covered* by this Gift. But only through Faith is this possible. Many claim that their sins are covered but have no Faith, this is wrong. Only to the one who has Faith will have their faith credited as righteousness.

*Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that **Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness**. Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, **but before!** And he received the sign of circumcision, **a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith** while he was still uncircumcised. So then, **he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised**, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. And **he is also the father of the circumcised** who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.*

Outward appearances are not enough, weekly visits to church or any visit at all are not enough, helping your neighbor is not enough and being kind to animals is not enough. No work is enough to cause God to look down and smile on any person. God is not looking for good works now any more than He did with Abraham; what He is looking for is the soul that is willing to be guided into His Love and Righteousness. Nothing else will do. All the carrying around of Bibles or witnessing or living by law or any other work called good by men cannot save anyone, anywhere. Only The Gift of Righteousness that comes from God can do that. Only His Promise is enough.

*It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless, because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.*

What a wonderful thought. Where there is no law, (where there is no need for the law if God is already in the heart) there is no sin (for the law is not being broken.) In other words: The child of God has allowed God to fully control their life and the two have become One. This means that the person would not and could not break the law because there is nothing in them to make them want to show that they really do not love God with all their heart, mind, soul and body. Instead they love God so much and they know the pain that it caused Him to have to deal with the issue of sin that they could not ever again hurt the One they love. That person who realizes this has made a choice, an eternal choice, to walk with God and never walk outside of His will again and to live free from sins grasp both day and night!

*Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring-not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed-the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.*

*Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead-since he was about a hundred years old-and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his*

faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness-for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

Amen and Amen!!

## ***Romans 5***

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

To gain access into God's grace is not a momentary action by God or a momentary reaction by the child of God. It is not something you pick up and set aside whenever it pleases you. But is a choice that is made because of the knowledge that God gives, so that each may make a healthy and well rounded decision to live in or not to live in Him. This state of grace is set in a place where both good times and bad times are accepted equally because the child of God has come to know their Savior and they know that everything is in His hands and that:

***Rom. 8:28*** "all things will work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose"

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, **having been reconciled**, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom **we have now received reconciliation**.

If anything has been reconciled (in this case man had been removed from God's presence in Eden because of sin and was now reconciled) then what was once in the way (sins penalty, death) that caused man to be removed from God's presence, has now been removed. Therefore those who live in God may now stand boldly before His throne. And also:

***Eph. 2:6-9*** ...God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-not by works, so that no one can boast.

If we say we belong to God, we need not fear Him or think of ourselves as being unworthy or unable to be in heavenly places with Him. For a long time now that doctrine has been taught so that the people have a feeling of helplessness (along with a lack of power) to be the sons of God. This is not so! God through His Son made a road that leads straight to the throne, that ALL great and small, rich and poor, free and slave alike may be one with Him where He is and may know Him as their friend, and may be sure that whatever they ask in His name they will receive. But what is it that we want?

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned-for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, **even over those who did not sin by breaking a command**, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

If those things that are good exist in the child of God, and they live in God, then what need is there of a law that continues to remind them of their sins (or an idea of falling down and continually repenting) when they no longer stand apart (fall down) from God? None, of course. But this must mean that God views them as a new creature in Him; holy, blameless and undefiled, virgins and first fruits. The meaning of the word **Israel** (*you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed*) has now come alive in their life.

**Gen 32:28** And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed."

**Gen 32:28** And he said, your name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince you have power with God and with men, and have prevailed.

Then a new character (the character of God) has replaced the *old man* that was once dead in sin and a new name has been given: **child of God**. It is still a day-by-day growth experience but now on an entirely new level of existence where the direction of the heart is what matters (the decision that was made to live in/with God.) And just as it was before there was law, sin is not taken into account because Love now rules in its place. Even though mankind's body stills suffers death, this new way of living gives Life to the soul and takes place in those who choose it in the place of death and the body is brought in submission to that decision. Thus these new creations can say the same as their Lord and Savior before them that they are not part of this world any more then He was in mind, body and soul.

But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, **but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification**. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, **how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ**.

No one can do anything to cause God to look down upon them with any more love than He gave in the form of His Son that paid the ultimate price so that we would look up and see our Salvation and become one with Him as He is with His Father. All the penance in the world, all the crying out, all the bearing of guilt and seeking God like an elusive dream WILL NOT AND CANNOT bring down His favor or Love any more than He has already given in His life, death and resurrection. God came with such Love that He cleared away all that stood in the way because of one man's sin (Adam) and made a clear path for all to follow that leads to the very throne of God.

The only thing that can stop us from seeing this is misconceptions and misinterpretations of His Word and a lack of knowledge and understanding of His Love for us.

God, through that act of Love, has given a wealth of information and wisdom to those who desire to know about this Love so that all may win the battle over the enemy of righteousness and may stand clean before their Lord.

Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

The law was given so that **all who had become blind to sin** could see. But the more we see sinfulness, the more we see God's grace increased, so that, just as sin reigned in death (through Adam) so also grace might reign (through Christ) through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.



This has been misinterpreted by millions around the world.

The law that God gave to Israel is disregarded by many because it is believed that the cross (God's grace) covers the sins of man and thus the law was just something given during one of the dispensations or evolutionary changes of God; while at the same time others demand obedience to that same law even (though it only ends in death) while also holding to the belief of grace over obedience. And what makes this issue even more complicated (for many who are searching for truth) is that both sides have a portion of truth involved in their self-proclaimed doctrine; however, neither side has revealed the character of God and His reason for introducing the law at Mount Sinai in the first place. Yet the reason is in plain sight for all to see and God declares it: *The law was given so that all who had become blind to sin could see.*

The point of distinction here is the fact that there are two laws, one based on death (*the law of Moses*) and one based on Life (*Jesus Christ*.) One Law that justifies while the other condemns. What many fail to see is that the law on stone was only given that Israel would see their sinfulness and would leave behind their state of death and look up to that Law that gives Life. That which ends in the death of the old man would lead those who had rejected their God to that which gives life to the new creation in Christ.

God gave to His own exactly what they needed for Love to break through their stony hard hearts and to raise up a heart of flesh within His people.

***The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.***

Does this somehow mean that our sins make God look good because He gives grace? NO! Instead He give power, dominion and authority to overcome in His name. If we are going to say we are a part of His body then how can we say that there is no sin in His body and yet be sinners who never stop sinning?

## ***Romans 6***

*Well then, shall we keep on sinning so that God can keep on showing us more and more kindness and forgiveness?*

***I John 3:2-6*** *Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. **Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.** Everyone who sins breaks the law; **in fact, sin is lawlessness.** But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.*

**We dare not miss this point.** Many see this text as saying that on the cross all of the sin we have ever committed or ever will commit, is completely covered and we don't have to worry about trying to become good or "perfect." Yet Paul spends a great amount of time on this very subject, talking about sin and how bad sin is, and yet so many act as though it is a meaningless gesture, just a bunch of wasted space in the Scriptures. But here is a request by God through John for a call to pure living. Pure anything means that whatever could have made it impure has either been removed or is not present; where the old self is gone and a new person that is pure and clean shows by their actions that they walk with God and no longer do the things they once used to do, which were wrong or sinful.

There is no place here for excuses why we cannot overcome and be pure examples of how God's Law may be lived out in His people.

*Of course not! Should we keep on sinning when we don't have to? For sin's power over us was broken when we became Christians and were baptized to become a part of Jesus Christ; through his death the power of your sinful nature was shattered. Your old sin-loving nature was buried with him by baptism*

when he died; and when God the Father, with glorious power, brought him back to life again, you were given his wonderful new life to enjoy.

If we have “died” to sin and it no longer has power over us, then we mock God when we show that sin still has power over us; even though we have supposedly been reborn and are new creatures in Him. We cannot straddle the fence and try to make claim to be feeding our own desires and wants through our sinning and at the same time claim to walk with God as though He were our best friend. Straddling the fence or being lukewarm should not be seen a desirable position to be in, especially by those who claim His name.

**Rev. 3:15-18** *I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm-**neither hot nor cold, I am about to spit you out of my mouth.** You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.*

For you have become a part of him, and so you died with him, so to speak, when he died; and now you share his new life and shall rise as he did. Your old evil desires were nailed to the cross with him; that part of you that loves to sin was crushed and fatally wounded, so that your sin-loving body is no longer under sin's control, no longer needs to be a slave to sin; for when you are deadened to sin you are freed from all its allure and its power over you. And since your old sin-loving nature “died” with Christ, we know that you will share his new life. **Christ rose from the dead and will never die again.** Death no longer has any power over him. He died once for all to end sin's power, but now he lives forever in unbroken fellowship with God. **So look upon your old sin nature as dead and unresponsive to sin, and instead be alive to God, alert to him, through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

***Christ rose from the dead and will never die again.*** This statement can only be made from an understanding of what it meant for The Sacrificial Lamb to die instead of an animal sacrifice as practiced under the Levitical priesthood. But Christ did not come in the capacity of the priesthood of Levi or as that kind of sacrifice. Instead, He came as a Melchizedek Priest of an eternal order, as a Lamb slain from the beginning of time which was not based upon a genealogical heritage nor on the basis of the blood of animals. No animal could break the power of Satan over anyone nor set a soul free. But Christ died once and for all sin. No other blood can be spilt and no amount of begging for forgiveness can be offered up to do what The Lamb has already done. If sins are committed by those who claim to be His, then they show by their own actions that they do not understand what the ultimate Sacrifice of The Lamb was all about. Therefore we must understand just what our Lord and Savior did for us so that we may be living examples of what it means to be forgiven and reborn again into His Eternal Heritage.

Do not let sin control your puny body any longer; do not give in to its sinful desires. Do not let any part of your bodies become tools of wickedness, to be used for sinning; but give yourselves completely to God - every part of you - for you are back from death and you want to be tools in the hands of God, to be used for his good purposes. Sin need never again be your master, for now you are no longer tied to the law where sin enslaves you, but you are free under God's favor and mercy.

**Does this mean that now we can go ahead and sin and not worry about it? (For our salvation does not depend on keeping the law but on receiving God's grace!) Of course not!** Don't you realize that you can choose your own master? You can choose sin (with death) or else obedience (with acquittal). The one to whom you offer yourself - he will take you and be your master, and you will be his slave. Thank God that though you once chose to be slaves of sin, now you have obeyed with all your heart the teaching to which God has committed you. And now you are free from your old master, sin; and you have become slaves to your new master, righteousness.

We show by our own actions who we are obeying. Either we are a slave to Satan and do those things that Satan does, or we will obey God and know Him as our Friend and become pure examples of His Power and Grace in our lives.

*I speak this way, using the illustration of slaves and masters, because it is easy to understand: just as you used to be slaves to all kinds of sin, so now you must let yourselves be slaves to all that is right and holy. In those days when you were slaves of sin you didn't bother much with goodness. And what was the result? Evidently not good, since you are ashamed now even to think about those things you used to do, for all of them end in eternal doom. But now you are free from the power of sin and are slaves of God, and his benefits to you include holiness and everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

## ***Romans 7***

As we are about to read this chapter there is one issue that must be resolved. When Paul speaks of the law of death against the backdrop of the Law of Life it must be settled in our minds just what law or what state of the law he is referring to. Some argue that Paul is speaking about a particular state or condition that the law exists in, in the sinners life (in comparison to another point of time in their life when they used to be unsaved in their view.) In this version, it is seen that at one time death was the answer for breaking the law, while at other times grace has ruled in its place. Therefore if what Paul is presenting is a condition the person is in at the time or a state of mind as to how one sees the law from different perspectives as they draw closer and closer to God, then the Scriptures will bear witness to this kind of understanding.

There is also the concept, that the law of death and the Law of Life are two distinctly different laws. One is based on the death of the sinner while the other gives life.

Yet it is evidenced in Abraham's life (as well as others) that the law would have appeared to be broken at times by some of the things that they did, and yet God looked beyond their actions and instead knew the intent and direction of their heart and called them His chosen one's. This is not used as an excuse for sin in the life but is seen as the way God views things rather than the way humanity judges one another on the basis of outward expressions as to whether the person lives within a certain set of rules or laws. This does not negate the law of scripture nor does it refer to it as garbage to be thrown out with the rest of the trash, but should be seen for what it was—a God guided method of revealing men's hearts that had become as stone. This method was used by God to awaken a people that had become blind and unaware of His Love for them and His desire for them to be His Light to the world. This of course would be in contrast to Abraham and others who obeyed God and did not need to be brought back to a obedient state of mind. (And if this is what Paul was writing about then the scriptures will bear witness to this understanding.)

It is evident though that for those who already knew God and held an open relationship with Him that the law on stone was not needed to remind them of what they already knew, because God (the Law in heaven) guided their life. In this understanding the capital 'L' Law is seen as the immutable character of God (that which gives life) in comparison to that law which ruled with its decree of death for the one who stepped outside of its demands.

So let's see what Paul is saying as he talks about the law God gave to Israel (the written code) and how he points out the difference between it and the Law of freedom that is brought about by death to the law on stone.

*Do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to men who know the law—that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives? For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man.*

*So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.*

The very finger of God wrote the written code and it was given to Moses to give to the people. But through the death of Christ, that law that was upheld by the death penalty found its fulfillment in and through the death of God's

only Son. Does this mean that now we live by a free-for-all, anything-goes, self-interpreted lifestyle? OF COURSE NOT!!! Did Abraham or Joseph or Jacob or Job live that way? NO! They had God living in their heart and God directed them, not in the way of evil and sin but in Righteousness and Love, but these men did not need tables of stone to point out their disobedience and priests to stand in-between them and God in order to know His will for them and how to worship Him, for they knew Him as a friend.

These men who lived without being threatened by death are our examples of what happens with those who know God. These people are a law unto themselves. Our problem is that we have not seen this kind of holy living so we seek law based on the principle of punishment and death, not ever knowing or experiencing what it means to live in Life and be one with God.

*What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet." But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead. Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.*

For many, if not most, the written code was the first understanding of what God has told disobedient people who will not listen to His voice how He wants them to live. Therefore holy living is only seen through a law that brought death to the law breaker. But now it is left to us to look to God's Word (outside of the written code/law) and see Christ as the true example of how we are to live, and with clear vision see the way to the throne of God as the Messiah showed to the whole world in His life as the Living Law. This Law is the Savior of the world, and this Law can only give Life. We all have a free will to choose and can either walk with God or walk away. But even if we can only see Him at the beginning of our journey through the law of death, He will teach us and lead us to His Law of Life. What a wonderful Savior is Christ our Lord.

*Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.*

*We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do-this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.*

*So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God-through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.*

We must not stop reading at this point as many do. This is one long expose on sin continues in Romans 8. But sadly, most never go on. They act as though Paul leaves us in a dark place where sin rules our bodies while God rules our souls. This is not so!

Paul is just trying to paint a word picture about the constant struggle that many have in the area of sin in their life, and if we read on, we will see the glorious victory we may have (as he proclaims he did) where our flesh and our soul are both brought together as one under the control of the will of God.

## ***Romans 8***

*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, **who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.***

The Law of the Spirit of Life will set us free from the law of sin and death, if we will allow God to come in and perform His work of Love in us, and we show by our actions, by the works of our flesh if God lives in us or not. Those who live according to their sinful nature show that sin has control over them. Those who live by Faith will show that the Spirit of God lives in them and they do the will of their Father.

*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.***

We must die to the old way of obedience to God wherein we obeyed or suffered the consequences. We must live so that His desire becomes our desire because He lives in our hearts and minds. This is the Life-giving Way. If we demand to live by a law that demands the life of the one who breaks it, then all humanity will die. For the law of death can only end in death. It can never bring forth Life. But that Law that is above will give Life to those who will live by its desires.

*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. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs-heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

The Ten Commandment law was to point out our sinful nature. And if we look at it we see ourselves in a new Light, and will allow God to come in and clear away the clutter of our sinful nature we no longer need to have anything point out that lives by that old nature. This does not do away with what God Himself wrote and gave to Israel, but is an admission of what happens when God comes into the life and is allowed to work His will and guide the child of God in the way they should go. This is a new and better life where sin is no longer present and God has made His home in the person, never to leave. This is the point of SINLESS LIVING.

*I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.*

The sons of God will be revealed. The only question is: "Will we be one of them?" Only those who have come by Faith into His Faith and have died to the old self and have risen with Christ from the tomb to a new and life-

giving way will be called the sons of God. We cannot hold on to the law of death and have the Law of Life living in us. We must die to the old law (the sinful nature) and let God give us Life. This is what all of creation was about—the sons of God appearing before the world showing that God’s Law of Life could be lived out in His people and that Satan is a liar and a thief, for he has convinced most to see God as a tyrant, an arbitrary ruler and redundant priest. Through the Ten Commandment law priests and pastors have preached “death to the sinner” and hell fire and brimstone. This is not God’s desire. He used this form of teaching only for a moment of time, to a people who would not listen to His voice. They had become deaf to His Words, blind to His ways and ignorant of His Law that was to be alive in their hearts. So an emergency method was used to bring them back to a place where they could start all over again and the world would see through their connection to God that there is only one God and one Life giving Way. But very few ever came to this kind of relationship with God. Instead, they became slaves to the law and are compared to Hagar, Sarah’s hand maid, who could only bear slave children.

*Gal. 4:24-27 These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.*

But the Jerusalem that is above is our mother.

*We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.*

Those who are victors in the race against sin, wait for the redemption of their bodies, from being mortal to immortal. This is not a hopeful expectation of a new mind in Christ, but a final deliverance from a world of death to an eternal home with God. But if our minds have not already become new in Him, then we cannot become participants in an eternal Kingdom where sin is not allowed to run free. We must shun sin as did our Lord while living as one of us in the same sinful world we live in but without sin, through the power of the Spirit of God living in Him. If we say we have the Spirit of God and yet continue to sin, we show by our own actions that we are not participating in the same Spirit as Christ did when He overcame. We must know as Christ knew that the Spirit of God helps us, even in what we need to pray for, so that we may become overcomers and partakers in the mind of Christ and need not worry about what to say or how to say it.

*In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.*

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*

This predestination is not to arbitrarily demand or move against any person’s will in a way that would limit or destroy their freewill of choice. This is a “foreknowledge” of what will take place before it happens. In this kind of scenario, God knows who He can successfully choose to do His will and who He can walk and talk with as a friend. Each person has a freewill-of-choice or there would be no rhyme or reason to try to proselytize anyone to receive God into his or her lives. But as God knows the future, He knows who will let Him into their hearts, and those whom He can use He calls, and they choose to work with Him and to dig a little deeper into the mysteries of Godliness. To those who seek this walk with God, He unlocks heaven’s storehouse and pours out His blessing, His knowledge and allows the receiver to partake in those things that He has promised to give to those who will seek and knock.

*What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died-more than that, who was raised to life-is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Christ's death on the cross is a constant intercession on man's behalf and proof of how much the Father and His Son were willing to do for mankind. Satan's lies that God does not really Love us fall flat against this backdrop.

Forever will the Life, crucifixion and resurrection be a resoundingly loud cry of the Father and Son's Love for us. Nothing more can ever be done to show the universe that God Loves us and cares so much that He wants us to be His very own and that He will never ever leave us alone. But the cross to the foolish person will never be enough. The story of redemption to them is nothing but empty stories told by people with too much time on their hands. But for those who know God as their friend, the intercession of Christ through His life, death and resurrection are sufficient.

## ***Romans 9***

*I speak the truth in Christ-I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit- I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.*

The Christian church down through the ages has been the holder of a most precious gift from God, the Scriptures. From the time of Martin Luther to the rebirth of Truth in the early 1800's, the Pro-test-ant church has had the storehouse of God opened for them to see what others have tried to hide from the view of the people. But sadly, as their parents before them, most Protestants have not continued to advance forward in the Scriptures. Each group put up their stop sign and God used others to advance the truth. He used those who would take up their position as His workers and take Truth to another level. (ie. Huss, Jerome, Luther and others of those called the reformers) These servants of God, who were willing to be used by God, each taking Truth to a new level of understanding, would later be used by others as an excuse to imagine that truth stopped at their doorstep. As each reformer died, those who listened to the what these men preached to them became religious bodies that would not accept anymore truth. But the will of God would still be accomplished. He would use others who would take the Truth a little further than the ones before. But how grand it all could have been if those protestants had not chosen to stop the advancement of Truth. How wonderful could have been their experience to take the final message of God to the world. It was the will of God for them to continue to search for more Truth. But instead, what we find today is a myriad of variations and strands of discord, disagreements and misunderstandings amongst those who call themselves Children of God and Protestants. To them was given great Truths to be built upon, to build up the Spiritual house of God.

*It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's*

children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring. For this was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son."

Not only that, but Rebekah's children had one and the same father, our father Isaac. Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad-in order that God's purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls-she was told, "The older will serve the younger." Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

God's Word has not failed. Though many call themselves sons and daughters of God and believe that they are doing His will, He will not recognize them as His. For it is not by name that one is saved, but instead is because of a personal relationship built on Faith

**Luke 3:23-27** *Someone asked him, "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?" He said to them, "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, 'Sir, open the door for us.' "But he will answer, 'I don't know you or where you come from.' "Then you will say, 'We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.' "But he will reply, 'I don't know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!'*

**Matt 7:21-23** *"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. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'*

What is sad is, that many believe that by saying the name *Jesus* or by claiming they are *saved* that they then have a hope built upon a knowledge of God. However, for most, this knowledge is only a position of status or a feeling of comfort that they receive by hanging out with others who believe the same thing. Yet week after week their experience with God is just like the week before; a week without victories to be told or a willingness to experience victory in their life. And in building their view of God on false concepts and misunderstandings of His Word, they join the world with one voice and sing and dance, scream and shout and rock and roll themselves believing that what they are doing is exactly what their Lord and Savior would do if He were to attend their group. And when they have recovered from their celebration they return to their everyday life and they prove to the world that they are powerless in the face of sin unlike their Lord and Savior. Instead of being a showcase to the world that the endless power of God can save mankind from sin, not in their sins; Christians fight to uphold a lie that promotes their humanity over their God's demand to be free from it.

So much is missed and misunderstood when the larger picture cannot be seen. And sadly, when the larger picture is presented to them, they say in their own defense: "Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?" But the will of God has never been for them to sin, but instead to be overcomers and live without it.

One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?" But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?

What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath-prepared for destruction? What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory-even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? As he says in Hosea: "I will call them 'my people' who are not my people; and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one," and, "It will happen that in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"



Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved. For the Lord will carry out his sentence on earth with speed and finality." It is just as Isaiah said previously: "Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah."

Only a remnant will be saved, that is, what is left after the smoke has all cleared and it is seen who were the victors and who were those who lost their battle over sin.

*What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone." As it is written: "See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."*

Those who stumble over the Word of God show through their daily life that they would rather accept defeat over victory. And that living in this world of sin, falling prey to its allurements, is just a part of living.

***That Stone which is laid as the Cornerstone  
Will only be a stumbling block.  
It will never be a Sure foundation.***

For those who choose Truth as their guide by working with God, being one with God and marching forward in one straight line with only one leader at the head of the rank: the Word of God to them is Life. To them He gives the honor of being called Sons and Daughters. What a wonderful blessing awaits those who choose this path. It is not a wide path for multitudes to pass over its ground, but is a narrow path that very few will ever find.

***Matt 7:13-14*** "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

## ***Romans 10***

Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

Each of us may be sincere in what we attempt to do, but as sincere as our appearance may be, we may be and many times are, sincerely wrong! If our basis for belief and action is built upon a false belief in tradition or culture over Truth, and live by the law of man over the Law of God, then that righteousness that passes beyond the boundaries of the law cannot be known or taken part in no matter what religious name we call ourselves. Biases and opinions, prejudice and traditions, teachings of the laws of men and their judgments must be set aside if we are to become priests and kingdoms to our God.

Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: "The man who does these things will live by them." But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) "or 'Who will descend into the deep?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is

Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.** As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile-the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

It is not what is said that makes a person holy, but it is what comes from the heart. Therefore, God looks at the heart and sees the very intent of each one of His children. There is nothing hidden from His sight. Those who believe that God does not see what is deep in their hearts only fool themselves. God is not blind nor on vacation, He sees what is hidden from human sight. And with the mouth, each person confesses what is in his or her heart. Either they prove with their lips their knowledge of the Word of God or they show their ignorance and unwillingness to hear His voice.

*How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"*

*But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world."*

*Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, "I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding." And Isaiah boldly says, "I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me." But concerning Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people."*

Sadly, most show (with their continual effort to seek for forgiveness and the Faith of God) that the experience that should be evident in their lives by the victories they should be having is obviously missing. From the lack of knowledge of the Word of God, many are without the experience they need to stand before God's throne and know Him as their friend. And while in this state of mind, they claim to have the Holy Spirit and to be "spiritual Jerusalem".

***Hos. 4:5-6*** *You stumble day and night, and the prophets stumble with you. So I will destroy your mother-my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children.*

Ignorance or the lack of knowledge does not put the child of God in God's favor.

## ***Romans 11***

*I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah-how he appealed to God against Israel: "Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me"? And what was God's answer to him? "I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal." So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.*

"seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal." This dare not be missed! It was not an arbitrary choice by God but a choosing of those who would not bow to Baal. God can only choose those who choose Him by their own freewill of choice. Yes, He knows who will make those choices once they have enough information stored in their minds. But He does not move against their choice. Each makes their decision as they view the life of Christ,

His death and resurrection which is clearly visible to everyone who wishes to see and weigh out the evidence. Each person makes a decision for or against God. No claim of ignorance can be made as to who He is and what He did for mankind.

What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened, as it is written: "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day." And David says: "May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them. May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever."

God's wrath has not been understood by most. This is not a decision by God to give loving and God fearing people a spirit of stupor, but to those who had *chosen* not to listen to Him or follow Him. He gave exactly what they were already choosing, ignorance. This is the wrath of God, but is not as many imagine of a God of ANGER or like a 'fire-breathing dragon' but instead a God of Love and Liberty who lets His creation have their own way...their choice to listen and obey and receive Life or to demand disobedience and reject Life altogether.

**Ps. 81:10-12** *I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt. Open wide your mouth and I will fill it. "But my people would not listen to me; Israel would not submit to me. So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own devices.*

**Ezek. 20:21-26** *"But the children rebelled against me: They did not follow my decrees, they were not careful to keep my laws-although the man who obeys them will live by them-and they desecrated my Sabbaths. So I said I would pour out my wrath on them and spend my anger against them in the desert. But I withheld my hand, and for the sake of my name I did what would keep it from being profaned in the eyes of the nations in whose sight I had brought them out. Also with uplifted hand I swore to them in the desert that I would disperse them among the nations and scatter them through the countries, because they had not obeyed my laws but had rejected my decrees and desecrated my Sabbaths, and their eyes [lusted] after their fathers' idols. **I also gave them over** to statutes that were not good and laws they could not live by; **I let them** become defiled through their gifts-the sacrifice of every firstborn-that I might fill them with horror so they would know that I am the LORD.'*

**Acts 7:39-43** *"But our fathers refused to obey him. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt. They told Aaron, 'Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who led us out of Egypt-we don't know what has happened to him!' That was the time they made an idol in the form of a calf. They brought sacrifices to it and held a celebration in honor of what their hands had made. But **God turned away and gave them over** to the worship of the heavenly bodies. This agrees with what is written in the book of the prophets: "'Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings forty years in the desert, O house of Israel? You have lifted up the shrine of Molech and the star of your god Rephan, the idols you made to worship. Therefore I will send you into exile' beyond Babylon.*

God does not hate His people and He will not move against their freewill of choice...whatever that is and will honor their desire even if it is to be ignorance or blindness. But His will is being accomplished and all will be fulfilled as His Word has spoken, not because of arbitrary rulership and design, but because Truth will always prevail over lies that sooner or later are revealed because lies cannot stay hidden no matter how good the lie seems to be. Although His Love is never ending and His desire is for ALL to be saved, He cannot and will not do anything against the freewill of choice (even of those He has desired to be His people.)

**Matt. 23:37-39** *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'*

*Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring!*

*I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? If the part of the dough offered as first fruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.*

*If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.*

**Rom. 9:6-7** *It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."*

Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

If the branches were pruned and new branches grafted in their place, how much rejoicing is to be heard?!! But how much more rejoicing will be heard for the prodigal son who comes back home to become one again with the family of God. There is both sadness as well as rejoicing. Sadness for those who refused to be a part of the vine and bear wonderful fruit, and rejoicing for those who were grafted in because of the Love of God and the willingness of the Son to be the ultimate sacrifice to save those who would be called His sons and daughters.

*I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."*

*As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all. Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.*

One of the greatest mysteries for humanity has been and is their ever constant and unanswered question: "*Why are we here?*" Mankind has pondered this question to little avail because most have never seen into the depth of God's design or aim in creating this world. And so the question goes without any knowledge as to the mystery of life.

But here we see that God has formed His creation and has delivered them up to be an example of what it will take, and has taken, in order that the will of God can be achieved for and through that creation. His Will, His desire for all to be saved, is then seen in the ultimate sacrifice on the cross at Calvary of a Creator for His creation. And for those who will work with the Creator God and hear His voice, for those who will know Him as their friend, they will be living examples of the Word of God working through mortal humans, even in the frail state that many see themselves in. And the promises of God are true. He will save all of Israel, all those who heard His voice and obeyed His commands. And then, the Gentiles together with the Israel of God are called to the Lamb's supper to partake in the Divine Nature and be one in God. It is therefore not robbery for anyone who lives in God to say, 'If you have seen me, you have seen my Father' for all are called to be like Him.

**Matt. 5:46-48** *If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? **Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.***

## ***Romans 12***

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. **Then** you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

In Paul's summation of what He was given by God and passed on to those who would listen to the truth, he declared with a clear voice that all who would hear the voice of God must be transformed from image to image in their minds before anyone can judge what is right and good. But if we are found to be continually seeking salvation like an elusive dream never reaching the end of our search, we can only sink into a miry pit of despair never being able to know what is the will of God in our lives. But if we can be truly transformed from the old life of sin and receive the new and Life-giving Spirit of God in our lives, we can be just like our Father in heaven—priests and kingdoms as He has created us to be.

**Rev. 1:5-6** *To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.*

**Rev. 5:9-10** *You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."*

Priests and kings after the order of a heavenly Priesthood. God's anointed one's, but not of a earthly priesthood. Just as Christ did not come as many perceive what a priest is supposed to look or act like but instead came as a Priest of a Priesthood with no beginning or ending; His people who have been called by His name act as He acts, but as priests of the order of Melchizedek and NOT as priests of the order of Aaron as so many present themselves today in churches, synagogues and mosques the world over.

**Heb. 7:2-3** *Melchizedek's name means "Justice," so he is the King of Justice; and he is also the King of Peace because of the name of his city, Salem, which means "Peace." Melchizedek had no father or mother and there is no record of any of his ancestors. He was never born and he never died but his life is like that of the Son of God—a priest forever.*

**Heb. 7:12-17** *And when God sends a new kind of priest, his law must be changed to permit it. As we all know, Christ did not belong to the priest-tribe of Levi, but came from the tribe of Judah, which had not been chosen for priesthood; Moses had never given them that work. So we can plainly see that God's method changed, for Christ, the new High Priest who came with the rank of Melchizedek, did not become a priest by meeting the old requirement of belonging to the tribe of Levi, but on the basis of power flowing from a life that cannot end. And the psalmist points this out when he says of Christ, "You are a priest forever with the rank of Melchizedek."*

This is not a priesthood of any hierarchical order that sets one person higher than another or deals with puffed up egos or goes on emotional coaster rides. It is a priesthood of brotherhood where only one body exists and each part is no more or less important than any other part.

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

One body, yet many parts. This does not say one body and each part working in a different way, but working as ONE. The leg cannot move without using muscles from the back, the arm cannot move without using muscles from

the chest, abdomen, neck and back. When one uses their hand the muscles of the arm are called upon to work in conjunction with the hand, etc.

Paul did not speak this to insinuate that each person has a distinct and separate “ministry” from someone who has another ministry or another talent. This thought would discount and deny the multifaceted ministry of Christ. In Him was ALL of what we are to be! He was not just a hand, a foot, an arm or leg, and we are all ONE in Him.

In other words;

- How can one be merciful and yet not just?
- How can one be prophetic and not be a teacher?
- How can one be loving and not be humble?

All the gifts of God are given in full and complete measure to anyone who seeks His face!

*Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

## ***Romans 13***

*Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.*

NT:1849 exousia (ex-oo-see'-ah); from NT:1832 (in the sense of ability); privilege, i.e. (subjectively) force, capacity, competency, freedom, or (objectively) mastery (concretely, magistrate, superhuman, potentate, token of control), delegated influence: - authority, jurisdiction, liberty, power, right, strength.

*For there is no **authority** except from God, and the **authorities** that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the **authority** resists the **ordinance** of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.*

NT:2937 ktisis (ktis'-is); from NT:2936; original formation (properly, the act; by implication, the thing, literally or figuratively): -building, creation, creature, **ordinance**.

*For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.*

**Matt. 7:28-29** *When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had **authority**, and not as their teachers of the law.*

**Matt. 9:6-8** Then he said to the paralytic, "Get up, take your mat and go home." And the man got up and went home. When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such **authority** to men.

**Matt. 10:1** He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them **authority** to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

**Matt 20:25-28** Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise **authority** over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave- just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

**Matt. 28:18-20** Then Jesus came to them and said, "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."

**John 17:1-5** "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him **authority** over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

**Luke 4:5-8** The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their **authority** and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

Lest it be misunderstood, may it be said in clear tones: **God's Word is true**, and if Scripture is read in its entirety, the truth will always win over anyone's personal interpretation or demand of how it is to be understood.

But sadly because of the demands of certain church doctrine this portion of Scripture has been interpreted by most as showing that ALL governing bodies on earth are set in place and are to be obeyed as if what they say came from the very throne of God. Of course, this would be to ignore the Hitler's and Stalin's of this world. God does not base His authority on man or use lies and deceit as a picture of the kind of government that He is a part of.

If we will allow God to help us in understanding His Word we will see that those authorities He recognizes as His are they who walk and talk with Him as friends and obey His voice. All other authorities are His enemy and are not a part of His Kingdom. Although all things in heaven above and on the earth are subject to His will not all are known by God and represent Him as an authority figure on this earth.

**Matt. 7:21-23** "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. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

All things will work together for good, for God is in charge just as with the Pharaoh in Egypt at the time of the exodus. But not every authority is to be seen as one coming to the people from God just as Pharaoh was not. Only those who come from God are His leaders in His Kingdom. But as far as possible, we are to be at peace with all men.

**Ex 9:13-21** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Get up early in the morning, confront Pharaoh and say to him, 'This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me, or this time I will send the full force of my plagues against you and against your officials and your people, so you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth. For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth. But **I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.** You still set yourself against my people and will not let them go. Therefore, at this time tomorrow I will send the worst hailstorm that has ever fallen on Egypt, from the day it was founded till now. Give an order now to bring your livestock and everything you have in the field to a place of shelter, because the hail will fall on every man and animal that has not been brought in and is still out in the field, and they will die.'" Those officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of the LORD

*hurried to bring their slaves and their livestock inside. But those who ignored the word of the LORD left their slaves and livestock in the field.*

The only reason that the people of Israel (the family of Jacob) found themselves in slavery to Egypt was because of the disobedience and hard hearts of the sons of Jacob (Israel) the brothers of Joseph. Living in Love was a hard lesson to learn for Joseph's brothers and as it for many today.

*Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*

Love is the fulfillment of the law. Yet men find reason to hate, to be angry or to seek vengeance on their foes while claiming to be filled with the Spirit of God who is Love. Israel did not understand this either because they had accepted the judgment system of man and had allowed man's doctrines to fill their hearts. They could not understand what all the writings of the prophets were saying because the teachers and leaders had taken God's Word and applied it to so many things in life that it had lost its real meaning and intent, just as it is to this very day. The Scriptures are used to against the backdrop of everything from sports to labor union actions. It is seen against paralleling everything from sex to violence in everyday life. Church authority and committee rule are preached from its pages and deliverance from spiritual oppression is presented in such a way to make the people believe that all they need to do is seek professional counseling from a licensed board certified psychologist. The Love that passes all understanding is no more known or understood than when Christ told the people of what they should have already understood.

**Matt 22:37-40** Jesus replied: "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."

So the question is asked, 'What do you think the church of God would look like if the people of God actually loved each other the way God Loves His own?' If each person so loved each other that they were willing to die for each other, how much professional help would anyone need?

*And do this, knowing the time that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lust.*

'Put on the Lord Jesus Christ...' This is not a metaphor! And for those who wish to know the just what it takes to live a sinless life, here it is. This is the answer to ALL of the questions that could ever be asked by anyone anywhere about life, love and happiness and how it is achieved.

## ***Romans 14***

*Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.*



“See, I can eat anything I want and you can’t judge me, God says so, so there!” Many say that in defense of their sloppy and careless attitude against the law of God. “Well, it was only written for the Jews anyway. Now we live under a new covenant relationship with God, that is a do-as-you-please kind of thing. We can do as we please and God will save us anyway.”

Many parents would punish their children for talking to them like that. But people say things like that without blinking and eye or thinking about the physical and mental laws involved with how we treat our bodies, let alone how God wants us to act if we are going to call ourselves His. Very few have ever stopped to think of what they are doing to God’s temple, this human body, created by Him. They act as though they have every right to treat God’s creation any way they choose, then they expect God to save them although they used and abused this creation of His.

Most will ignore what is right and good. That is, until their bodies finally call upon by them to pay the price for mistreating them and by doing what they *felt* was good in their own sight. And today the diseases of the world are winning the battle because people have ignored common health principles and have had their own way even to the point of death, then in a last ditch effort to free themselves of what they have done, they look to heaven and say, “why God, why?”

*One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.*

A doctrine has been created on this portion of Scripture which allows men and women to worship as they please and eat as they please. It doesn’t matter that they are breaking the laws that God set in place to keep His creation in perfect Spiritual health, their going to live their lives as they choose no matter what you say. But they are only fooling themselves. God is not fooled! He sees the very intent of the heart in its attempt to live while pleasing itself instead of living a life totally for Him.

*For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.'"*

*So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died. Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.*

God is the only One who can judge anyone for good or bad, for God is the only one who knows the heart. But we are to judge what is just and good, and in that we are to make our decision as to whom we will obey. Like Judas in the midst of the group who by normal everyday standards should have been brought before the church counsel and made to straighten-up and fly-right, Christ did not even judge him. Then who are we to sit in the seat of judgment about each other?

Christ came to judge and He did just that, but not with the judgment man uses. He judged evil as sin, took it to the cross, defeated it.

**John 9:39** *Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind."*

The power of evil needed to be revealed so that no one could stand by the sidelines and act like they didn't know anything. But in that process, those who do not want evil unveiled as evil become blind to the truth. But Christ came

and crushed the power of sin on the cross and the whole world was shown the true character of God in comparison to the evil that they had learned to live with. God's people were free and the battle was won over all the contemptible lies told to mask the Truth..

*Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. **All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble.** It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.*

Ultimate Love for one another is to realize that what we do really does affect those around us. This, of course, is the opposite of what we have been taught by so many in authority positions, but it is the only way we are to act as children of God. If we truly care for each other, each will want to give whatever it takes to be what the other needs in the name of God.

*So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.*

Oh, if we only believed this, we would not be so quick to act so hastily as we often do. Only in Faith can we be what God wants us to be and what we need to be to others. This Faith is not based on a situational ethics platform but is based on the knowledge we have acquired from our connection and experience with God. All obedience and power comes from this Faith relationship built on the knowledge of salvation and deliverance from sin. If we are still seeking for these things and know in our hearts that we do not have this kind of connection with our Lord and Savior, then we must decide just who we are and what we are doing in the name of God.

***We do not fool God,  
only ourselves.***

## ***Romans 15***

*We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*

*May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written: "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing hymns to your name." Again, it says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people." And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and sing praises to him, all you peoples." And again, Isaiah says, "The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him." May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

All over the land, church after church has risen up on the principle of a dispute. So many congregations split from another congregation because of disagreements and finger pointing. They do this while claiming to be children of God who are representing the character of God to the world while supposedly being a witness to the power of God in their lives. And while standing on this platform they seek and claim the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. What a mess! Even the simplest reading of the Word of God shows us over and over again what God requires of His people.

Unity. Not unity at any cost, but a unity brought on by a desire to know and hear the voice of God and to be able to distinguish right from wrong and to stand firm in the day of test and trial. The greatest feeling of all is to stand as true as the needle to the pole; to be a witness of what God has done in our life and to know that arguments and disputes accomplish nothing.

God's Word has nothing to do with false unity; where religions drop their pretenses for a day or an hour while joining together on a platform of worship to God, only to return to their respective places of worship and preach a different doctrine than the church down the street or around the corner. They do this while in disagreement with those whom they have just spent time with in spiritual unity. If there has ever been a more detestable lie and misappropriation of the Word of God it is the false teaching of "unity in disunity." And as many often say: "We can agree to disagree can't we?" There is no disagreement in the Word of God! God does not say one thing to one person and then say an equally opposing belief to another, causing disunity between the two. This can only happen when the Word of God is misused and manipulated to present an idea proposed by someone. But the Word of God does not lie or repent (change) of what He has said.

*Num. 23:18 Rise up, Balak, and hear: Listen to me, you son of Zippor. God is not a man, that he should lie; He doesn't change his mind like humans do. Has he ever promised, Without doing what he said?*

If we have determined that the Word of God is left up to each person's interpretation as is claimed by religion today, then each and every organized religious body is no different than those pagan religions that claim their god and holy writings are to be read and understood in a yin yang fashion where change is constant. In other words, Freud was right after all; for he states that life is not based on a force somewhere out there that guides us but is built on a idea of survival of the fittest which means that each person is dependent upon being able to adapt to the situation and not always staying the course because life is constantly changing around us. So in that kind of thinking process, the cross of Christ is just a way people (who believe in a creator-god) use to escape the reality of a constantly changing and evolving world. WOW! Just think of all the time that has been wasted by those who believe in a God that had everything in His hands. Instead of wasting their time believing such things, they could have lived a care free anything goes life and not have had to worry about anything being wrong for life is just left up to the moment or the circumstances that each person may find themselves in!

**But the damnation of those who say such things!**

How foolish we can make the Scriptures look when we allow ourselves to believe in a such mixture of psychology and mystic beliefs; believing that what we are doing, in the name of God, is looked upon by God as something good. But the Word of God condemns these actions and declares that although humanity may brainwash themselves into believing a lie and then tempting others to believe the lie that it would have been far better for that person to kill themselves rather than to face the reality of being found fighting against God.

*Luke 17:1-2 There will always be temptations to sin," Jesus said one day to his disciples, "but woe to the man who does the tempting. If he were thrown into the sea with a huge rock tied to his neck, he would be far better off than facing the punishment in store for those who harm these little children's souls. I am warning you!*

The problem with lying (other than the obvious) is that it shows a lack of the thing that songs are sung about and people declare they want more of, LOVE. For as the saying goes, 'love does not harm to its neighbor.' Lies always end up harming someone. It does not matter if it is a small lie or a big one, they are all the same, a LIE.

*I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another. I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.*

*Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done—by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's*

foundation. Rather, as it is written: "Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand." This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you.

But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to see you, I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while. Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there. For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings. So after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this fruit, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way. I know that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ.

How much silent suffering goes on among the people of God without a hand being raised to help relieve that suffering? Calamities arise around us and we band together, as one, to help in any way we can. But sister so-and-so is having a hard time and brother so-and-so is down to his last penny and goes unnoticed. This is not a picture of how caring people of God act. Billions of dollars pass through the church coffers while the work of God (kindness, longsuffering, merciful, etc.) is left behind to collect dust.

As Paul's words ring in our ears, may we be willing to join him in the struggle to do God's work, to bear good fruit and to be a Living Witnesses of God living in each and every one who calls themselves His.

*I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there, so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and together with you be refreshed. The God of peace be with you all. Amen.*

## ***Romans 16***

*I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea. I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many people, including me. Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. Greet also the church that meets at their house. Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia. Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you. Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. Greet Ampliatus, whom I love in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys. Greet Apelles, tested and approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus. Greet Herodion, my relative. Greet those in the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord. Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me, too. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brothers with them. Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the saints with them. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send greetings.*

*I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I am full of joy over you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.*

The goal of all who seek salvation should be to search for Truth, being sure that the Cornerstone of their faith is in Jesus Christ. There is no other way. The Word of God is True and it will not mislead anyone into believing

differently than those of like Faith. Each will be a witness to the other of God's never ending Love and Grace. May we all accept this search with a holy kiss between each other and dig deeper than we ever have before; laying aside those things that have so easily caused us to stumble and turn a deaf ear to God's voice; and may all preconceived opinions, biases and prejudices not be found among those who are called to this good fight of faith.

*The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. Timothy, my fellow worker, sends his greetings to you, as do Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my relatives. I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter, greet you in the Lord. Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy, sends you his greetings. Erastus, who is the city's director of public works, and our brother Quartus send you their greetings.*

***Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him- to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.***

# 2

## 1 Corinthians 1

*Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ-their Lord and ours:*

*Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way-in all your speaking and in all your knowledge-because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.*

An idea has been born in the minds of many church goers that knowledge is some kind of 'end of all things.' These people have come to a conclusion that if God were to reveal so much knowledge of Himself to His people that a point of saturation would be reached and that some kind of spiritual boredom or idiocy would occur. It has been imagined that 'all knowledge' would be either of no use to those who wish to know more about God or would make the person who gained this knowledge to become so heavenly minded that they would be no earthly good. Yet of course it can't help but be noticed that they voice the reason as to why they go to church as wanting to know more about God, to gain more heavenly knowledge.

So some questions beg to be answered at this point. If there is a point of saturation that occurs, just what are the people of God looking for when they attempt to talk between themselves in Bible classes all over the world and as they listen to sermons throughout their lives in hope of gaining more knowledge about God? What is the stopping point of seeking more knowledge and who is the one that will determine what is that point of complete saturation?

But even a greater question arises; What does God have to say about this revelation of knowledge of what most call 'a mystery' and what has He promised in His Word?

***Matt 7:6-12*** "Do not give dogs what is sacred; **DO NOT THROW YOUR PEARLS TO PIGS.** If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces. "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

Just what is this 'pearl' that God's people have been given?

***Matt 13:44-46*** "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. "Again, **the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls.** When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it."

Just what is this 'kingdom of heaven' that Christ is speaking of?

***Matt 12:25-28*** Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then **THE KINGDOM OF GOD** has come upon you."

What had come 'upon' the people? What had come to God's people? And what is this 'kingdom'?

**Zech 9:9** *Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

**Matt 21:1-9** *As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away." This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:*

*"Say to the Daughter of Zion,  
'See, your king comes to you,  
gentle and riding on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"*

*The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,*

*"Hosanna to the Son of David!"*

*"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"*

*"Hosanna in the highest!"*

The kingdom of God came to His people, a place where His children could find peace and rest.

**Jer 6:16** This is what the LORD says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and **walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls**. But you said, 'We will not walk in it.'

**Matt 11:28-30** **"Come to me**, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, **and you will find rest for your souls**. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

But wait! Can we really believe this? Does God's Word really mean what it says? Isn't the kingdom of God yet to come? That is what we have been taught. So can it really be true that the kingdom came? Well what about the teaching by so many men on this subject?

**Num 23:19** *"God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"*

Balaam could not have spoken any more truth about God. This is God's rule: He does not lie, misrepresent, misconstrue, fumble around or leave His own Word to interpretation by men nor repent of what He has said. His Word is forever True. We can count on it!

The Wisdom of God, His Word, the Great Mystery for many, has been unveiled, laid bare for all to see and understand of His rest and the kingdom He promised to send to His people Israel. That Kingdom, that Mystery was revealed for ALL to see. God has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes?

**Col 1:24-27** *Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness-the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. TO THEM GOD HAS CHOSEN TO MAKE KNOWN AMONG THE GENTILES THE GLORIOUS RICHES OF THIS MYSTERY, WHICH IS CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY.*

YES! Christ in us, the great mystery had been disclosed to the saints. The rest for Israel was standing in their midst and the door to the Kingdom was being opened for those who wish to enter the sheep-pen. We need not be blind to what was once hidden in ages past, for ALL knowledge and ALL wisdom has been given so that the blind may now see. PRAISE THE LORD!!!

*He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.*

Many have been taught that this means that blameless is only in God's eyes because we are just mere human beings and we can NEVER, NEVER hope to be anything less than sinners. Woe to us! Sin will always be a weight we will have to bear up under because we just can't stop doing what God has told us to stop doing. Evil or sin will ever be present among those who call for others to stop doing what is wrong in their lives. Others must stop doing wrong so they may be baptized and voted into the church as good Christians, but the poor Christian cannot stop doing what is wrong because they are just mere human beings and not God. (This is what so many actually believe.)

**1 Tim 5:20** *Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning.*

**John 5:14-15** *Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you."*

**1 Cor 15:33-34** *Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God-I say this to your shame.*

**1 John 3:7-10** *Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.*

Let's see now.

*Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly*

*Stop sinning*

*Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning*

*He who does what is sinful is of the devil*

*No one who is born of God will continue to sin,*

*Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God*

Just what part of God's Word do we not understand? How many times does God have to say something before it is right, and just what was it that Christ came for?

**1 John 3:7-8** *He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose THE SON OF GOD WAS MANIFEST, THAT HE MIGHT DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL.*

Let's see now;

God does not lie.

He came to destroy the works of Satan

He came and did what He said

He destroyed the works of Satan

We cannot quit obeying Satan



Now, which part of the above statement does not fit? (Pay careful attention to what we have read so far.)

If you chose 'We cannot quit obeying Satan' then you are right. If you did not choose that statement as being wrong, then please go back to your Bible and read everything God says about sin in His Word.

In other words, for those who claim to love God and want to obey Him, then for them there is no other way than pure obedience.

*I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.*

Of course this cannot be right. For do we not have the right to agree to disagree and still serve the same God? Can't God tell me one thing and you another? And won't there always be some division in God's house?

***Col 2:1-4** I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and **united in love**, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.*

United in love. What is love?

***1 John 4:14-17** If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. **God is love**. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him.*

***1 John 5:1-5** Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. **This is love for God: to obey his commands**. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world **THIS IS THE VICTORY THAT HAS OVERCOME THE WORLD**, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

So far we see that God is Love. And fortunately we need never worry that His Love is divided. But, is God's Word divided and what is His Word?

***John 1:1-5** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.*

***John 1:14-18** 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. John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'" From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through **Jesus Christ**. No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.*

Ok. So we see that the Messiah, Jesus Christ, is the Word of God. So, is Christ divided in anything or at any time? What does He say about this?

***Mark 3:24-26** If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.*

***Luke 11:17** Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them: "Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall.*

What is God's house?

**Heb 3:6** But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And **we are his house**, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.

So, God is not divided and Christ is not divided and we (His house) are NOT divided. And further more **This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.** THE ONLY VICTORY WE MAY HAVE IS IN UNITY NOT DIVISION. GOD'S HOUSE STANDS TOGETHER AS ONE FOR IT IS HIS HOUSE, HIS TEMPLE!

**2 Cor 6:14-16** Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For **we are the temple of the living God.** As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

Gods' house, His temple is not divided or in an agreement to disagree with itself. **IT IS AN UNADULTERATED LIE THAT HAS BEEN TOLD THAT ALLOWS FOR GOD'S CHILDREN TO BELIEVE IN ANY OF THE DOCTRINES OF MEN THAT TEACH THEM THAT ORDER COMES OUT OF CHAOS OR UNITY CAN BE FOUND IN DISUNITY. NO DOUBT IT MAY BE A NEW THOUGHT OR BIT OF INFORMATION FOR SOME, BUT THERE IS NO DIVISION OF ANY KIND IN GOD'S HOUSE.**

My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul? I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, so no one can say that you were baptized into my name. (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel **not with words of human wisdom**, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

Opinions, biases, prejudices, doctrines, dogmas and decrees have NO PLACE in God's house. Only His Word reigns supreme. Only His Word will do, and His Word is enough. Man worship is not found in God's house. 'Oh my, I remember when I was baptized. Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ baptized me; I went to listen to brother \_\_\_\_\_ at a crusade and was saved; I go to Reverend \_\_\_\_\_ church and he says.' People show continually that they are divided, but **G O D ' S   H O U S E   I S   N O T   ! ! !**

**Eph 4:4-6** There is one body and one Spirit- just as you were called to one hope when you were called- one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." **Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?** For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

Sadly this is all to true. The truth of the cross of Christ is not accepted by those who seek human words and doctrines that allow them to live a life with one foot in heaven and the other in hell. Therefore the Truth is disposed for lies and misconceptions that make the churches of today rich in earthly wealth and clothed with worldly power and glory.

But no matter what people believe they can or cannot do, God's Word reigns.

Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of

the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things-and the things that are not-to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. 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. Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."

## *1 Corinthians 2*

When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

'Oh I love to hear Brother \_\_\_\_\_ speak the word. He went to school at \_\_\_\_\_ and has a Md.R and Ph.D from \_\_\_\_\_. He is so wise in God's Word.'

It would appear that Jesus Christ Himself fails the test that man often puts upon the message, by rating each other by how well one speaks and whether he or she has learned from a good school and if they have enough letters behind their name. The letters behind the name makes it appear (in many people's minds) as though the speaker must be knowledgeable on the subject.

And yet for all the rules mankind sets within their minds as to just how things are suppose to be, God has His own way. Therefore, people such as Paul set aside their earthly wisdom to gain the wisdom of God. Instead of making sure that everyone knew of his wisdom and learning on a given subject, he made a decision for God's simple knowledge which leads to salvation.

We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"- **but God has revealed it to us** by his Spirit.

**DO NOT MISS THIS POINT!!!** Those who had ears could not hear, and those who had eyes could not see, and those who had minds could not comprehend the 'hidden secrets of God;' **BUT THIS DOES NOT SAY THAT IT IS HIDDEN FROM THOSE WITH EYES TO SEE OR EARS TO HEAR OR MINDS TO THINK, BUT IS ONLY HIDDEN FROM THOSE WHO CANNOT SEE, HEAR OR UNDERSTAND.**

***Ezek 12:1-2** The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, you are living among a rebellious people. They have eyes to see but do not see and ears to hear but do not hear, for they are a rebellious people.*

***Rom 11:7-10** What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened, as it is written: "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day." And David says: "May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them. May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever."*

***2 Cor 4:4-5** The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

Sadly very few will see, but for those who seek, they will find and for those who knock the door will be opened.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

Dear reader, do not stop reading at this point, for many do and miss the rest of the story.

We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.

The Spirit we have received from God (His Spirit within Him) reveals what is within Him. Nothing is kept from the view of those who truly believe. Only the ignorant who wish to live in darkness cannot see what God has for those who seek His face.

This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" **But we have the mind of Christ.**

If we will but continue forward in God's Word and seek the 'hidden wisdom' that others cannot see, we will see the mind of Christ and enter into His thoughts of righteousness and holiness that comes from the throne of God. There is no excuse, opinion, bias, prejudice or doctrine that can change or alter what God has given to those who seek, knock and receive His Life and become just like Him in this world.

PRAISE GOD!

### ***1 Corinthians 3***

Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly-mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men? What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For **we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.**

Gold name plates, the best seat in the house, degrees behind the name, seats at the head of the table, people scurrying to do whatever is needed to please another. Why? Why do we allow anyone to ever become so important that salvation becomes bound up with another human being?

Leaders of churches and organizations have become demigods and mega-stars. Churches have become cathedrals and committees and sub-committees have become the decision makers for the poor laity who have no ability to think on their own.

Human wisdom and puffed up pride have taken the place of humility and love.

This all must change for it has no place in the kingdom of God.

By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work.

What is the fire that will test each man's work?

**Isa 33:14-16** *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?" 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--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.*

**Heb 12:28-29** *Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, **for our "God is a consuming fire."***

If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

God's house, His kingdom cannot be shaken or hurt by anything. But those kingdoms that were built with men's ideas and upon false foundations will be brought down to nothing by God's Word that proceeds out of His mouth.

**Rev 19:11-16** *I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. **Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations.** "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.***

God's Word has always proven what is right and what is a lie. Those who heard Him speak were cut to the very core of their souls. Some accepted what they heard while others sought to take His life because He was using words to uncover their lies and false doctrines.

**Matt 21:43-46** *"Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed." When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them. They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.*

**Mark 11:15-18** *On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: "My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations"? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'" The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.*

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.

The Messiah showed all those with eyes to see the way to His throne and a vision of the true temple of God in heaven, in hope that they would desire to become part of it. But because they could see no further than their own buildings of sticks and stones they would not enter into His house. Instead they filled their house with teachings and lies that brought destruction and misery that followed them to their graves. And today that same spirit exists that keeps God's people bound to leadership and authority figures that continually lead them into a kingdom of hierarchical government and Levitical worship that never allows the worshiper to become a victor over sin and to show others the Way of Holiness.

Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a "fool" so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"; and again, "The Lord knows that the

thoughts of the wise are futile." So then, ***no more boasting about men***. All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future-all are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

How much more can it be said? Are we awake? Is God's Word coming through? Do we hear it? Please, if you do not see it, read it again and seek God's face and listen to His voice.

## ***1 Corinthians 4***

So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the **secret things of God**. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

For centuries this has been taught to be a futuristic event of the coming of Christ and the 'judgment to come.' Yet, in all fairness, it has also been taught (in the same breath) that Christ comes to us and knocks at our hearts door and waits for us to open the door and let Him in.

This is called a dichotomy in terms. On the one side it is made to appear that the text has a futuristic look and feel, while at the same time to be understood as a 'right now' scenario. Let's take a closer look at this reading and what God has for us to see.

So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the **secret things of God**.

As we learned in I Cor 2, the secret wisdom that was hidden from 'eyes that could not see and ears that could not hear' was in fact not hidden at all from those who truly wish to see into God's perfect wisdom and become a part of His ever growing temple in His kingdom.

However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"- **but God has revealed it to us** by his Spirit.

If we choose man's teaching over God's Word then we will neither read with clear vision nor hear with working ears. God has revealed His wisdom for anyone who wishes to walk and talk with Him and become a part of His ever growing temple in His kingdom.

***Eph 2:19-22*** *Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*

So much doctrine has been presented before the people as to a kingdom that is just out of reach and a temple that requires a confessional priest. This has been done so well that this reading has been determined to be 'just another metaphorical comment' made by God. In other words, God's Word is made to appear to be understood in whatever fashion of study that each religious body believes in. Yet in His Word, God is presented as one God and one Lord with only one baptism. So it would be understood then that this teaching must be seen for what it really is: **A DIRTY LITTLE LIE THAT HAS BEEN TOLD FOR TOO LONG!** God is not divided nor made up of argumentative parts that are left to opinions, biases and prejudices of every sort.

God's Word is True and we may trust **It** implicitly.

**Eph 2:1-7** As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-it is by grace you have been saved. **And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.**

PRAISE GOD!! His Word is True: we have been lifted up to a far better place that is not of this world. Therefore just like Him we may say with confidence; we are not a part of this world anymore than our He was.

**John 17:1-19** After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. **Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.** I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. **I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me,** for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name-the name you gave me-so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, **for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.** My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

Songs have been sung that present an idea of only being a 'stranger' in this world and sermons preached about the same. Yet after all the singing and preaching about only being a stranger here, it is then said that each of us must live here and be a part of this world's system of religion and worldly government and the sin that is so prevalent here, until God comes to take His people home. And while that kind of action is called hypocrisy, the people who talk like that do not see it as anything but truth. Yet God says just the opposite of their doctrine.

**John 8:23-24** But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; **I am not of this world.** I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am [the one I claim to be], you will indeed die in your sins."

**John 18:36** Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now **my kingdom is from another place.**"

Instead of rising above the things of this creation, churches the world over are caught up every day in social issues and eco-survival modes that places them deeper and deeper into a social conscientiousness and political correctness that has them continually in a circular thinking or merry-go-round ride that never ends. And while living in this world and being a part of its many thoughts and actions they then declare that sin is just a part of life and we will all have to learn to just live with it because until God comes we are all earth bound.

**Eph 2:1-7** As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were

*dead in transgressions-it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*

The idea of being lifted up now into heavenly realms is neither taught as being a present day reality or as a goal to be reached in our lifetime. Instead God's Word is redefined and interpreted to fit the doctrine at hand of living in sin and needing continual sacrifice for those sins. They go beyond what is written and see nothing wrong with it.

Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, **"Do not go beyond what is written."** Then you will not take pride in one man over against another.

Paul must have lost his mind. Doesn't he know that gold plaques must be installed and private parking signs erected for the VP's of this world? Human recognition is a must and those who make signs need to make a living too! God must have missed the boat on this one.

For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?

What a day it would be to see those who call themselves Believers raising God up and giving Him the glory instead of each other. What a caring church it would be when instead of handing out gold plaques the hand would be extended to be a friend. What a day it would be to see the church caring and crying and praying together as one for more than a new parking lot or new band equipment. What a day it would be to see the millions and millions of dollars spent in luxury and advertising campaigns and instead be given to the poor sister and brother in need.

God is not blind to what man does in His name. All the sin and evil that runs rampant in the churches of the land is being weighed in the balances and all to late it will be seen that He was never blind to their actions and thoughts.

***Ps 94:1-11** O LORD, the God who avenges, O God who avenges, shine forth. Rise up, O Judge of the earth; pay back to the proud what they deserve. How long will the wicked, O LORD, how long will the wicked be jubilant? They pour out arrogant words; all the evildoers are full of boasting. They crush your people, O LORD; they oppress your inheritance. They slay the widow and the alien; they murder the fatherless. They say, "The LORD does not see; the God of Jacob pays no heed." Take heed, you senseless ones among the people; you fools, when will you become wise? **Does he who implanted the ear not hear? Does he who formed the eye not see? Does he who disciplines nations not punish? Does he who teaches man lack knowledge? The LORD knows the thoughts of man; he knows that they are futile.***

Though it is a sad thing indeed that anyone would ever think this way, yet it is true. And it becomes more understandable why God would take from the proud and from those who feel so wise and give to the weak and the meek those things that confound the wise and proud.

***1 Cor 1:18-22** For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: **"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate."** Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.*

***1 Cor 1:27-30** But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things-and the things that are not-to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.*

No matter what man may say, God's Way is not man's way. God's wealth is not measured in pride, or high finance or earthly wisdom. His wealth is measured in grace, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, meekness, etc.



Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! You have become kings-and that without us! How I wish that you really had become kings so that we might be kings with you! For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men. We are fools for Christ, but you are so wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are honored, we are dishonored! To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless. We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly. Up to this moment we have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world.

I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children. Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me. For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.

Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you. But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a whip, or in love and with a gentle spirit?

## *1 Corinthians 5*

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. And you are proud!

Churches have split into factions, they have become a kind of sexual free-for-all. Pastors and priests are found in compromising positions. Homosexuality has become 'just another way of life' among those who call themselves Believers; and yet none of this is of God. But it is practiced and tolerated among those who claim to be 'set apart' from the evils of this world.

And instead of a feeling of grief and dishonor to God's name, these sins are coddled and repressed with a attitude of 'loving the sinner.' And instead of victory over the sin, the doctrine of 'humanity' is taught and the cross of Christ becomes a crutch to lean on. And a picture is painted of a Messiah that acts as a medium of forgiveness rather than a God of power who will provide what is needed to overcome Satan and ALL of his temptations.

***1 John 5:1-5*** Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. ***Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.***

***1 Cor 10:13*** No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. ***But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.***

*Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this?*

God's Word has been steadily abused over the centuries; and texts like these have been used to promote everything except overcoming sin. And instead of helping the body to learn how to overcome, sin is dealt with by casting away the sinner. If the sin of the individual becomes more than what the church can handle, disfellowshipping or excommunication is used instead.

But is this what Christ did when confronted with sin in its awful grandeur? Let's see just handled these situations.

**John 8:1-11** But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. **"Then neither do I condemn you,"** Jesus declared. "God and sin no more."

**Mark 5:1-16** They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even with a chain. For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!" For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you evil spirit!" Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area. A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." He gave them permission, and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid.

**Matt 9:1-8** Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over and came to his own town. Some men brought to him a paralytic, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven." At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, "This fellow is blaspheming!" Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, "Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . ." Then he said to the paralytic, "Get up, take your mat and go home." And the man got up and went home. When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to men.

In each situation Christ healed mind, body and soul. Forgiveness and compassion were the rule not an occasional feeling or action due to what 'had to be done.' God's Love is what has been spoken in His Word and never is it left to situational ethics or a majority vote nor does it end up in disfellowshipping or excommunication. His Love is real.

**1 Cor 13:4-7** Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

And what is love?

**1 John 4:16-18** God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

The only confidence that one may have 'on the day of judgment' is to know that their salvation or right standing with God is sure; and right standing with God is the action of obedience over disobedience.

God has spoken about how we can and will show our love to Him if we live in Him.

**1 John 5:3-5** *This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

So what is to be removed from those who live 'in Him' and what is to take its place?

**2 John 6** *And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.*

**Rom 6:11-14** *In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.*

For those who choose to live in God, sin **MUST** be removed from the life that is given over to Him. There isn't any other form of love that anyone may believe in or give that shows love to God. Therefore the action of anyone who says they love God is shown in their life of obedience not disobedience; for sinfulness or sin in the life proves just who is controlling or living in the life of each and every person.

**1 John 3:7-10** *Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. **He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning.** The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.*

If the devil has been sinning from the beginning, which makes him the father of sin, then he is sin's rightful owner. If he is its rightful owner, then what is his (sin) is to be given back to him. This is what we have been commanded to do: give back to Satan what is his (sin). So when you see your brother sin give him (his sin) back to its owner that the sinful nature will be destroyed and the new man may emerge from the ashes of a wasted life.

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. When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

Everything belongs to one of two owners. Sin to Satan and righteousness to God. Therefore give to God what is His, and give to Satan what is his.

**Luke 20:21-25** *So the spies questioned him: "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right, and that you do not show partiality but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" He saw through their duplicity and said to them, "Show me a denarius. Whose portrait and inscription are on it?" "Caesar's," they replied. He said to them, "Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."*

**Rom 13:7** *Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.*

Always give to those what belongs to them, and **NEVER** leave any debt remain outstanding. And what is it that we owe?

**Rom 13:8-10** *Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. 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." Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the*

*whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast-as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.*

The old yeast (mans laws, doctrines and decrees, which is hypocrisy) must be removed from what we once believed was what we were to give to those we owed. God's Word must be supreme in our vision so that It and It alone will be our guide.

***Luke 12:1-3*** *Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying: "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs.*

This 'removal' is the action of cleaning house. The old must go and be replaced with 'new.' This is not mixing the two in any portion nor keeping any of the old on the shelf to be referred to at another time, but is a removal out of the house (and do you not know that you are God's house if He lives in you?) and a replacement with a totally new and wonderful Life.

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.

This reading must be seen with open eyes so that it will not be misunderstood or misapplied as it has been for far too long. God has spoken about living in this world but not being a part of it. He has not spoken about 'not' living in this world but has commanded that we not be partakers in sin and be swayed by its power or to let it rule in our mortal bodies.

God has spoken over and over again of those He sees as sinful, and those who He has called sinful are those who have KNOWN the truth, His own people, and through their lives have made God's Word of non-effect. They then teach their doctrine to others so they will agree with them which will cause any other teaching to be seen as a lie and therefore unaccepted and thrown out of that place called God's temple.

So just who are the people that we are not to have anything to do with?

***Rom 1:18-32*** *The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-his eternal power and divine nature-have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator-who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. 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. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they*

*know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.*

For those who have a problem with the knowledge of just who the 'they' are within this text, may this be said (by God): 'They *'exchanged the truth of God for a lie'*. This is only talking about those who disobey God, not those who live in Him and the only one's who have disobeyed Him are those who once obeyed Him. In other words it is not talking about the world, but instead it is THE CHURCH.

**2 Tim 3:1-9** *But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God- having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them. They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the truth-men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone.*

Before anyone jumps the gun and demands that this reading is referring to the world and not the church, it must be noted that JANNES AND JAMBRES WERE NOT THE WORLD BUT PART OF THAT GROUP CALLED ISRAEL, GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE.

This is the knowledge of Christ coming 'unto His own', not to the world. And yet, no matter what has been said, most continue to ignore this fact and instead make it apply to those outside the church doors.

*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."*

Are we not glad for our Fathers Love that does not expel us from His presence even when we were not what we knew we should have been?

This portion of scripture should not be mistaken as it so often has been. 'Expel the wicked man from among you' can be done no different than our Savior and Lord treated those who were seen as 'wicked.' Instead what our Savior did was to expel THE wicked man, Satan out so that everyone could be free.

**John 8: 1-11** *But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."*

**Mark 8:33** *But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."*

Our Savior, in ultimate compassion, showed what forgiveness is and how Love goes beyond the boundaries we often set in our determination of how to treat each other. But as our Savior showed to us the way to His Fathers throne, we too must shun evil and wickedness and be separate from it as our Savior was, even though He was surrounded by it every moment of every day but did not become a part of it. Like Him we must live as He lived and live where He lived that we may be what He was as our guide in this life.

**1 John 3:5-6** *But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.*

**John 8:23-24** But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am [the one I claim to be], you will indeed die in your sins."

**John 18:36** Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."

**Rom 12:1-2** Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

So often the desire to 'throw out' those who we see as wicked overrides our compassion for each other. This is not what it means to 'expel the man.' instead we are to cry with each other and bears one another's burdens and forgive each others sins so that sin is not found among those who are called His very own.

**Col 3:1-14** Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

In other words, remove the sin from among you and if possible, in the Love God has shown to each of us while we were yet sinners, rebuke in Love and free the captive from sin.

**1 Cor 5:3-5** When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

Give back to Satan what is his, the sin that so easily entangles us, and Christ showed us how to do this when He dealt with sin and Satan while confronting Peter just before His crucifixion.

**Matt 16:21-23** From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

This is what it means to 'expel' from among us what is not right or good. It means to turn away from even listening to ANY of what Satan has to say and rebuke it in the name of God. Give what belongs to Satan back to him and send him on his way.

## ***I Corinthians 6***

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? But instead, one brother goes to law against another-and this in front of unbelievers! The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers. 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.

What is in the heart shows up in the actions of each individual. It becomes very evident just who is in control of each life, God or Satan. And when those who have eyes to see and minds to think see sin in all its evil they are to judge against it in Love and see it just the same way as their Lord and Savior saw it and to react to it in the same way as He did.

***Luke 12:54-59** He said to the crowd: "When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, 'It's going to rain,' and it does. And when the south wind blows, you say, 'It's going to be hot,' and it is. Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time? "Why don't you **judge for yourselves what is right**? As you are going with your adversary to the magistrate, try hard to be reconciled to him on the way, or he may drag you off to the judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny."*

"Judge for yourself what is right." Why is this so hard to do for so many who claim to be wise? Why do so many feel that judgment is only to be used by leadership? Are not God's people wise 'unto salvation?' If they are then were they not wise enough to make the decision to be saved? If they were wise enough to be saved and God gave them the wisdom that it would take to make that decision then won't He give them wisdom if they ask to make eternal or righteous decisions? And if He will give them wisdom to make righteous decisions then is it enough wisdom to be able to make a decision to sin or not to sin? And is God able to give to the one who is tempted enough power to be set free from sin, not live in it?

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.

And that is what some of you were.

How dare Paul be so negative. Couldn't he have said this in a more kind and considerate attitude? And anyway, doesn't he know who he is talking to? These are people with feelings and some of them leaders and saints in the church. Besides, anyone who comes off this angry cannot be from God, can they? And isn't idol worship about bowing down to a 'graven' or hand made or hand carved image anyway? I mean, isn't that idolatry?

***Col 3:5-7** Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, **which is idolatry**. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. Wait just a minute, those things can't be idolatry. I mean doesn't it talk about people bowing down to 'idols' all the way through the Bible? So what makes things like greed and evil desires idolatry? Can people bow down to these things and worship them instead of God? Is that why no one sin is worse then another because they are all idolatry in God's eyes? WOW!*

But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

So what does it mean to be 'washed' and 'sanctified'?

***Col 3:5-7** Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.*

And how do we put to death the earthly or sinful nature?

**Rom 6:1-7** *What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin- because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.*

IF WE HAVE BEEN BAPTISED WITH CHRIST, THEN WE ARE DEAD TO SIN. WE ARE NO LONGER SLAVES TO SIN NOR OBEY IT BUT HAVE A TOTALLY NEW LIFE! Just as Christ told Nicodemus that he must be 'born again', so must we. This is not being born a little again, but dying to what we used to live for and being re-born to a brand new life. But instead of not being able to see anymore than Nicodemus, we must see just what it means to be made NEW again, not of this creation or of this world, but a new creation that is born ONLY of heavenly parents and not of any earthly contrived method.

**John 18:33-37** *Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered him, "Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this about Me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."*

**John 1:10-13** *He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, **he gave the right to become children of God- children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.***

Those who live in Him and through Him and for Him are not of this world nor are they a part of this creation. But because so many are caught up in the things of this world God's Word is not seen or understood. God's people are so caught up in everything from music to dress to social, political and environmental issues, what to eat, what to wear, and what kind of car to drive. With little Johnny needing to get to soccer practice and little Sarah with her cheer-leading squad, who has any time for God anyway. The grass needs to be mowed, the vacation is coming up and the kitchen needs to be remodeled. No wonder so little study takes place in the average home about God.

It is high time to wake up and decide what is important and see what God has spoken to His people and become a part of His kingdom that is NOT OF THIS WORLD. But the struggle to be free is a grand struggle. And for this reason most will not be free. Instead, doctrines and teachings of men are all too often heard and accepted over what God has to say on the subject.

"Everything is permissible for me"-but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"-but I will not be mastered by anything.

Everything is permissible, but just because I can own a gun and kill someone does not mean that it is a good thing for me to do. Everything is permissible for me but just because I can go out and buy rat poison and eat it does not mean it is a good thing for me to do. Therefore I will not be mastered by anything so that my walk with God is not altered by ANYTHING that could come in-between my relationship with the One I say I love.

"Food for the stomach and the stomach for food"-but God will destroy them both.

**John 6:27** *Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."*

**John 6:28-58** *Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Jesus said to them, "I tell you the*



truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." "Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread." Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?" "Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered. "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever."

Our Lord and Savior is to be our nourishment, that nourishment that gives salvation to our spirit as earthly food gives nourishment to the body made of muscles and tendons and blood and a mind to think. This food is our victory that gives us all the daily requirements we need to be what God has asked us to be, and that all things may be done for the glory of God.

**1 Cor 10:31-32** *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*

Yes, we may live doing ALL to the glory of God. It really is possible. That does not mean that we drink cyanide to the glory of God or eat rat poison to the glory of God. But for those who walk with Him and live in Him they become caretakers of what He has given to them. Their goal is to live by example and as a witness to what God has done for them and in them, to live as changed people that no longer live to please their own body but now seek to live in Him. They no longer live for themselves but desire to please the One they love and be the kind of brother and friend that Christ was for those He died for. These children of God know what the body was designed for from the beginning and live that knowledge.

The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

**1 Cor 12:27** *Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

**Col 1:15-19** *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **And he is the head of the body, the church;** he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.*

If God is the head and we are His body can bad feelings fill His mind, can anger and rage, jealousy and envy, depression and fear and evil feelings exist in His body, so that the body of Christ acts in sin and through that belief denies the cross where Christ died to pay the penalty for sin? Of course not, but this is what many seem to believe as they promote the lie that sin will always be a part of God's body until He comes back to take His sinful children back home (as Christians call themselves sinners). What an awful thing to think about God!

By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute?

Good question! If prostitution is one of the word pictures God gives for the act of sinning (giving ones self to another master (Satan) and then obeying that master) and if we live in God, then if God is the head of the body and Christians are the body of God then God is a sinner and united with a prostitute for His body is united with sin. **WOW!** Is that what Christians are going to admit when they claim to be just poor humans who cannot quit sinning? Are they going to claim that their Lord and Savior is a SINNER? Or can the body of Christ sin and it not effect the head ?

***Eph 4:15-16** Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

Well, if the whole body is one, joined and held together by Him, then the answer would have to be that Christ our Lord and Savior is a sinner. But that would make His sacrifice a lie.

So is this what we are going to say about God?

Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? (a marriage covenant where two become one) For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

God does not unite Himself with a prostitute and He has spoken clearly on this subject for those who have ears to hear and eyes to see!

***Ezek 23** The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, there were two women, daughters of the same mother. They became prostitutes in Egypt, engaging in prostitution from their youth. In that land their breasts were fondled and their virgin bosoms caressed. The older was named Oholah, and her sister was Oholibah. **They were mine** and gave birth to sons and daughters. **Oholah is still Samaria, and Oholibah is Jerusalem.***

*"Oholah engaged in prostitution while she was still mine; and she lusted after her lovers, the Assyrians-warriors clothed in blue, governors and commanders, all of them handsome young men, and mounted horsemen. She gave herself as a prostitute to all the elite of the Assyrians and defiled herself with all the idols of everyone she lusted after. She did not give up the prostitution she began in Egypt, when during her youth men slept with her, caressed her virgin bosom and poured out their lust upon her.*

*"Therefore **I handed her over to her lovers**, the Assyrians, for whom she lusted. They stripped her naked, took away her sons and daughters and killed her with the sword. She became a byword among women, and punishment was inflicted on her. "Her sister Oholibah saw this, yet in her lust and prostitution she was more depraved than her sister. She too lusted after the Assyrians-governors and commanders, warriors in full dress, mounted horsemen, all handsome young men. I saw that she too defiled herself; both of them went the same way.*

*"But she carried her prostitution still further. She saw men portrayed on a wall, figures of Chaldeans portrayed in red, with belts around their waists and flowing turbans on their heads; all of them looked like Babylonian chariot officers, natives of Chaldea. As soon as she saw them, she lusted after them and sent messengers to them in Chaldea. Then the Babylonians came to her, to the bed of love, and in their lust they defiled her. After she had been defiled by them, she turned away from them in disgust. When she carried on her prostitution openly and exposed her nakedness, **I turned away from her in disgust, just as I had turned away from her sister.** Yet she became more and more promiscuous as she recalled the days of her youth, when she was a prostitute in Egypt. There she lusted after her lovers, whose genitals were like those of donkeys and whose emission was like that of horses. So you longed for the lewdness of your youth, when in Egypt your bosom was caressed and your young breasts fondled.*

*"Therefore, Oholibah, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: **I will stir up your lovers against you**, those you turned away from in disgust, and I will bring them against you from every side, the Babylonians and*

*all the Chaldeans, the men of Pekod and Shoa and Koa, and all the Assyrians with them, handsome young men, all of them governors and commanders, chariot officers and men of high rank, all mounted on horses. They will come against you with weapons, chariots and wagons and with a throng of people; they will take up positions against you on every side with large and small shields and with helmets. I will turn you over to them for punishment, and they will punish you according to their standards. I will direct my jealous anger against you, and they will deal with you in fury. They will cut off your noses and your ears, and those of you who are left will fall by the sword. They will take away your sons and daughters, and those of you who are left will be consumed by fire. They will also strip you of your clothes and take your fine jewelry. So I will put a stop to the lewdness and prostitution you began in Egypt. You will not look on these things with longing or remember Egypt anymore.*

*"For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am about to hand you over to those you hate, to those you turned away from in disgust. They will deal with you in hatred and take away everything you have worked for. They will leave you naked and bare, and the shame of your prostitution will be exposed. Your lewdness and promiscuity have brought this upon you, because you lusted after the nations and defiled yourself with their idols. You have gone the way of your sister; so I will put her cup into your hand.*

*"This is what the Sovereign LORD says:*

*"You will drink your sister's cup, a cup large and deep; it will bring scorn and derision, for it holds so much. You will be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, the cup of ruin and desolation, the cup of your sister Samaria. You will drink it and drain it dry; you will dash it to pieces and tear your breasts.*

*I have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD.*

***"Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Since you have forgotten me and thrust me behind your back, you must bear the consequences of your lewdness and prostitution."***

*The LORD said to me: "Son of man, will you judge Oholah and Oholibah? Then confront them with their detestable practices, for they have committed adultery and blood is on their hands. They committed adultery with their idols; they even sacrificed their children, whom they bore to me, as food for them. They have also done this to me: At that same time they defiled my sanctuary and desecrated my Sabbaths. On the very day they sacrificed their children to their idols, they entered my sanctuary and desecrated it. That is what they did in my house.*

*"They even sent messengers for men who came from far away, and when they arrived you bathed yourself for them, painted your eyes and put on your jewelry. You sat on an elegant couch, with a table spread before it on which you had placed the incense and oil that belonged to me.*

*"The noise of a carefree crowd was around her; Sabeans were brought from the desert along with men from the rabble, and they put bracelets on the arms of the woman and her sister and beautiful crowns on their heads. Then I said about the one worn out by adultery, 'Now let them use her as a prostitute, for that is all she is.' And they slept with her. As men sleep with a prostitute, so they slept with those lewd women, Oholah and Oholibah. But righteous men will sentence them to the punishment of women who commit adultery and shed blood, because they are adulterous and blood is on their hands.*

*"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Bring a mob against them and give them over to terror and plunder. The mob will stone them and cut them down with their swords; they will kill their sons and daughters and burn down their houses.*

*"So I will put an end to lewdness in the land, that all women may take warning and not imitate you. You will suffer the penalty for your lewdness and bear the consequences of your sins of idolatry. Then you will know that I am the Sovereign LORD."*

There is no questions on this subject. God hates sin and does not tolerate it among His people. He has never taken any other position, and nowhere in His Word does He give any room for sin over obedience. Therefore it is time to open our eyes and listen with our ears to God's Word and start living as though we truly are His body, working as one, with each part doing what God designed it to do.

Now, if the body is to work as God designed it then the ears will hear, the eyes will see, and the mind will have the ability to think. With the body functioning as it should it will do what the mind tells it to do, and if the mind of God is running the body then the body will do what it is told to do. Therefore, if the mind calls for righteous living, then the body will react to the command and live righteously. If the mind tells the body not to do anything unrighteous then the body will not do anything unrighteous. Therefore, if God is the head of the body and His mind is in control, will He or does He ever tell His body that it is all right to sin a little here and there? NO! Anyone who takes that position is a liar and a fool; but the only person they are fooling is themselves. Woe to that person who believes such a thing and then tells it to others so they too will believe the lie.

**Luke 17:1-3** Jesus said to his disciples: "Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come. It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin. So watch yourselves.

Would we rather believe a lie so we may sin while feeling saved at the same time? Or is it truly our desire to know God, to do His will, to live in Him and through Him as our Savior was with His Father?

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. **DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT YOUR BODY IS A TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHO IS IN YOU, WHOM YOU HAVE RECEIVED FROM GOD? (AND FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO BELIEVE IN SUCH THINGS AS SELF-ENRICHMENT, SELF-AWARENESS, SELF-ESTEEM, SELF-DELIVERANCE, SELF-DETERMINATION, SELF-INDULGENCE AND ANY OTHER FORM OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CONJURING) MAY THIS BE SAID: YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN; YOU WERE BOUGHT AT A PRICE. THEREFORE HONOR GOD WITH YOUR BODY.**

## ***1 Corinthians 7***

Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry.

This portion of scripture has received a lot of attention while at the same time has not been understood. There has been an effort by religion to use this writing as proof for the reason they have those within their body those who give up all their worldly goods (to the church) and go live a monastic life (at least by outward appearances.) And yet even those who do this are being seen by the world as doing things behind closed doors that are showing a different picture of that organization than has been promoted by itself over the centuries. Rape, molestation, fornication, murder of babies found in their catacombs built to hide what they were doing from outside eyes.

These things and more are being seen for the first time by many even as they sit down to watch the evening news.

All this being said, it should be noted that there are those, who because of the kingdom of God give up many things that are coddled and held onto by others for their earthly value.

***Matt 19:8-12** Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery." The disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry."*

*Jesus replied, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it."*

Dedication is widely accepted as it pertains to many issues in what this world offers. Education, politics, cooking, art, music, ministry, leadership roles and so many other things are excepted as valid forms of dedication, but when it comes to standing against accepted beliefs and against what the majority believe, it becomes a totally different story. Just as in the life of Christ, standing for truth can literally get you killed some times.

This reading is one of those issues that many do not want to look at because it goes against what so many believe in, MARRIAGE. But what most have not imagined is what God was referring to in Matthew 19. He was not declaring what He instituted from the beginning as being something that people should not do, but was declaring what people do who do not have a 'hard heart.'

Man has continually turned away from God's Word and have come up with rules about what they see of what God has said, so that what He really did is not seen in its true light. God made Adam and Eve to be one body in the ultimate wedding. It was not a wedding that was granted by the state or recognized by any religious body, but was a joining together by the hands of the Creator God. There was no dowry, no audience to approve, no license to sign or no minister to officiate. This was an act of God bringing two bodies together with NOTHING or NO-ONE else getting in the way or having ANYTHING to do with the joining together of a man and woman. But this was unheard of in the days of Christ just as it is today by the majority who hold to the idea that a marriage involves a wedding dress, a caterer, a large church, a minister to officiate over the wedding, brides maids, grooms men, wedding rings, etc. Yet not one of those things are found when God gives Eve to Adam. All of those things are of mans interpretation, not God's. And this is the kind of marriage Christ spoke of that would not be in heaven.

***Luke 20:27-40** Some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus with a question. "Teacher," they said, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother. Now there were seven brothers. The first one married a woman and died childless. The second and then the third married her, and in the same way the seven died, leaving no children. Finally, the woman died too. 33 Now then, at the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?"*

*Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection. But in the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive."*

*Some of the teachers of the law responded, "Well said, teacher!" And no one dared to ask him any more questions.*

**Matt 19:3-9** *Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?"*

*"Haven't you read," he replied, "that AT THE BEGINNING THE CREATOR 'MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."*

*"Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?"*

*Jesus replied, "MOSES PERMITTED YOU TO DIVORCE YOUR WIVES BECAUSE YOUR HEARTS WERE HARD. BUT IT WAS NOT THIS WAY FROM THE BEGINNING. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."*

There has never been such a time for the need of discernment and open communication between man and God. Now is the time, now is the Day of Salvation. It is time to wake up, to listen and learn.

As Christ was speaking to people who no longer knew the words of God, Paul was speaking to a people that had to be told how to live instead of them already living by God's Word. And sadly, in a day and time when so much immorality is found in the churches of today these Words still find reason to be spoken again. We must strive to hear God's voice over the doctrines of men and see Him as He is and has always been from the very beginning and stop comparing Him to man-made rules set in the backdrop of culture and tradition.

But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband.

Divorce, marital unrest, adultery, abuse and far too many issues that should not exist in any home or any church that claims to have the Love of God in their hearts are found among those who call themselves Christians. These things are found in such proportions that churches the world over have instituted counseling classes and marriage enrichment sessions for the problems being experienced by both leadership and laity. Every conceivable effort is made to bring peace in homes and in churches all over the world; to bring something that supposedly resembles the kingdom of God that they preach to the people.

Is this the picture of church and God's body that He speaks about when He talks about His people? Is this the church found in scripture that speaks like Him and lives like Him?

It must be taken into account how many divorces and broken families are found within church walls and as to how many are found outside those walls. The divorce rate in both situations is almost identical (as well as the reason for all the divorcing both inside and out.)

The churches of today are in direct disobedience to God's Word, both in allowing this to continue as well as the fact of giving their blessings to marriages that are supposed to be set on the foundation of God's Word where two are to become one. God's definition of marriage is when two become ONE. And through the act of divorce and the teaching of 'self' where each person believes that they are a separate individual in the body of Christ, Christians prove over and over again that they do not believe God's Word of 'one body' or where two become only one. They treat God's Word as though it is a misprint or to be rearranged or redefined to mean something other than what it says. And unlike what the world believes that one is the loneliest number (just as God is One) we too are to be one in a God ordained marriage as we are one in Him who is our husband. No longer two, but only one. And if you try to divide one, you only end up with a half.

The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband.

As our Husband, our Savior gave His life for His bride, just as men are to act in their proclaimed love for their wives as God loves His creation.

**Eph 5:25-33** *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless (this is every man's marital duty.) In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who*

*loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church, for we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery-but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.*

This is a hard saying, but only because of what has been taught rather than knowing the Truth. Husbands are to keep their wives clean with water from the throne of God, with the Word of God, holy and blameless, without stain, wrinkle or blemish. This is a true home where God lives, His body.

So let's look at what Paul, speaking by the Spirit of God, tries to show what a relationship with God will do in a marriage that is brought together by Him and controlled by Him.

The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.

This is the Love of God that hung on a cross for you and I. This is Love. This is One. Not two or one becoming two (as many feel that happens in a divorce) but one and only one. This is the picture of God living in the life of two who have given up their individuality and have given themselves to each other and have become one flesh. Anything else, any other understanding is not from God, but from the enemy of God.

***Mark 12:29-33** "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that **God is one** and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."*

***Gal 3:19-20** What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator. A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but **God is one**.*

Let's see how this all works.

***Eph 5:25-30** Husbands, love your wives, **just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy**, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and **to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless**. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church, for we are members of his body.*

Husbands, DID YOU HEAR THIS? God as our husband, gave Himself for us so that we may be presented as a **RADIANT CHURCH, WITHOUT STAIN OR WRINKLE OR ANY OTHER BLEMISH, BUT HOLY AND BLAMELESS**. And in a marriage brought together by God the husband is the 'head' of the house and is to give himself for his family as our Lord gave Himself for us. This is no joke. This is not to be laughed at and treated as some kind of misprint or just some passing conversation in scripture. This is a picture of a home run by God, a church where God is the head of His body.

This is the picture of a real home and not like the kind of home that has been presented where a woman or man can become both the father and mother in a 'one parent' home. Under God that is not a version of His home or church. But due to the reality that sin has been accepted and become a learned behavior among those who claim to belong to God, divorce and single parenting have become an accepted evil in life.

Where is the Truth? Where are the teachers of the Truth so that the true version of church is taught where God is the husband and we are His loved wife? It is time to teach the Truth and allow people the privilege of having God being their guide and the foundation of their house, their home.

Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

Everything the body does is by mutual consent for the body acts as one. And if the body is one with the creator God then there cannot be any lack of self-control. Therefore we must die to the misdeeds of the body and no longer live by a sinful nature, but so we may be controlled by the One who made the body, our Lord and God. Paul speaks of this in a way that many do not appreciate, but none the less, it is the way each of us should live.

**1 Cor 7:29-31** *What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they had none; those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.*

**Rom 8:12-17** *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. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs-heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

This is the very life our Savior lived. He stayed unmarried in this world because of the work He came to do and because He was One already with His Father. He knew the day and the hour of which He lived and He knew the time was short. Yet even though it is widely taught (as it has been for hundred of years) that the time is short, life goes on from day to day as though tomorrow has been promised to everyone. But if the time is short, then where are those who are acting like their Savior? Sin is not being dealt with, let alone a call to action to be a living sacrifice for those who are languishing in a world gone mad and God is presented as a body with many separate parts.

I say this as a concession, not as a command.

Paul should not have had to be say anything at all. But due to the situation at hand, something needed to be said to remind the people of how to act if they are going to call themselves Believers.

I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.

Paul is not setting a new doctrine in place where each person now sees the right to have their ministry while someone else has their ministry (and never the two shall meet.) He is just stating that God gives gifts all the time and each must be open to the call from God to do as He asks when He asks it. One day it may be one thing while the next day something else. Paul did not say that the gifts each person has is *separate* from the other. The body is one, not separate parts. What is given by God is for the whole body not just for a specific person. In other words, everything is shared and used by the WHOLE body.

Just as Paul himself did many different things and went many different places, we too, following in the footsteps of God's messengers, should be ready at any time of the day or night, to do the bidding of God. But this cannot be accomplished unless each one of us is living wholly and totally for Him and by Him and through Him, 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Therefore; *from now on those who have wives should live as if they had none; those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.*

What greater gift can one have but to live outside of man's ideas and live within the commands of God, open to His bidding and obeying whatever He asks of each person.



Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

‘For those whom it has been given, to them it is far greater to not marry, but for those whom it has not been given, then it is far better to marry.’

For those who know their Savior and Lord as their best friend, will live as He wants them to live, rather than each person living by their own passions. This is not a command for a monastic lifestyle but a seriousness of what time Paul knew that it was.

Sadly it is all too evident as to how people view life in this world and become easily complacent living each day as though it is just another day in their life. And the way that denominations have portrayed working and living for God as though that is something that a few feel a calling for and maybe become missionaries in a foreign land or maybe become involved in the church baseball league or something, it is only reasonable that most pass over this reading with a feeling of ‘well that was in Paul’s day not ours.’ They never see just what God is trying to say about commitment to what people say they believe and the time they believe that they are living in.

*1 Cor 7:32-35 I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs-how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world-how he can please his wife- and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world-how she can please her husband. I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.*

If we will hear it, we will see with open eyes that God is talking about a call to serious thinking about what it means and takes in order to serve Him with ALL our heart and ALL our mind and ALL our body; that we must be *one body* undivided, controlled by the Head and living to please Him. And the wonderful thing about pleasing God is that when we do that we soon realize that we are working with each other, caring for each other just as the body works together as one.

*Col 1:15-20 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **AND HE IS THE HEAD OF THE BODY, THE CHURCH;** he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

The body works together as one unit. The body relies on all its many parts to do anything needed to be done. That is how God created the body and if God is the head of the body then if anyone makes claim to be part of that body then they **MUST** be acting as one with the rest of the body. This is not said as a command (for how can anyone command anything that God has already commanded) but as a concession so that the church (the body of Christ) may be one.

To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.

As our God considered Israel His bride, His daughters, He never went looking for another lover. He was True to His covenant relationship to them no matter how much Israel prostituted themselves to pagan nations and demanded a certificate of divorce be given to her. And it was only when they killed their Husband (God) that the crown was given to another people who would give to God their hearts and souls and obey His voice alone. But how do those who claim to worship Him act today in light of this information?

Do those who worship God show that they love their Husband with such a love as to do those things that make their Husband happy? Do they believe that sinning makes Him happy or that obeying Him makes Him happy? Do they believe that He will do just what He says and provide for their EVERY need and show their trust in Him by

actually relying on Him to provide for them? Do they really believe in ‘picking up their cross’ and following Him? Do they show their relationship to Him by loving each other so much that they would die for each other and provide for each other because they are all part of the same body? Do they show the character of God in their life of forgiveness and mercy even when they have been done harm by another? Do they seek for that kind of character?

To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. (As God let Israel go.) A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

If those who claim to love their Lord lived this way, how much peace would there be among those who claim to belong to God instead of strife and heartache that does not belong in the body of Christ.

Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches.

It is HIGH TIME for those who claim to love their God to let Him assign to them their duties. This is not filling out a form or taking a test to find out what could possibly be your assignment or ministry but is where God is leading body (and we never have to worry that God will act outside of His never changing character and cause His body to become separate parts that go their own way.) It is past time for each one that says they love their God to let Him be their only leader and head of His body! This is not left to committees to decide nor does it take a drafted form of legislation to impress anyone to move in a particular direction, but is where GOD AND GOD ALONE GUIDES HIS PEOPLE.

Was a man already circumcised when he was called? He should not become uncircumcised. Was a man uncircumcised when he was called? He should not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God's commands is what counts.

Far too long, it has been taught from the lips of those who claim to be ‘God’s messengers’ to the people: that the people should listen to them and that they will show them what God has to say about the direction of their life. Therefore, it has been seen, that to hold a position in church or to sing in the choir or to become a deacon or leader or to mow the lawn of the church or to repair the windows and doors, is what God has called the people to do. BUT WHERE IS ANY OF THIS IN GOD’S WORD? His kingdom is within the heart of the true believer not in buildings of sticks and stones nor is it in *human wisdom* that so many believe to be what is needed to make it through life in these days.

***1 Cor 1:20-25 Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? HAS NOT GOD MADE FOOLISH THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.'s For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.***

God is to be our wisdom. Freud nor any of what man comes up with is mentioned here. In fact man’s greatest points of knowledge are called foolishness by God. Do we hear this or should we *interpret* this text so that it reads the way so many wish whereby they can inject into any conversation whenever they wish, any piece of any man’s wisdom whenever they feel it meets their needs?

NO! God’s Word is not left up to interpretation and these kind of actions must stop (and will stop) among those who live by EVERY WORD that proceeds from the mouth of God!

Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him.

If God has called each of us into a particular situation, would we really choose anything else? God has a plan and as we grow in Him we see deeper and deeper into that plan as we see Him work through our lives. Some may never be asked to do more than what they are doing today, while others may be asked to do many things. The arm may be asked to do things that the leg could never do, and the hand may be required to do things the foot could never do. And when the body works together all things are done to His names honor and glory.

Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you-although if you can gain your freedom, do so. For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave.

*1 Cor 9:19-23 Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.*

*2 Peter 2:19 ... a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.*

Therefore it is said with no doubt to its understanding; ... *then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... Josh 24:15*

You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.

Yes, it has been said already, but here it is again! "Far too long, it has been taught from the lips of those who claim to be 'God's messengers' to the people: that the people should listen to them and that they will show them what God has to say about the direction of their life. Therefore, it has been seen, that to hold a position in church or to sing in the choir or to become a deacon or leader or to mow the lawn of the church or to repair the windows and doors, is what God has called the people to do. BUT WHERE IS ANY OF THIS IN GOD'S WORD? His kingdom is within the heart of the true believer not in buildings of sticks and stones nor is it in *human wisdom* that so many believe to be what is needed to make it through life in these days."

The choice must be made and will be made by those who work for God and not for man. It is high time to allow God to show us His priorities, rather than those things that we have allowed to fill our lives which causes us to feel as though we hardly have time to breath, let alone study God's Word. And isn't it interesting how often those who say they love God hardly have any time to study or really dig into the deeper questions that lie heavy on their hearts? In the end of it all, the relationship that each person says they want with God is lost to work that has been placed before them and presented as being needful or meaningful and is made to appear to be the kind work of God has called His children to do. How sad.

**Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called him to.** Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for you to remain as you are. Are you married? Do not seek a divorce. Are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife. But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this. ***WHAT I MEAN, BROTHERS, IS THAT THE TIME IS SHORT***

Paul must not have understood what time it really was, for there has been over 2000 years since he spoke this. This must be one of those places in scripture that call for a reinterpretation of what is said so that we can see what it really means.

Wait! Is this a misunderstanding? Did God have Paul believe something that was not true? And if this is not true, then what about the rest of Paul's writings? Are we left to reinterpreting them too? Where do we start, and where do we stop; and are there other things in any of the other writings in scripture that are also not so correct or need to be reinterpreted by those who are seen as wise in God's Word? Wow! This can really become confusing.

Yes it can if we do not see clearly what is right before our eyes.

Paul knew what time it was and that time was short. Israel's devastation because of their sin of turning against God was just before them. And time is always short for the one who lives in God because they see that time is not promised to anyone. Yes, time is short.

From now on those who have wives should live as if they had none; those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.

There is an old song that says this all so well.

'Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the Light of His Glory and Grace.'

This earth in the view of anyone living in God is passing away. It must be seen that way or the things in this world will not grow strangely dim but will become an integral part of each person's existence.

I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs-how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world-how he can please his wife, and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world-how she can please her husband. I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

If anyone thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if she is getting along in years and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married. But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion **BUT HAS CONTROL OVER HIS OWN WILL**, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin-this man also does the right thing. So then, he who marries the virgin does right, **BUT HE WHO DOES NOT MARRY HER DOES EVEN BETTER.**

So the question; 'Who is in control of your will?' If we are in control of our will and God is the head of our body, then how will we act? Just like Him! Does that mean that no-one will ever get married, NO! Stop that right now. But it will no longer be the kind of marriage that everyone else believes in. And God has a time and a place for everything under the sun.

*Eccl 3:1-14 There is a time for everything,  
and a season for every activity under heaven:*

*a time to be born and a time to die,  
a time to plant and a time to uproot,  
a time to kill and a time to heal,  
a time to tear down and a time to build,  
a time to weep and a time to laugh,  
a time to mourn and a time to dance,  
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,  
a time to embrace and a time to refrain,  
a time to search and a time to give up,  
a time to keep and a time to throw away,  
a time to tear and a time to mend,  
a time to be silent and a time to speak,  
a time to love and a time to hate,*

*a time for war and a time for peace.*

*What does the worker gain from his toil? I have seen the burden God has laid on men. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live. That everyone may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil-this is the gift of God. I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that men will revere him.*

Please do not weigh this out using man's ideas, but look through God's eyes and see what He says about time and what is to be done in comparison to what man says must be done.

A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.

This is an issue of law. Do not make this a reason for marriage or not to marry. God has something far greater to teach us if we will listen.

***Rom 7:1-6*** *Do you not know, brothers-for I am speaking to men who know the law-that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives? For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man. SO, MY BROTHERS, YOU ALSO DIED TO THE LAW THROUGH THE BODY OF CHRIST, THAT YOU MIGHT BELONG TO ANOTHER, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.*

Marriage is a far greater institution than just a demand of people to do when they get old enough or a mandate that needs to happen so that sexual intercourse can occur without sinning. Marriage to God is a showing of what God has been doing and has done so we may be free indeed and one in Him. Marriage is the ultimate view of God's kingdom, of a house He is building that is one in Him and built on Him: our Solid Rock and our Firm Foundation.

In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is-and I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

Paul knew what it meant to be free in every way, both in his mind and in his body. And despite how good marriage is in God, to be free indeed in mind and body is a wonderful thing for those whom it has been given.

## ***1 Corinthians 8***

Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. But the man who loves God is known by God.

***Matt 6:24-27*** *"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money. "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?"*

Knowledge is a wonderful thing, but only if it is accepted and used in Love. Outside of Love, knowledge is useless and degrading because it is no longer of Love but of pride and prejudice.

And pride and prejudice eat up our time and talents so that what should be meaningless to us becomes of paramount importance and what is of paramount importance becomes quite meaningless. Even to the point of eating and drinking this issue shows up. For many it has even taken on the role as having something to do with holiness where people begin to see their relationship to God as having something to do with what they eat. And it is interesting how this idea begins to take on a view of offense when presented in any other way than what is demanded by those who see food as having a paramount importance in their life.

All this is done while God's Word is forever clear as to the freedom He has given and what our concerns really should be.

**John 6:26-27** *Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."*

Why are we so quick to defend what we put on our plates or in our mouths? Is it so important that we see the need to mount up a defense against anything else that might call for a change in the way we see the world around us?

God is saying that there are two kinds of food, One that He gives you that is about our spiritual lives and another that we may physically put into our mouths and that sustains us for a moment. But in today's world the priorities have been reversed and man is more interested and concerned with what he eats rather than what happens to his soul.

The food that we are to consume is that bread that came from heaven, and that bread is our life.

**John 6:28-59** *Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." "Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread." Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?" "Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered. "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever." He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.*

Depending on what each person sees in this issue makes all the difference in the world as to their relationship with God. Either food (the things of this world that can feed us for a moment) will become our modus operandi of living, or we will choose to live eternally in God (Love) and become a part of a ever growing Temple (Kingdom) that is not of this world nor a part of this creation.

***John 6:60-66** On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you? What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! **The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing.** The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him." From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.*

Scenario: A young person is putting together a weight set he purchased to begin his new exercises to 'get in shape.' Just as he was getting the last pieces together an older person walks into the room and sees what is taking place.

Older person: Well, what do we have here?

Young person: I just bought this new weight set and I'm going to start getting in shape so I can have a good looking body.

Older person: Interesting idea. But be careful, once you start you cannot stop or you will loose the body you worked so hard to get. In other words, you will become a slave to your own body.

God has set before us what we are to become a slave to. This kind of slavery is NOT a slavery of chains but of righteousness (doing right) it is a slavery to the best kind of Love that sets the captive free. When we experience that Love we realize what things are truly meaningful and what things have no real meaning at all.

So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

For those who believe this and know their Lord and Savior, they know what is meaningful and what is not. They know that God will not mislead them and has provided what they need to do His will.. Does that mean that whatever one feels is right to do is the right thing to do? No, but for the one who lives in God whatever God requires of them is right to do. But the right thing to do will ALWAYS be done to the glory of God and will always take into consideration every aspect of what God has spoken in His Word about His righteousness and vengeance and justice and Love.

But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.

Israel was to look to the Creator when they ate the manna in the desert. But instead they began to grumble and complain. The Levites were to look to God as they ate part of the offerings offered up on behalf of the sins confessed by their relatives, the Israelites. But instead, the motions they went through as God had commanded them to perform in the temple service became things done to make men holy. And then they mingled their service with pagan worship and applied pagan ideas of food and rituals as something that pleased the gods. These same practices abound today and the view of God is lost to rituals and teachings about this and that.

***1 Cor 10:31-11:1** So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, **DO IT ALL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.** Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God- even as I try to*

*please everybody in every way. **FOR I AM NOT SEEKING MY OWN GOOD BUT THE GOOD OF MANY, so that they may be saved.***

It is time to seek the Way of God and stop looking at each other or human leadership to guide us as we seek to obey our Lord and Savior. In Him we will find our nourishment and will stop feeding our bodies what does not belong in them. If we will do this as the body of Christ then we will not be a stumbling block to anyone or try to sit in judgment of anyone but instead judge between righteousness and evil. Then when the offence is taken out of our eyes first, then we may be able to help our brother and sister to have the same kind of relationship that we have so they too may remove their offence from their eyes.

Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.

As Christ before him, Paul took on the responsibility of being his 'brother's keeper,' the very thing that mankind tries to distance themselves from every moment of every day. But for those who live in Christ, they know that every action and reaction to life has a consequence attached to it that touches everyone around them and that the greatest concern is the desire to have others experience the same Love and Grace that has set them free in their life and that others can have that same experience in theirs.

## ***1 Corinthians 9***

Am I not free?

Good question. Are we free, and does that freedom end up in sinning which is unrighteousness; or is that freedom based upon obedience which leads to righteous living (also known as living without sin?)

As we have learned so far God is calling us to an experience of righteous living which frees us from everything of this creation and seats us in heavenly places where there is no sin in the presence of God.

Am I not an apostle?

Another good question. Was Paul an apostle and have we been called to give to others the same message Paul has given to us? And if we have, do we have any more time to build organizations and churches of sticks and stones instead of going forward with what God unveiled to Paul so that others may become apostles as he was to God's will?

Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?

Have we seen Jesus our Lord? Do we know who He is? Is our life wrapped up in His? Do we look like Him? Do we act like Him?

People wear clothing or jewelry that has 'WWJD' (what would Jesus do) inscribed on it and yet, at the same time they claim to be sinners who are unable to do what Jesus did. The claim is made that they are merely humans living out a desperate life in this world and waiting for the return of their Lord and Savior to take them out of here. Yet the inscription 'WWJD' is said to help the poor sinner think about what Jesus would do in any given situation with a hopeful expectation that the poor sinner will look at the inscription and choose to do right instead of sinning? But if the right choice is made and the sinner is able to overcome the issue at hand, then what is the reason for continuing in sin until Christ comes?

A decision must be made as to whether or not each person who claims to love their Lord and Savior really believes that the Truth can set them free.



*Are you not the result of my work in the Lord? Even though I may not be an apostle to others, surely I am to you! For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.*

Can each of us say this, or are we happy to just go to church each week and leave the work of God for others to do? Sadly, for the majority that is the truth. The way the current system is set in place is that the work is left to those who are *seen* as being wiser than the most of us and that all we have to do is put more money in the offering plate or send more money to the address on the television and the gospel can then be preached all over the world. This way of living makes it easy to *imagine* oneself as being too ignorant to go and tell others because the Word of God 'is too complicated and only someone who is talented or wise can make any real sense out of it anyway'. Yet God has asked those who believe in Him to seek His understanding so that each one can read and understand what others have declared to be a mystery.

***Col 1:24-27*** Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness- the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, ***BUT IS NOW DISCLOSED TO THE SAINTS.*** To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, ***which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.***

It is not a mystery to anyone who truly wishes to know the truth of the matter. But like any truth seen and understood, it causes the one who sees it to realize that truth always demands a reaction to the Light that has been given. And in God this change is that the old way that the sinner used to live has to now come into alignment with the Truth. Now instead of just believing what has been doctrinally taught for so long on any given subject, it is seen through the eyes of a personal experience of being set free.

This is my defense to those who sit in judgment on me. Don't we have the right to food and drink? Don't we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas? Or is it only I and Barnabas who must work for a living?

It is interesting how often we use rules and regulations that have been set in our minds by men who have been voted into their positions and then declare that because of the position that the people are to see them as being trustworthy and chosen by God to make eternal decisions for the body of Christ. However, in this kind of human government when a need is presented to those in charge, it must first be taken to the board and 'looked into' to see if the 'need' meets up to church dogmas or decrees and a vote is taken to determine if the request is legitimate. If it is legitimate and the church board approves, then and only then will the person in need receive what was requested.

But is this what Jesus would do, or did? He who healed the lame and gave sight to the blind; is this how He treated those who asked of Him anything and then preached freely without an offering plate being passed and gave His life without a vote or seeking for church approval?

NO IT IS NOT, AND NEVER CAN BE!

Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk? Do I say this merely from a human point of view? Doesn't the Law say the same thing? For it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." Is it about oxen that God is concerned? Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because when the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest.

The idea of people ruling over people is born out of disobedience to God and denying His rulership as King over those who call themselves His children. And as long as the people can be kept in ignorance of God's Kingdom and the kind of priesthood that rules there, then the Truth will never be known and the church of God will never be revealed.

***Heb 7:11-19*** If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), ***WHY WAS THERE STILL NEED FOR ANOTHER PRIEST TO COME-ONE IN THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK, NOT IN THE ORDER OF AARON?*** For when

*there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law. He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. **FOR IT IS CLEAR THAT OUR LORD DESCENDED FROM JUDAH, AND IN REGARD TO THAT TRIBE MOSES SAID NOTHING ABOUT PRIESTS.** And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. For it is declared: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." **THE FORMER REGULATION IS SET ASIDE BECAUSE IT WAS WEAK AND USELESS (FOR THE LAW MADE NOTHING PERFECT), AND A BETTER HOPE IS INTRODUCED, BY WHICH WE DRAW NEAR TO GOD.***

For those who are ingrained with church doctrine and its liturgy or do not want to hear the Truth, this is a misunderstood and misspoken part of scripture; and this is and forever will be one of the hardest pills to swallow for many, if not most. Our God and Savior is not the person that has been taught for so long all over the world. The liturgy and religious government that parades itself in front of the world as being the way to God has allowed those who would look to it as some kind of representative of God and His Kingdom to believe in a form of church and priesthood that does not exist and was never intended to replace God's Priesthood: Melchizedek. That Priesthood is based upon Life eternal while the Levitical priesthood that religion mirrors in its liturgy and government was based upon only that which the law it served could give, DEATH.

God only set the Levitical priesthood in place because of disobedience and unbelief; while the Melchizedek Priesthood is based upon Righteousness and Eternal Life.

If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more?

**But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ.**

Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

Paul is not demanding to get paid for his work but is trying to get those who claim to believe the truth that they are to care for body of God and not hold one person over the other because they may like one speaker better than they like another. The body of God is one and everything is God's and no one is to hold back of what God has given them and not share with another part of God's body.

But in order for anyone to live that kind of life, God must first be allowed to empty the life of pride. This pride shows up when people are asked to give of what God has given to them to provide a way to help to spread the Gospel. And at the same time some will give but only to the ones they like. And others will give without knowing what the truth really is and help those who are actually spreading lies. And this all takes place while all the while people are putting their trust in the things of this earth that have no value in the Kingdom of God. The only value God's body sees, is the value which is above fine gold, the value of wisdom and knowledge.

**Prov 8:11-22** *For the value of wisdom is far above rubies; nothing can be compared with it. Wisdom and good judgment live together, for wisdom knows where to discover knowledge and understanding. If anyone respects and fears God, he will hate evil. For wisdom hates pride, arrogance, corruption, and deceit of every kind.*

*"I, Wisdom, give good advice and common sense. Because of my strength, kings reign in power, and rulers make just laws. I love all who love me. Those who search for me shall surely find me. Unending riches, honor, justice, and righteousness are mine to distribute. **My gifts are better than the purest gold or sterling silver!** My paths are those of justice and right. 21 Those who love and follow me are indeed wealthy. I fill their treasuries. The Lord formed me in the beginning, before he created anything else.*

This is not just a cute part of the Bible and something to be put on a plaque so we may read it and imagine ourselves as being in love with God, but is in fact the reason why Christ said about Himself on the issue of putting value on things one may possess; *"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."* Christ lived this way and presented to those with eyes to see the Way to God's throne which can only be seen through faith.

**1 Peter 1:3-9** Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade-kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. **In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith-of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire-may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.** Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

But in order to accept this as actually being a true way to live, a paradigm shift must occur in our thinking so we may see God's understanding of what He has spoken about doing good, and about baptism and dying, about His power and authority and knowing what it really means to be alive by receiving His life into our hearts.

**1 Peter 3:13-22** Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened." But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also-not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand-with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

But instead, what we have become accustomed to is a life style of crystal cathedrals, huge auditoriums, basilicas, amphitheaters with a 5000 seating capacity, Cadillac's, BMW's, Mercedes Benz, Rolls Royce, mansions, thousands and hundreds of thousands of dollars in the bank, and all of this accepted by so called believers that read the Bible and while our Lord and Savior showed to those who would walk His road a totally different lifestyle.

**Matt 8:18-20** When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake. Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

It is always a point of interest that when the discussion about money and who should get what begins to take place among God's people that the scriptures like *1 Peter 1: 3-9* and *1 Peter 3:13-22* are not used to promote the life that those who claim to 'believe' will live. Even though God Himself declares that those who walk with Him will suffer just as He did, maybe even to the point of death, a message is still preached to the people of financial success and fiscal prosperity.

But why aren't the very words of God enough on this subject? Why will it forever be that instead what those who walk with God are suppose to live like instead always end up making living with Him with God about money, not about suffering.

But no matter what others may do, let's see if what Paul was saying is that he believes that believers should give him money to support him in his cause.

**But I have not used any of these rights.** And I am not writing this in the hope that you will do such things for me. I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of this boast. Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to

me. **What then is my reward? Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it FREE OF CHARGE, and so not make use of my rights in preaching it.**

Paul's reward? This must be a misprint! I mean, we all know that pastors and priests must be paid, so I mean, wow, like, well, it can't really mean what it says can it?

It is, as far as many are truly concerned, easier to just 'go with the flow' than to rock the boat and believe the WHOLE Bible. To leaders it would be a ridiculous and meaningless gesture to even imagine not asking for money, and to the laity it would not be true religion without seeing the offering plate being passed around. But what do we do with God's Word when we come to things like this? Are we going to interject our own thoughts on the subject and make them equal to scripture so we can do whatever we deem necessary for the moment? Or are we just going to pretend that it really doesn't mean what it says because we may believe that we live in a different time and do things differently than Paul or anyone else in those days way back then?

But a question arises at this point, will we play the role of Christ and become a slave to each other or will we be a slave to Satan's lies about what is really important?

Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (***THOUGH I MYSELF AM NOT UNDER THE LAW***), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (***THOUGH I AM NOT FREE FROM GOD'S LAW BUT AM UNDER CHRIST'S LAW***), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

If Paul is already a Jew he doesn't need to become *like a Jew*. And if he upholds the law of the Jew then he cannot lay it down for the sake of anyone. But if Paul is free, then he can be *all things to all men* as God has given him the freedom *under Christ's law*. The dichotomy that seems to appear at this point can only be understood under what was read earlier:

***Heb 7:11-12*** *If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come-one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law.*

As Paul has stated earlier:

***Gal 5:16-18*** *So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.*

Paul declares that in order to not gratify what so many believe that they must live by (the sinful nature of man) in this world because they are only human and therefore bound to that sinful nature, is in fact the ONLY way we can live if we are going to worship God and be filled the way so many believe they are filled with God's Spirit. And there is ONLY ONE WAY to worship God.

***John 4:21-24*** *Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet 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."*

This is not a metaphor nor is it something in need of reinterpretation to meet some kind of doctrine that demands that you can live in the sinful nature while at the same time be filled with God's Spirit. Those who claim to believe in God must worship Him in His Spirit. God is Spirit and that Spirit came to this world as the Word, and the Word was God and became flesh and lived among us as one of us. That Life-giving Spirit changed everything that man had come to believe in and revealed the Way to the throne of God. All things found their beginning and end in

Him and all things that were old became new in Him. The old passed away and the new now took its place. And instead of digging up the bones of the past and trying to obey laws and decrees which were and are only for a disobedient people (people who would not listen to the voice of God as Moses was willing to) those who say they believe in the Son who is Life, should then be what He is: a Melchizedek Priest and King that is not a part of this world nor bound to man's demands but bound to righteousness and a divine nature.

**1 Cor 6:16-17** *Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.*

Worshipping in Spirit and Truth means to come before God's throne and talk with Him as a friend (not someone that is way out there somewhere) and listen to His voice (not anyone else's) and obey. In this kind of a relationship there is no breaking of any law and thus no need for a law to tell you what you are doing wrong if you are not breaking it. And if any person stays there to receive Mercy and Grace, then there is no longer a need to seek for what has been given. And if a person lives before God's throne day and night, then he or she no longer searches for God to find out what they now already have.

But if the lie is believed that God is a vengeful creature or an arbitrary ruler that has a law that ends in death and that law cannot be kept but is dependent upon a constant form of confession and repentance then the poor sinner is kept on their knees seeking for peace and forgiveness day-in and say-out never finding the rest of God that comes from living in Him where there is no sin. And if the Son of God is seen as a mediator that needs to beg the Father to forgive the poor sinner who is begging for forgiveness and the Father is seen as sitting in judgment of each individual sin or confession sent in the general direction of heaven, and the poor sinner never knows if the sin was really forgiven (because every time he/she sins again that God becomes more and more upset at them) and believes that judgment day is fast approaching, then that poor sinner never comes to know God as a friend. So the sinner continues to seek for mercy within walls of brick and mortar hoping to hear something the speaker has to say that will give them hope and encouragement since they do not know where they really stand with God.

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

'You see, here it is, that is why everyone does not know where they stand with God until He actually puts the golden crown on the head of the poor sinner when He judges the world and tells each one whether they were good or bad, saved or lost!'

Yes that is what has been taught, but is it the truth? When is the judgment and just who is it that gets judged?

**1 Cor 11:27-32** *Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. **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.*

Disciplining is judgment? Then when are we disciplined?

**Hos 5:2-3** *The rebels are deep in slaughter. I will discipline all of them. I know all about Ephraim; Israel is not hidden from me. Ephraim, you have now turned to prostitution; Israel is corrupt.*

**Heb 12:4-11** *In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." **Endure hardship as discipline;** God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? **If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.** Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we*

*submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but **God disciplines us for our good**, that we may share in his holiness. **NO DISCIPLINE SEEMS PLEASANT AT THE TIME, BUT PAINFUL. LATER ON, HOWEVER, IT PRODUCES A HARVEST OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN TRAINED BY IT.***

This is not a metaphor. Discipline is for the here-and-now, and those who receive it need no judgment at ANY future time. But what about the wicked, don't they need judgment at the end of time?

***John 3:18-19 HE THAT BELIEVES ON HIM IS NOT JUDGED: HE THAT DOES NOT BELIEVES HAS BEEN JUDGED ALREADY, because he has not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil.***

The Word of God is True no matter what has been taught or believed. The picture that has been painted of a God of judgment and vengeance with a gavel in His hand and a sword at His side to execute anyone who gets in His way is a lie of the worst kind. The Word of God seeks for only one thing of His creation, obedience. He does not need sacrifice (for He is the Sacrifice) nor does He require blood (for there is no greater blood to be spilt then what was already spilt on the cross.)

But there is something that must be done. Each one who chooses to serve God must run a race. That race is a battle that is all about bringing our bodies and minds into submission to God's will and good, pleasing pleasure. This will is a living will and testament, but is not based upon disobedience but upon Love, a Love that does not seek anything else but to please the One who has given everything in order that we might stand as He did. Free. Free from sin and ignorance that keeps mankind in a prison with bars of lies and deceptions.

Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, 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 10***

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert.

People try to convince themselves and are convinced in their minds that the time of the Israelite exodus in the Sinai desert was of a different time, or different dispensation where God made His people obey His laws or die. These people, who see God as changing from time to time, imagine that now because they do not die as the Israelites did for disobedience (sinning) to God that they now live under a different period where God's love is now supreme and He no longer sees the sin in His children the same way as He did with Israel. They therefore feel justified in sinning because they are just human anyway and can't stop (even though God's Word does not say that.)

***Prov 14:2 To do right honors God; to sin is to despise him.***

***Matt 18:7-9 "Woe upon the world for all its evils. Temptation to do wrong is inevitable, but woe to the man who does the tempting. So if your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. Better to enter heaven crippled than to be in hell with both of your hands and feet. And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. Better to enter heaven with one eye than to be in hell with two.***

There is no more room for sin now than in any other time of earth's history. It is only those who wish to find an excuse for what they do that turn God's Word and make it say what it does not say and refuse the knowledge of the history laid out before them as to why things have happened and what God was doing.

Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were;

These things occurred as examples. So the question is; Have we learned anything from their mistakes? God wants to be our Ruler and King, are we letting Him? And in case anyone has forgotten what was read earlier about idolatry, here it is again.

***Col 3:5-11** Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: **sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, WHICH IS IDOLATRY.** Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: **anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language** from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

Sin is idolatry, and anything this is not of God is sin. Therefore each must decide if what they say about God is the truth and if what they believe is the truth or that what they do is because they believe the truth.

...as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry." We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did-and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died (Number 25:1-9.) We should not test the Lord, as some of them did-and were killed by snakes (Numbers 21:4-8.) And do not grumble, as some of them did-and were killed by the destroying angel. **THESE THINGS HAPPENED TO THEM AS EXAMPLES AND WERE WRITTEN DOWN AS WARNINGS FOR US, ON WHOM THE FULFILLMENT OF THE AGES HAS COME.**

As Paul was speaking to the Jews in Corinth and asking them to remember their past, the same request is made of us. 'Have we learned from the past? Will we learn from the past? Or will we live in the past, use the same excuses and live the same way; while convincing ourselves that this time is different so we can act just like them and yet God's favor will rest on us?' Do we hear the warning, are we awake?

So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

YES!!! There is victory in God through the blood shed on the cross. We can stand without falling! But just how badly do we NOT want to fall? Is it truly a desire to live in Christ or is it just an excuse to sin (and get away with it?) so many have been convinced that they are now under grace and don't need to worry about falling down (sinning) because He will just reach down and pick them up again just so they can fall down (sin) again. Right?

***Matt 13:40-43** "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.*

***Rom 6** What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that **WE SHOULD NO LONGER BE SLAVES TO SIN**- because anyone who has died*

has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, **COUNT YOURSELVES DEAD TO SIN** but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace. **WHAT THEN? SHALL WE SIN BECAUSE WE ARE NOT UNDER LAW BUT UNDER GRACE? BY NO MEANS!** Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, **YOU ARE SLAVES TO THE ONE WHOM YOU OBEY**-whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. 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. When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But now that **YOU HAVE BEEN SET FREE FROM SIN AND HAVE BECOME SLAVES TO GOD**, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If it is true that those who have been set free from sin are slaves to God, are we then going to say that as our master that He causes us (or tempts us) to fall (to sin?)

**James 1:13-18** When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." **For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; BUT EACH ONE IS TEMPTED WHEN, BY HIS OWN EVIL DESIRE, HE IS DRAGGED AWAY AND ENTICED.** Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

Sin, my friends is not about (nor ever can be) being caught unaware and falling without realizing it. There are no mistakes in God. **BUT EACH ONE IS TEMPTED WHEN, BY HIS OWN EVIL DESIRE, HE IS DRAGGED AWAY AND ENTICED.** God is not in the business of sin. He already paid the price and won the victory for us so we too may have the victory OVER sin. He did not come just to forgive us and then leave us to wallow in our sins, but gave us His Spirit so we can have whatever we ask in His name to live as He lived.

**John 14:11-14** I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

So, will we ask for deliverance from sin or will we come up with any reason under the sun as to why we just can't stop sinning?

Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

This is a call to understand that the body acts as one, not as individual parts that have nothing to do with each other.

What man can hurt his body without the rest of the body suffering? The body therefore must act as one or it is not one. And the body is connected to only one head and that head is Christ! I say this to your shame, stop sinning and live by the Head so the body may be one.



Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons.

If anyone believes in the ability to fall and get up as having something to do with their relationship with God, then the lie they believe will cause their downfall. You cannot eat from God's table (eat His body and drink His blood) without being changed. And we can't eat from Satan's table of lies, hatred, revenge, murder, strife, jealousy, adultery, gossiping, slandering, homosexuality, envy, and every evil under the sun without being changed. Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than He? Do we imagine that we have the ability to participate in sin while in the same breath say we are obedient to God? Even God in the flesh could not do that! Are we stronger than the One who created us?!

Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he? "Everything is permissible"-but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible"-but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.

Everything is before us, we can do anything we wish. We can murder, steal, drink and eat to our little hearts content, kill ourselves, hurt ourselves or do a myriad of things that are not good but are permissible. But that doesn't make what we have done constructive. Only the blind cannot see, but how great is the darkness for those who have eyes but *will* not see.

Eat anything sold in the meat market (meat market NT:3111 makellon (mak'-el-lon); of Latin origin [macellum]; a butcher's stall, meat market or provision-shop: - shambles.) **WITHOUT RAISING QUESTIONS OF CONSCIENCE**, for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."

Does this mean that if you find cyanide in the meat market you are to eat it? Does this mean that if you find rat poison being sold in the meat market you are to eat it also? NO! So stop the foolishness. Therefore, just because you can put something in the mouth does not make it food! Do not make the freedom that God gave you become a point of foolishness all for the sake of your own evil desire to argue that whatever you call food should then be considered food just because you say it tastes good.

If some unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions **OF CONSCIENCE**. But if anyone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the man who told you and **FOR CONSCIENCE' SAKE**- the other man's conscience, I mean, not yours. For why should my freedom be judged by another's conscience? If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?

Paul is still not saying that if hemlock is set before you to eat it and do it with thankfulness. But he has shown what it means to be free in God, to do what God wishes to do through us at any given moment. Because for those who walk with God there is no denouncement for what God is leading someone to do in their life.

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God-even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good **BUT THE GOOD OF MANY, SO THAT THEY MAY BE SAVED**.

This does not say that when you sin do it all to the glory of God. NO, not at all! This is a picture of what we will do if God is truly in charge of His people. All things, **ALL THINGS** will be done to the glory of God because God (as the head of His body) will be the One guiding every movement and thought of His people. All will be done for the good of many, so that they may all be saved.

## *1 Corinthians 11*

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

What does Paul think he is, perfect or something? This man is a murderer (and he has openly admitted to the crime) and we are to follow his example? Paul has preached against sinning (when everyone knows you can't stop); he has said that we are to live in Christ (when he knows that it only happens at the second coming); he has said that we have been raised up with Christ in the heavenly realms and have been seated with Christ (when he knows that Christ is not seated on His throne but is in the sanctuary receiving billions of prayers and asking His Father to forgive them); he has stated that the law leads to slavery and death (and he knows that can't be the truth) and yet we are to follow his example?

At a surface glance Paul does not appear to be a person that anyone would want to even associate with let alone imitate. And when we begin to consider his words it truly makes us wonder if in fact all that he said really came from God?

But as we have seen all through Romans and now into Corinthians that Paul is revealing only what God has spoken already to those who will listen. Yet for many the issue of the validity of his writings is a bridge that must be crossed.

I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teachings, just as I passed them on to you.

We must make a decision as to whether or not we can agree with Paul in ALL he says, by and through the power of God, so that we may come to the point of holding to the teachings he has passed on. Will we look and if we look will we agree or disagree with Paul's teaching? We must lay aside every weight that tries to hold us down. We must lay aside the teachings of men so we may hear God's voice and be what He has made His people to be. FREE!

Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

Yes, this is true, but we must remember that God is Love and that all He is was given for His bride just as the man is to for his.

Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head-it is just as though her head were shaved. If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head. A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head.

The Head of God's house is God and He showed us that 'self' has no place in His word. In His house giving is everything and receiving is left to eternal life. In this house women's liberation and man's emancipation is left at the cross and a whole new view of 'family' appears where Love rules and the body is One and 'no man hates his own body.' Woman needs no liberation in this house and man is filled with the Love of God and is ready to die for his family. There is no individualism in this house, just One body that works as One.

In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. ***BUT EVERYTHING COMES FROM GOD.***

***...EVERYTHING COMES FROM GOD.*** Does God hate His own body or treat any part of it better than any other part? NO! And when we begin to realize that God Loves His body we will begin to love His body as He does.

Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? (head shaven) (For long hair is given to her as a covering) Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering. If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice-nor do the churches of God.

As God is the head of man, man is to be covered or clothed with the His righteousness, His Love. And as man is the head of woman, so the woman is to be clothed with her husband, as he is to be a representation of God to her.

This is the picture of God and His body, His church, His temple, His bride. This is not a picture of individuality or separate bodies, but is a picture of what it means to be *one*.

**Rev 12:1** *A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head.*

God's church is covered with Him and filled with Him so that His bride's nakedness will not be seen.

**Ezek 16:8** *"Later I passed by, and when I looked at you and saw that you were old enough for love, I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness. I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign LORD, and you became mine.*

**Rev 3:18** *I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.*

God's garment is Love and it is given to anyone who will come into His kingdom and partake in the wedding supper.

**Matt 22:1-14** *Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. "Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.' "But they paid no attention and went off-one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.' So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests. "But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. 'Friend,' he asked, 'how did you get in here without wedding clothes?' The man was speechless. "Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' "For many are invited, but few are chosen."*

In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. No doubt there have to be differences (heresies or factions) among you **to show which of you have God's approval.**

God's body is united as One, for the body is One. Divisions will occur but only **TO SHOW WHICH OF YOU HAVE GOD'S APPROVAL.** This is righteous judging: to know the difference between what is of God and what is not. For those who remember what has been read before, they recall what Paul stated needs to be done because of sin in the church.

**1 Cor 5:1-5** *It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. And you are proud! **SHOULDN'T YOU RATHER HAVE BEEN FILLED WITH GRIEF AND HAVE PUT OUT OF YOUR FELLOWSHIP THE MAN WHO DID THIS?** 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. When you are assembled*

*in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, **HAND THIS MAN OVER TO SATAN, SO THAT THE SINFUL NATURE MAY BE DESTROYED AND HIS SPIRIT SAVED ON THE DAY OF THE LORD.***

Sin is never to be tolerated among those who claim to be Believers in Christ. But it is how sin is dealt with that shows whether or not one really is a Believer. If the person or people who need to deal with the sin, are not willing to die for the sinner, then they themselves have a sin problem that needs to be dealt with before they can even attempt to deal with someone else's sin.

Just as it is not natural to lose a part of one's body it should not feel natural to have to lose any part of the body of Christ. Therefore Love is the reason for dealing with the sin in the first place.

When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk. Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not! For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. **THEREFORE, WHOEVER EATS THE BREAD OR DRINKS THE CUP OF THE LORD IN AN UNWORTHY MANNER WILL BE GUILTY OF SINNING AGAINST THE BODY AND BLOOD OF THE LORD. A MAN OUGHT TO EXAMINE HIMSELF BEFORE HE EATS OF THE BREAD AND DRINKS OF THE CUP. FOR ANYONE WHO EATS AND DRINKS WITHOUT RECOGNIZING THE BODY OF THE LORD EATS AND DRINKS JUDGMENT ON HIMSELF.** That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.

What is an unworthy manner? Could it be to think about yourself and what you will get out of worshipping God? This is not a new thing, even the disciples felt this way:

**Matt 19:23-30** *Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." Peter answered him, "**WE HAVE LEFT EVERYTHING TO FOLLOW YOU! WHAT THEN WILL THERE BE FOR US?**" Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.*

Eating in an unworthy manner is living with sin in the life. Sin is always set in the backdrop of what a person can get instead of what they can give. Therefore serving the Lord is all to often about receiving instead of acting like the One who gave up everything and became just like us so we could become just like Him. The old saying is very true;

**Prov 16:18** *Pride goes before destruction, a haughty/arrogant spirit before a fall.* But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment (discipline.) When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world. So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other. If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment. And when I come I will give further directions.

There is no excuse for not being what we know we should be. But in order to be what we know we should be, we must be willing to look into ourselves and let God reveal to us what needs to be changed or removed from our house (life) so we may be swept clean and be furnished with every good work.

**2 Tim 3:14-17** *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Therefore we must know God's Word from beginning to end so that we can be thoroughly equipped and in agreement with God that His Word is, and can be, what He has said it is for the one who walks the pathway of righteousness.

**Ps 119:105-106** *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws.*

Either we agree with God in what He has told to us as being the Way, the Truth and the Life or we will be found at war against Him. The decision is up to us and His Word stands directly before us.

**Josh 24:14-15** *"Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."*

For many, the things God has said are just a plaque to hang on the wall for decoration.

But now it is time to take those plaques off the wall and let God's Word be forever imprinted on the walls of our heart.

## ***1 Corinthians 12***

Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," (accused) and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

It is amazing how people accuse God of so many things. They accuse Him of just about every evil in the world, even murder when they cry out in their anguish: 'Why did you take my loved one away from me?' They label the storms of life as 'acts of God' and then when things turn bad in their life they look to Him and say: 'Why did you make me this way?' But while things are going 'good' they say: 'Isn't God good?' and 'Praise God!' Yet they do not realize that although they believe they are speaking correctly when they either accuse or bless God, that they can do neither unless the Spirit leads them to do so.

And before anyone misunderstands just who the Spirit is that would cause someone to make such remarks about God let's look to see just who this Spirit is and what He is said to be Spirit so that we may know whether or not **It** would cause us to do either thing.

**2 Cor 3:17-18** *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

**John 4:24** *God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."*

It would seem fair enough on the surface to leave this subject alone at this point by just believing what God has said in His Word. And that would be a wonderful thing to do. However, due to the fact that tradition, through the teaching of the trinity has caused such a hardened doctrine to be set into the minds of millions on the issue of Father,

Son and Holy Spirit that has caused an inability for people to see God's Word in It's simplistic form, and has made God's Word to appear to disagree with itself, we must then continue on.

Although it is the Truth to admit that the Lord is the Spirit and God's Word is Truth, for most it must be seen as to why God would say that there are 'three' that testify and why these three (often referred to as the trinity) Spirit, water and blood are said to parallel Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But if the word Spirit is to be understood to mean 'Holy Spirit' then who gets to be the water and who is the blood?

**1 John 5:6-12** *This is the **one** who came by **water and blood-Jesus Christ**. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. **For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.** We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

*This is the one who came by water and blood-Jesus Christ.* Jesus came by water and blood, so does this mean He is neither because He came by these two? Let's be fair here! **For if these three testify then it would have to be a 'quad' not a 'trinity.'** In other words there are four not three, for these Three testify about the One.

But before we all get carried away here, take a look at what God says about this in His own Word.

**John 19:31-37** *Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of **blood and water**. The man who saw it **has given testimony, and his testimony is true**. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."*

This picture of the crucifixion cannot be seen from a medical or fleshly view because if that is what is demanded to be seen, then the Truth will be overlooked.

The blood and water and the body of Jesus Christ are one. This is the meaning of '*This is the one who came by water and blood-Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood.*'

This is the reason why we must pass through His body which is the Living Curtain of the Temple and be washed with His pure water that flowed from His side and be covered with His blood that we may have eternal life and be victorious over sin as He has commanded. And this is the Way to the throne of God.

**Heb 10:19-22** *Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place **by the blood of Jesus**, by a new and living way opened for us through **the curtain, that is, his body**, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, **having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.***

Many have imagined God as being a lacksidical author that does not follow any real set standard in His writing; and therefore those who try to read and understand what He has written through men who were willing to be lead by Him or used by Him to pen these words, that to attempt this herculean task is impossible unless it is seen that only through doctrinal interpretation that the truth is then revealed.

And so, what God has said is not seen by many who sit in hierarchical positions of religious authority who make demands on God's Word that makes those who then try to understand what these learned men have said that God says to pass right over such points as this or learn to read it in such a way that makes it mean something other than what it says.

But for the one who allows God to be seen as a wise Creator and intelligent Author then they see that there is only one sprinkling to be done in Scripture and that is the sprinkling of blood in the sanctuary to make all the parts of the sanctuary clean and holy and to consecrate those, who are priests, in God's temple. And that the water used in

the service of the sanctuary was to clean away stains or anything that is unclean so that whatever goes into the sanctuary is not defiled. And do you not know that YOU are the temple of God?

**Ex 29:10-21** *"Bring the bull to the front of the Tent of Meeting, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on its head. Slaughter it in the LORD's presence at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. Take some of the bull's blood and put it on the horns of the altar with your finger, and pour out the rest of it at the base of the altar. Then take all the fat around the inner parts, the covering of the liver, and both kidneys with the fat on them, and burn them on the altar. But burn the bull's flesh and its hide and its offal outside the camp. It is a sin offering. "Take one of the rams, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on its head. Slaughter it and take the blood and sprinkle it against the altar on all sides. Cut the ram into pieces and wash the inner parts and the legs, putting them with the head and the other pieces. Then burn the entire ram on the altar. It is a burnt offering to the LORD, a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the LORD by fire. "Take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on its head. Slaughter it, take some of its blood and put it on the lobes of the right ears of Aaron and his sons, on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet. Then sprinkle blood against the altar on all sides. And take some of the blood on the altar and some of the anointing oil and sprinkle it on Aaron and his garments and on his sons and their garments. **Then he and his sons and their garments will be consecrated.***

**Ex 29:1-4** *"This is what you are to do to consecrate them, so they may serve me as priests: Take a young bull and two rams without defect. And from fine wheat flour, without yeast, make bread, and cakes mixed with oil, and wafers spread with oil. Put them in a basket and present them in it--along with the bull and the two rams. Then bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and wash them with water.*

**Ex 29:15-18** *"Take one of the rams, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on its head. Slaughter it and take the blood and sprinkle it against the altar on all sides. Cut the ram into pieces and wash the inner parts and the legs, putting them with the head and the other pieces. Then burn the entire ram on the altar. It is a burnt offering to the LORD, a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the LORD by fire.*

**Ex 30:17-21** *Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a bronze basin, with its bronze stand, for washing. Place it between the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and put water in it. Aaron and his sons are to **wash their hands and feet with water** from it. Whenever they enter the Tent of Meeting, they shall wash with water so that they will not die. Also, when they approach the altar to minister by presenting an offering made to the LORD by fire, they shall wash their hands and feet so that they will not die. This is to be a lasting ordinance for Aaron and his descendants for the generations to come."*

**Ex 40:12-16** *"Bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and **wash them with water**. Then dress Aaron in the sacred garments, anoint him and consecrate him so he may serve me as priest. Bring his sons and dress them in tunics. Anoint them just as you anointed their father, so they may serve me as priests. Their anointing will be to a priesthood that will continue for all generations to come." Moses did everything just as the LORD commanded him.*

And that temple lives within God's people and is God's people.

**1 Cor 3:16-17** *Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.*

**2 Cor 6:16** *What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."*

The blood in the Levitical priestly service represented the blood of Christ and the water was to represent the washing away of anything that would cause anyone working in the sanctuary to be unclean. This is what has been taught the world over by anyone speaking about these things.

However, when it comes to seeing the WHOLE picture and understanding it without someone's interpretation of what these things meant or pointed to, it is then taught that these things do not have anything to do with any fulfillment that is met in Christ. Instead it is used to try to present a form of church doctrine called the trinity that has become a pre-requisite of belief in order to be able to join a church.

But when a person moves away from herd and the noise of voices demanding to be understood as preaching the truth, then they begin to allow God's voice to be heard and allow Him to mean just what He has said and they see

that the blood and the water come from Jesus Christ who has washed His bride with His Word to make her clean before His throne and has covered her with His blood spilt in victory over sin.

*Eph 5:25-28 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her **by the washing with water through the word**, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, **without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish**, but holy and blameless.*

This is the testimony of Jesus Christ: these three testify of Him. This testimony, His people washed by the water that comes from our Him; filled with His Spirit because He lives in them; covered with His blood (which is the righteousness of the saints) and washed with the water that flows from Him and cleanses us from ALL sin, is the Way, the Truth and the Life. It is the same Spirit, the same Lord and the same God.

There are different kinds of gifts, **BUT THE SAME SPIRIT**. There are different kinds of service, **BUT THE SAME LORD**. There are different kinds of working, **BUT THE SAME GOD** works all of them in all men.

This does not say that there are gifts that are given but not all to the same person, or that service is only doled out to maybe this person but not that person and that works are left up to a church board decision. This does not say that, yet many believe it as well as the idea of these three things: Spirit, Lord and God are being spoken of as three different persons. And that belief is called the trinity doctrine. Yet at the same time we see as we read God's Word a far greater picture than a church doctrine of the God-head.

*Luke 9:51-62 As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" But Jesus turned and rebuked them, and they went to another village. As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." He said to another man, "Follow me." But the man replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-by to my family." Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit **FOR SERVICE IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD.**"*

*Luke 12:32-40 "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. "**BE DRESSED READY FOR SERVICE** and keep your lamps burning, like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and door for him. It will be good for **those servants** (servants provide a service) whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself **to serve**, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. It will be good for **those servants** (servants provide a service) whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."*

So what are these servants who serve their Master to do, and how are they to do it?

*Rom 15:14-33 I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are **full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another**. I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with **the priestly duty** of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become **an offering acceptable to God**, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus **in my service to God**. I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in **leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done- by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit**. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully*



*proclaimed the gospel of Christ. It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. Rather, as it is written: "Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand." This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you. But now that there is **no more place for me to work in these regions**, and since I have been longing for many years to see you, I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while passing through and to have you **assist me on my journey** there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while. Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem **in the service of the saints** there. For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make **a contribution for the poor** among the saints in Jerusalem. They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the **Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings**, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings. So after I have completed **this task** and have made sure that they have **received this fruit**, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way. I know that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of **the blessing of Christ**. I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by **praying to God** for me. Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that **my service in Jerusalem** may be acceptable to the saints there, so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and together with you be refreshed. The God of peace be with you all. Amen.*

God has spoken it as loudly as it can be said (other than yelling it at the top of His voice.) Works, service and gifts are ALL THE SAME and they are found in those like Paul who follow God and join in the same priestly duties as Paul did in proclaiming the gospel of God. It is all given by the same Spirit, the same Lord and the same God.

***James 1:16-18** Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.*

This is not so hard to comprehend when we realized just who God is. He has been spoken of throughout scripture and was prophesied by those who were led by Him to speak of Him.

***Isa 9:6** For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

This is the One who came and spoke the truth about God and made it clear just what service was and how each one was to show the work of God in their life through the gifts of the Love and authority that comes by Love that reveals Love in everything we do. But unlike so many who make works and service something that is to be seen by everyone around them so that everyone will know that they are specially favored or specially filled with a spirit from God, the One who brought Light into the world spoke something quite different than that.

***Matt 6:1-8** "Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, (in your church papers and in the local newspaper) as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men (with gold plaques and satellite presentations.) I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, **do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing**, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men (over the airwaves and through satellite uplinks.) I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. **Do not be like them**, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*

‘Oh my, didn't he say the most beautiful prayer?’ ‘Oh I wish I could pray like she does.’ ‘Wasn't that just a wonderful sermon?’ I wish I could talk like that.’ ‘Be sure to not miss the next satellite 13th Sabbath mission presentation as the church tells of all the wonderful things they are doing for God and how many people they are baptizing and how much money they need and assure the people that they are giving their time and money to the right people.’

There is nothing good that comes from man, only pure unadulterated humanism. Yet it happens all too often. And even though Christ would not allow anyone to call Him good nor would He set out to show Himself being full of His Spirit, people still feel it is ok to act and react in a proud or promotional way so that everyone who needs to know will know what they have done.

**Mark 10:17-19** *As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good-except God alone.*

It is past time for us to learn a new lifestyle. It is not an easy thing to do, but it must be done so that we can start sounding like and acting like the One we say we believe in.

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

God's Word is full of men who were either great either great at spiritually multitasking or were being liars as they painted a picture of themselves as having the gift of healing while also having the gift of teaching and speaking in tongues and at the same time prophesying and being judges of spiritual things and full of the knowledge of the mysteries of God. They presented a picture that all the gifts are can be present in one person without violating any spiritual doctrine that demands that God does not give any one person all of the gifts or all understanding or all knowledge at anytime. And of course, that teaching would have to label Christ as the greatest of imposters that made it seem that He had all the gifts and all at the same time.

God shows no favoritism nor holds back His Love and power to anyone who wishes to do His will. And all of what God is will fill those who live in Him and are full of His Love which is what all the gifts are made of.

**James 1:16-18** *Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.*

We are first fruits, not of old works or doctrines of men but first fruits of power and a new birth.

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

And what do we remember that God has spoken about this 'Spirit'?

**2 Cor 3:17-18** *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

In a day and age when the Godhead has become such a complicated matter that it takes a theologian to unravel its great mystery and just how it all fits together, it would seem a misunderstanding or misprint by Paul (or someone) that would take the Godhead discussion and break it down to such a simple form. But of course this is what Paul so often does that tends to drive many to a point of frustration in taking what many have turned into deep mysterious doctrinal studies and then states it so matter-of-factly that is boggles the wise and makes the simple reader wonder what the truth is because they have depended on the wise for their theology.

The sad part here is that God's Word has been made to appear to be hard to understand when in fact when the whole book is read and understood as one rather than little bits and pieces that tries to explain the whole thing, that the Truth is in fact very simple to understand and anyone may see it clearly.

It is like this; though the gifts of the Spirit are made to appear to be an issue of one gets and maybe another doesn't or maybe gets another gift of some-kind because they are all individuals with different talents or characters; that idea can only be upheld as long as the body of Christ is seen as many separate parts and not really just one body. But if the people of God begin to realize that they are one and not separate parts, then soon the reality will begin to hit home as to what it means to 'loose ones-self' and become just one body under One name with God as the head.

Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? **As it is, there are many parts, but one body.** The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, **so that there should be no division in the body**, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts.

*"...that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other."* Wow, if only it really worked that way. It is awful thing to watch how Christians treat each other in day-to-day life. Ministries work separate from each other, denominations because of their different doctrines and internal dislikes for each other stay separate from each other, neighbors who go to the same church but just cant get along stay separate from each other, and yet this is called by these same people 'the body of Christ.'

***1 Cor 1:10-14** I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul?*

Of course this kind of thing never happens in the church, no one would ever act this way.... would they? But before we give up all hope, let's see what is just ahead as Paul moves forward with the Truth.

And now I will show you the most excellent way.

## ***1 Corinthians 13***

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

In other words; *The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts...* and if God is missing from the picture then nothing is gained and the body is dead (for God is Life and what is the body without the head?) But a question arises at this point; What will the body be like if it is truly filled with God?

*Love is patient, love is kind.  
It does not envy,  
it does not boast,  
it is not proud.  
It is not rude,  
it is not self-seeking,  
it is not easily angered,  
it keeps no record of wrongs.  
Love does not delight in evil  
but rejoices with the truth.  
It always protects,  
always trusts,  
always hopes,  
always perseveres.  
Love never fails.*

‘Oh my, I could never do all those things. Only God can do that anyway.’ ‘God doesn’t really expect me to do that does He!?’

These things are said by those who claim to love God and have Him in their hearts. They say it in defense of their failures to do what is right. But is what they are claiming the truth? NO! The truth is; *And now I will show you the most excellent way*, and God is the most excellent Way; for He is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

**John 14:6** *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life.*

*This is God, three in one... Water, Blood and Spirit... the Way, the Truth and the Life.*

But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

Paul must have lost his mind! Prophecies ceasing? Tongues stilled? Knowledge will pass away? I mean, come on now, some religions even claim that the outward expression of being filled with the Spirit is speaking in tongues. And some teach that prophecy and speaking in tongues go together and that sometimes interpreters are even needed. And let's not even talk about knowledge. And others claim to even have the Spirit of prophecy. And all these things will either cease, be stilled or pass away?

For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.

Ok, we hear what Paul has been saying up to this point. But this part has to be about the future, because we can't be perfect can we? He must mean that when God comes and we are changed in the twinkling of an eye or at the rapture that we will then become perfect. After all, no human has ever been perfect have they? I mean, haven't all sinned and come short of the glory of God?

**Rom 3:21-25** *This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

And furthermore, John says;

**1 John 1:8-10** *If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.*

See, there it is we all have sinned and it's just a part of us until we are made new when God takes His unrighteous sinful people home. You have it right here, there is no one who has never sinned, right?

**Rom 5:12-14** *Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned- for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.*

What!? There are people who have not sinned by breaking a command of God as did Adam? This does not make sense. Paul and John both said that all have sinned and that those who say they have not are liars. What is going on here? Did Paul forget what he said earlier and what about John?

Sadly as we have spoken about this issue before, these texts like others in scripture have been used by those who have been considered wise in God's Word in such a way that helps to uphold a version of salvation that allows for sinners who claim the name of Jesus to be saved in their sins while the rest of the story is left unread and therefore misunderstood while making God's Word appear to be in disagreement with Itself.

But when the rest of the story is read we see that Paul and John are both talking to the Jews about what they had done as a nation to their Messiah. Israel had murdered an innocent man for no reason, One who had shown them, in every way possible, that He fulfilled all the requirements of the One they had been looking for and longing for throughout the centuries. But because they listened to their Rabbis and teachers of the law, who had so badly distorted the Word that God had given to them through the prophets and those sent to them by God, the people did not know the Truth when they were staring It directly in the face. And instead of growing up they stayed as little children with no real understanding of God's Word. They could only reason as little children, being totally dependent upon what they were being taught by those they had put their trust in to tell them the truth.

But despite the sadness and destruction this brought upon the Jewish nation as a whole, there have been those who did know the Truth and grew up into maturity and walked and talked with God, and knew Him as their friend.

And as Paul spoke under inspiration from God, many who had that one-on-one relationship with God from the womb, who were dedicated to God and filled with His Spirit in the womb, stood free from sin just as there Lord and Savior would and did. But to those who did sin and murdered their Savior, to them many a word was spoken of the need for repentance and forgiveness as well as to those who were not of the nation of Israel and did not know this God person.

**1 Cor 15:33-34** *Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God-I say this to your shame.*

When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Yes, when maturity comes and the mirror is no longer out of our reach; when the rubble of childish ways are left behind, a face to face relationship takes place that is only for the mature. And when that happens, and everything has been left behind, then faith, hope and love are fulfilled in the life of the one who has now grown up.

## ***1 Corinthians 14***

Follow **THE WAY OF LOVE** and eagerly desire **SPIRITUAL GIFTS**, especially **THE GIFT OF PROPHECY**.

**1 John 4:16-18** *God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.*

**John 4:24** *GOD IS SPIRIT, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."*

Prophecy NT:4395 propheteuo (prof-ate-yoo'-o); from NT:4396; to foretell events, divine, speak under inspiration, exercise the prophetic office.

For those with open eyes and who have minds to think, here it is again; God spoken of in another three-in-one idea: love, spiritual and prophecy. These three testify of one's connection to God. In other words, to love you must have God, to receive from Him any of His bountiful spiritual gifts you must worship Him as He is, Spirit. And to worship Him in Spirit and have the gifts that come from Him, you must be filled with Love. And the greatest gift He can give is that thing that many desire and at least on the surface seem to want: to be filled with His Love and to have the gift of knowledge in His Word in order to speak intelligently and know what they are speaking, to see into the mind of God and to have that wisdom that goes beyond human wisdom.

In other words, to have any of these things you must have God. And when you have Him in your life ALL these things that are Him are in you.

*1 Cor 1:4-9 I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way-in all your speaking and in all your knowledge-because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.*

*Staying strong to the end.* To stay strong or be kept strong to the end is to be blameless, to walk with God and live in God through our fellowship with Jesus Christ. There is no other way. This must happen and will happen to those who call themselves a Believer or Christian. This is the only Way, and God has provided everything we need and has given us Himself through His Son so that we may come boldly to His throne and stay there to receive power, wisdom and glory forever and ever.

For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit.

God's Word is true and it means what it says, *For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit.* It is not a bad thing to speak in tongues because when one does they speak to God. But when it is made a doctrinal judgment or decree, then something bad has taken place. Even our Lord who gave us His Word never included in it any reference to Himself speaking in tongues. When He spoke to His Father His disciples are never found to be asking Him what He said because they could not understand His language. And as always, it is when the rest of the story is told that the WHOLE picture is seen as to why what was said was being said.

*1 Cor 14:22 Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers;...*

Just as in the issue of the ten commandment law not being anything a righteous person needs who keeps it in the heart already, the outward expression of God's power in the Believer is not for the Believer. If it were then it would have to be said that the Believer is blind to the fact that they have God living in them and thus needs proof that God is really living in them. And when Believers act this way they are admitting that they are in fact blind.

Sadly this is where it becomes evidently clear that the Words God has spoken in Love to those who will listen, have been manipulated, abused, mutilated, twisted, turned and broken and all for the simple reason of keeping alive a system that must be continually fed with a steady stream of offering and tithe to keep it functioning and to keep the leaders in the lifestyle that they have become accustomed to so that they may continue to preach a misunderstanding to the people and keep them blind to the Truth. Money pours into the church coffers at such an astronomical rate, that the churches of today have become one of the richest corporations known to man. Meanwhile the unbelievers (that supposedly the power of God is to be a sign for) are outside the doors of the church with no sight of what is going on inside.

Yet these signs (as God has spoken) have always been for those who do not know Him. It is a sign of the power of God to a world that has forgotten Him. It is not nor ever has been for those who already know Him and have Him in their hearts.

**Mark 16:19-20** *After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.*

When God sent those who believed on Him into the world to preach the everlasting gospel, He gave them power and authority just as He had done with Moses to prove to anyone with eyes to see that He was calling those with ears to hear and minds to think, to follow Him into His Kingdom.

But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort. He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified.

Edify: NT:3618 oikodomeo (oy-kod-om-eh'-o); from the same as NT:3619; to be a house-builder, i.e. construct or (figuratively) confirm: (be in) build (-er, -ing, up), edify, embolden

And just who is building what house?

**Heb 3:1-6** *Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but **GOD IS THE BUILDER OF EVERYTHING**. Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future. But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. **AND WE ARE HIS HOUSE**, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.*

Is this house, His church being edified? Are God's children acting like Him and lifting Him up for all to see or are they busy building doctrines and ministries to provide more laws and social interaction for strengthening each other?

Just what are they to be strengthening each other for? Are they to be helping each other to see that in the end of everything they are just pretty-much like everybody else and therefore are to compare each other to each other realizing that things like sin and self-empowerment, greed, backbiting, quarreling, lawsuits, adultery, drugs, alcohol, embezzlement, money laundering, scandals, gossip, lying, cheating, broken families, divorce, self-esteem, psychology and on and on, are just a part of life and therefore will be a part of the church until God comes to take His sinful children home? Is that what the world is to see as a sign of the churches empowerment in the kingdom of God?

Now of course we all know that NONE of these things ever happen in church today.

Now, brothers, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction? Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the flute or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes? Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle?

Good question. What battle are we to be found fighting, and what are we to be able to distinguish?

**Eph 6:10-18** *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. **FOR OUR FIGHT IS NOT AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD, BUT AGAINST THE RULERS, AGAINST THE AUTHORITIES, AGAINST THE POWERS OF THIS DARK WORLD AND AGAINST THE SPIRITUAL FORCES OF EVIL IN THE HEAVENLY REALMS** (I don't know what Paul is talking about for He never met my mean neighbor.) *Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, **YOU MAY BE ABLE TO STAND YOUR GROUND, AND AFTER YOU HAVE DONE EVERYTHING, TO STAND**.* (This cannot be true, for isn't our experience to be about falling down and getting up?) *Stand firm then, with the belt of truth* (Paul just doesn't understand that lying is a small thing anyway and we just have to learn to*

live with it.) *buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness* (Righteousness? We all have sinned haven't we and not met up to God's righteousness?) *in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace* (I can see that Paul has not sat in a church board meeting lately.) *In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith,* (How can we take up what we are still asking questions about?!) *with which you can extinguish ALL the flaming arrows of the evil one* (Now surely Paul knows we can't stop sinning!) *Take the helmet of salvation* (I was saved last week in church and I didn't have to do any of these things.) *and the sword of the Spirit,* (I've got a Bible somewhere.) *which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit* (I ask God everyday to forgive me for my sins against Him) *on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests* (I keep praying for many things I want but I don't understand why I don't get them.) *With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints* (I pray for my family and friends and the missionaries and my cat and the neighbor next door, does that count?)

**James 4:1-12** *What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. **YOU DO NOT HAVE, BECAUSE YOU DO NOT ASK GOD. WHEN YOU ASK, YOU DO NOT RECEIVE, BECAUSE YOU ASK WITH WRONG MOTIVES, THAT YOU MAY SPEND WHAT YOU GET ON YOUR PLEASURES.** You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. **CHANGE YOUR LAUGHTER TO MOURNING AND YOUR JOY TO GLOOM. HUMBLE YOURSELVES BEFORE THE LORD, AND HE WILL LIFT YOU UP.** Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?*

It is of interest that no matter what God has said (through whomever He chose to say it through) that there are always reasons why what He has said can't be obeyed. Have God's people decided that His Word is left up to their own personal opinions and somehow decided for them by taking in consideration the time in which they live? If it is, then how is that different than the world around us who lives with that same knowledge?

But alas, God's true children do not live that way. Yet the Way God has called us to walk with Him is not found by many.

So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air. Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me. So it is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts **THAT BUILD UP THE CHURCH.** For this reason anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret what he says. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, **BUT I WILL ALSO PRAY WITH MY MIND;** I will sing with my spirit, **BUT I WILL ALSO SING WITH MY MIND.**

There is a saying that is oh-so-true; *Luke 6:31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.* It is really an easy thing to do if you care about those around you. It is a simple thing to do if we will just stop and think of what each of us would want if we were in another person's position. Therefore if the Believer next to me already Believes, then why would I want to be a part of something or do something that is not going to build them up? And if I realize that what is being said is the same thing that Jesus did while living on this earth, of caring for those who needed to know the power of God instead of giving to those who already claimed to have the power of God, then I will do as He did and let His power flow to those who really need it.



**Matt 9:10-13** Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "**THOSE WHO ARE WELL HAVE NO NEED OF A PHYSICIAN, BUT THOSE WHO ARE SICK. BUT GO AND LEARN WHAT THIS MEANS: 'I DESIRE MERCY AND NOT SACRIFICE.' FOR I DID NOT COME TO CALL THE RIGHTEOUS, BUT SINNERS, TO REPENTANCE.**"

There is an old adage about wasting time by preaching to the choir something the choir already knows. Not only does that bore the choir to death but it also does not feed them with continual nourishment from the throne of God. But the worst thing it does is makes them into spiritual weaklings that learn to depend upon human teachings rather than becoming disciples of God. And as time progresses on, the choir becomes lethargic and begins to have the same issues in their life as the world does. And instead of being pillars of power and victory showing redemption and deliverance from sin, they are found needing those very things themselves.

If you are praising God with your spirit, how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? You may be giving thanks well enough, but the other man is not built up.

This is Love for one another, to stop, think and be honest. That is a hard thing to do these days in a world where people are worried so much about their own self-esteem that they do not have time to show care or concern for others. Yet that is the beauty of God's Love in that He gave no concern for His own self-esteem but gave Himself to anyone who would come to Him. Instead of coming as an earthly king and being a political force to be reckoned with, He came as a servant. Instead of claiming what was rightfully His (for He created all things) He was poor in worldly goods. He did not preach in a crystal cathedral, He owned no private means of transportation, nor did He demand for recognition of what He had done, but instead told those who were healed or who had been delivered from demonic oppression, to tell no one what He had done for them.

With all this information we have of God's way of doing things, the question begs to be asked; Is this how it is done by those who claim to be servants of His today?

I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue. Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.

'Woe Nelly' stop this train! What is Paul calling evil? Speaking in tongues?

No. Paul is just trying to get people to stop acting evil. The people are not being kind to each other and lifting each other up but instead doing whatever makes them feel good (kinda seems like today doesn't it?)

In the Law it is written: "Through men of strange tongues and through the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to me," says the Lord.

This is one of those interesting moments in God's Word that is often read right over or misinterpreted. Paul throws in a quote from Isaiah and says it's part of the Law. Now most know that the first five books of the Bible are called the law or Torah and the writings of Isaiah are part of nineteen other books called Prophets. Also it is of a general consensus that what Isaiah is speaking about is the foreigners like the Babylonians who would come and overtake Israel and make them slaves. But Paul takes a prophecy of Isaiah and brings it into this discussion of tongues to show that even when tongues are spoken (known languages, not gibberish or spirit languages as some claim) it does not edify or build up the people and help where help is needed.

And in the case of Israel, God Himself spoke to them *Through men of strange tongues and through the lips of foreigners*, yet they still would not listen to what He said. This should be a wakeup call for everyone, for God does things that do not align with the doctrines of man.

And through what happened to Israel, the issue of tongues as being a sign to those who do not know God and do not have the kind of relationship that does not require God to speak to them in another language (as Jeremiah did not need to hear the Babylonians say that they were there because the God of Israel sent them, to know what God was telling the people because he talked with God as a friend) we see what it means that *tongues are not for believers but*

for unbelievers. Israel's sin from the beginning was unbelief and thus God gave them multiple signs of His power working through those He called friends. But never is it seen in scripture of God giving signs for those who knew Him already.

Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is for believers, not for unbelievers.

An interesting question at this point is 'WHY?' Why is prophecy for believers and not for unbelievers. If prophecy is believed to mean what many have caused it to mean (future events) then why would God not want the world to know so they can repent and get ready for God Almighty to come? Why?

But of course another question needs to be asked at this point; Do we know what is meant by the word prophesy? What does it mean to *prophesy* and just what is a prophet?

NT:4394 propheteia (prof-ay-ti'-ah); from NT:4396 ("prophecy"); prediction (scriptural or other): prophecy, prophesying.

NT:4396 prophetes (prof-ay'-tace); from a compound of NT:4253 and NT:5346; a foreteller ("prophet"); by analogy, an inspired speaker; by extension, a poet: prophet.

In other words, to prophecy is to carry a message that God has given about something that is going to take place (like the command to repent and be baptized for the kingdom of God is at hand) which is inspired by God.

So to prophecy is to give what God has given to you about His kingdom that comes into the church which is His body.

Wow! So simple, but it has been made so complicated by those who have claimed to know what a prophet is and what a prophet does.

So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who do not understand or some unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind?

A very good question indeed! And it is all too sad that no-one wants to talk about it.

Just like the issue of the ten commandment law not being given for the righteous, it will not be talked about by those who promote the idea or doctrine of tongues being proof to other Believers that they have received God's Spirit. Yet within both camps of those who believe or do not believe in tongues as being a show by God that He has filled the Believer with His Spirit, is an unwillingness to face the truth of what the gifts of God's Spirit are really for.

But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!"

Let's look at this for a moment. If prophecy makes a unbeliever understand that they are a sinner (and being a sinner means they are sinning) and the secrets of their heart is laid bare before their own eyes; is this kind of prophesying being done by those who claim that what they are doing is from God?

And if this is what prophesying is for, then would not those who do not believe in speaking in tongues or that say that they believe in prophecy would desire to do all the time?

But sadly neither group believes in overcoming sin and instead preaches a lie about living in sin and living with the sinful nature until sometime in the future when their god is to come and take his sinful children home to live with him where there is no sin.

What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church. If anyone speaks in a tongue, two-or at the most three-should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God.

'See there it is. You tried to make it seem that tongues are never to be spoken. See, you're a liar.'

Sadly this is the conclusion many come to when they hear what God has said on this subject. But it was not said that tongues are never to be spoken, what God said is that it is NOT for believers as some kind of sign. But that whatever is said must be done ALL to the glory of God and the lifting up of His body, the church.

Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can all prophesy in turn **SO THAT EVERYONE MAY BE INSTRUCTED AND ENCOURAGED**. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.

WOW! Eureka! Order, can you imagine that? But not order arranged by men for men, instead it is order where God is in charge and His body is being fed.

As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.

‘Oh boy, here we go. Do you really think Paul meant this for our day, I mean come-on now really, a woman not able to voice her opinion or to speak her own mind? Haven’t you heard of woman’s-liberation? I mean what year are you living in?’

This and much more has been said in defense of an idea that has been formed out of a thinking process that is set against the kingdom of God. Sadly most of what God has said is lost to ideas, concepts and opinions that have nothing to do with what God has given to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

And further more it is to be noticed that as readers of scripture happen upon verses like these the attitude taken about scripture pertaining to the here-and-now is quickly relegated to past history and has very little if anything to say to us or has anything to do with us today. They pick and choose what they deem as necessary or pertinent for the body of Christ (as if God died and made them rulers over His Word.) And in doing such things they ignore what God was trying to say to those who would listen to His voice.

God has a plan and no matter what we may think of it or demand it to be, it is still His will being done. This plan is for His bride, His people to do what He has wanted from the beginning, to have a wonderful relationship with His creation built upon obedience through Love. In that relationship (as we saw in I Cor 7) obedience brings about an equal partnership where both participants are one body acting in complete harmony, with God as the head of that body that has only one mouth that is connected to only One head, Jesus Christ. Only the head does the talking, and the body is silent. This is a silence of reverence and submission in Love, not a demanded silence.

Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored.

Who does Paul think he is?! Its his way or the highway? Paul, the son of a Pharisee? Paul the one who murdered, imprisoned and tortured anyone who he felt was a follower of the Way?

This kind of thing has been taught to Believers as a false system or belief that anyone has the right to say such a thing other than those who have been educated and duly recognized as leaders and trustworthy speakers from God.

(Of course if that were the truth then we would have to remove Paul’s writings from the Bible immediately.)

Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. **BUT EVERYTHING SHOULD BE DONE IN A FITTING AND ORDERLY WAY.**

For those filled with the Love of God and wanting to please Him in every way they understand this completely and only want to do whatever makes their Husband (God) happy. Therefore everything they do and say, whatever they eat or drink and if there is anything else, IT WILL BE DONE IN A FITTING AND ORDERLY WAY THAT HELPS THE BODY WORK AS ONE.

## *1 Corinthians 15*

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

What a wonderful message Paul has spoken, but who will hear it? Are we willing to see what God gave to Paul or will we demand our own way over God's way? It is truly a thought provoking question. Will we believe or continue in our own doctrines duly voted on and set to print to prove our beliefs?!

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Christ died for our sins. What a statement. He came and paid the price for what sin has done to mankind, was tortured and beaten, called a liar and heretic, was made to look like scum by the leaders of the church, He proved who He was in every possible way by fulfilling every prophecy that spoke of a Messiah to come who would heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cause the blind to see, preach the everlasting gospel (to those who would hear it) be the Light to the world, be the ultimate sacrifice (for those who would see it) be born of a virgin (who by law had to prove her virginity to the priest) have a voice say from heaven that He was the Son of God, be both a king and priest (a Melchizedek priest) with both offices of king and priest working in full harmony (as had not been done up to that time) speak words that no one had heard before, and with just a simple word set the demons fleeing from those who were captives of sin. After all of that, people found and still find a reason why they can continue to sin in this world and yet call heaven their home. There is only one way this can be done; the life, death and resurrection of the Messiah must be abolished in their mind. Of course this would give a proper explanation as to why the church of today can do what it is doing and all under the cloak of calling themselves *God's chosen people*.

Truly those who are willing to be led by God and obey rather than disobey, are born out of time (abnormally born.) To obey when everyone else is saying that it is impossible is to stick out like a sore thumb. And to hold to that belief when everyone else holds to their doctrines is to be put-down and relegated to position of trouble maker and heretic.

Another way of saying is; *There is another and more important question that should engage the attention of the churches of today. The apostle Paul declares that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." 2 Timothy 3:12. Why is it, then, that persecution seems in a great degree to slumber? The only reason is that the church has conformed to the world's standard and therefore awakens no opposition. The religion which is current in our day is not of the pure and holy character that marked the Christian faith in the days of Christ and His apostles. It is only because of the spirit of compromise with sin, because the great truths of the word of God are so indifferently regarded, because there is so little vital godliness in the church, that Christianity is apparently so popular with the world. Let there be a revival of the faith and power of the early church, and the spirit of persecution will be revived, and the fires of persecution will be rekindled.*

For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them-yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

How much did Paul change? Had he really grown from what he was before to the point of now preaching things that even to this day people still have a hard time grasping or are willing to grasp? And yet the majority of the evangelical or Christian world use bits and pieces of Paul's writings to show their doctrinal positions they take on most of the issues of the day. But when it comes to living a life completely changed and living wholly in God, Paul's writings are then used to say that we really can't do it. But for those who wish to be honest and admit that if what Paul is saying is that he has changed and wants everyone to follow his example of right living (righteous living) then we must be able to change just as he did.

And for those who need an example, here is one.

Let's say the sin that so easily got under Paul's skin and caused him to fall was murder and when he met Christ he gave that up, then it would be fair to say that Paul did not fall any longer on that subject. But, to go even further, if Paul then lives in Christ as he is telling us to do, then either Christ is sinful (for many say that Paul promotes falling down (sinning) and getting up as a daily ritual of life in this world) or he has had the victory OVER sin and no longer does what the sinful nature would have him do. And if the later is true, then what Paul says is fact. We can live just as sinless as our Savior before us.

***Rom 8:1-17** Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, (And why would there be if they are truly 'in Him?') because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And **SO HE CONDEMNED SIN IN SINFUL MAN**, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, **WHO DO NOT LIVE ACCORDING TO THE SINFUL NATURE** but according to the Spirit. **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**. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs-heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

(Those involved with the writing of this study actually wished to have this reading put into neon lighting but realized it was not cost effective.)

Paul is in agreement with his own words, whether it is something he wrote in Corinthians, Galatians, Romans or any of his other writings.

For those who live in God, they live in victory not defeat. Falling down is not a continual part of their life, instead they choose victory over sin and its author. Those who live in God know that they no longer live by the sinful nature for now they live in God, that Spirit that raised Christ from the dead.

***...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 it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

Crosses have been erected, a grave has been unearthed, the whole that supposedly held the cross has been embellished and a mosque built for it, a grave cloth has been held up as proof of the Messiah, tours are given of where the Messiah supposedly walked and a place is declared as the holy land and a day of worship has been declared because the Messiah rose on the first day of the week and the experience of being raised up with Him is left to dancing, yelling, jumping up and down, speaking in tongues, prophesying, signing a baptismal certificate, singing in the choir, paying tithe, submitting to church leadership, (no matter what they do) becoming an elder or eldress, everything but being set free from sin. And when living without sin is even attempted to be brought to the forefront of people's minds, it is quickly called a lie and then ignored so that hopefully its presenter will think again before mentioning anything about it in the future.

But for those who live in God, the old sinful nature must die and the new man (the new creation) be raised up in a resurrection of eternal life. But if the discussion of life and death is left up to an idea of breathing or not breathing, then any thought of continuing on with this thing called Christian living is for nothing.

Christ has been raised from the dead and we who have died with Him are raised up with Him and rule with Him in heavenly places as priests and kingdoms that are not of this world. But for those who continue to live in the sinful nature and teach others the lie of sinful living, to them the resurrection is of no effect and they deny the power of God to raise the dead.

***Eph 2:1-10** As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-it is by grace you have been saved. **AND GOD RAISED US UP WITH CHRIST AND SEATED US WITH HIM IN THE HEAVENLY REALMS IN CHRIST JESUS, IN ORDER THAT IN THE COMING AGES HE MIGHT SHOW THE INCOMPARABLE RICHES OF HIS GRACE, EXPRESSED IN HIS KINDNESS TO US IN CHRIST JESUS.** For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

The idea of anyone sitting in heavenly places is not accepted by most, for most have not had the experience of truly being set free from sin. At best they have had an experience or two of being 'saved' (as it were) as it has been presented to them by a spiritual speaker who they felt knew more than they did on the subject. But as time goes by and sin is still a part of their life they know that something is wrong.

But at the same time many like that form of freedom that allows them to believe they are saved in their sins. For them salvation is saying they are a Christian and attending church regularly (or irregularly whatever the case may be.)

But for those who do believe that God's Word is true, they know that the power of God is available for anyone who wants to be free just as their Savior before them.

Therefore believing in the resurrection is far more than just mouthing the words, it is the realization of what the resurrection is all about.

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. (Here it is, pray that you don't miss it.) For since death came through a man, (Adam) the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man (The Messiah.) For as in Adam all die, (For the wages of sin is death.) so in Christ all will be made alive (But the gift of God is eternal Life.) But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. (Please do not traditionalize this point. If you do you will miss it! The Messiah has won the victory over hell and the grave. This is not a future statement. Paul is just stating things in a timeline fashion.) For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all. (Is God our all-in-all?)

Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them? (This does not say that Paul believes this, but is just mentioning what others believe.) And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? **I DIE EVERY DAY-I MEAN THAT, BROTHERS**-just as surely as I glory over you in Christ Jesus our Lord. If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

No one buries Paul in a tomb every day so that he may rise again for another day, but he dies to sin so that he is alive in Christ. This must be our life, to die and be raised up with Him and have victory over sin (death) and be alive in Christ.

Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God-I say this to your shame. But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" How foolish!

I am glad Paul says that, at least no one can say that I said that or treated them as though the question they asked was foolish. But as Paul so rightly puts it, it is a foolish question to ask. Why not rather ask, 'How do I die so I may be raised again a new creature in Him?' But instead most will try to become involved in a scientific understanding so that what the eye can see or mind can think is all they can imagine. But God has a different vision. His eyes see a far different world that goes beyond human demands of science so called.

In the end, we need His vision, His mind so we may perceive His knowledge and walk in His Way and live in His Kingdom so we may become the trees planted along the river of Life that continually bear fruit.

What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

We are His body if we will die to sin and let Him in.

If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. (*John 4:23-24 Yet 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.*) So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. (*John 10:9-10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*) The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. 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. (*John 18:36 Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."*) (*John 15:18-19 "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you."*) (*John 17:13-19 "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for **THEY ARE NOT OF THE WORLD ANY MORE THAN I AM OF THE WORLD.** My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. **THEY ARE NOT OF THE WORLD, EVEN AS I AM NOT OF IT.** Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be*

truly sanctified.) And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. (**Matt 12:22-28** *Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. Could this be the Son of David?" But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons." Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom (Satan) divided against itself (Satan) will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. If Satan (An evil kingdom) drives out Satan, (An evil kingdom) **HE IS DIVIDED AGAINST HIMSELF**. How then can his kingdom stand? And if I (The Kingdom) drive out demons by Beelzebub, (Satan, the evil kingdom) by whom do your people drive them out? (Which kingdom?) So then, they will be your judges. But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God (Christ the Messiah) has come upon you.*) Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. (**Ezek 33:1-6** *The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, speak to your countrymen and say to them: 'When I bring the sword against a land, and the people of the land choose one of their men and make him their watchman, and he sees the sword coming against the land and blows the trumpet to warn the people, then if anyone hears the trumpet but does not take warning and the sword comes and takes his life, his blood will be on his own head. Since he heard the sound of the trumpet but did not take warning, his blood will be on his own head. If he had taken warning, he would have saved himself. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes the life of one of them, that man will be taken away because of his sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for his blood.'*) (**Joel 2:1-2** *Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand- a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was of old nor ever will be in ages to come.*) For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. (**Ezek 37:1-14** *The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, "Son of man, **CAN THESE BONES LIVE?**" I said, "O Sovereign LORD, you alone know." Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: **I WILL MAKE BREATH ENTER YOU, AND YOU WILL COME TO LIFE**. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; **I WILL PUT BREATH IN YOU, AND YOU WILL COME TO LIFE. THEN YOU WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD.**'" So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: **COME FROM THE FOUR WINDS, O breath, and breathe into these slain, that they may live.**'" So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet-a vast army. Then he said to me: "Son of man, **THESE BONES ARE THE WHOLE HOUSE OF ISRAEL**. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, **I AM GOING TO OPEN YOUR GRAVES AND BRING YOU UP FROM THEM; I WILL BRING YOU BACK TO THE LAND OF ISRAEL. THEN YOU, MY PEOPLE, WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD, WHEN I OPEN YOUR GRAVES AND BRING YOU UP FROM THEM. I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT IN YOU AND YOU WILL LIVE, AND I WILL SETTLE YOU IN YOUR OWN LAND. THEN YOU WILL KNOW THAT I THE LORD HAVE SPOKEN, AND I HAVE DONE IT, DECLARES THE LORD.**'") For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. 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." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. **BUT THANKS BE TO GOD! HE GIVES US THE VICTORY THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.** 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.*



'Now you've done it, I know you are not telling the truth now. Everyone knows that this is speaking about the *end of the age* and everyone knows that means the end of the world. Now you are trying to twist the scriptures to meet your doctrine as you say others do.'

Yes it does seem as though that could be taking place right here. But before we make any demands let's see what God has spoken about the end of the age.

**Matt 13:36-50** Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field." He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. **THE HARVEST IS THE END OF THE AGE**, and the harvesters are angels. "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it. "Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. **THIS IS HOW IT WILL BE AT THE END OF THE AGE**. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

**Matt 24:3-14** As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and **WHAT WILL BE THE SIGN OF YOUR COMING AND OF THE END OF THE AGE?**" Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains. "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, **AND THEN THE END WILL COME**.

**Matt 28:16-20** Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "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**."

**1 Cor 10:6-13** Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry." We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did-and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. We should not test the Lord, as some of them did-and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble, as some of them did-and were killed by the destroying angel. **THESE THINGS HAPPENED TO THEM AS EXAMPLES AND WERE WRITTEN DOWN AS WARNINGS FOR US, ON WHOM THE FULFILLMENT OF THE AGES HAS COME**. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

**Heb 9:24-27** For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. **BUT NOW HE**

**HAS APPEARED ONCE FOR ALL AT THE END OF THE AGES** to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

It has been taught and widely accepted as the truth that the Bible writers many times did not understand what they were writing. This has been offered up as proof evidence that issues like this one must then be re-interpreted for they cannot possibly mean what they say.

But interestingly enough, the many reinterpretations that have been interjected into God's Word have caused the so-called body of Christ to be divided and sub-divided into what we see today of what has become a denominational smorgasbord of beliefs.

But before we go too far into pointing out what is wrong with this picture, let's see what the Messiah said as to what time was the end and just when was to be the harvest spoken of in Matt 13.

**Matt 9:35-38** *Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."*

**Matt 13:24-30** *Jesus told them another parable: "THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. "The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' "An enemy did this," he replied. "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' "No," he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. AT THAT TIME I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"*

**Matt 21:33-46** *"Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit. "The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said. "But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.' So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end," they replied, "and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time." Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes"? "Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed." When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, **THEY KNEW HE WAS TALKING ABOUT THEM.** They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.*

**Mark 4:26-29** *He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because **THE HARVEST HAS COME.**"*

**Luke 10:1-3** *After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "**THE HARVEST IS PLENTIFUL**, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.*

**John 4:34-38** *"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, **OPEN YOUR EYES AND LOOK AT THE FIELDS! THEY ARE RIPE FOR HARVEST. EVEN NOW THE REAPER DRAWS HIS WAGES, EVEN NOW HE HARVESTS THE CROP FOR ETERNAL LIFE**, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor."*

The Messiah made it very clear just what time it was and that the end of the age had come. No one needs to misunderstand it or misinterpret it to fit any particular doctrine. Emmanuel, God with us spoke it loud and clear that the time had come for the harvest and that the day of judgment had arrived.

**John 9:39** *Jesus said, "FOR JUDGMENT I HAVE COME INTO THIS WORLD, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind."*

**John 12:30-33** *Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.*

**John 16:7-11** *But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.*

Judgment and the end of the age was far different than man has made it to seem. But it is only when God comes into the heart and heals the vision of those who want to be free from Satan's lies and deceit that the story of salvation can be clearly seen.

## ***1 Corinthians 16***

Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me.

Wow! If it were really just that easy. But I guess Paul just doesn't understand the protocol that must be followed for anything like this to happen. Requests must first be submitted by the 3rd Monday of each month and then those in charge will investigate the request, and if they feel it to be worthy of their attention it might be submitted before the board for a vote (as long as something of greater importance does not come along in the mean-time.)

Anyone who wants what Paul is requesting must understand the way things work. The church cannot just throw time, effort or finances to the wind you-know. I mean, that would not be the actions of a good steward of God's money would it? Besides, those who have given to the cause want a tax-deductible receipt and want to know that their money is being used wisely. And let's not forget, the church has its own bills that must be paid first. There are parking lots to be paved, pews to be padded, new rugs installed, a new sanctuary built and missionaries requesting funds. Just how much do you think can be done before the church goes broke? Are we really our brothers keeper anyway? I can't help if you spent your money on things I don't think you needed anyway; and who says your particular cause is worth it anyway? Hay, wait a minute, you're not of this flock anyway, sorry.

After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you-for I will be going through Macedonia. Perhaps I will stay with you awhile, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go. I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.

Who would oppose Paul, isn't he speaking the truth, doesn't the church love the truth?

If Timothy comes, see to it that he has nothing to fear while he is with you, for he is carrying on the work of the Lord, just as I am. No one, then, should refuse to accept him. Send him on his way in peace so that he may return to me. I am expecting him along with the brothers. Now about our brother Apollos: I strongly urged him to go to you with the brothers. He was quite unwilling to go now, but he will go when he has the opportunity. Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of

courage; be strong. **Do everything in love.** You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints. I urge you, brothers, to submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work, and labors at it. I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived, because they have supplied what was lacking from you. For they refreshed my spirit and yours also. Such men deserve recognition.

Yes those who work deserve recognition, but no different than every part of the body (no matter its seeming insignificants or not) for can a man hate his own body. No, he loves his body and treats it with respect.

The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house. All the brothers here send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss. I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. If anyone does not love the Lord-a curse be on him. Come, O Lord! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen.

# 3

## 2 Corinthians 1

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God in Corinth, together with all the saints throughout Achaia: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, **SO THAT WE CAN COMFORT THOSE IN ANY TROUBLE WITH THE COMFORT WE OURSELVES HAVE RECEIVED FROM GOD.** For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.

Our sufferings, our discipline that comes from a Loving God is our comfort, for what father does not discipline his child so they may learn what is needed. So, that would mean that once the lesson is learned that the one who learned it would now have a whole new view of what was wrong and would not do it again. Therefore the idea of continuing to do wrong until sometime in the future when God comes to take His sinful children home is NOT THE TRUTH.

*Heb 12:7-13 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. "Make level paths for your feet," so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.*

Lord God heal our eyes so we may see what you see, for we have been taught since childhood that discipline and punishment are awful ways to treat children. But we are your children and we want to grow up to maturity so we may see clearly as we are seen and see the result of the discipline you have given to us for our growth into righteousness. Heal us Lord and fill us with Your Mind so we may perceive Your Way and walk in it.

This is our prayer as we continue in this study, to see far deeper than anyone has gone in a very long time.

And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort. We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. **BUT THIS HAPPENED THAT WE MIGHT NOT RELY ON OURSELVES BUT ON GOD, WHO RAISES THE DEAD.** He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

Do we see the hand of God at work in our lives when times get rough? Do we see how each and every thing that happens is for our good? Can we look up and say **Praise God?** If we are mature (as many say they are) then those

are the words that will be on the tongues of those who live in God as they walk with God and know His leading in their life.

Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace. **FOR WE DO NOT WRITE YOU ANYTHING YOU CANNOT READ OR UNDERSTAND.** And I hope that, as you have understood us in part, you will come to understand fully that you can boast of us just as we will boast of you in the day of the Lord Jesus.

If we accept the idea of worldly wisdom as being a part of life, then Paul himself doesn't understand what he is saying and therefore human ideas and concepts would be called upon to fill in the blanks that God has left unanswered. And if Paul does not understand (and he is the major writer of the New Testament) then where is our comfort in calling ourselves Believer's in a book that may very well be only a man's opinion instead of being God's Word that was supposed to be written by holy men (as well as the idea that it seems to be something that is only written in some kind of code that only God understand and is waiting to reveal it is some future time in His Kingdom.)

This is a thought provoking moment in that we would believe that God would do something of this sort that puts Him in the position of playing hide and seek with His creation. He would tell them to obey Him, He would give them specific directions within the command, He would tell them to read and understand and then would judge them as guilty of not obeying Him while holding back some of what He told them not allowing them to understand. So God would destroy them while not giving them an understanding of what He said to them! WOW!!!!

This thought must be weighed out in our minds and a decision must be made as to whether or not God's Word is steadfast and True without human thoughts or wisdom being thrown into the mix. If the decision is made for opinions, biases and prejudices to be involved with God's Word, then ground will be found for a body of so-called Believers that can worship One God and yet be distanced from each other by opinions, biases and prejudices. Even though that is the meaning of a house divided, those who hold to the idea of opinions and human thinking do not believe that it will bring about a fall as God said it would, and so they continue to speak their own ideas and no longer care to know God's Word on the subject. But we will go on and see what God has spoken in His Word and will pass beyond human wisdom and opinions and find ourselves in a place where we may agree with Paul when he says; **FOR WE DO NOT WRITE YOU ANYTHING YOU CANNOT READ OR UNDERSTAND.**

Because I was confident of this, I planned to visit you first so that you might benefit twice. I planned to visit you on my way to Macedonia and to come back to you from Macedonia, and then to have you send me on my way to Judea. When I planned this, did I do it lightly? Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath I say, "Yes, yes" and "No, no"?

For most this is just an accepted way of life, for they believe that life is full of *yes* and *no*. For those who believe this, they live in a world full of grey areas where they do not see the hand of God at work and therefore are left to finding their own way and come up with their own laws, rules and thoughts for the day. They see that life has been left to self-esteem, self-reliance and a survival-of-the-fittest mentality. Those who walk this road know that to survive they must adhere to the idea of an ever changing and never the same world where ethics and morals must be adapted to the moment or situation they find themselves in. To them life is Yin-Yang (good/bad) and thus the idea of a God of only one way is only for those who will not accept the world in which they live.

But if Paul is correct (and he is) then the world as many know it is built upon false ideas and faulty doctrines that only leads to opinions, biases and prejudices which are found not only in the world but also in all the religious bodies that exist today. And that should not be, for the church is suppose to be holy to God alone.

But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No." For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes." For all the promises of God in him are yes, and in him Amen, to the glory of God by us.

Yes: NT:3483 nai (nahee); a primary particle of strong affirmation; yes: even so, surely, truth, verily, yea, yes.

In God the only thing that is found is yes. There is never a no. But this can only be seen with open eyes and open hearts, for the ONLY THING that God's true children ask of Him are those things that pertain to righteousness. Sadly many of those who claim to be His children have imagined that God is in the business of cars, planes, boats, houses, land, stock and bonds, entertainment, food, clothes, bank accounts, jewelry, vacations, mortgages, jobs, music, sermons, offering plates and the list goes on and on. The idea has been taught and accepted that God is like a genie waiting to bestow on the faithful adherent a bounty of blessings as long as they openly give to the church their tithes and offerings showing their desire for God's storehouse to be filled with an endless supply of funds. And they have also been presented with the idea that even if they give with all their heart that God sometimes has to say no. But that is ok, because they are told that somewhere down the road He will say yes again and everything will work out just fine

**James 1:16-27** *Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.*

*So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

*Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*

*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.*

*If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*

The way of God leads to righteousness, not a big bank account, not an expensive car, not lots of jewelry, not a big house, not a crystal cathedral or mega church, not expensive clothing or a private school, not a table full of luscious food and not a feeling of peace when your life is not what you know it should be in God. But of course these things are accepted as truth as long as we believe what we have been told rather than knowing for ourselves what God has said about it.

Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. I call God as my witness that it was in order to spare you that I did not return to Corinth. Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm.

*...who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ.* It becomes very obvious that nowhere in Scripture is the command to fall short of the goal but instead it is to stand firm. So what is achieved by fighting for the freedom to fall down or fall short of the goal just because we can?

As we have learned, those who live in Christ do not fall short nor do they live according to the sinful nature. In fact the sinful nature is now understood to be an enemy of God and therefore to be rejected and removed from our life. We want to be born again, not of sinful stock but instead as heirs to the throne and co-rulers in Christ. God has given this Gift by grace, so let's lay hold of it and never let it go.

## **2 Corinthians 2**

So I made up my mind that I would not make another painful visit to you. For if I grieve you, who is left to make me glad but you whom I have grieved? I wrote as I did so that when I came I should not be distressed by those who ought to make me rejoice. I had confidence in all of you, that you would all share my joy. For I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you.

One of the hardest things to do in life is to receive a rebuke in love or to know how to rebuke in love. There has been so little of the Love of God shown or made known so that mankind could learn from it. Therefore there has been much grief and sorrow that has ruined many and left a door open for Satan to bring in distress, depression, anger and a myriad of possessive emotions.

Even though this has occurred, it is a wise person who chooses to let God rule in their life that they may know God's version of a rebuke and be able to experience His discipline and understand it to be a good thing, to be a testimony of God's rulership in their life.

If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you, to some extent-not to put it too severely. The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.

Discipline may be very hard to imagine as a good thing especially in a world that has deemed discipline as almost inhumane. Even though the court systems of the land hand down judgments to supposedly teach people that breaking the rules is a bad thing, the teaching of discipline has been taken away by that same court system so that criminals learn to use the system to help them break the law, and in homes in many countries children learn that those who were once seen as authority figures (mom and dad) are now just some kind of care-giver that has no say-so in the upbringing of the child.

This is the outcome of disobedience to God in forgetting Him and not allowing Him to be the only ruler in the lives of those who have instead wanted man to rule over them just as Israel did before them.

***1 Sam 8:1-8** When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges for Israel. The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba. But his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice. So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have." But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. And the LORD told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; **IT IS NOT YOU THEY HAVE REJECTED, BUT THEY HAVE REJECTED ME AS THEIR KING.** As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you.*

Why did they do it, why have we done this? What makes us want to have another human to rule over us. Isn't God enough? Why would the Creator God not be enough? Has He not shown His dominion, power and authority that all may believe? Must He prove even more who He is by some kind of stupendous miracle so we will finally follow Him and Him alone? Is that what it will take for us to allow Him to rule His people again?

Because Israel would not listen to God, He set before them a picture of what the rulership of man would do for them.

***1 Sam 8:9-20** Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and **LET THEM KNOW WHAT THE KING WHO WILL REIGN OVER THEM WILL DO.**" Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king. He said, "This is what the king who will reign over you will do: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. Your menservants and maidservants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use. He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. **WHEN THAT DAY COMES, YOU WILL CRY OUT FOR RELIEF FROM THE KING YOU HAVE CHOSEN, AND THE LORD WILL NOT ANSWER YOU IN THAT DAY.**" **BUT THE PEOPLE REFUSED TO LISTEN** to Samuel. "No!" they said. "**WE WANT A KING OVER US. THEN WE WILL BE LIKE ALL THE OTHER NATIONS,** with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles."*



Truly as it has been said; to obey is better than to sacrifice. Why should we believe that we are born to ere and so continually need to confess (sacrifice) for the mistakes (sins) we have committed even to the point of setting up men to rule over us in the place of God? Will we continue in the way of Israel and ignore God and reject Him by choosing others to rule over us? Will we use God's Word to try to make it seem that human rulership (that which God said was the act of rejecting Him) is set up by God as His desire and His will to be done? ...**THEY HAVE REJECTED ME AS THEIR KING.**

The reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven-if there was anything to forgive-I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

If we truly are aware of Satan's schemes then what are we doing about it? But if we preach that sinning catches us unaware or that we have to live with sin (Satan) in our lives, then are we aware of his schemes? **NO!!!** Instead his schemes have been allowed into what is called church through the idea that sometimes you fall (or as some say *you make a mistake*) without knowing you have done anything, therefore you have not seen or been aware of Satan's schemes. But the idea of sinning (making mistakes) has been accepted as just a part of life and therefore to sacrifice (repent to God for what you have done wrong) is something that must be done to be forgiven (even for what you have not been aware of) and then to continue this merry-go-round existence over and over again without ever experiencing the power, dominion and authority of God in the life. And all this is done while claiming to be worshipping (obeying) God and believing what He has said.

Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord had opened a door for me, I still had no peace of mind, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said good-bye to them and went on to Macedonia. But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life.

The Word of God is a healing balm to the weary, but to the one who wants what they want when they want it, it is the horrible smell of death. And so the question is asked;

And who is equal to such a task?

Many treat the giving of what God has given as a job, in fact paychecks are written to church employees and received for work performed by individuals on behalf of the denomination they work for. Yet while buildings are erected and programs set up (and then replaced with new ones) God's Word is left up to biases, prejudices, opinions and a committee vote. So the question; ...*who is equal to such a task?*

The problem is that Truth is not a popular message for it deals with the task of having victory over sin and removing those things that have gotten in the way of seeing God as He really is and knowing His will, and in order to do this a change must occur in the mind as to what is desired, either worldly applause or God's Love? For many this is an agonizing decision for it means no longer standing in the spotlight but now being a servant to all. But for the one who lives in God it is the **ONLY** desire found in their heart, to serve in whatever means is asked of them.

Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God.

*But what are we to do with all the trinkets and books being sold for a profit? I mean come-on-now. There is nothing wrong with making a little money is there? Gotta pay the bills somehow.*

Did our Lord and Savior leave us a legacy of how to turn the truth into a means to make a profit? Do the accepted ways of the day justify the means? Will we take what God has given to us and work it in such a way as to allow us to do things that though God has said *don't do it* that we will find a way around the command so that we may do it? Will we allow those who claim to be leaders of God's people convince us that what they say is ok to do and that it must be because they say-so? Is God's kingdom always going to be seen as a structure dependent upon

money and things as the way God works with His people today, while the Bible teaches of a Messiah that had nothing and told those who would follow Him that they too would have to leave behind everything as He did?

These questions and more need to be answered so it may be seen as to whether or not the Word of God can be trusted to mean just what it says in this day and age of technology and high finance. Will we allow God's Word to teach us (even if it hurts) to learn what He has to teach us? Or is His Word to be left up to biases, prejudices, opinions and commandments of men?

## **2 Corinthians 3**

Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you? You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

In every way Paul works to raise the view of those who will look and see with heavenly vision that goes beyond human reasoning. Therefore in order to begin to imagine what Paul is saying each person must leave behind the kind of thinking that uses human wisdom and instead allow God's mind to fill each person's thinking so they each may see what He sees and allow His knowledge to rule supreme in their life. And when that takes place the issue so many have with Paul that his writings are hard to understand will disappear.

As Christ used parables to point out a truth that had been kept hidden by church leaders, Paul uses the same analogy within the discussion of slavery (living with sin, and the law points out sinfulness and shows how many have become slaves to it) and how those who truly believe the Word of God are just like a letter that is written as proof evidence of the power of God. But unlike the tablets of stone that were written by God to point out Israel's sins, those who believe and have overcome sins power point out that greater Law of Love that lives within their heart and witnesses to the fact that they have been set free from slavery.

**Gal 4:21-26** *Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise. These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.*

Paul has a wonderful message of freedom for those who wish to hear it. But just as Israel decided long ago to turn away from the voice of God and instead have human rulership, most will not listen to that voice today unless it comes through a human orator that they imagine is speaking on behalf of God. And those who choose this road to travel become bound up to human rules and dogma that must guide them or they will lose their way, for they are merely human beings that need continual guidance so they may know what they should do and when they should do it. These little children never grow up and never learn to eat meat but are continually breast fed and nursed along the way.

**Isa 30:9-10** *For they are stubborn rebels. They tell my prophets, "Shut up-we don't want any more of your reports!" Or they say, "Don't tell us the truth; tell us nice things; tell us lies. Forget all this gloom; we've heard more than enough about your 'Holy One of Israel' and all he says."*

**Heb 5:13-14** *Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*

Milk (those first principles) is an elementary food and must be left behind in the growth to maturity. The first principles (elementary teachings) are those things we first learned, and though they were a starting point they are just FIRST principles. But sadly most have taken those first principles (the elementary teachings) and have made them into rituals that show their refusal to go forward.

**Heb 6:1-3** *Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of **REPENTANCE FROM ACTS THAT LEAD TO DEATH**, and of **FAITH IN GOD, INSTRUCTION ABOUT BAPTISMS**, the **LAYING ON OF HANDS**, **THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD**, and **ETERNAL JUDGMENT**. **AND GOD PERMITTING, WE WILL DO SO.***

God permitting, we will go on and see His understanding and grow up in Him. We cannot stay in the same place as so many do as they listen to the same sermons they have heard over and over again and talk about the same things over and over again in Bible class. We must go on, and we will.

Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant-not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

It would seem at this point that many would ask a very pertinent question; just why is Paul speaking of a difference between something that God gave to the nation of Israel (and seen by many as the answer to humanities problems, the law) and God Himself. Shouldn't it be that if God gives something that it must be good especially if He makes a statement that it would be forever or for generations to come as He did when He gave Israel the law and the temple service and lead them through the wilderness?

Yes, it would seem as such (that is, until the rest of the story is told and then we quickly realize that what was given by God was given to an unbelieving and disobedient people who would not listen to His voice.)

**Heb 3:7-19** *"Today, if you hear his voice, **DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS YOU DID IN THE REBELLION, DURING THE TIME OF TESTING IN THE DESERT, WHERE YOUR FATHERS TESTED AND TRIED ME AND FOR FORTY YEARS SAW WHAT I DID. THAT IS WHY I WAS ANGRY WITH THAT GENERATION, AND I SAID, 'THEIR HEARTS ARE ALWAYS GOING ASTRAY, AND THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN MY WAYS.'** SO I DECLARED ON OATH IN MY ANGER, 'THEY SHALL NEVER ENTER MY REST.'"* **SEE TO IT, BROTHERS, THAT NONE OF YOU HAS A SINFUL, UNBELIEVING HEART THAT TURNS AWAY FROM THE LIVING GOD.** *But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." **WHO WERE THEY WHO HEARD AND REBELLED? WERE THEY NOT ALL THOSE MOSES LED OUT OF EGYPT?** And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.*

Of course most of those who demand law over God and wish to see the law given at Mt. Sinai (as well as church law made by men as their saving grace) will not hear anything more on the subject even though Paul makes it emphatically clear that the law cannot save anyone. As good as it has appeared to many that law is a good thing, they ignore that even the glory that was shining from Moses face was fading away even as Moses was speaking to the people.

**2 Cor 3:9-14** *If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. **AND IF WHAT WAS FADING AWAY CAME WITH GLORY, HOW MUCH GREATER IS THE GLORY OF THAT WHICH LASTS!***

*Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance **WAS FADING AWAY**. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read.*

One of the hardest things to see is why God has used so many different ways to reach His people (and that He has a far better way for those who will listen to His voice (one that is not based upon death for the law breaker, but on Life.)) For those who hear His voice that Life is their life because they live in Him. Therefore it is not left to just claiming that you are a child of Abraham because someone has told you that you are but is instead about being one

in Him and obedient to His Word. Rules and laws pale in comparison to falling in Love with God and living in Him where there is no sin or disobedience.

*Gal 3:6-7 Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."*  
**UNDERSTAND, THEN, THAT THOSE WHO BELIEVE ARE CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM.**  
*John 14:23-24 Jesus replied, "IF ANYONE LOVES ME, HE WILL OBEY MY TEACHING. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching.*

Rules and commands can only end in death just as it did over and over again for so many Israelites for those who never become free from disobedience, and those who never overcome disobedience show in their continual falling down that they have not falling in love with the One they say is their God.

Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was, will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!

There are a couple of questions that beg to be asked at this point; Just how many times and how many ways does Paul have to ask the question or explain the difference between Life and death (the law on stone compared to the Law of God) before we get it? And; Just how many ways can it be said before we see what has been said?

Paul as well as many others have said it clearly, therefore it is up to us to see into the mind of God for an understanding and to have Him heal our vision so we may see the Truth.

*Rev 3:18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.*

Paul was speaking to a diverse group of people, Gentiles that had heard of the Messiah and Jews who were slowly becoming aware that they had been lied to and had helped to crucify their Lord and Savior. Now the message was becoming clear, now their eyes were opening and the scriptures were being understood for the first time in their life. They were being healed of the blindness that had kept them from seeing the Truth and the veil was being removed and a new and greater picture was being painted before their eyes. They were becoming the children of a new life under a new covenant that was not based upon disobedience and death but on Life and Faith. Not a blind faith but one based on power, dominion and authority.

Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. **WE ARE NOT LIKE MOSES**, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. But their minds were made dull, **FOR TO THIS DAY THE SAME VEIL REMAINS WHEN THE OLD COVENANT IS READ.** It has not been removed, because **ONLY IN CHRIST IS IT TAKEN AWAY.**

Christ fulfilled the entire law and prophets; and once the answer was given and the fulfillment had taken place there was no need for anything that pointed to the answer for fulfillment. In other words, once you have found what you are looking for, you quit looking for what you have found. The law pointed to the answer (Israel's need of a Savior) and He came at the time appointed. But for those who demanded to live by law (death) they had become blind to the Law of Life.

Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

This was a wonderful promise given to Israel, that if they would allow God to remove the veil from their stony hearts that He would give them a new heart of flesh and a Law that they could Live by.

**Ezek 11:17-20** "Therefore say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again.' "They will return to it and remove all its vile images and detestable idols. 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.

**Ezek 36:24-32** "For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. 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. You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God. I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you. I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine. Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices. I want you to know that I am not doing this for your sake, declares the Sovereign LORD. Be ashamed and disgraced for your conduct, O house of Israel!

This was done and we can see with open eyes and learn from others not to lean on our own understanding but on God for His wisdom and knowledge. Therefore it is time to wake up and listen to the Lord who will take away the veil so we may reflect God's glory and be transformed into His likeness and live as overcomer's through the power of the Spirit. But do we know that Spirit?

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Yes it is true, the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom. This is not a misprint nor something to be understood through any doctrine of any denomination about the God-head, but is the Truth the Way and the Life. Thus, as it has been said, and as we have discussed this issue previously in this study;

**Deut 6:4-5** Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

**Mark 12:29-33** "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, **THE LORD OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE.** Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that **GOD IS ONE** and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

**Gal 3:19-20** What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator. A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but **GOD IS ONE.**

For those who are born of tradition and doctrines, this is heresy, but for those who are born of God it is the Truth, the Way and the Life. Therefore there is only One Lord, One Baptism, One Law, One Head of the body, One Throne, One Kingdom, One Spirit and One God to live in, and His name is THE WORD OF GOD.

## **2 Corinthians 4**

Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

So much said in such a small space. Renounce secret and shameful ways, no deception, do not distort the Word of God and any veiling of the gospel only happens to those who are perishing! Wow! Are we to believe this, is it really the truth and nothing but the truth?

Yes it is the Truth. But as to whether or not it is believed, that is left up to the one who says they *believe*.

Paul does not leave any stone unturned and leaves no place for falling down and getting up as being a part of the Believer's life. And as far as the constant excuse of *some things will never be understood until God comes and takes His unknowledgeable children home* Paul makes it clear that ignorance of God's Word is only left to the perishing.

It is past time to wake up from our deathly sleep and be healed of our sight problems so we are not found without the knowledge that we need in order to not be found among the perishing. And there is only One God to serve who will heal our blindness, and it is not *the god of this age*.

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

One of the sad realities in this world is the fact of what most have allowed to take place in their minds of the issue of right and wrong and what they believe and just why they believe it. Through the process of education (whether from a pulpit or a class room) the human sciences have been taught from childhood and have been given as the answer to such questions as *why we are here* and *just what we are to believe* so that God's Word has not only been consigned to the back seat but has been found faulty and questionable at best.

Thus God's Word is seen by many as out of date and limited in a day and age of man's technical advancements and intellectual growth; for surely how can God compare to such wisdom and knowledge that comes to us through our doctors and scientists who know so much about the mind and body? And through these so called avenues of wisdom we have realized our need for counseling, psychoanalysis, tolerance and our need to be medicated. And we now know that genetics is to blame for our problems and all we need is to seek for an alteration to our basic building structure and take more pills for all of our ills. More of men's ideas and more medication and less of God. We know that all we need is yoga for our minds and money in our bank accounts and a little more fun and much less of a hassle of what God says about the way we should be living. And to finish the icing on the cake what we need is more governmental action and solid leadership and we will change the world. More of men and less of God, that's all we need. Let's see what God has to say about this idea.

**Matt 7:13-27** *"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. "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. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."*

Is God's Word enough, have we outgrown it through this technological age of space travel and nuclear science and does it really find a place in our world where our basic need is self-esteem and good survival skills?

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair;

persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

Paul made it clear that all he would preach is *Jesus Christ and Him crucified*. He saw just what the life, death and resurrection meant to God's creation and that if the people would look they too would see the open door that leads to the very presence of God wherein lies the answers to all their questions. He saw that the work of God was complete and prophecy fulfilled and the power of sin broken. The accuser of God's creation had been thrown down and a new creation was being built, and for those with eyes wide open and minds to think, God was forming a new heaven and a new earth that would become filled with that Rock that came out of the mountain of God without hands. Everything the law and the prophets had spoken about the coming of the Messiah had taken place and the Word of God had become living flesh. Man's wisdom had nothing to do with it nor any effort that man could muster. Therefore Paul knew that in order for God to live in His people that they would have to die to their ideas about self and be raised up to a new creation that is not of this world where sin no longer could/would be found among those who are called His very own.

**Rom 6** *What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

*If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.*

*In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.*

*What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.*

*I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. 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. When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

For those who believe that God's Word is enough, for them the Word is the LAST Word on the subject and that God does not speak with a forked tongue saying in one place that sin is not to be a part of those who believe, while at the same time leading His people to believe that they are just frail human beings bound to sin and mistakes to the end. God does not say at one time; obey my laws or die and then at another time say; that's ok, my grace will get you by. He is the same yesterday as He is today and will be tomorrow and we can count on that.

It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also

raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence. All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

This is not a future statement, Christ has already died and been raised up from the grave and sat at the right hand of Power and He has already lifted up His own and seated them with Him on His throne and they live with Him in heavenly places. That was the reality that those who were living by the new covenant had to face, of living a new life and what it meant to no longer be a slave to sin but to be *free indeed*.

***Eph 2:1-10*** As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-it is by grace you have been saved. And **GOD RAISED US UP WITH CHRIST AND SEATED US WITH HIM IN THE HEAVENLY REALMS IN CHRIST JESUS, IN ORDER THAT IN THE COMING AGES HE MIGHT SHOW THE INCOMPARABLE RICHES OF HIS GRACE, EXPRESSED IN HIS KINDNESS TO US IN CHRIST JESUS.** For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Sadly it has become evidently clear that God's Word for most is ultimately hard to understand and as far as they are concerned it can only be understood by someone who is deemed as wise in the Word. But after all is said and done even by those so-called wise men, God's Word is seen only in bits and pieces and not as one whole picture. It is read in a fashion of *a little here and a little there and it makes the reader fall backwards* instead of going forward in the Truth.

***Isa 28*** Woe to the city of Samaria, surrounded by her rich valley-Samaria, the pride and delight of the drunkards of Israel! Woe to her fading beauty, the crowning glory of a nation of men lying drunk in the streets! For the Lord will send a mighty army (the Assyrians) against you; like a mighty hailstorm he will burst upon you and dash you to the ground. The proud city of Samaria-yes, the joy and delight of the drunkards of Israel-will be hurled to the ground and trampled beneath the enemies' feet. Once glorious, her fading beauty surrounded by a fertile valley will suddenly be gone, greedily snatched away as an early fig is hungrily snatched and gobbled up!

Then at last the Lord Almighty himself will be their crowning glory, the diadem of beauty to his people who are left. He will give a longing for justice to your judges and great courage to your soldiers who are battling to the last before your gates. But Jerusalem is now led by drunks! Her priests and prophets reel and stagger, making stupid errors and mistakes. Their tables are covered with vomit; filth is everywhere.

**"WHO DOES ISAIAH THINK HE IS," THE PEOPLE SAY, "TO SPEAK TO US LIKE THIS! ARE WE LITTLE CHILDREN, BARELY OLD ENOUGH TO TALK? HE TELLS US EVERYTHING OVER AND OVER AGAIN, A LINE AT A TIME AND IN SUCH SIMPLE WORDS!"** (For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little.")

But they won't listen; the only language they can understand is punishment! So God will punish them by sending against them foreigners who speak strange gibberish! Only then will they listen to him! They could have rest in their own land if they would obey him, if they were kind and good. He told them that, but they wouldn't listen to him. **SO THE LORD WILL SPELL IT OUT FOR THEM AGAIN, REPEATING IT OVER AND OVER IN SIMPLE WORDS WHENEVER HE CAN; YET OVER THIS SIMPLE, STRAIGHTFORWARD MESSAGE THEY WILL STUMBLE AND FALL AND BE BROKEN, TRAPPED AND CAPTURED.** (But the word of the LORD was to them, "Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little,")

Therefore hear the word of the Lord, you scoffing rulers in Jerusalem:

You have struck a bargain with Death, you say, and sold yourselves to the devil in exchange for his protection against the Assyrians. "They can never touch us," you say, "for we are under the care of one who will deceive and fool them."



*But the Lord God says, "See, I am placing a Foundation Stone in Zion-a firm, tested, precious Cornerstone that is safe to build on. He who believes need never run away again. I will take the line and plummet of justice to check the foundation wall you built; it looks so fine, but it is so weak a storm of hail will knock it down! The enemy will come like a flood and sweep it away, and you will be drowned. I will cancel your agreement of compromise with Death and the devil, so when the terrible enemy floods in, you will be trampled into the ground. Again and again that flood will come and carry you off, until at last the unmixed horror of the truth of my warnings will finally dawn on you."*

*The bed you have made is far too short to lie on; the blankets are too narrow to cover you. The Lord will come suddenly and in anger, as at Mount Perazim and Gibeon, to do a strange, unusual thing-to destroy his own people! So scoff no more, lest your punishment be made even greater, for the Lord God has plainly told me that he is determined to crush you.*

*Listen to me, listen as I plead: Does a farmer always plow and never sow? Is he forever harrowing the soil and never planting it? Does he not finally plant his many kinds of grain, each in its own section of his land? He knows just what to do, for God has made him see and understand. He doesn't thresh all grains the same. A sledge is never used on dill, but it is beaten with a stick. A threshing wheel is never rolled on cummin, but it is beaten softly with a flail. Bread grain is easily crushed, so he doesn't keep on pounding it. The Lord Almighty is a wonderful teacher and gives the farmer wisdom.*

Or as it is said in the way most are used to hearing this reading;

*Isa 28 Woe to that wreath, the pride of Ephraim's drunkards, to the fading flower, his glorious beauty, set on the head of a fertile valley--to that city, the pride of those laid low by wine! See, the Lord has one who is powerful and strong. Like a hailstorm and a destructive wind, like a driving rain and a flooding downpour, he will throw it forcefully to the ground. That wreath, the pride of Ephraim's drunkards, will be trampled underfoot. That fading flower, his glorious beauty, set on the head of a fertile valley, will be like a fig ripe before harvest--as soon as someone sees it and takes it in his hand, he swallows it.*

*In that day the LORD Almighty will be a glorious crown, a beautiful wreath for the remnant of his people. He will be a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment, a source of strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate.*

*And these also stagger from wine and reel from beer: Priests and prophets stagger from beer and are befuddled with wine; they reel from beer, they stagger when seeing visions, they stumble when rendering decisions. All the tables are covered with vomit and there is not a spot without filth.*

**"WHO IS IT HE IS TRYING TO TEACH? TO WHOM IS HE EXPLAINING HIS MESSAGE? TO CHILDREN WEANED FROM THEIR MILK, TO THOSE JUST TAKEN FROM THE BREAST? FOR IT IS: DO AND DO, DO AND DO, RULE ON RULE, RULE ON RULE; A LITTLE HERE, A LITTLE THERE."**

*Very well then, with foreign lips and strange tongues God will speak to this people, to whom he said, "This is the resting place, let the weary rest"; and, "This is the place of repose"--but they would not listen.*

**SO THEN, THE WORD OF THE LORD TO THEM WILL BECOME: DO AND DO, DO AND DO, RULE ON RULE, RULE ON RULE; A LITTLE HERE, A LITTLE THERE--SO THAT THEY WILL GO AND FALL BACKWARD, BE INJURED AND SNARED AND CAPTURED.**

*Therefore hear the word of the LORD, you scoffers who rule this people in Jerusalem. You boast, "We have entered into a covenant with death, with the grave we have made an agreement. When an overwhelming scourge sweeps by, it cannot touch us, for we have made a lie our refuge and falsehood our hiding place."*

*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; hail will sweep away your refuge, the lie, and water will overflow your hiding place. Your covenant with death will be annulled; your agreement with the grave will not stand. When the overwhelming scourge sweeps by, you will be beaten down by it. As often as it comes it will carry you away; morning after morning, by day and by night, it will sweep through."*

*The understanding of this message will bring sheer terror. The bed is too short to stretch out on, the blanket too narrow to wrap around you. The LORD will rise up as he did at Mount Perazim, he will rouse himself as in the Valley of Gibeon--to do his work, his strange work, and perform his task, his alien task.*

*Now stop your mocking, or your chains will become heavier; the Lord, the LORD Almighty, has told me of the destruction decreed against the whole land.*

*Listen and hear my voice; pay attention and hear what I say. When a farmer plows for planting, does he plow continually? Does he keep on breaking up and harrowing the soil? When he has leveled the surface, does he not sow caraway and scatter cummin? Does he not plant wheat in its place, barley in its plot, and spelt in its field? His God instructs him and teaches him the right way.*

*Caraway is not threshed with a sledge, nor is a cartwheel rolled over cummin; caraway is beaten out with a rod, and cummin with a stick. Grain must be ground to make bread; so one does not go on threshing it forever. Though he drives the wheels of his threshing cart over it, his horses do not grind it. All this also comes from the LORD Almighty, wonderful in counsel and magnificent in wisdom.*

It is a horrible thing that has been done in the teaching of God's Word. Men have taken this reading and made it to look as though everyone is to study God's Word in a little here and a little there fashion. But God has said that when He comes to those who have to have it that way that it can only make them FALL BACKWARDS and that this kind of reading of God's Word is only for those who will not listen to God speak to them in any other way.

It is high time, yes PAST TIME for people everywhere to WAKE UP! God has spoken and He will talk with those who will listen to Him and will reveal His Word to those who will come to Him so they may rule with Him in their lives so that they may not lose heart.

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. **SO WE FIX OUR EYES NOT ON WHAT IS SEEN, BUT ON WHAT IS UNSEEN. FOR WHAT IS SEEN IS TEMPORARY, BUT WHAT IS UNSEEN IS ETERNAL.**

That is right, we do not fix our eyes on this world (what is seen) for those things are only temporary, but instead we fix our eyes on the ONLY thing that is eternal, GOD!

## **2 Corinthians 5**

Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, (**Eph 2:19-22** *Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him **THE WHOLE BUILDING** is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*) an eternal house in heaven, **NOT BUILT BY HUMAN HANDS.** (**Dan 2:34-35** *You watched **WHILE A STONE WAS CUT OUT WITHOUT HANDS**, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. **AND THE STONE THAT STRUCK THE IMAGE BECAME A GREAT MOUNTAIN AND FILLED THE WHOLE EARTH.***)

Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. (**Rev 3:14-18** *These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm- neither hot nor cold- I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white **CLOTHES TO WEAR**, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.*) For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. (**John 14:5-7** *Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and **THE LIFE**. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."*) Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us **THE SPIRIT** as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to

come. (2 **Cor 3:17-18** Now **THE LORD IS THE SPIRIT**, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from **THE LORD, WHO IS THE SPIRIT**.) Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. (We live by faith, not by sight.) We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For **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. (John 5:19-30 Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. Moreover, **THE FATHER JUDGES NO ONE, BUT HAS ENTRUSTED ALL JUDGMENT TO THE SON**, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is **COMING AND HAS NOW COME** when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. **AND HE HAS GIVEN HIM AUTHORITY TO JUDGE** because he is the Son of Man. "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. By myself I can do nothing; **I JUDGE** only as I hear, and **MY JUDGMENT** is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.)

The Messiah spoke these words knowing full well what He meant by them. Yet even though these words were given by God to be understood by those who heard them, it has been determined by most that they are cloaked in some kind of code or said as a metaphor that is in need of interpretation to make them say something of importance today about something yet to happen. For those who have chosen to travel that road, the Word of God is never allowed to answer itself or to say what it says but is left up to opinions as to how it is pertinent for the moment. Through the many long-winded speeches and books or papers written trying to show to the world that the Word of God is complicated and is in need of scholars or someone with special insight to show to everyone that anyone with this kind of learning is wise and should be recognized as such; the Bible has been interpreted, re-interpreted, sliced, diced, manipulated, dragged through the proverbial manure pile, used, abused, psychologized, re-evaluated and found to be highly questionable and only partially to be understood at best. And the answers that have been offered up to the questions asked have brought the world to believe that some parts of God's Word will never be understood until some future point of time (which is presented as meaning that God will someday take His unknowledgeable people home where He will then let them in on the secret which He kept hidden from them (and yet told them to read and understand.))

Without realizing what they have done, those who make claim to love God and have stated that He is their Savior, they show to the world a God that is no different than the gods of this world who play a game of hide and seek with their believers showing to them that only a god can do what has been asked of them. What kind of god is that?

But for those who will read and break free from men's demands that have been instilled into so many minds, they will see God's plain Truth spoken in simple language (as in *John 5*) that is written for anyone to see who wishes to know God as their friend.

In *John 5* as well as many other places in scripture, God spoke about what judgment was and who it had been given to and when it was to come. And no matter what anyone has said about the judgment being in the future some time, God has spoken His knowledge of it and when it actually took place.

*John 9:39-41* Jesus said, "**FOR JUDGMENT I HAVE COME INTO THIS WORLD, SO THAT THE BLIND WILL SEE AND THOSE WHO SEE WILL BECOME BLIND.**" Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?" Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.

**John 12:27-33** "Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, **SAVE ME FROM THIS HOUR**'? No, it was for this very reason **I CAME TO THIS HOUR**. Father, glorify your name!" Then a

*voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. **NOW IS THE TIME FOR JUDGMENT ON THIS WORLD; NOW THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD WILL BE DRIVEN OUT.** But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.*

Judgment had arrived and unveiled all the lies that had been told from the beginning of time, no-one could say they did not know or were not fully shown the difference between righteousness (right doing) and evil (sin.) Everything that could be said was said and everything that could be done was done. Israel made their choice and the Christ was determined by the church to be a liar and a child of the devil. The church board met and the leaders decided this man must die. With one voice presidents, Bible leaders, music directors, elders and the like agreed and called upon the government to kill this innocent man.

But at this point of the story a very curious thing takes place in the eyes of the people today that causes them to be blind to this judgment scene, they declare that the judgment is yet to come and man is the one on trial. Yet the Messiah did what He did once and for all, and never again will the price be paid for what He already paid the price for. And yet it is determined (by those who claim to know) that the judgment is yet to take place? But this can only occur in people's minds as long as the cross is not seen in its full light. This can only happen when the life, death and resurrection of Christ is twisted and manipulated to back up a false doctrine that states that the work of God has not been completed yet. And no matter what God has said about His work and its completion, men preach just the opposite and declare their own words to be truth.

**John 17:1-5** *"Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. **I HAVE BROUGHT YOU GLORY ON EARTH BY COMPLETING THE WORK YOU GAVE ME TO DO.** And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.*

Man may preach sermons of fire and brimstone saved for the wicked while the righteous are judged in some future time, but God has spoken His Word about judgment and what it is for as well as the time it takes place.

**John 3:16-21** *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. **HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM IS NOT JUDGED; HE WHO DOES NOT BELIEVE HAS BEEN JUDGED ALREADY, BECAUSE HE HAS NOT BELIEVED IN THE NAME OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD. THIS IS THE VERDICT:**(the only time a verdict is rendered is when all the evidence has been presented and the lawyers have finished their jobs of presenting to the court their side of the story and the jury has taken a vote and made their decision, in other words the trial is over) *Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, **SO THAT IT MAY BE SEEN PLAINLY THAT WHAT HE HAS DONE HAS BEEN DONE THROUGH GOD.**"**

Satan has called God a liar and God has proven that Satan is the liar. Satan says that man determines his own destiny, while God calls all to give themselves to Him so He may guide their life. Each person makes a choice and the choice they make is not left unnoticed by God until some future time and place. God does not have to wait for sometime in the future to bring men in front of the bar and slam the gavel down in determination of guilt or innocence. That picture of God in the courtroom is nowhere to be found in His Word, it is only mans idea of judgment not God's.

**John 3:16-17** *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. **FOR GOD DID NOT SEND HIS SON INTO THE WORLD TO CONDEMN THE WORLD, BUT TO SAVE THE WORLD THROUGH HIM.***

Men have formed ideas and given definitions to those ideas that has separated them from God, and the definition of their idea about judgment is one of many things they have done that has caused them to be blind to what God has said and done that proves what judgment really is and what it is for. God brings judgment through

Truth, through witnesses of His power that speak louder than any human courtroom run by human law could ever do. That power is the proof evidence that what God says is true and that what Satan proposes is false. So each one makes up their mind for or against God and He knows their decision. If He did not, how could He ever declare anyone as a lawbreaker.

***Rom 2:25-27*** *Circumcision (outward appearances) has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised. If those who are not circumcised keep the law's requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? **THE ONE WHO IS NOT CIRCUMCISED PHYSICALLY AND YET OBEYS THE LAW WILL CONDEMN YOU WHO, EVEN THOUGH YOU HAVE THE WRITTEN CODE AND CIRCUMCISION, ARE A LAWBREAKER.***

Yet God is not a judge with a gavel in His hand, but wants all to be saved and has done everything that can be done to make that Way plain for all to walk in it if they choose. It is left up to a choice for all to see just who is and is not a child of God. And if man can see it, then surely God knows the decision each one has made already and does not need to find out just who did or did not obey His Word in some future time.

Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. **WHAT WE ARE IS PLAIN TO GOD**, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart.

It has been said as a wonderful conclusion to the issue of judgment that it is NOT the occasional good deed or bad deed that determines ones salvation, but is determined by the general direction of the heart. Therefore judgment is all about what is happening in the heart, and what a person does only shows what has happened inside. Either God rules or the Devil controls it. And each person shows by their actions and words just who it is that they have asked to take over.

***Luke 6:43-45*** *"No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. 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.*

Bad fruit (sin) cannot come from a good tree or an upright heart. Let's say that again; Bad fruit (sin) cannot come from a good tree (an upright heart.) Sin is left to bad trees that can only bear bad fruit. But in a day and age when psychology rules the beliefs of men, people have convinced themselves (or have allowed others to convince them) that God is only a positive force. And therefore anyone telling someone they are sinning or that they can be free from it cant be speaking on behalf of God. This has turned God into a big fuzzy happy feeling instead of knowing what God has declared about sin. For those who buy into that humanistic belief, to them God is a misunderstood creature that may or may-not save them in the end.

If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

This is true, and for those who wish to follow or live for Him who died for them, they will die and be raised up in His resurrection. But if this is true then the death that must take place can only come to the one who has decided to leave behind what they once were and now desire to become a NEW creature in God where ONLY His will is done and sin no longer reigns in their mortal body and the sinful nature has been crushed forever. In other words, they are no longer known by this worlds standards, but are now living in the very presence of God.

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view.

***Col 3:1-3*** *Since you became alive again, so to speak, when Christ arose from the dead, now set your sights on the rich treasures and joys of heaven where he sits beside God in the place of honor and power.*

*Let heaven fill your thoughts; don't spend your time worrying about things down here. You should have as little desire for this world as a dead person does. Your real life is in heaven with Christ and God.*

There is a requirement for those who want to live within God's kingdom: they must live above this world. The Messiah lived that life and showed the Way to the throne and how one could be in this world and yet not be a part of it. But the many voices speaking today have told the people that this kind of living can only be achieved by a god. Yet our God calls us to live this way, to be removed from this world so our minds are caught up with Him in paradise. This kind of living is called freedom, where the things of this world grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.

In this kind of living we no longer think in worldly terms and compare each other to each other or use ANY human contrived thinking (pre-conceived ideas and opinions, biases and prejudices) to answer even one little question in our minds. This kind of living is where God completely saturates the mind with His thoughts and so fills us with His power that those who wish to follow Him can overcome this world and live as He lives.

Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

This is not just some kind of metaphor nor a point to be interpreted or reinterpreted to mean something other than what it says. The old creation (the old sinful desire, the sinful nature) is now dead because it was nailed to the cross through the victory of Christ and was buried in a tomb so that there is no longer any responsiveness to sins allure, because sin seen in its full disgrace as to what it cost the Creator and what it has done to each of us and now must be shunned like the plague (just as death is shunned.) And when that happens, a new Life giving Spirit fills our life and a new desire to love God and seek Him in everything that we do completely fills our hearts and there is no longer any room for anything that would or could ever again come between God and those who love Him.

All this is from God, who reconciled (atoned) us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation (atonement) that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, **NOT COUNTING MEN'S SINS AGAINST THEM**. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

God does not stammer nor say things He does not mean. He speaks clearly for anyone who wishes to listen and understand. Those who God has called and chosen have been reconciled to Him. This is not a futuristic event, the cross was two thousand years ago, this was done once and for all through the life, death and resurrection of the Messiah.

**2 Cor 5:14-15** *For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And HE DIED FOR ALL, THAT THOSE WHO LIVE SHOULD NO LONGER LIVE FOR THEMSELVES BUT FOR HIM WHO DIED FOR THEM AND WAS RAISED AGAIN.*

**Rom 6:8-10** *Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. THE DEATH HE DIED, HE DIED TO SIN ONCE FOR ALL; but the life he lives, he lives to God.*

Salvation has been given, a death has occurred and atonement fulfilled. No greater amount of blood can be spilt nor needs to be spilt. No seeking for forgiveness can be sought than was given there. It will not be redone or continued. It was accomplished once and for all. And it is left with us to see what is before our eyes and seek for His knowledge and grace so we may be partakers in His kingdom where He lives, and become a part of His house, His temple that He is building. And therein lies Salvation which is given to all who will look to the cross and see their Salvation.

## **2 Corinthians 6**

As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

As it has been stated all along, **GOD'S WORD IS NOT IN METAPHORS**. The day of salvation had come, and His name is Savior and Lord, and He will never come again to offer salvation, for He cannot/will-not give what He has already given.

But sadly, because of what has been presented on this subject for so long by so many, the day of salvation has been seen as being far off sometime in the future. Therefore many a sermon has been spoken or book written about a coming Messiah who will bring healing in His wings and salvation to the world. This is taught in the form of prophecy that makes God's Word appear (at least) partially unfulfilled until some future time when God will restore everything back to its new or original state. But this can only be done as long as God's Word is made to appear cloaked in some kind of spiritual language with the idea of *fulfillments* and *applications* being bound together in such a way that at one moment the Bible may say something (that is made to appear to be fulfilled) while in the next word or sentence it somehow changes to a future understanding or application.

In this kind of teaching, God's Word is never allowed to mean just what it says. So men read the Bible to seek out their salvation, to see what new thing can be seen from reading the same thing over and over again while all the while ignoring what God said about these words.

**John 5:39-40** *You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. **THESE ARE THE SCRIPTURES THAT TESTIFY ABOUT ME**, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.*

Yes, the scriptures that are so diligently studied by so many as they seek to find out the answer to so many human questions and concerns are all about the Messiah, Jesus Christ. It is so simple and yet so hard to accept for many. But no matter how hard the struggle is, every Word and every thought is about Him. It is not left to any future person or action/s yet to occur, but is just what He has said; **'THESE ARE THE SCRIPTURES THAT TESTIFY ABOUT ME.'**

We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited.

If we take God's Word out of context (interpreting it) and try to make it say something it does not say, then without realizing it we will have made other portions of God's Word a lie or to be seen as being in disagreement with itself. This kind of thinking has caused many to leave God behind or to not even try to understand His Word. It has caused the whole world to imagine God as being everything from an angry tyrant to a magical loving genie who just can't wait to grant someone a wish.

This part of Corinthians does not say to stop being so negative in telling the people all of the time that they need to stop sinning or to make it appear that somehow you seem to think that you know-it-all, but instead that the truth will always be the truth (even though it is negative to some and may seem like all that is being done is that someone is trying to set up stumbling blocks that do nothing but get in the way.) Sadly for many, that is how the truth comes across to them and so they do not want to hear it.

**Rom 9:30-33** *What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. **THEY STUMBLED OVER THE "STUMBLING STONE."** As it is written: "See, **I LAY IN ZION A STONE THAT CAUSES MEN TO STUMBLE** and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."*

We must pay close attention to the details or we will make God's Word a lie. He is the Truth and the Truth is a stumbling stone to those who read the scriptures but do not believe what it says. And sadly many read it as if it were to be studied (as they have been told) in a fashion of a little here and a little there. But God has made it very plain that this kind of understanding is not a good thing at all. (refer back to *Isa 28:1-13*)

For those who will not listen, who demand to stay infants though God has called for maturity in His Word, to them God becomes a stumbling stone that will cause each one to fall backwards over what should have been a Rock to cling to and a sure Foundation to build upon.

Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

WOW! What a mouthful! Do we commend ourselves (to stand, to be a witness) in every way? When trouble or hardship comes do we stand or fall? Do we stand with the weapons of righteousness in the right hand and the left, or do we rather give in to the idea of falling down and getting up?

We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. As a fair exchange (I speak as to my children) open wide your hearts also.

The only way God can come into the heart is for it to become open. He stands at the heart's door and knocks but it must be opened wide so He may enter and bring into it what He is, and then may do what He will do if He is allowed in. But here is where the proverbial rubber meets the road. If God is allowed in then He will do a work that shows that He is in the heart; the old life of falling down and getting up will come to an end and the old man will be replaced by a totally new man, a new creation in Him. This is no small matter nor is it left up to a weekly cycle of sinning and asking for forgiveness, but is the act of bearing weapons of righteousness in the right hand and the left. This relationship with God shows to the world that the person and God now live together and that God's Kingdom is alive within their heart.

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols?

No! This has nothing to do with pride or prejudice. NOT AT ALL! This has nothing to do with the color of someone's skin or what church someone attends. This is taking about not listening to and staying clear from sin and its owner, Satan. If anything is clear about who the enemy of Truth is, it is not each other (flesh and blood) but the war is against Satan and his kingdom. All too sadly many make this a battle between themselves and others. Even to the extent of agreeing with the world about going to war against each other. That has never been spoken by God anywhere in His Word.

***Eph 6:12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*

Righteousness is to be the stand we take as followers of God; so what fellowship is there between Light (God) and darkness (Satan?) NONE! Sin and righteousness cannot both rule in the same place at the same time, for no one can serve two masters at the same time.

***Matt 6:19-24** "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! **"NO ONE CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS. EITHER HE WILL HATE THE ONE AND LOVE THE OTHER, OR HE WILL BE DEVOTED TO THE ONE AND DESPISE THE OTHER.** You cannot serve both God and your own sinful desires.*

For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." "Therefore come out from them and be



separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

Is God's temple filled with sin or cleansed from sin?

Is it far better to sacrifice because of sin or to obey?

What did our Savior and Lord, the Messiah come to do; remove sin or make a way for sin to be found among His people until He comes again?

Does God give His people power to become powerless to sin or to overcome it?

Do people change when God comes into their life or do they stay pretty much the way they have always been but now are a little more saved than they were before they knew God?

These questions (and more) need to be answered so that God may be seen more clearly and His Word become more alive than ever before and the child of God become what God has always wanted His people to be.

**Rom 8:19-21** *The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.*

All of creation waits to see just who it is that has eyes to see and ears to hear, and its all about winning the battle over sin and decay and being what Satan says we cannot be. It is all about God being our God and getting rid of the one who has laid claim to humanity for far too long. This is not a warfare between each other but a battle to end all battles in our life against Satan and all his host.

## **2 Corinthians 7**

Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

For those with eyes to see and ears to hear, here it is again. God calls for not just a purification of soul but also body. Many have taught that the body and spirit (soul) are two separate entities that make up each person and that the only thing that can become perfect is the spirit that is within a man; but God calls for a purification of both body and spirit. In other words He calls for perfection (purification) of the WHOLE man. And if the WHOLE man can be pure then what room is there for ANYTHING that defiles? NONE of course!

Therefore the sin issue must be dealt with once and for all among those who call themselves God's children.

Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one. ***I DO NOT SAY THIS TO CONDEMN YOU***; I have said before that you have such a place in our hearts that we would live or die with you. I have great confidence in you; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.

Words spoken on behalf of God as Paul has done are considered by many as harsh or out of place. The problem however is not that these words are harsh or out of place but that many have accepted a theology of positive thinking over anything that may cause any kind of physical or emotional pain in their life. Even though God's Word points out just why the Messiah was sent (not to bring peace but a sword) it is not seen or understood by those who claim to believe in His Word in a way that allows for the cleansing work of God to be completed within His people. Instead, when anything causes any kind of pain among Believers, it and its presenter are quickly removed out of the way so to keep from harming God's people. '*God is a loving God*' they say '*and He would never rebuke His people like you are doing*' but then they turn right around and rebuke the one they say is rebuking them.

Though the Law and the Prophets are full of God's rebuke to the children of Abraham because of their continual sinning against Him (and their history of slavery and death is laid out for anyone with eyes to see) the church of today will only allow for positive preaching and uplifting thoughts to be presented before the people. The media is controlled, the pulpits are controlled, and unless the message meets up to church standards, it will not be allowed to be put before the people because they already know what the truth is and God would never treat His people in such a way as to make them feel like they are not reaching the goal.

**Matt 10:32-39** *"Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven. **"DO NOT SUPPOSE THAT I HAVE COME TO BRING PEACE TO THE EARTH. I DID NOT COME TO BRING PEACE, BUT A SWORD.** For I have come to turn **"a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law- a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.'** **"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.***

These words were just a repeat of a prophecy of what the coming of the Messiah would bring to the people of God, a *falling* and a *rising* of many and that hearts would be revealed. Therefore, the whole story (whether seen as a positive or a negative) must be told and the hearts must be revealed. And just like Paul, what is said is not a note of condemnation, but that repentance may take place and a new life begin.

So it is up to each one to decide if the God of Israel changes His mind and repents of what He says He would do and did not mean what He says, or that He did do what He said He would do.

**Luke 2:33-35** *The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: **"THIS CHILD IS DESTINED TO CAUSE THE FALLING AND RISING OF MANY IN ISRAEL, AND TO BE A SIGN THAT WILL BE SPOKEN AGAINST, SO THAT THE THOUGHTS OF MANY HEARTS WILL BE REVEALED.** And a sword will pierce your own soul too."*

This is the repentance/purification that is to take place in the hearts of those who call themselves His. Yes, it may be painful at first but those who believe in the creator God know that hardship brings about the true character of God and is the reason why even a parent must discipline their child to let them know how much they love them and want what is best for them.

**Heb 12:7-11** *Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*

No this is not a picture of self-torture or church sanctioned punishment or a parent beating their child into submission, but is a picture of what God does in the HEART when the Truth is allowed to do its work. His Word is enough and will do it's work if allowed to by those He calls His very own.

For when we came into Macedonia, this body of ours had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn-conflicts on the outside, fears within. But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever. Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it-I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while- yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, **BUT BECAUSE YOUR SORROW LED YOU TO REPENTANCE.** For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

The old song of 'Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus' sums it up very well:

Turn your eyes upon Jesus  
Look full in His wonderful face

And the things of earth will grow strangely dim  
In the light of His glory and grace.

So many who have accepted a way of life where *positive thoughts* and *what's best for the greater good* have so filled their minds that what God has spoken is no longer seen as being relevant to today's issues and struggles. Therefore to even imagine that what the song *Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus* says is possible is a leap of faith that appears insurmountable. And even though God has spoken about dying to self, living in Him, not being of this world or any kind of *Godly* sorrow being a good thing in any way, the idea is then ignored or rejected on the reality of higher human wisdom and societal behavior that makes it appear that we are just humans bound to an earthly existence of failures/sin/mistakes.

**Col 3:1-4** *Since you became alive again, so to speak, when Christ arose from the dead, now set your sights on the rich treasures and joys of heaven where he sits beside God in the place of honor and power. Let heaven fill your thoughts; don't spend your time worrying about things down here. **YOU SHOULD HAVE AS LITTLE DESIRE FOR THIS WORLD AS A DEAD PERSON DOES.** Your real life is in heaven with Christ and God. And when Christ who is our real life comes back again, you will shine with him and share in all his glories.*

Most cannot imagine this kind of living spoken of in the Bible. Yet for those with ears to hear and eyes to see, this is the very life that God has called those who would follow Him to live. But in order to conceive of this idea as being achievable it must first be realized that the thoughts of this world about what evil is and how it is to be fought must be put aside so that the real enemy may be seen and the real weapons to fight with may be understood so each of us may stand victorious in this battle.

**2 Cor 10:1-6** *By the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you-I, Paul, who am "timid" when face to face with you, but "bold" when away! I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. **FOR THOUGH WE LIVE IN THE WORLD, WE DO NOT WAGE WAR AS THE WORLD DOES. THE WEAPONS WE FIGHT WITH ARE NOT THE WEAPONS OF THE WORLD.** On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.*

**1 John 2:15-17** **DO NOT LOVE THE WORLD OR ANYTHING IN THE WORLD.** *If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world-the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does-comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.*

**1 John 4:4-6** *You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because **THE ONE WHO IS IN YOU IS GREATER THAN THE ONE WHO IS IN THE WORLD.** They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.*

**John 8:23-24** *But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; **I AM NOT OF THIS WORLD.***

**John 18:36** *Jesus said, "**MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD.** If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."*

**Rom 12:1-2** *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship. **DO NOT CONFORM ANY LONGER TO THE PATTERN OF THIS WORLD,** but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

**1 Cor 3:18-23** *Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a "fool" so that he may become wise. For **THE WISDOM OF THIS WORLD IS FOOLISHNESS IN GOD'S SIGHT.** As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"; and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile." So then, no more boasting about men! All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future-all are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.*

Godly Wisdom (the very thing that many say is beyond mans reach) is the very thing that is needed to become wise, and all who live in Christ will have this kind of knowledge (and it does not take a college degree to achieve it.) This can only be done by walking with, talking with and living in the Author and Creator, our Lord and Savior. When that happens each one will begin to understand what it means to not be of this world and they be able to say just like their Lord that they are not of this world any more than He is.

See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. So even though I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did the wrong or of the injured party, ***BUT RATHER THAT BEFORE GOD YOU COULD SEE FOR YOURSELVES HOW DEVOTED TO US YOU ARE.*** By all this we are encouraged.

Paul had a perfect opportunity to make sure that no one misunderstood the meaning of *justice*, but instead he takes that moment and turns it inward to say that it is not what can be physically done to a person because they have done something that could be determined as evil, but instead ***‘THAT BEFORE GOD YOU COULD SEE FOR YOURSELVES HOW DEVOTED TO US YOU ARE.’*** Paul turns what could be a situation about getting revenge or seeking justice into one that shows how a relationship with God takes a person in a totally different direction, about looking inward to see who you really are. Those moments are revealing to the one with eyes to see, and this is what happens when God’s Word and the true Believer begin to become one. The Believer begins to let God rule in them and learns what it means to die to themselves.

In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you. I had boasted to him about you, and you have not embarrassed me. But just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting about you to Titus has proved to be true as well. And his affection for you is all the greater when he remembers that you were all obedient, receiving him with fear and trembling. I am glad I can have complete confidence in you.

## ***2 Corinthians 8***

And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God’s will. So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

One of the hard things in God’s Word to see is how God views things compared to the way man views things. Case in point: Gods view of rich and poor is the reality of losing everything in this world (being poor) and becoming rich in heavenly gifts (kindness, gentleness, meekness, being persecuted, being cut off from family and friends because they will not understand the position you have taken, etc. etc.) But since man judges by what they can see, touch, smell, hear and taste they cannot imagine any other form of rich or poor other than what they have or do not have. Classes of people have even been formed around this kind of thinking and has helped cause attitudes of hatred and misunderstanding because life is seen as *the haves* and *the have not’s*.

But no matter what man says, God speaks His view, and the question is: will we listen and peer into His mind or accept mans wisdom instead?

***Matt 5:1-16*** Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the

*kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*

Everything man has put a value upon, EVERYTHING of mans value system, man's wisdom, honor and glory is NOTHING in God's eyes. There is no place for self-esteem or self-reliance, for everything is dependent upon God, not on what man may think should be done. Therefore only in Him do we find our riches and power.

I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

God's Law is summed up in this; **LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' THE SECOND IS THIS: 'LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'** Riches and power and glory and honor belong to God and are found in God, this is who He is and what He is and are found in those who live in Him. So, they live to give-as He died and gave-and are seated with Him on His throne.

**Mark 12:28-34** *One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.*

This is the Law that became flesh and lived among men and gave His Life for those who would accept It and allow It to fill them, change them and overflow from them. That Law was Jesus Christ, the Word of God, the Kingdom of God and is not far from anyone who speaks the Truth.

And here is my advice about what is best for you in this matter: Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. For if the willingness is there, **THE GIFT IS ACCEPTABLE ACCORDING TO WHAT ONE HAS, NOT ACCORDING TO WHAT HE DOES NOT HAVE.**

And what do God's people have?

**Gal 5:22-24** *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. **THOSE WHO BELONG TO CHRIST JESUS HAVE CRUCIFIED THE SINFUL NATURE WITH ITS PASSIONS AND DESIRES.***

...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, this is how we know who is a child of God and who is not, and it all comes through the act **OF CRUCIFYING THE SINFUL NATURE WITH ITS PASSIONS AND DESIRES**. The action of killing off or bringing to an end the old sinful nature does not lead anyone to then say they are just human and bound to that nature without being a liar.

**1 John 2:3-6** We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. **THE MAN WHO SAYS, "I KNOW HIM," BUT DOES NOT DO WHAT HE COMMANDS IS A LIAR, AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN HIM.** But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. **THIS IS HOW WE KNOW WE ARE IN HIM: WHOEVER CLAIMS TO LIVE IN HIM MUST WALK AS JESUS DID.**

**1 John 3:7-10** Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. **HE WHO DOES WHAT IS SINFUL IS OF THE DEVIL, BECAUSE THE DEVIL HAS BEEN SINNING FROM THE BEGINNING.** The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. **THIS IS HOW WE KNOW WHO THE CHILDREN OF GOD ARE AND WHO THE CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL ARE: ANYONE WHO DOES NOT DO WHAT IS RIGHT IS NOT A CHILD OF GOD; NOR IS ANYONE WHO DOES NOT LOVE HIS BROTHER.**

These are not just mere words on a page or something that really doesn't mean what it says. This is THE TRUTH! But because so much human wisdom has been allowed to have a say-so over God's Word, people have come to believe that there are excuses they may use as to why they continue to sin or live with the many evils in this world. But THIS IS BLASPHEMY! The only thing a child of God can do is to **WALK AS HE WALKS**. That is what giving is all about, that is what Paul is asking of the Corinthians, to give as it has been given to them, to act like their Lord and Savior.

Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, as it is written: "He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little."

WOW! Can you imagine what would happen if God's people really started acting just like their Savior who gave up everything so that His children could have everything? Can you imagine what the body of God would look like if each person who was a part of that body actually cared for each part of the body just like a real body does? Just think of that, EQUALITY! Not where one person tries to make another person *feel* like they are not an equal part of the body, but where they really are equal parts (and NOTHING is held back or kept hidden because one part has a supposed bigger and more important role to play than the other part.)

I thank God, who put into the heart of Titus the same concern I have for you. For Titus not only welcomed our appeal, but he is coming to you with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative. And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel. What is more, he was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering, which we administer in order to honor the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help. We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men.

This is not supplying the need of a minister to purchase a nicer car or to pave the church parking lot or to invest in a high yield stock; this is supplying real needs and sharing with each other what the other has. This is not about building a new college or crystal cathedral or buying new instruments for the ministry of music, but is about taking care of each other knowing that what is being given was already God's in the first place. And that action is not taken because of a majority vote but comes from a heart full of Love, and it is not done behind closed doors as if no one should see or hear what the church board is doing, but is done in the open so all may be a part of the work of God.

In addition, we are sending with them our brother who has often proved to us in many ways that he is zealous, and now even more so because of his great confidence in you. As for Titus, he is my

partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives of the churches and an honor to Christ. Therefore show these men the proof of your love and the reason for our pride in you, so that the churches can see it.

## **2 Corinthians 9**

There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the saints. For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action. But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be. For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to say anything about you—would be ashamed of having been so confident. So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.

The question arises; 'Can one give grudgingly and still be filled with God's Spirit of Love?'

**2 Cor 9:6-7** *Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

It is a continual battle for organizations to find new ways to get people to release their money to them. And as times get tough they have to use more and more forceful tactics to achieve that goal. But for those who live in Love, they are always ready and willing to help any other part of the body that is in need. And this is all done for what reason?

**2 Cor 9:8-9** *And **GOD IS ABLE TO MAKE ALL GRACE ABOUND TO YOU**, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; **HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ENDURES FOREVER.**"*

All of this is done for one reason alone, for a show of an enduring righteousness that is based in Love through Grace/God that provides ALL THINGS at ALL TIMES that those who believe on Him may have ALL they need to do His work. And what was the work that was to be done?

**1 Cor 3:10-15** *By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But **EACH ONE SHOULD BE CAREFUL HOW HE BUILDS**. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. **IF ANY MAN BUILDS** on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. **IF WHAT HE HAS BUILT** survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.*

Paul was speaking of a building process that each one who believed on God was a part of. And as he and Peter and others grasped what the Messiah had gone to do, they saw the construction of something far greater than temples or houses made of sticks and stones. They realized that God's house was His body.

**Heb 3:3-6** *For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future. But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And **WE ARE HIS HOUSE**, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.*

**1 Cor 3:16-17** *Don't you know that **YOU YOURSELVES ARE GOD'S TEMPLE** and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and **YOU ARE THAT TEMPLE.***

God's temple, His house, His body was being built person by person for a place for Him to place His throne in and to come in and eat heavenly food.

**1 Peter 2:4-6** *As you come to him, the living Stone-rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-YOU ALSO, LIKE LIVING STONES, ARE BEING BUILT INTO A SPIRITUAL HOUSE to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

**Rev 3:19-20** *Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I STAND AT THE DOOR AND KNOCK. IF ANYONE HEARS MY VOICE AND OPENS THE DOOR, I WILL COME IN AND EAT WITH HIM, AND HE WITH ME.*

It must be noticed though that God does not speak of many temples being built, but only one spiritual house, a body. That body has many parts/mansions but the body/temple is just One, and it is a building/body with just One head, One cornerstone and One mind and all those who are a part of that building are one, not many. This is not a building of many opinions and or disagreements, but it is a house with only One Mind, One God and only One Ruler and King. Therefore to be a part of that house, that temple (that has ONLY one God that does not change His mind and tell one person one thing and then tell someone else something totally different) there is going to have to be a change that takes place in the hearts/minds of those who wish to live in God and worship in His temple.

**Phil 2:1-11** *If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. **LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST JESUS:** Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death- even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

We must have the SAME mind as that of the Christ, the SAME attitude, the SAME thinking, the same character, the same thoughts and beliefs. And for those who choose to have Him in their life (rejecting anything (everything) else) and living by His thoughts that fill their minds and cause the body of Christ to do what the mind tells it to do, for those who choose this path to walk, they must know this:

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."

The greatest Gift was given to anyone who would accept Him into their life. That Gift was the Light of the world, and just like the Corinthians, that same giving will continue to take place in the lives of those who show that God lives in their heart by doing the same thing their Lord and Savior did and give as God has given to them. Sadly though most would rather not walk in the Light but live in darkness rather than have their actions exposed and be seen for who and what they really are.

**John 3:19-21** *This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."*

But of course all of this has no meaning to anyone who does not feel they have any issues that need attention. Yet among the some 2500 plus organized religious bodies that exist (and that number continues to escalate at a alarming rate) no one will admit they have a problem, but will do whatever is in their power to show they are filled with the Spirit of God while ignoring the needs of those around them.



Is this how God is creating His temple? Is this God's house He is building? Are these the kind of people who are filled with the Spirit and showing God's Love to their brothers and sisters? Is God's house to be seen as divided against itself as it argues opinions and biases that they say they have a right to voice at any given moment? NO! God's body does not act that way so that the arm disagrees with the hand and the foot disagrees with the leg. God's body is One and will always and forever be One.

Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food **WILL ALSO SUPPLY AND INCREASE YOUR STORE OF SEED AND WILL ENLARGE THE HARVEST OF YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.** You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, **MEN WILL PRAISE GOD FOR THE OBEDIENCE THAT ACCOMPANIES YOUR CONFESSION OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST,** and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

Yes! Thanks be to God for His indescribable Gift that was given to all who will accept Him into their hearts. But money and things are not found in His heart, God did not create a space for storage of things nor did He build a special compartment for financial holdings anywhere in His body. But He did create a place for righteousness and holiness so we may be one in Him and He in us. That place is called the heart of God, and we may live there right now if we will just ask Him to come in and be our all-in-all.

## **2 Corinthians 10**

By the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you-I, Paul, who am "timid" when face to face with you, but "bold" when away! I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. **FOR THOUGH WE LIVE IN THE WORLD, WE DO NOT WAGE WAR AS THE WORLD DOES.** The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

*Telling the truth, not hiding behind anything, keeping everything out in the open, not following the majority, keeping the line, obeying the law, following protocol;* these ideas have been used to express the thought that doing what is right is the right thing to do (even if the ones who preach these ideas do not practice it themselves.)

The idea of a set of rules to form a sense of order and correctness which points the way to living a more secure and righteous life is offered up as proof of what God has called for in obedience to Him. And such moments in time as the Christian reformation are even offered up to show this kind of belief in action, where men like Luther, Huss, Jerome and others stood for the right even if it meant the cost of their life in doing so. These men are seen as a kind of champion of the cause for righteousness and are hailed as hero's who stood up against the evil church system of their day. And these men are perceived as Bible believers holding to the idea of *sola scriptura*, declaring their belief in the Bible and the Bible alone.

Yet when this idea is tested today in the face of church authority, it is quickly seen as a incorrect position to take (if not a heretical one) by those same ones who preach about *telling the truth, not hiding behind anything, keeping everything out in the open, not following the majority, keeping the line, obeying the law and following protocol.* It is quickly seen that to disagree with those who feel they are in an authority position is even to put your very life on the line in some cases. All over the world people make life and death decisions when they choose to stand for what is right or to stand against the rule of the church.

This kind of action has formed the major religious bodies that exist today and have brought about church doctrine and decree that demands that the one who wants to join that congregation must submit to the beliefs of that body of believers. But when all is said and done, the question of what God actually says and His knowledge of their only being one Truth, one Lord, one Baptism is swept under the rug of the belief of unity in diversity. But never has such unity brought about such diverse beliefs as it has between those who say they worship the same God as the church across the street that holds to different beliefs as the church down the street and the one around the corner. It would appear that the God they say they all believe in gives to one group one truth and yet gives to another group an

equal opposing truth.

Yet God has spoken through His messengers what His Word is for, and He makes it clear what the truth will do, bringing down all the arguments that cause division and making every thought captive to obedience to Christ. But if the idea of sinning is disobedience to Christ, then how can those who call themselves Christians be sinners while becoming captives to the obedience of Christ? And how is division showing a unity of the faith?

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.

The battle we wage is not against each other, but against false ideas and doctrines and laws of men and we can only listen to one Voice and that One voice will only lead One Way. It is not a myriad of truths, but only One Truth and that Truth is eternal and can be trusted at every moment to be the same as it was a billion, trillion moments ago.

We must stop looking at the surface of things and see through God's eyes what He has said no matter what any person or people have declared as truth. God's Word is enough and His promise is True to lead His people into the path of righteousness. It is past time to let God say what He has said without us finding a reason to say *well, that's not really what it means*.

You are looking only on the surface of things. If anyone is confident that he belongs to Christ, he should consider again that we belong to Christ just as much as he. For even if I boast somewhat freely about the authority the Lord gave us for building you up rather than pulling you down, I will not be ashamed of it.

There is a thing called holy boldness that is used by those who are under the command of God, and that is a good thing. But sadly this holy boldness has been misused by many claiming to be under the control of God. Paul, under direct guidance of God speaks boldly and with determination. But this kind of frankness is not excepted today (unless of course a person who is seen as an authority figure uses it to wield power that he/she believes they have in God.) But the power and authority that Paul uses comes from God and is only used to bring righteousness to the surface so that those who claim to be followers of God will see what it means to be a true believer, where righteousness reigns and sin is removed from the body. This is the holy boldness that is needed in a day and age when people have learned to live with sin instead of having victory over it.

I do not want to seem to be trying to frighten you with my letters. For some say, "His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing." Such people should realize that what we are in our letters when we are absent, we will be in our actions when we are present.

Yes, and Paul's letters are weighty for those who do not understand them or wish to live the lifestyle he is talking about. And all too sadly, whether it is because someone just does not understand what Paul is saying, or because they do not want to bring their lives into alignment with God's Word, they then help to spread the idea that Paul's words are beyond our grasp and therefore must be left to sometime when God finally reveals it to those who He told to read and understand some 2000 years ago.

But as for us, we will go on.

We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise. We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the field God has assigned to us, a field that reaches even to you. We are not going too far in our boasting, as would be the case if we had not come to you, for we did get as far as you with the gospel of Christ. Neither do we go beyond our limits by boasting of work done by others. Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our area of activity among you will greatly expand, so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you. For we do not want to boast about work already done in another man's territory. But, "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord." For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

In a world where preachers and psychologists talk endlessly about self-esteem, self-worth, self-deliverance, self-determination and self-actuation Paul's words fall on deaf ears. For self is seen as a necessity in a world where so much suffering takes place because of abuse and scorn, but Paul speaks a message of letting go of self and boasting only in the Lord. His confession is of God and what God desires instead of looking to society and finding comparisons to weigh life against. Just as his Lord and Savior preached about righteousness and victory over sin, Paul joins in this battle against evil and knows (as it happened to him) that self must be left behind so that only God is left ruling in the life of the one who calls themselves a child of God.

## ***2 Corinthians 11***

I hope you will put up with a little of my foolishness; but you are already doing that. I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.

How easy it seems to be for many to listen to those who claim to be followers of God with a message from God. Everything from hell fire to psychology is brought before the people week after week, and week after week the people listen to these words and never stop to ask *is this the truth?* Yet after all the talking and pulpit pounding is over, sin remains among those who call themselves part of the body of Christ. No matter how much Paul calls for a cleansing of mind, body and soul, humanism is offered up as the answer to the problem of sin and therefore all that is needed is to pay more tithe, sing in the choir, lead the children's entertainment hour, go visit a poor person, sing to the senior citizens, clean the church, wear a certain kind of clothing, raise hands to God, smile and say *nice to meet you* or *happy Sabbath*. What is needed is to be baptized in this or that denomination, find out what your ministry is, join a cell group, listen to a sermon, put more money in the offering plate, eat certain foods, read certain books, donate money to the church, pray at certain times of the day, follow the lesson outline, obey the leaders (except when they do something wrong or illegal) fill out your will and leave your goods and wealth to the church, attend more church functions, put more money in the offering plate, don't rock the boat, and on and on it goes. These actions and reactions have become the pathway to heaven for most and the answer to life's struggles, and ministers appearing on television and radio or down the street at the local revival lead the people into a never ending and ever costly endeavor to seek for God through the doctrines they profess. Yet the question is not if the speakers are charismatic enough or do they preach a thrilling sermon, but instead it should be, do they show that they preach another gospel other than the one God presents in His own Word?

But I do not think I am in the least inferior to those "super-apostles." I may not be a trained speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way.

A couple of questions demand to be asked at this point; Just what is the truth and who speaks the truth? People go from church to church looking for the truth and try to make sense of what religion really is while super apostles sell their wares on every street corner and all the time God is right there within a thoughts reach. Yet because people seek for human reasoning to give them what they are requesting, they are left with more questions than they have answers for.

So what is wrong with looking to God for the answers? But instead we are found looking to the pastor or elder or friend for their opinion! Is there something wrong with talking to God and reading His Word? What if we heard the Truth, would we know it from a lie or do we accept what we hear because it has an official title attached to it or comes from a leader or authority figure? Do we accept it because it soothes our lifestyle or it is said by someone we confide in, or do we accept Truth because God has said it and we know in our hearts that what He has said is right and just?

Was it a sin for me to lower myself in order to elevate you by preaching the gospel of God to you free of charge? I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so as to serve you. And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from

Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and will continue to do so. As surely as the truth of Christ is in me, nobody in the regions of Achaia will stop this boasting of mine. Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about.

If we all serve the One God and that God is Love, then why wouldn't Paul understand about getting along with others who are using God's name in preaching the gospel? If they are all worshipping and preaching about the same God then what's Paul's problem, why would he want to *cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us*?

Even as Paul preached the gospel of Jesus Christ the lines had become blurred in-between right and wrong from all the false preaching being done by those claiming to be speaking the Truth. And today, in a time when the people hold to an opinion that though they may all go to different churches that hold to different doctrines and yet preach and teach from the same book and believe that they are in one accord and able to join hands together and pray together to the same God (who of course is keeping them separate from each other); in a day as this, there has never been such a need to know what the Truth is and just who is preaching it. But of course the question is; Do we really want to know any more than some of the Corinthians who had been won-over by false teachers and false apostles?

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

At first glance it would seem that Paul has a problem with getting along with others and not seeing his need for counseling (and maybe some mood altering drug) and more positive enforcement in his approach to others. Isn't the child of God suppose to be more positive if God is really working in their life? Isn't love to flow as thick as syrup from the child of God? So why is Paul coming off as such an angry and judgmental person when he knows that you aren't suppose to judge anyone?! And why does he seem to think he has the right to say that the pastor down the street may in fact be *Satan himself masquerading as an angel of light*? Isn't Paul suppose to be acting under the guidance of the Holy Spirit?

It appears that Paul was facing the same problem in his day as we do today were right and wrong had become hard to distinguish for many. Instead of living by defined parameters sin was being left up to the moment or situation. Psychology offers a term for this and it is called situational ethics. This is an area where emotions, lusts, desires and feelings cause such actions as fight-or-flight or a survival of the fittest where the first thought is to defend. Yet as we have seen, Paul demands for death to self and a life to God where the things of this world and of this creation pass away and all that is left is a one-on-One relationship with God. Then it is easy to see why many would not take that path that leads to a righteousness, for it means dying to self instead of defending it, it means taking a whole new look at life and giving up all to walk with God.

I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool. But if you do, then receive me just as you would a fool, so that I may do a little boasting. In this self-confident boasting I am not talking as the Lord would, but as a fool. Since many are boasting in the way the world does, I too will boast. You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise! In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or pushes himself forward or slaps you in the face. To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that!

One of the interesting facts of this life is what a lack of knowledge on ANY issue will do to the one who is involved with the issue. For the lack of knowledge, those who should know what they are getting into instead rely upon what is known as second-hand information instead of the knowledge that is gained by personal investigation. And sadly all too late the one with very little knowledge on the subject finds themselves a slave to another persons interpretation of the issue. But humanity is so use to the idea of limited information that they allow this to take place even when they know that their life could be in jeopardy. But of course it is easier to take that position rather than to rock-the-boat or to take the time to search out the answer for themselves. Between life in general with all its ups and downs as well as family, entertainment and the things one has to do to survive, who has time anyway?

But God has set before us His Word and is available to anyone who wishes to seek and find the answers to the questions of the day, but it is up to us to take the time (as we do for so many other things) to seek for the Truth and find it.

What anyone else dares to boast about-I am speaking as a fool-I also dare to boast about. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?

I guess Paul just needed to slow down a little and seek some peace (a little yoga, a little counseling, take a vacation, see the sites.) Paul just doesn't understand that too much religion can hurt a person, you need to mix-it-up a little.

But God called Paul into His field to labor for Him as He has called each of those who choose Him as their God. In this field there is no Jew or Greek, no Protestant or Christian just God and His faithful workers. There is no official titles or church doors to pass through and there are no schools to attend or committee meetings to decide what must be done and who will do it, but only God's Word and instruction is found there.

If I must boast, I will boast of the things that **SHOW MY WEAKNESS**. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying. In Damascus the governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me. But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands.

This is not a weakness of sinning, but the reality of being weak in the things of this world and being strong in Christ. This is not a weakness of mind so that others are needed to help direct the work and this is not an admittance that those super apostles and leaders of the synagogue in Jerusalem are now to be seen as co-workers of Christ and leaders of God's kingdom. But this is Paul's human attempt (talking foolishly) to say that if the others who are trying to mislead the Corinthians are so easily accepted by them then surely they should accept what he is saying since they came to their knowledge through him. If the others who wish to enslave the Corinthians in issues of the flesh are accepted because they present themselves as a Hebrew or Israelites and therefore important in some way, then surely they should listen to Paul for what he has gone through for them as well he is one of their very own. Yet in the end he does not make it his claim to fame but shows them how they are not using correct judgment in the Truth.

*2 Cor 12:9-10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, **THEN I AM STRONG**.*

Paul adds it up in just a few words that what some call weakness he has learned to praise God for, because he has found that through those things (*insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties*) that instead of showing a moment of sinfulness (falling down and having to get up over and over again) instead he has found that there is strength to be had in depending on God for victory and the ability to go through whatever God has for him to do.

## **2 Corinthians 12**

I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know-God knows. And I know that this man-whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows- was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell. I will boast about a

man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say.

To live in heavenly places and describe God's wonders is beyond the imagination of many as well as it being a virtually impossible task to explain that kind of living to those who will not listen even the simplest idea that God does not ask anything of His children that is impossible to do.

Therefore it is almost a silly thing for Paul to have to say what he is saying at this point. But people have a unhealthy attitude toward judging each other and specifically anyone coming into their particular circle of influence and trying to get them to stop what they are doing and instead do right in the eyes of God. They quickly take on the attitude of *who do you think you are?! They want to know if someone gave you authorization to tell them what you are saying or if the leadership knows what you are doing.*

But Paul had a heavenly experience and tried in every way to prove himself as at least half as worthy of being heard as the others who were not speaking the truth. And sadly he had to try to prove himself unlike those who were *false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ.*

To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

*Paul is admitting he's weak, therefore aren't we glad that if we sin we have an advocate with the Father who pleads our case and claims His blood that cleanses us from our sins. (This is what many see in this reading.)*

If what so many say about this is true then we are ALL LOST, for even Jesus cried out in His human weakness: *Luke 22:42 "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."* Are we going to say that Jesus was talking about sinning in His weak state?

The thorn in Paul's life that was given to him had nothing to do with sin but was given to keep him free from it. Instead of becoming conceited he was kept humble by this experience and would be able to say in the end that he *delights in weaknesses.* But if we make this into a situation where Paul is describing his sinfulness, then are we going to say now that he delights in his sins so that God's strength may be made known to him? Let's see if this is what Paul believes.

***Rom 5:18-21*** *Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.*

*Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Many read this with the understanding that indeed Paul is talking about how our sins make God's grace look good to those around us because His strength (His Grace) is shown to be eternal against the backdrop of our disobedience. But what happens if we read the rest of the story, what now do we see?

***Rom 6:1-14*** *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

*For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

***Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.***

So, we see that Paul is either speaking out of both sides of his mouth at the same time or that we have never read the rest of the story to see how the writer has far more to say on the subject than the promotion of sinful living. The sad part about this is the reality of how the study of God's Word has been seen from the use of this sentence or that sentence compared to another sentence somewhere in the book. Never is the entirety of the issue read or discussed so that each person can see the WHOLE of the matter. So it is left to us to look at the entire picture so that we can see rest of the story without being found denying the rest of the many parts of His Word.

Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, ~~so that Christ's power may rest on me~~. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses,

**WAIT!!** Don't stop reading there, the story is not finished. Paul is now going to explain what he means by *weakness*.

in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties.

**WOW!** He is not talking about sin but about insults, hardships, persecutions and difficulties. Isn't it just amazing what we can see if we will just read the rest of the story. In Paul's weakness Christ's power rested on him and filled him, AMEN! And if the power of God ruling in our life is what weakness is all about, then may we all be weak that God's victorious power may be flowing through us!!!!!!

For when I am weak, then I am strong.

But for those who are determined to see traditions view of this and try to make it seem to be talking about God's righteousness shining through our sinful weakness, may this be said by the Author Himself: **Rom 3:7-8** *Someone might argue, "If my falsehood enhances God's truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?" Why not say-as we are being slanderously reported as saying and as some claim that we say-"Let us do evil that good may result"?* **THEIR CONDEMNATION IS DESERVED.**

God does not look good because of sin, instead He ends up looking useless and underpowered as if sin were more powerful than righteousness. So let's stop this foolishness and admit that God is stronger than sin and has given us all the armor we need to fight the battle of sin and be victors rather than just a defeated bunch of hypocrites.

I have made a fool of myself, but you drove me to it. I ought to have been commended by you, for I am not in the least inferior to the "super-apostles," even though I am nothing. The things that mark an apostle-signs, wonders and miracles-were done among you with great perseverance. How were you inferior to the other churches, except that I was never a burden to you? Forgive me this wrong!

Speakers come in for a revival and the work begins. Money must be spent, television adds run, radio spots played, chairs set up, buildings rented and churches cleaned, hotel room/s paid for, meals made, pictures taken, finances arranged, and when it is all over (like the circus leaving town) then the mess must be cleaned up. Paul refuses this lifestyle as did his Savior before him yet today this is an excepted way of life within what is called church. The true disciples of Christ were just like their Savior, humble, meek, long-suffering etc, and did not seek for glory to themselves. But is that what is done today?

Now I am ready to visit you for the third time, and I will not be a burden to you, **BECAUSE WHAT I WANT IS NOT YOUR POSSESSIONS BUT YOU.** After all, children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. So I will very gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as well. If I love you more, will you love me less? Be that as it may, I have not been a burden to you. Yet, crafty fellow that I am, I caught you by trickery! Did I exploit you through any of

the men I sent you? I urged Titus to go to you and I sent our brother with him. Titus did not exploit you, did he? Did we not act in the same spirit and follow the same course?

Sadly religion and the spreading of the *gospel of Jesus Christ* has become a multi-billion dollar business. Churches have trade marked their names (as if they had something to sell to the general public) church schools have been accredited to take advantage of public funding (at the loss of the freedom to control their curriculum) and tithe and offerings are made to appear as part of what a Believer does when they are saved. Books, cd's, tapes, records, bread, cakes and pies are sold, donations are gathered up, wills and property are called for as a showing of one's dedication to God, penance is paid, indulgences offered for a price and all of this is treated as though it is what a Believer does to be a part of the kingdom of God as well as a myriad of other financial practices that are taught and used to make the church the financial institution it is today. Yet, unless our Savior was a liar when: *Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."* **Matt 8:20** then Jesus Himself did not preach that kind of religion. In other words, we have fallen so far from the Truth that without a Savior who can heal us, we are lost. But praise be to God that He not only came with healing in His wings and opened the graves of those who were dead in their sins, but also made the Way clear for anyone to be new again if they would only let Him in and become what He is so that anyone with eyes to see would know there is a God in heaven.

**Rom 6:1-7** *What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin-because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.*

This is not a freedom to sin, but freedom from it. And if we have died to sin (that means that sin is now dead to us) then how can we live in it (which would mean that we would have to resurrect it (which would mean that we would have to have resurrection power)) any longer?

Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you? We have been speaking in the sight of God as those in Christ; and everything we do, dear friends, is for your strengthening. For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder. I am afraid that when I come again my God will humble me before you, and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery in which they have indulged.

If sin is something we must learn to live with, then why does Paul (the one who told of his weakness of which many say is his sins) keep harping on the issue of sinning when he knows that it is just a normal part of living in this world? And why does he call things like *quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder* sin (and besides, doesn't he understand that some of these things just naturally occur when there is the idea of agreeing to be able to disagree?) I mean these are such minor crimes, hardly even worth wasting one's breath over. Now if he would have mentioned murder or rape, well now there's some real sin!

Sadly this is how many think and report that God teaches this kind of thinking in His Word. They then teach others this kind of thinking and the church becomes a kind of hospital for sinners instead of a powerhouse of deliverance and victory.

But Paul is correct, all evil is sin and no matter what man wants to call sin or how they wish to rate sin, ALL EVIL IS SIN. It is time to pull back the carpet and get rid of the dirt that has been swept there for far too long. Sin can no longer hide among those who call themselves sons and daughters of God (unless those who call themselves His very own are not really what they claim to be.)

## 2 Corinthians 13



This will be my third visit to you. "Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." I already gave you a warning when I was with you the second time. I now repeat it while absent: On my return I will not spare those who sinned earlier or any of the others, since you are demanding proof that Christ is speaking through me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you. For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. Likewise, we are weak in him, **YET BY GOD'S POWER** we will live with him to serve you.

What would the church of today be like if sin/evil were dealt with and removed from among those who call themselves Believers? Of course the church would be pure, without spot or wrinkle and a light to the world of the power of God (but it also might become empty overnight.) It would not have to have signs and miracles to prove its connection to God but would be filled with victory and Love that goes beyond human boundaries. It would not have to have programs to help bring in those who need to be saved or use ANY of the worlds thinking in devising any new methods to make the church more visible or socially acceptable. As their Savior before them, the world would search and find them without the church having to raise a hand to do anything to make it happen.

But alas, this cannot happen until a cleansing takes place and a people are found who want this kind of existence. Thus it is said: *"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. **Matt 7:13-14***

A cry is heard from the throne of God;

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves.

This does not say to test yourself by comparing yourself to yourself or anything else of this world, but *to see if you are in the faith*, and faith comes from God. In worldly terms it is called self-evaluation. But this has nothing to do with the world and instead it is to look to God and see ourselves as we really are instead of what we often fantasize about our situations when we think about ourselves. If we will see ourselves as we really are then we will see ourselves as God does, not living in sin/evil but needing to be free from it as He was and told us how we may be free indeed. This is how we know if God lives in us (unless we fail to let His work be done in us.)

Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you-unless, of course, you fail the test?

**1 John 3:7-10** *Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. **THIS IS HOW WE KNOW WHO THE CHILDREN OF GOD ARE AND WHO THE CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL ARE: ANYONE WHO DOES NOT DO WHAT IS RIGHT IS NOT A CHILD OF GOD; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.***

How do we know if we live in God and He lives in us? **THIS IS HOW WE KNOW WHO THE CHILDREN OF GOD ARE AND WHO THE CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL ARE: ANYONE WHO DOES NOT DO WHAT IS RIGHT IS NOT A CHILD OF GOD;...**

Most will fight to keep up the idea of living with evil in their life, but for those who hear what God has said through holy men, evil is not to be accepted as something that you learn to live with. God's children are called to a higher form of living that goes beyond human thoughts or ideas, His call is to obedience and nothing else will do.

And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test. Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong. Not that people will see that we have stood the test but that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed. For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and **OUR PRAYER IS FOR YOUR PERFECTION.**

Yes this is true, in our weakness God's strength is our strength and His armor is our armor, and it protects us from anything that Satan throws at us 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We need not falter or fail for God is on our

side; He is our Rock and our Salvation, our Shelter in the time of storm, the Captain of our vessel and our Guide and Sheppard. What more could we ask for, what more could we want?

But in the end it is left up to us to decide just what we will do, either let the power of God rule in our life or give in to Satan and his lies. It is our choice.

This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority-***THE AUTHORITY THE LORD GAVE ME FOR BUILDING YOU UP, NOT FOR TEARING YOU DOWN.*** Finally, brothers, good-by. ***AIM FOR PERFECTION***, listen to my appeal, ***BE OF ONE MIND***, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints send their greetings. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Do not shun perfection, for it is the Way of God that His children walk as they become a testimony of His power and grace. And be of ONE mind, not many, for God is One not many. And live in Love, for God is Love.

# 4

## *Galatians 1*

Paul, an apostle-sent **not from men nor by man**, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead- and all the brothers with me, To the churches in Galatia: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins **to rescue us from** (not in) the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

So much is to be said about this portion of Scripture. On the one side is the issue of Paul claiming that he was sent by God to give a message that is not only different from what had been taught by those who have physically walked with Jesus Christ and knew Him as a friend, but is, at a glance, anti-Christ in nature (it stands against the teaching of the church and the disciples.)

The second issue involved here is the view of the ultimate sacrifice for sin and the Father's Love—who gave His Son to deliver (those who would come to Him) from evil. This very portion of Scripture holds the key to understanding the Father's Love and the deliverance from wages (power) of sin that was so desperately needed. This is not something yet to come but was made complete in the life, death and resurrection of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ.

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel-which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned! Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

The message that Paul was preaching was anti-law and anti-hierarchy (the structured nature of church leadership) in nature. Such ideas as the thought that one did not need to be circumcised when the voice of God had demanded it of those who would be called *children of Abraham* was both ludicrous and obscene at best. How could one speak directly against the holy Torah and consider himself to be preaching the truth? It would be absolute heresy. And it would be if the Word of God were left up to human interpretation!

So what is to be our position on such things? Are we to stand afar off and stick our heads in the sand or are we to see with the same vision of Paul the deeper meaning of what he said under the guidance of God's Spirit?

I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.

Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days. I saw none of the other apostles-only James, the Lord's brother. I assure you before

God that what I am writing you is no lie. Later I went to Syria and Cilicia. I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." And they praised God because of me.

A murderer and death angel to those who dared to call themselves followers of this man Jesus. Paul, was he now to be believed to be a messenger of God? We must each answer this ourselves as we seek to see past the arguments, biases and opinions that have surfaced over the issues presented by Paul. We must get past the teachings of grace, predestination, Love over law, the worship of saints and a myriad of traditional doctrines proposed and upheld as truth by so many today and look through the eyes of God what He gave to Paul to give to those who have ears to hear and eyes to see. If we will do this, then we will understand what God said through Paul and the clearly defined line of Truth that flows throughout the entire story.

## *Galatians 2*

*Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those **who seemed to be leaders**, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. [This matter arose] because some **false brothers** had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.*

What holy boldness Paul seemed to act with. In an effort to show his version of God's Word of *revelation* over *law* he uses Titus to show that one did not have to keep the law (that was agreed upon by the disciples of Christ as being both binding to the Gentiles as well as the Jews.) That law, written by God and given to Moses and then given to the Israelites and upheld by a death decree to the disobedient was now to be considered as being of none effect? How ludicrous! The only way that could have occurred in any logical fashion would be for some kind of a change to have taken place, a change in what was given by God as His law that both the people and the priests of the tabernacle had learned (at the point of death if they disobeyed or even by accident if they made an error in judgment or action.)

As for those who seemed to be important-whatever they were makes no difference to me; **God does not judge by external appearance**-those men added nothing to my message. On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of *preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews. For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. James, Peter and John, those **reputed to be pillars**, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and **they to the Jews**. All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.*

***When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong.*** Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles ***because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"***

What is going on here? Jewish customs questioned, Paul rebuking Peter for misleading the Gentiles, Jesus' disciples failing to act in line with the truth of the gospel . . . and for those who believe that Peter was the first Pope, boy oh boy oh boy! And what is that about the disciples going to the Jews and Paul going to the Gentiles? I thought that the disciples had been sent to the whole world (unless we have misunderstood what Christ meant when He spoke of just who the world was for them.)

**"We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified. "If, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not! If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a lawbreaker. For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for *IF RIGHTEOUSNESS COULD BE GAINED THROUGH THE LAW, CHRIST DIED FOR NOTHING!*"**

***Rom. 5:12-13 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—FOR BEFORE THE LAW WAS GIVEN, SIN WAS IN THE WORLD. BUT SIN IS NOT TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT WHEN THERE IS NO LAW.***

Oh what peace we often forfeit;  
oh what needless pain we bear;  
all because we do not carry,  
everything to God in prayer.

Humanities greatest need, to win the battle over evil and its stranglehold upon the world, is lost to the desire of human authority; and thus they feel that all that is needed is to obey this law or that law and do what has been told to them and all will be fine in the end. But never has God asked of His people to become children born under law, but instead He has through His Son, asked us to have a change of heart where Love reigns supreme and law is left to the lawless or disobedient.

When God gave the laws to Moses to give to the people, He knew that law would not nor could it answer the question of sin in each person's life. It was only to point out their failure of not letting Him into their hearts so they would do what He asks without having a law that ends in the death of the law breaker. Over and over again God asked for obedience instead of sacrifice, but the people would not hear His voice. Instead they continually demanded that a man speak on behalf of God. So rulers and kings would be their guide, and living under law would be their lot. Unlike Abraham and Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, Samuel and so many others, the people would not listen to God's voice. And today that same spirit exists and man still wants human rulership in the place of God being their king. And because of that desire men seek law to lead them and so they see themselves as not measuring up to any righteous standard and start to believe that they are just simple sinners and what God has made them to be (living in a sinful world) and start to imagine that God Himself is the one responsible for sin. *If, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, DOES THAT MEAN THAT CHRIST PROMOTES SIN? ABSOLUTELY NOT!* It is time to listen to God and see the whole story and not lay at His feet the very thing He is against!

All too often man is content to depend on other men's interpretations of God's Word and let others lead their thinking thus continuing to repeat the mistakes of Israel before them. (author unknown)

### ***Galatians 3***

You foolish Galatians! **WHO HAS BEWITCHED YOU?** Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, **ARE YOU NOW TRYING TO ATTAIN YOUR GOAL BY HUMAN EFFORT?** Have you suffered so much for nothing-if it really was for nothing? Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?

Two Laws: One based upon death, one built upon eternal Life through a Faith relationship with God and knowing Him as a friend. Two very distinctly different laws and yet coming from and being a part of God's will in working out His ultimate plan of salvation seen from the creation of this earth and then in the re-creation of the sons of God. One Law that has no beginning or ending and one lesser law to bring Israel back to a place of reference to see the greater and more perfect Law working within them.

Let there be no doubt in any mind. This greater Law cannot be seen or understood without spiritual eyesight and through a deliverance from the chains that have bound so many in a merry-go-round of traditional circular thinking that continually brings people back to the same starting point every time. Sadly, no matter how far many feel they have moved forward in truth, they continue to use circular thinking in the way they act, react to and define life in general (let alone how they interpret and define Scripture.) This kind of reaction inhibits discussions about the Word of God and causes most to be held back or stunted in their spiritual growth. Instead of searching for new and higher ground, they become convinced to study only those things handed down by the church through the ages instead of advancing forward into the Kingdom of God. In other words, one cannot argue or discuss the law from an old viewpoint or doctrinal position and hope (without a great struggle) to see much more than they have seen before. It is not that they will not see ANYTHING about the subject they had not seen before, but what they call new light or understanding will only be rehashed doctrine of the past. The only new light that is to be seen is that which takes one on a Spiritual Journey where the old man is cast off and a TOTALLY NEW MAN has taken its place and God is the ONLY ruler in the life.

Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

This is not a non-descript kind of faith based upon any denominational definition or doctrine, but is a definite and clear view of the Word of God and His will for His people. This Faith is built upon a knowledge base of evidence given and experiences had by the child of God in their daily walk with Him. It is based upon knowledge received by a clear understanding of the Word of God through a personal and up-close relationship with God.

At the same time, it is not built upon emotional highs and lows or through a willingness to agree-to-disagree and still be friends (for disagreements have NEVER caused friendships.) It is not based upon a false idea of a type of unity that allows all religions to come together and worship one common God who, in the end, causes them to disagree with each other and returns them to their perspective places of worship separately while holding different doctrines on the same subject. It is not based upon an idea of having as many questions as there are supposed answers for in the Word of God (which shows either an unwillingness on their part to study and find themselves approved, or an unwillingness of God to give to them whatever they ask of Him as He has promised He would.) Either way, it portrays an unholy and false relationship built upon doctrines of Satanic design. God is not yin-yang in nature (both good and bad) yet many, if not most, picture Him in that context because of what has been preached of a God with a dual personality. And sadly, this idea has been brought on largely through the teaching of the law of death over the Law of Life. The law of Moses and the laws of men are not those kinds of laws that can give eternal life. Only that Living Law that came from God can do that.

**ALL WHO RELY ON OBSERVING THE LAW ARE UNDER A CURSE, FOR IT IS WRITTEN: "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT CONTINUE TO DO EVERYTHING WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW."**

Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, **"THE RIGHTEOUS WILL LIVE BY FAITH."** The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

TWO LAWS, one small 'l' and one capital 'L', this is not two laws within one law, but is two separate laws (one dealing in death and the other in Life, one dealing with sin and one dealing in righteousness.) The law of death cannot give life and the Law of life cannot promote death. The Law of Life cannot be born out of or be upheld by a law or idea that is based upon death. And that Law that is Life cannot give birth to or uphold a law that can only bring death. If we demand to see the God of Life through a law that was upheld by its power base of death (for the

law breaker died because of disobedience) then that is just what we will see. But if we will allow the Law of Life to reign in our bodies, then the very mysteries of God will be revealed and the storehouse of heaven will be opened to see how we must advance beyond the law of death and participate in the Law of Life as Paul understood it and lived it in His life.

Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ. What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.

It could not be said in any clearer tones. God did not change at Mt. Sinai. The Law of Life was established from the beginning and spoken to father Abraham, but not through a law given at Mount Sinai based upon the principle of death to the disobedient, but instead upon the Promise (the Promised One, who is Christ.) And that Promise could not be made void by a law written on stone tablets. If that law at Mt Sinai had made void the God of heaven, then the Law of Life would have been brought to an end and the claim of Lucifer that God is a liar would have been true (and of course that would have made the creation (tablets of stone taken from the earth) greater than the One who created it in the first place.)

So why was the law at Mt. Sinai (written by the very hand of God) introduced to Abraham's grandchildren?

What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until THE **SEED** (Jesus Christ) to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator. ***A MEDIATOR, HOWEVER, DOES NOT REPRESENT JUST ONE PARTY; BUT GOD IS ONE.***

The law that was added at Mt Sinai was based upon sin and continual mediation and repentance. It required a human mediator (a Levite priest) to officiate before God on behalf of the people. But the Promise (God) is only One. For as it is said; *A mediator, however, does not represent just one party, but God is One.* And since God is One then there cannot be the kind of mediation that has been preached from churches all over this world of a God that begs God to forgive humanities evil condition. Our Savior and God is not the kind of priest that has been offered up by ministers and priests of this world that has provided a view of worship that requires mediation or some kind of representation of someone standing in between God and man. That kind of priesthood was given to Israel to show them how far they had fallen away from the kind of relationship that God wanted to have with His people. But the Priesthood of God is of a whole different order and kind. God is a Melchizedek Priest. That is a Priesthood that is not of this world nor of this creation. Thus the Messiah would say over and over again that He was not of this world (nor could He be if He was a Melchizedek Priest.)

And there is still another point to ponder. The law at Mt Sinai was not added because of one man's sin (Adam) but was introduced because God's people (Abraham's grandchildren, the Israelites) had forgotten Him and had become slaves to sin (Satan.) And now, that with which they were already all too familiar (the ever constant threat of death) would be used in order to bring them through the baby stage of learning so that they would cease from their evil habits and seek to know God as their friend as did father Abraham. But sadly they did not achieve that kind of a relationship with Him. Yet it does not mean that it is impossible. Others became friends of God throughout history (even though the majority did not.) That goal is still achievable and is reached every day by those who are called according to His purpose.

Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. But the Scripture declares that the whole world (those who the law was given to) is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

Many question at this point as to whether or not the small 'I' law is opposed to or set against the capital 'L' Law. The only way that could occur is if both could give the same thing. But one is based on death, while the other gives Life. One is a Promise, while the other is conditional. One is based on unrighteousness while the other deals

with righteousness. Two laws. One bringing salvation to the world, while the other would be used to teach those who had forgotten God to look up and see their salvation.

These words in scripture are there that we might learn from them and not repeat the same mistakes of the past. It is there for OUR admonition and OUR learning. Praise God.

But sadly most will not look, and if they look they will not see. Instead most see tradition as something that is worth more than the knowledge that one may receive from God. And just like so many who have gone before, death and destruction is their lot and law is their life. These kind are ever searching for the simple things of God ie: Faith, Love, Mercy, Kindness, Gentleness, Meekness and Lonsuffering. They look and look and search but never see the Way, the Truth and the Life. Instead they become prisoners of laws and decrees.

Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed.  
***SO THE LAW WAS PUT IN CHARGE TO LEAD US TO CHRIST THAT WE MIGHT BE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH. NOW THAT FAITH HAS COME, WE ARE NO LONGER UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE LAW.***

Faith does not come by ignorance. When God comes into a person's life He brings with Him what He is, Truth, Faith, Knowledge, Righteousness, Salvation, etc, and as long as we claim to have God in our lives then we will have all those things. Thus we will show by the way we act and speak as to whether we really do have God in our lives or not.

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

The Galatians had been lied to by those who thought they were the leaders of the church of God. But now they were presented with the reality of the Truth, that there is no *Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus*. This news was a declaration of freedom from all the entanglements of a way of life bound by laws and decrees. This was what Messiah had spoken about who the real Israel of God were. And for those who listened and had eyes to see, they were made heirs according to the Promise given to Abraham.



## *Galatians 4*

What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

Like little children who have no legal rights or say-so in legal matters until they reach an age of maturity, the law was a fence keeping Israel in on the left and the right, in front and in back. But when that child reaches the age of maturity they then move about freely without the need of fences or guardians.

This is the scenario of Abraham's children. The small 'l' law once kept them corralled in and taught them rules about life (which was needed while in their child-like state) but would no longer be needed or sought after when the redeemer came and fulfilled the old will-and-testament. And just as the prophets said would happen, the Promise arrived. Now the capital 'L' Law was active, and the fence (the small 'l' law) was no longer required because the learning period was over. Now came the time of maturity. The time appointed had arrived and brought deliverance from the penalty of sin, and now what was once to point out the stony condition of the heart was to bring about a transformation from hard-heartedness to a heart of flesh. The child was grown up and now nothing but solid food would suffice.

Redemption had come and the time of being under a law as a tutor was over. Now Israel was to show their maturity as sons and daughter of the King, now was to be heard the cry "*Abba, Father.*" And for those who would accept this relationship with God in their hearts, to them was given the highest position of rank and honor, as heirs, even co-heirs to the throne of God.

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. But now that you know God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you are turning back to those **WEAK AND MISERABLE PRINCIPLES**? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? **YOU ARE OBSERVING SPECIAL DAYS AND MONTHS AND SEASONS AND YEARS!** I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.

Israel was given a beautiful and bountiful gift in the form of such men as Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Titus, Timothy and others. But when they turned their back on their Savior and Messiah the kingdom of God was taken from them *and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. Matt 21:43* Out of that time came men like Paul who would now give to the Gentiles what was once the power of Israel and would show the Way to the kingdom of God. But as always, those who thought they were the authority of God on earth made it their job to take away the freedom of others and bind them to laws and dogma of men. Now Paul would have to fight to bring those back who had once known the gospel but were now being taught another gospel that was not built upon Truth.

Just like the Galatians who were so easily convinced through seemingly holy preaching that they must walk in the old paths and keep the faith of the elders, Christians have given up their rights to be free and instead have once again become slaves and have turned *back to those WEAK AND MISERABLE PRINCIPLES* of human leadership and obedience to the commandments of men. Like Israel before them they will not listen to the Truth nor heed the warnings coming from those God has sent to be the watchmen on Zion's walls. Instead they have forgotten God and have set men up as their guides and demanded the ways of law and decrees. But as God has spoken in clear tones, law cannot give life.

I plead with you, brothers, become like me, for I became like you. You have done me no wrong. As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you. Even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself. What has happened to all your joy? I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. **HAVE I NOW BECOME YOUR ENEMY BY TELLING YOU THE TRUTH?**

Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you [from us], so that you may be zealous for them. It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always and not just when I am with you. My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!

Why do so many hate to hear anything other than what they already believe? Is it that they believe it is a sin to investigate the Truth? Are they afraid that what they believe won't bear up under investigation? Or do they believe that their doctrines are infallible and are never to be tested while God Himself commands to *try every spirit*? No, of course not! But where there are faults and cracks in the armor much is done to keep from having those faults revealed (even if it means to confuse the issue or excommunicate the one who is doing the revealing.)

It has always been a struggle to proceed forward with Truth. And it is no less at this point. Those who hold to law over Love and tradition over the Truth cannot bear to lose the ground they stand on. For if the Word of God were believed by those who claim to believe it, then religion as it is known today would be turned upside down and every man would become a minister for God, with God as their only guide and King.

Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise.

These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. **ONE COVENANT IS FROM MOUNT SINAI AND BEARS CHILDREN WHO ARE TO BE SLAVES:** This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written: "Be glad, O barren woman, who bears no children; break forth and cry aloud, you who have no labor pains; **BECAUSE MORE ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE DESOLATE WOMAN THAN OF HER WHO HAS A HUSBAND.**"

Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. **IT IS THE SAME NOW.** But what does the Scripture say? "**GET RID OF THE SLAVE WOMAN AND HER SON,** for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son." Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

Paul must have completely lost his mind! Claiming that the Jerusalem below is in slavery?! All the world knows that it is the holy land, the city of peace where God is to come and reign, RIGHT? Even those who believed in the Messiah knew they were not slaves and they told the Messiah that very thing.

***John 8:31-36** Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

*They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, 'You will be made free'?"*

*Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, **WHOEVER COMMITS SIN IS A SLAVE OF SIN.** And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.*

Israel had been in slavery for a very long time, not in slavery to others but to sin, and their knowledge of sin came through the law. This had been a death decree for them, for under the law death was the payment for breaking it. Unlike their father Abraham they had chosen the path of death and destruction and were left desolate of the power of God. They had accepted sin as just a part of life and sacrifice as the answer for reconciliation. Therefore they could not accept their Messiah or anyone telling them that they were not free. And even though those who call themselves children of Abraham today believe the same thing as did Israel and fight to stay in that belief, it does not make them any more saved than Israel was before them. In other words, it is time, yes past time for men and women everywhere to be free at last!!! It is time to leave behind that place that is spiritually called Sodom or Egypt (and ALL that is connected to slavery) and become part of God's Kingdom, that heavenly Jerusalem that is above.

*Rev 11:8-9 And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, **WHERE ALSO OUR LORD WAS CRUCIFIED.***

The old way of believing  
for traditions sake  
must be thrown out.

Slavery must be rejected and the voice of God heard once more in His Holy temple. **AND DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT YOU ARE THAT TEMPLE?**

### *Galatians 5*

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

If one makes a demand that because the small 'I' law points to the capital 'L' Law therefore they are the same law, then to that one may it be said: If you keep the small 'I' law, you are obligated to obey the **WHOLE LAW** ie: feasts, new moons, Sabbaths, animal sacrifices etc. **THE WHOLE LAW MUST BE KEPT.** It has not been decreed by God through His Word that one part of the law is binding while the others have somehow been fulfilled (even if there are those who hold to that doctrine.) That kind of belief system when tested against the Word of God always comes up empty handed. God did not separate any of His laws, and call for obedience to one and not the other. Only through the teachings of man has this idea been promoted, and has bound the people up with the commandments of men and have kept them in a vicious cycle of sinning and seeking for the forgiveness of their sins. And in that cycle is found no salvation, no forgiveness and no righteousness any more than the sacrifices of animals could do. It is only through Christ, the Righteous One that these things can be found.

You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth? That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough." I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion will pay the penalty, whoever he may be. Brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished. As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves (**CUT IT ALL OFF!**)

You, my brothers, were called to be free. **BUT DO NOT USE YOUR FREEDOM TO INDULGE THE SINFUL NATURE;** rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

The beatitudes, the Love chapter, turn the other cheek, walk the extra mile, and give not only your coat but your shirt too; this is the essence and totality of the Law. And if one has God in their heart they will be a living witness of what a child of God acts like, thinks like and speaks like. Sadly, not many have ever shown this kind of character and thus most do not believe this can ever be accomplished in a human being. It is like believing that man will never fly because maybe you've never seen it done. History is filled with skeptics and scoffers who have been shown to be both limited in their imagination as well as naive to think that only those things they can imagine can actually be true.

But praise God that He is not limited to so much senseless thinking.

So I say, **LIVE BY THE SPIRIT, AND YOU WILL NOT GRATIFY THE DESIRES OF THE SINFUL NATURE.** For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. **BUT IF THE SPIRIT LEADS YOU, YOU ARE NOT UNDER LAW.**

Laws are for the lawless. And where there is no disobedience there is no need for a law to point it out. Only if you are disobedient do you need something or someone to tell you what you must do to be obedient.

In other words, the natural consequence of righteousness (living in God where there is no sin) is living within God's will, while the natural consequence of living outside of God is destruction. Thus, only those who live continually outside of God's will are found sinning, while those who live inside of God's will are virgins to sin and first fruits of the kingdom of God. So I say, **LIVE BY THE SPIRIT, AND YOU WILL NOT GRATIFY THE DESIRES OF THE SINFUL NATURE.**

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. **I WARN YOU, AS I DID BEFORE, THAT THOSE WHO LIVE LIKE THIS WILL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD.**

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. **AGAINST SUCH THINGS THERE IS NO LAW.** Those who belong to Christ Jesus **have crucified the sinful nature** with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

When something is crucified, **IT IS DEAD!** In other words it is not alive at all. It is just like a corpse, dead, no longer breathing or able to do anything anymore other than vanish into oblivion. Therefore, those things that represent the sinful nature: *sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like* are no longer ANY part of the life of the one that now lives by the Spirit of God. In other words the one who lives by the Spirit of God no longer sins or desires to do so. And further more; *His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, SO THAT THROUGH THEM YOU MAY PARTICIPATE IN THE DIVINE NATURE AND ESCAPE THE CORRUPTION IN THE WORLD CAUSED BY EVIL DESIRES.* **2 Peter 1:3-4**

It cannot be said any clearer nor can God say it in some kind of special language other than how He has stated it already to make us understand that there is a life beyond sin that He has called His children into. No longer are they to be slaves, no longer are they to walk in darkness, but are now children of the Light. And not only did He come as He said He would but He provided EVERY means of escape from even the desire to do evil. Therefore it is left to each one to make a choice to live in righteousness and be free from sin and its degrading principles or to choose to not believe what He has said and instead be slaves to evil desires and live a life that can only end in death. It cannot be said any clearer than this;

**I WARN YOU, AS I DID BEFORE, THAT THOSE WHO LIVE LIKE THIS WILL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD.**

## *Galatians 6*

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. **CARRY EACH OTHER'S BURDENS,** and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, for each one should carry his own load. Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.

There is a Law that each are called to obey, it is the Law called Love. That Law was hung on the cross for all to see and gave Himself for man and paid the ultimate price. Jesus Christ is that Law, and what a wonderful Savior and Lord is He. Who would not want to obey that Law? Anyone who receives this Law in their heart will want to do only those things that He does. Those who live with this Law in their heart will not compare themselves with others or claim to be so good, for they know that but for the Grace of God they would be left to destruction. Those who keep this Law are Living witnesses of the power of God in their life, and victory is experienced at every turn.

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!

Each will reap a bountiful harvest of what they have planted. Some will reap everlasting death, for they lived by it. Others that have chosen to walk with God and hear His voice will reap Eternal Life, for He is the Life and they have sought those things which come from Life. Each will come to the natural conclusion of the way they chose to live. Those who lived by the sword of man's justice will receive man's justice, and those who lived by the Sword that proceeds from the mouth of God will receive mercy, for He is Merciful.

Each will choose just what they will live by. So choose you this day who you will serve! A life of sin for Satan, or a life of freedom in God.

Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. Not even those who are circumcised obey the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your flesh. May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation. Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God.

If we will hear it and understand, **THE ONLY THING WE NEED TO SEE IS JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED.** If we will invite Him in and sit with Him and hear His voice over all the other voices that demand to be heard we will receive power and riches and glory that is awaiting for those who will pick their cross and follow Him. But just as the Galatians, we must see the complete story so that the things that man has taken out of context and has made it to back up the doctrines they have designed to show men the way to God, that these things must be seen for what they were, only shadows that pointed out how far man had walked away from God. All of the things that man has grabbed out of the scriptures and clothed themselves with to make it appear that what they are doing is God's will were only to show Israel how far they had fallen and to look up to see their Salvation. Those things (tithes, offerings, confession, sacrifice, law, feast, holy days, Sabbaths, new moons, temple worship) that were given to Moses to give to the people (and even circumcision that was given to Abraham as a sign between himself and his God and as it was to be for his family line) was only a shadow, not the reality itself that was coming in strength and power and dominion and glory. And that One to come was Emmanuel, God with us. And when the new has come, behold the old has gone away.

If we will see this with open eyes then the Truth can be made complete in each of us and the work of re-creation will be finished in our life.

...let no one cause me trouble,  
for I bear on my body  
the marks of Jesus.  
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ  
be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

# 5

## *Ephesians 1*

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

For those who have made it thus far in this study, you already know the answer to this statement by Paul and trust God's moving in Paul's life and know that Paul speaks the Truth.

Paul was an apostle of Christ, and yes, also at one time a death angel to anyone who believed in this Christ. But when God came into his life Paul was forever changed, his words and his thoughts were no longer his own but now were guided by the Author and Creator God.

To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **WHO HAS BLESSED US IN THE HEAVENLY REALMS WITH EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING IN CHRIST.**

It has become a doctrine within the minds of many that God is somewhere out there watching us, just out of our reach and in a place where we cannot be until we die or He comes back to take His children home to be with Him forever. Music has been written and songs have been sung about this issue and people go along with it as though it were the truth.

But is that what God has said in His Word?

***Eph 1:3-4*** Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **WHO HAS BLESSED US IN THE HEAVENLY REALMS** with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

***Heb 4:14-16*** Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-yet was without sin. **LET US THEN APPROACH THE THRONE OF GRACE WITH CONFIDENCE, SO THAT WE MAY RECEIVE MERCY AND FIND GRACE TO HELP US IN OUR TIME OF NEED.**

Of course the question must be asked; If we can only do what God has just told us to do through men filled with His Spirit and we are to obey His Word, then how can anyone obey if it cannot be accomplished in this life? The ONLY way anyone can do what God has said is for what He has said to be true for the one who reads and understands. It can only be accomplished because the Way has been made that ALL can come before His throne because He has lifted up His very own so that they may be where He is NOW! But in order for that to take place then we must have a whole new view of His kingdom and just where is it that He has said He will live for the one who dies to this world and now lives in Him.

***Heb 8:1-2*** The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty **IN HEAVEN**, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.

Then where are those who follow God to be found?

***Eph 2:4-8*** But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-it is by grace you have been saved. And **GOD RAISED US UP WITH CHRIST AND SEATED US WITH HIM IN THE HEAVENLY REALMS IN CHRIST JESUS,**

*in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*

This is not some futuristic statement of a time yet to come, but is a fact of what took place through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and then spoken to those who would hear and believe.

The Way was opened to the throne of God and He made it clear just where His throne is. It is found in those who believe in Him. But because of so much prophetic teaching where the Word of God is broken up in such a way that it no longer stands as one but is at times seen as spiritual while at other moments it is seen as literal and other times seen as a part of past history and then at times consigned to the future, it is never allowed to mean just what it says. But God is One and His Word is One and never has He asked us to take His Word and divide and sub-divide it (even though many take His Word and do just that.)

**Mark 12:28-34** *One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, **THE LORD IS ONE.** Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that **GOD IS ONE** and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God."*

This God who is One, lifted up His own to His throne. And then, so no one would be able to say that it was in some faraway place, He said it with clarity;

**John 14:19-21** *"A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. At that day you will know that **I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.***

**John 17:20-23** *"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as **You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: **I in them, and You in Me;** that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.***

**Rev 3:20** *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.***

God has lavished on ALL who will seek Him, wisdom and understanding of who He is and where He is that ALL may be with Him and in Him and to never have to depart from Him again. These are they who are holy and blameless in His sight. They have redemption through His blood and have been forgiven before they have even asked so they may stand as one in His holy presence. Think of that! It is not something yet to take place, but happened thousands of years ago and was given by Grace. Therefore; *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*  
**Eph 2:8-10** This is not a future event to take place, but is clearly written in the present tense! And that present tense was over 2000 years ago!

For he chose us **IN HIM** before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

Ok, lets see now;

He chose those who would believe **IN HIM** before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined them to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given in the One he loves.

In him each **HAS** redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on them with **ALL** wisdom and understanding.

Three steps that lay out God's plan for redemption. From the very beginning His desire was for all to believe on Him, but very few have been willing. But for those who will, who will seek His Way and walk in it, who will hear His voice and obey; in Him they have redemption through His blood.

And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment-to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

God's will, the mystery of God was made known to those who had eyes to see and ears to hear. This was accomplished *WHEN THE TIMES HAD REACHED THEIR FULFILLMENT* through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

*Col 1:24-27 Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness- the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. **TO THEM GOD HAS CHOSEN TO MAKE KNOWN AMONG THE GENTILES THE GLORIOUS RICHES OF THIS MYSTERY, WHICH IS CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY.***

God came to His own at the time appointed and fulfilled **ALL** that was spoken about Him. The time had reached its fulfillment, and God had chosen from the very beginning for His creation to be one with Him, holy and blameless in His sight. But most have not chosen Him.

*John 1:10-13 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. **HE CAME TO THAT WHICH WAS HIS OWN, BUT HIS OWN DID NOT RECEIVE HIM.** Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*

From the beginning God set into motion a plan to set Israel free from Satan's words of deception and all would see that God is Love and that He is willing to lay aside everything and become a servant to His creation and lift them up to His throne of power and give to them His authority and ***THE GLORIOUS RICHES OF THIS MYSTERY, WHICH IS CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY*** and to lift them up to rule in His kingdom.

*Col 1:3-20 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints- the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.*

*For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. **AND WE PRAY THIS IN ORDER THAT YOU MAY LIVE A LIFE WORTHY OF THE LORD AND MAY PLEASE HIM IN EVERY WAY: BEARING FRUIT IN EVERY GOOD WORK, GROWING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, BEING STRENGTHENED WITH ALL POWER ACCORDING TO HIS GLORIOUS MIGHT SO THAT YOU MAY HAVE GREAT ENDURANCE AND PATIENCE, AND JOYFULLY GIVING THANKS TO THE FATHER,** who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities;*



*all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

For those who Love God and are called according to His purpose, they have been lifted up into heavenly places in Jesus Christ and given power and authority as children of the King and heirs to the throne. They are God's house, His temple, a part of a living body with Christ as their head. They have not been given power to rule and then left powerless to overcome even the simplest of evils, but instead they sit with God and rule with Him in the heavenly realms.

***Eph 2:4-8*** But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-it is by grace you have been saved. And **GOD RAISED US UP WITH CHRIST AND SEATED US WITH HIM IN THE HEAVENLY REALMS IN CHRIST JESUS**, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

***Eph 3:2-6*** Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations **AS IT HAS NOW BEEN REVEALED by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. THIS MYSTERY IS THAT THROUGH THE GOSPEL THE GENTILES ARE HEIRS TOGETHER WITH ISRAEL, MEMBERS TOGETHER OF ONE BODY, AND SHARERS TOGETHER IN THE PROMISE IN CHRIST JESUS.**

***Rom 8:12-17*** 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. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, **BUT YOU RECEIVED THE SPIRIT OF SONSHIP.** And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. **NOW IF WE ARE CHILDREN, THEN WE ARE HEIRS-HEIRS OF GOD AND CO-HEIRS WITH CHRIST**, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

This is not a misprint or something to be interpreted to mean something other than what it says. This is where the proverbial rubber meets the road, because if those who live in God are children and joint-heirs then the power and authority of God belongs to them and sets the captive free from sin and make them victors in the battle against evil. And these are the ones who have learned who their enemy is and just where they must go to fight.

***Eph 6:12-13*** **FOR WE WRESTLE NOT AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD, BUT AGAINST PRINCIPALITIES, AGAINST POWERS, AGAINST THE RULERS OF THE DARKNESS OF THIS WORLD, AGAINST SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS IN HIGH PLACES.**

*Therefore take to yourself the whole armor of God, THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO WITHSTAND WHEN THE DAY OF EVIL COMES, and having done all, TO STAND.*

This is what our Savior and Lord did. Wherever He went, whatever the time of day or night, He stood against evil in its many forms and rebuked it. Yet today most do not believe in God's way of handling sin in their lives. Instead they have learned to live in it instead of rebuking it. But for those who walk in His Way, they stand and win every victory.

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. **HAVING BELIEVED, YOU WERE MARKED IN HIM WITH A SEAL, THE PROMISED HOLY SPIRIT, WHO IS A DEPOSIT GUARANTEEING OUR INHERITANCE** until the redemption of those who are God's possession-to the praise of his glory.

Who is this Spirit?

**2 Cor 3:17-18 NOW THE LORD IS THE SPIRIT, and WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS, THERE IS FREEDOM.** And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, **WHICH COMES FROM THE LORD, WHO IS THE SPIRIT.**

Yes, it is that simple. The Lord is the Spirit. It is not a misprint nor does it require interpretation. And if we will stop and think for a moment we will see that there is no other Spirit that could guarantee our inheritance. Therefore, just as it was told to the Corinthians, those who live in God are included in Christ and reflect the Lord's likeness with ever-increasing glory.

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe

...the Spirit of wisdom and revelation  
...the eyes of your heart may be enlightened  
...incomparably great power

Three wonderful promises to those who follow God;

To receive the Spirit of wisdom and revelation  
To have the eyes of our heart enlightened.  
To receive His incomparable great power.

Nowhere in all of God's Word have any of these things been promised to anyone other than to those who love Him and obey Him.

Nowhere in all of God's Word have any of these things been promised and then taken away or locked up because someone says so.

Nowhere does God say that any of these things were for His people so they would be left powerless against sin and Satan and left stumbling in the darkness of mistakes and sins against God.

It is high time to wake up and believe what God has said and ask, seek and pass through the Door-Way into the throne room of God and listen to His voice.

That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

This again is not some futuristic statement, all the power of the Father rests within the Son and everything was put under His feet and He was made the head of the church which is His body, and do you not know that you are that church/temple, His body?

**2 Cor 6:16** What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? **FOR WE ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD.** As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

**1 Cor 3:9** For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.

#### **Questions:**

Has any man ever hated his own body,

Does not a man care for his body?  
Does not God care for His body?  
If He cares for His body as He said He does then do you think He gave/gives to His body what it needs?  
If it needed deliverance from sin as He said it did and that He came to set the captives free then did He do what He said He would do for His body?  
And if that body needed wisdom and knowledge did He also give that as well?

God loves His own body and has given it what it needs to win the battle over the sin that so easily entangles so many. The sad part is that not even those who say they believe in Him see Him as a true care-taker of His creation. They see Him through the eyes of those who have pictured God like the mythical gods created in the minds of men (that make Him into a forgetful, unknowledgeable, always learning but never getting it right, creator of evil, moved by emotion, motivated by lust, warring against His own flesh, using His creation as guinea pigs in the act of sin) kind of person. They see Him as having a split personality as they try to explain what they see as the many types of love that exist in Him and coming from Him so that He is no different than all the other gods of this world. So instead of being able to stand at the moment of temptation and having the victory that they believe that only a god can have anyway, they then sin and blame it on the way they were created by an elusive, forgetful, dysfunctional God.

But for those who live in Him, they know who He is and what He has done in their life and they stand in His power and dominion just as He stood in His as the Messiah and Son of God. They stand just as those who have gone before them, that great cloud of witnesses that have lived just as He lived.

*Heb 12:1-3 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, **LET US THROW OFF EVERYTHING THAT HINDERS AND THE SIN THAT SO EASILY ENTANGLES, AND LET US RUN WITH PERSEVERANCE THE RACE MARKED OUT FOR US.** Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

Praise the Lord, we are not left alone nor is it up to us to overcome by our own strength, for everything has been put under His feet and He sits at the right hand of power in our heart, as our Brother, Lord, Savior and Redeemer.

***Heb 2:10-15** In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. **SO JESUS IS NOT ASHAMED TO CALL THEM BROTHERS.** He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises." And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again he says, "Here am I, and the children God has given me." Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity **SO THAT BY HIS DEATH HE MIGHT DESTROY HIM WHO HOLDS THE POWER OF DEATH-THAT IS, THE DEVIL-AND FREE THOSE WHO ALL THEIR LIVES WERE HELD IN SLAVERY BY THEIR FEAR OF DEATH.***

Do we yet believe that what God's Word says is true? If we do, then what God came to do through Jesus Christ was done; *that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death-that is, the devil-and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.* The battle has been won, the victory is real and we may stand as one body in Christ.

## ***Ephesians 2***

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature

objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-it is by grace you have been saved.

In sin all are dead, but by God's Grace those who choose Life over death have been raised up a new creation, no longer living by the old sinful nature that was ruled over by Satan and caused man to transgress or fall; now we stand, fully armed and ready for battle in our place. By His power and might we no longer live within a law like Israel that points out our failures and defeats, for we are no longer defeated nor do we fail as He gives us His might and power to stand as victors in the battle against evil.

Those who live in Him have been lifted up to His throne in the heavenly realms where there is nothing but power and strength, and they stay there and live in that strength and victory for the hour of need.

***Heb 4:14-16*** *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-yet was without sin. LET US THEN APPROACH THE THRONE OF GRACE WITH CONFIDENCE, so that WE MAY RECEIVE MERCY AND FIND GRACE TO HELP US IN OUR TIME OF NEED.*

This is not a misprint nor is it in need of interpretation. We may approach God's throne with confidence. And we may do this knowing that what we ask for we have received, when we ask within God's will. And since His will is for our salvation then we will receive His strength, authority and dominion to stand and not fall. That strength and authority is for doing His will, and His will is for our re-creation. We are His workmanship being built into His spiritual house (mansions) in the heavenly realms that we may do good works that all may see that there is a God and that He loves His creation.

***Eph 2:19-22*** *Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And IN HIM YOU TOO ARE BEING BUILT TOGETHER TO BECOME A DWELLING IN WHICH GOD LIVES BY HIS SPIRIT.*

Oh if we only believed this! But for the sake of traditional doctrine it is consigned to the interpretation pile. Yet no matter what men may do, God's Word is the last word on the subject, and for those who will follow Him, who will live in Him, to them is a mansion given, a house that will stand against any storm. That house is built on Faith through Grace and is big enough for all who will enter its Gate.

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Yes we have been *lifted up* and the Door has been opened for ALL to come ***boldly before God's throne*** were they can talk to God without any need of a mediator. If we will do this God will unveil to us what has been hidden from the foundation of the world about His will to be done and the victory that would be won over ALL the power of the enemy.

Therefore the question is not will God forgive us or does He love us but is instead **WILL WE ALLOW HIS WORD TO BE TRUE IN OUR LIVES SO THAT WE WILL BELIEVE WHAT HE HAS SAID INSTEAD OF BELIEVING WHAT SOMEONE ELSE HAS SAID ABOUT WHAT HE HAS SAID?**

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men) - remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

Sadly those who had the tradition of circumcision and had been chosen to be a light on a hill, had locked themselves away from the throne of God and imagined that human contrived hierarchical structures of committees and sub-committees were the correct picture of God's kingdom. They had taken what God had placed before them to show them their need of a Savior and had made it the way the truth and their life. They had made God's creation greater than the Creator. Man was now god and God was made to be a man. Yet in the face of God's Word it was proven to be a lie. God had not called His people to come before any other throne than His (and it was not left up to any human to change or alter that knowledge.) But of course as we have read, they did not want God as their king.

But for those who would have a personal relationship with their Father in Heaven and know Him as their friend, they passed through the veil (the flesh of Christ) and came boldly to His throne. There they found their Peace, their Joy and Salvation. They came to the knowledge that no man could offer this to them nor could they be their god, for there is only One God and Lord, with only One Way, One Truth and One Life. Once there they could never leave His presence and nor the reality of being joint-heirs with Him and part of that ever growing temple, His body. They chose this over their very lives and were willing to die rather than follow men ever again.

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. **FOR THROUGH HIM WE BOTH HAVE ACCESS TO THE FATHER BY ONE SPIRIT.**

Those who believe are children of the King, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. They are citizens of God's household, **BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, WITH CHRIST JESUS HIMSELF AS THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE. IN HIM THE WHOLE BUILDING IS JOINED TOGETHER AND RISES TO BECOME A HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD.**

**CONSEQUENTLY, YOU ARE NO LONGER FOREIGNERS AND ALIENS, BUT FELLOW CITIZENS WITH GOD'S PEOPLE AND MEMBERS OF GOD'S HOUSEHOLD, BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, WITH CHRIST JESUS HIMSELF AS THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE. IN HIM THE WHOLE BUILDING IS JOINED TOGETHER AND RISES TO BECOME A HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD. AND IN HIM YOU TOO ARE BEING BUILT TOGETHER TO BECOME A DWELLING IN WHICH GOD LIVES BY HIS SPIRIT.**

Those who live in Him are a part of His house, His temple, part of His holy people (His body) His royal priesthood and have become virgins, first fruits (the true Israel of God) who are blameless and undefiled just as the Gentiles before them. In that kind of a house there is no sin or evil of any kind to be found, and through His grace they too are His very own and He is their God, and in Him they are one.

### ***Ephesians 3***

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles-if indeed you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the **MYSTERY MADE KNOWN TO ME BY REVELATION**, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, **YOU WILL BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND MY INSIGHT INTO THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST, WHICH WAS NOT MADE KNOWN TO MEN IN OTHER GENERATIONS AS IT HAS NOW BEEN REVEALED BY THE SPIRIT TO GOD'S HOLY APOSTLES AND PROPHETS. THIS MYSTERY IS THAT THROUGH THE GOSPEL THE GENTILES ARE HEIRS TOGETHER WITH ISRAEL, MEMBERS TOGETHER OF ONE BODY, AND SHARERS TOGETHER IN THE PROMISE IN CHRIST JESUS.**

For centuries of time this reading has been a thorn in the side of many a religionist; and in the end of it all it has been determined by most that this mystery is still pretty much a mystery that we will only understand when God reveals its true meaning when He comes and takes His unknowledgeable and sinful children home. But WAIT! If the creator God made it visible to Paul and Paul wrote down what was made visible to him, then are we left any

more blind on the subject than the Ephesians were? NO, we aren't, and Paul makes it very clear that **THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST...** had been revealed.

**Rom 16:25-27** Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, **BUT NOW REVEALED** and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him- to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

**1 Cor 2:6-10** We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, **WE SPEAK OF GOD'S SECRET WISDOM, A WISDOM THAT HAS BEEN HIDDEN AND THAT GOD DESTINED FOR OUR GLORY BEFORE TIME BEGAN.** None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"- **BUT GOD HAS REVEALED IT TO US BY HIS SPIRIT.**

And just what did we find out about who or what is God's Spirit?

**2 Cor 3:17-18** NOW THE LORD IS THE SPIRIT, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, **WHICH COMES FROM THE LORD, WHO IS THE SPIRIT.**

And just what is the mystery of God that the Spirit (our Lord) has revealed to us?

**Col 1:24-27** Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness-**THE MYSTERY THAT HAS BEEN KEPT HIDDEN FOR AGES AND GENERATIONS, BUT IS NOW DISCLOSED TO THE SAINTS.** To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of **THIS MYSTERY, WHICH IS CHRIST IN YOU,** the hope of glory.

For those with open eyes and ears, the mystery that has been claimed by so many to be hidden from view is **JESUS CHRIST**, and is understood completely when we accept that Jesus Christ came and revealed Himself to anyone who would look upon Him and seek His face.

In fact, there have been songs written about looking in God's wonderful face, but in the end of it all do we see Him, is He revealed in our own personal lives, is He living in us and are we living in Him? And if He is living in us what will be the result?

**1 John 3:7-10** Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. **NO ONE WHO IS BORN OF GOD WILL CONTINUE TO SIN, BECAUSE GOD'S SEED REMAINS IN HIM; HE CANNOT GO ON SINNING, BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN BORN OF GOD.** This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.

The mystery of God was revealed over 2000 years ago, it was called: *Christ in us*, and for those who chose Him above every other voice that called out to be heard were called His seed, His children, and those who believed on Him began to see that sin could no longer live in them because He now filled their life. They began to realize that the sinful nature had to die and be buried with Him in His tomb. They were now new creatures, new creations just like the One who came from the tomb with a glorified body. And now they were glorified with Him in living a new life of victory by faith, saved by Grace and full of the power of God against evil. These new creations were witnesses to the world of a God who had set the captives free and conquered hell and the grave once and for all.

I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all God's people, **THIS GRACE WAS GIVEN ME: TO PREACH TO THE GENTILES THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST, AND TO MAKE**

**PLAIN TO EVERYONE THE ADMINISTRATION OF THIS MYSTERY, WHICH FOR AGES PAST WAS KEPT HIDDEN IN GOD, WHO CREATED ALL THINGS.**

What was hidden in God?

A: the mystery

What is the mystery?

A: Christ in you

**Col 1:24-27** Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness-**THE MYSTERY THAT HAS BEEN KEPT HIDDEN FOR AGES AND GENERATIONS, BUT IS NOW DISCLOSED TO THE SAINTS.** To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of **THIS MYSTERY, WHICH IS CHRIST IN YOU**, the hope of glory.

Who created all things?

A: Christ

**Col 1:13-18** He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And **He is the head of the body, the church**, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

All-right, let's go over this.

A mystery

Hidden from ages past

Now revealed

Made plain for all to see

The mystery is Christ in us

And Christ is the creator of ALL things

This is the great plan of God that those who go to church say they do not understand for it is a mystery to them. But if that plan/mystery has been revealed, then why do they not know?

God has revealed Himself in and through His children so all of those who wish to know Him may know Him, and as He has said: *Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. 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. 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.*

*In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. 1 John 3:7-10*

This is what it has been about since the very beginning, to know the Truth and be able to distinguish it from lies. And in this we then know who is of God and who is not. It is truly so simple and yet so ultimately hard. Hard because God has not been allowed to speak and yet easy when we finally know the rest of the story. This does not say that living is easy as people understand the word easy, it says that knowing the Truth is easy once we know Him; for He is the Truth, the Way and the Life.

**HIS INTENT WAS THAT NOW, THROUGH THE CHURCH, THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD SHOULD BE MADE KNOWN** to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, **ACCORDING TO HIS ETERNAL PURPOSE WHICH HE ACCOMPLISHED IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.** In him **AND THROUGH FAITH IN HIM WE MAY APPROACH GOD WITH FREEDOM AND CONFIDENCE.**

Just as Jesus Christ brought the issue of sin and slavery to the forefront and made it clear that the father of those who sin is the devil, then we who are searching for the Truth must listen to Him and realize why this issue must be forever dealt with in our minds so that we may be witnesses to those who wish to know if the power of God is greater than the power of Satan and whether or not that they need to continually fall down and have to beg for forgiveness for the rest of their lives instead of living a life full of victory.

**John 8:31-47** *To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

*They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?"*

*Jesus replied, "I TELL YOU THE TRUTH, EVERYONE WHO SINS IS A SLAVE TO SIN. Now A SLAVE HAS NO PERMANENT PLACE IN THE FAMILY, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. I know you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you are ready to kill me, because you have no room for my word. I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and **YOU DO WHAT YOU HAVE HEARD FROM YOUR FATHER.**"*

*"ABRAHAM IS OUR FATHER," they answered.*

*"If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did. As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. **YOU ARE DOING THE THINGS YOUR OWN FATHER DOES.**"*

*"**WE ARE NOT ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN,**" they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself."*

*Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. **YOU BELONG TO YOUR FATHER, THE DEVIL,** and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? He who belongs to God hears what God says. **THE REASON YOU DO NOT HEAR IS THAT YOU DO NOT BELONG TO GOD.**"*

As a religious body, the Jewish nation, those Israelites known as Hebrews, had not heard the voice of God for so long because they allowed the leaders or so-called leaders to corral them into doctrines and dogmas of pride and prejudice, biases and opinions that did not have their origin in God. And sadly the demands of the church were believed in as though they came from the throne of God. This kind of blind obedience brought the people to the point of having such faith in their leadership that they believed the lie that it would be better for them if one man died than for the whole nation to perish.

**John 11:49-53** *Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, "**YOU KNOW NOTHING AT ALL! YOU DO NOT REALIZE THAT IT IS BETTER FOR YOU THAT ONE MAN DIE FOR THE PEOPLE THAN THAT THE WHOLE NATION PERISH.**"*

*He did not say this on his own, but as high priest **THAT YEAR HE PROPHESED THAT JESUS WOULD DIE FOR THE JEWISH NATION,** and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. **SO FROM THAT DAY ON THEY PLOTTED TO TAKE HIS LIFE.***

If ANYTHING is plain to see, it is the very fact that just because the majority vote a certain way does not make what they have voted on right!! Yet what has the church of today learned from this lesson? Under the doctrine of *not forsaking of the assembling of yourselves together* it is taught that the people of God must stick together no matter what and stand against those who would seek to bring in false doctrines (otherwise known as **NEW LIGHT**) that would cause them to imagine that what they currently believe as being wrong.

This is the same way the leaders of Israel acted, and on that platform of lies they hung the Messiah on a cross for the crime of heresy. Yet despite the criminal act of the church and its leaders, the Messiah had already given up His life from the foundation of the world for His creation. Now it is left to those who can see and think to decide what is right and just. Will it be what people say about God, or what God says about Himself? Will it be what the majority vote declares or what God declares?



I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory. For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

That kind of Love surpasses human knowledge but lives within those who know God as their Friend. That kind of Love separates Truth from error, God's Way and man's way and human leadership from God's leadership.

**NOW TO HIM WHO IS ABLE TO DO IMMEASURABLY MORE THAN ALL WE ASK OR IMAGINE, ACCORDING TO HIS POWER THAT IS AT WORK WITHIN US,** to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.

Yes, even more than we can ask or imagine. So, do you want to be free, would you like to live in Him and Him in you, would you like to no longer be tied to those things you know are wrong but have been unable to break free from? Then believe in His name and rebuke the devourer in the mighty name of Jesus of Nazareth and open the door and let God come in and make His home in you and make His Word come alive and furnish you with every good work.

**2 Tim 3:14-17** *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, **SO THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE THOROUGHLY EQUIPPED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK.***

## ***Ephesians 4***

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Ah yes, the fruits of the Spirit which are the character of God, gentleness, kindness, humbleness, patience, longsuffering, and all of this because there is only one body (and we are that body and Christ is our head) and one Spirit (and the Lord is the Spirit) (and God is One) therefore we can only be called to one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all; and please do not miss this: **WHO IS OVER ALL AND THROUGH ALL AND IN ALL.** This is not just some kind of meaningless gesture or diatribe but is THE TRUTH. This is God! God is the head of the body (and what is the body without the head and the head without the body) and we are the body, His church if we hold fast to the Truth.

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)

Christ *descended* to the lower, earthly regions as He lowered Himself to become one of His own creation. He gave up ALL that we could have ALL. Please do not miss this. Many have taken this reading and somehow applied it to God visiting hell where Satan is supposedly in charge of burning people. And though it is true that God did descend into hell, the hell he descended to was among those who would not accept Him and hounded Him at every turn and then crucified Him to show how good they were and just who was really in charge of God's church. This was the place of the dead, a valley of dried up bones, otherwise known as the house of Israel. And despite what men

tried to do, when He descended He did what He promised He would do and came to raise the dead, to set the captives free.

***Ezek 37:1-14** The hand of the Lord came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones. Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry. And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"*

*So I answered, "O Lord God, You know."*

*Again He said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord."'"*

*So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them.*

*Also He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live."'" So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.*

*Then He said to me, "**SON OF MAN, THESE BONES ARE THE WHOLE HOUSE OF ISRAEL.** They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, O My people, **I will open your graves** and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, **WHEN I HAVE OPENED YOUR GRAVES, O MY PEOPLE, AND BROUGHT YOU UP FROM YOUR GRAVES.** I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it," says the Lord.'"*

***Isa 58:6-9** "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: **TO LOOSE THE CHAINS OF INJUSTICE AND UNTIE THE CORDS OF THE YOKE, TO SET THE OPPRESSED FREE AND BREAK EVERY YOKE?** Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter--when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: **Here am I.***

***John 8:31-37** To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and **THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE.**" They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?" Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, **EVERYONE WHO SINS IS A SLAVE TO SIN.** Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. **SO IF THE SON SETS YOU FREE, YOU WILL BE FREE INDEED.***

Sadly God's Word has been so abused that the idea of what it means to be free or resurrected has been used in a way to allow sin to become a part of the Christian walk and to look off into the future for a time when people will come up out of the ground instead of it meaning exactly what the Messiah said, that it was about being free from sin (not free to sin and still be alright or saved) and to become new creations in Him. On that ground Christ built His church, a church with no spot or wrinkle or full of dry bones. And He has given them power and authority over evil. On that foundation He has built His house, His people, His temple, not one made with sticks and stones or built with human hands, but built *on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.*

***Eph 2:19-22** Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Unity? Mature? Attaining to the WHOLE measure of Christ?

Yes, that is what it is all about, being unified in One Truth (not many) and being mature (not staying babies or little lambs our whole Christian experience) and attaining (reaching) to the exact representation of our Lord and Savior. This is what the men were given the power to do. It was not to become rich in earthly goods or to have a paved church parking lot or to have the best sounding choir in the country, it was to have the power to grow up and become mature adults that no longer participate in this world as they once did when they did not know God, and it was not to have padded pews or the largest congregation in history, but to know God and be one in Him, being one body under only One head which is Jesus Christ.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. So I tell you this, ***AND INSIST ON IT*** in the Lord, ***THAT YOU MUST NO LONGER LIVE AS THE GENTILES DO, IN THE FUTILITY OF THEIR THINKING.*** They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, ***THEY HAVE GIVEN THEMSELVES OVER TO SENSUALITY SO AS TO INDULGE IN EVERY KIND OF IMPURITY, WITH A CONTINUAL LUST FOR MORE.***

'I need that' 'I've got to have that' 'Please your taste' 'Self-esteem' 'Self-enrichment' 'Self-indulgence' 'Demand more for yourself' 'Love yourself' 'Please yourself' 'Have it your way' 'Reach for the stars' 'Fulfill your destiny' 'See more' 'Do more' 'Have more' 'Eat more' 'Earn more' 'Go farther' 'Go faster' 'Do whatever you want' 'Be whatever you want' 'Get whatever you want.'

***...THEY HAVE GIVEN THEMSELVES OVER TO SENSUALITY SO AS TO INDULGE IN EVERY KIND OF IMPURITY, WITH A CONTINUAL LUST FOR MORE.***

You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, ***TO PUT OFF YOUR OLD SELF***, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ***TO BE MADE NEW IN THE ATTITUDE OF YOUR MINDS; AND TO PUT ON THE NEW SELF, CREATED TO BE LIKE GOD IN TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HOLINESS.***

God's Word can be summed up in this saying; Love God with ALL your heart and ALL your mind, and ALL your soul and with ALL your body, and your neighbor as yourself. If this is done (and will be done by a true child of God) then evil will be forever removed from those who are His children, His temple, and they will never again give the devil a foothold in their life.

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and ***DO NOT GIVE THE DEVIL A FOOTHOLD.*** He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

No, this does not say that everyone in world is your neighbor and thus you are to see them as being a part of the body of Christ, for that would make Christ a sinner being full of sin. We must read with understanding and we should know by now that there is suppose to be a difference between the believer and the neighbor next door. And yet just like Israel, so many need to understand just who is their neighbor. It is all to sad that very few know who their neighbor is so they throw wide open their doors and let everything and everyone come in while at the same time ignoring sister Smith who is down to her last dime and brother Jones who is struggling to be free from the grasp that Satan has on his life. The rich of the church look down on the poor, the poor of the church shake their fist at the rich, the leaders have their own to attend to and the chairman of the board has more important things to do. So just who is our neighbor?

## *Ephesians 5*

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

There is an interesting thing about sin, it always has to do with ourselves, for pride always goes before the fall. Sin is about what we want, doing something that is going to benefit our-self in some way. But for the one who has chosen to walk with God and live in God, to them self is removed from the equation because working for God comes first, and as far as what they need, they leave that up to God.

***Matt 6:25-34** "So my counsel is: Don't worry about things-food, drink, and clothes. For you already have life and a body-and they are far more important than what to eat and wear. Look at the birds! They don't worry about what to eat-they don't need to sow or reap or store up food-for your heavenly Father feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than they are. Will all your worries add a single moment to your life? "And why worry about your clothes? Look at the field lilies! They don't worry about theirs. Yet King Solomon in all his glory was not clothed as beautifully as they. And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today and gone tomorrow, won't he more surely care for you, O men of little faith? "So don't worry at all about having enough food and clothing. Why be like the heathen? For they take pride in all these things and are deeply concerned about them. But your heavenly Father already knows perfectly well that you need them, and he will give them to you if you give him first place in your life and live as he wants you to. "So don't be anxious about tomorrow. God will take care of your tomorrow too. Live one day at a time.*

It is one thing to read God's Word and say we agree with it, but it is a whole different subject to say we believe it when it comes to letting go of our cares and concerns (as we see them) and letting God take care of us completely. Very few know God in this way and they show it every day and night as they tighten their locks and purchase their theft-deterrents and make sure the children have memorized the local emergency numbers. Psychologists provide mental health care and doctors are available to heal sickness and disease and life insurance offers after-life protection and wall street keeps the funds flowing, while Yoga gives peace to our mind, body and soul and Hollywood keeps us entertained. And with all of this, who needs God to provide?

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.

Wow! Are we to believe this? I thought God had a rating scale of one sin being worse than another! You mean He doesn't? Wow! And I can't even tell an off colored joke every now and then? MAN! Where is the fun in life if I

have to give that as well? Now lets see, what are all the things we have been told we are suppose to get rid of out of life?

**1 Cor 10:14-15** Therefore, my beloved, flee from **IDOLATRY**.

**Gal 5:19-21** Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: **ADULTERY, FORNICATION, UNCLEANNESS, LEWDNESS, IDOLATRY, SORCERY, HATRED, CONTENTIONS, JEALOUSIES, OUTBURSTS OF WRATH, SELFISH AMBITIONS, DISSENSIONS, HERESIES, ENVY, MURDERS, DRUNKENNESS, REVELRIES, AND THE LIKE**; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

**Col 3:5-7** Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: **FORNICATION, UNCLEANNESS, PASSION, EVIL DESIRE, AND COVETOUSNESS, WHICH IS IDOLATRY**. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

**Eph 5:1-7** Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

But **FORNICATION AND ALL UNCLEANNESS OR COVETOUSNESS**, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither **FILTHINESS, NOR FOOLISH TALKING, NOR COARSE JESTING**, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them.

**2 Tim 2:15-17** Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and **IDLE BABBLINGS**, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer.

**Rom 1:18-32** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man — and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

For this reason God gave them up to **VILE PASSIONS**. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a **DEBASED MIND**, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, **SEXUAL IMMORALITY, WICKEDNESS, COVETOUSNESS, MALICIOUSNESS; FULL OF ENVY, MURDER, STRIFE, DECEIT, EVIL-MINDEDNESS; THEY ARE WHISPERERS, BACKBITERS, HATERS OF GOD, VIOLENT, PROUD, BOASTERS, INVENTORS OF EVIL THINGS, DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS, UNDISCERNING, UNTRUSTWORTHY, UNLOVING, UNFORGIVING, UNMERCIFUL**; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

What does God expect, for me to crawl into a hole in the ground? Surely He must know that I am just human and bound to make some of these mistakes from time to time. What does He expect from me, **PERFECTION**?

One horrible lie that has been told by many who have passed themselves off as leaders of God's people is the lie that there are sins that are worse than others and that God has some kind of rating scale as to which is which. But it is interesting or at least something to take notice of that this rating system continues to fluctuate depending on the time, place or individual who is found guilty of committing that sin. In other words, leaders are not treated the same

as laity and the wealthy are not treated the same as the poor. That group over there gets more lead-way then the one over there and that elder can get away with murder while Mr. Jones got in trouble just for saying something about the pastors sermon last week. Therefore sin and its meaning seems to be often applied in a manner of social status or position at the moment. One person can tell a lie and it is over-looked while another person can tell a lie and get punished for it. One person can be found having an extra-marital affair and be overlooked, while another not so important person can do the same and be punished ever so severely. And sadly this kind of view of what is right and wrong is presented the world over as to how the kingdom of heaven is run. It is no wonder why people outside of church look at what goes on inside and say 'I can do the same thing out here and not have to give them my money or agree with their beliefs.'

But no matter what kind of picture men paint of the Kingdom of God, God's Word speaks the Truth and what these people do has not gone unseen by the One who created man.

*Ps 94:8-11 Understand, you senseless among the people;  
And you fools, when will you be wise?  
He who planted the ear, shall He not hear?  
He who formed the eye, shall He not see?  
He who instructs the nations, shall He not correct,  
He who teaches man knowledge?  
The Lord knows the thoughts of man,  
That they are futile.*

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.

Many find it easy to apply the theory of *guilt by association* until it comes back around like a boom-a-rang to them or if it happens to do with someone who holds a high enough leadership position. Then the people are told *not to worry because God will deal with it in the end*. That kind of teaching that makes excuses for sin for one and not the other is a lie and comes from the pits of hell, for God has spoken about what we are to do with that kind of thinking and those who think that way.

*Eph 5:6-7 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**.*

*Rev 18:4-8 Then I heard another voice from heaven say: "**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.** Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done. Mix her a double portion from her own cup. Give her as much torture and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself. In her heart she boasts, 'I sit as queen; I am not a widow, and I will never mourn.' Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire,*

Lest anyone feel that this is taken out of context may it be said; There is only one **HER** in God's Word who believes she is a queen and will not see any harm come to her even though she commits adultery with her enemies. That **HER** has always been and forever will be the church, the Jerusalem which is below, the one who has been in slavery because of her sins, the one who has always stood against the Truth and has done whatever it takes to stop the Truth from being told.

Dear Lord, as we read this, please open our eyes so we may see and heal our minds that we may think clearly, Amen.

*Ezek 23 The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, there were **TWO WOMEN**, daughters of the same mother. They became prostitutes in Egypt, engaging in prostitution from their youth. In that land their breasts were fondled and their virgin bosoms caressed. The older was named Oholah, and her sister was Oholibah. **THEY WERE MINE** and gave birth to sons and daughters. **OHOLAH IS SAMARIA, AND OHOLIBAH IS JERUSALEM.***

*"Oholah engaged in prostitution while she was still mine; and she lusted after her lovers, the Assyrians-warriors clothed in blue, governors and commanders, all of them handsome young men, and mounted*

horsemen. She gave herself as a prostitute to all the elite of the Assyrians and defiled herself with all the idols of everyone she lusted after. She did not give up the prostitution she began in Egypt, when during her youth men slept with her, caressed her virgin bosom and poured out their lust upon her.

"Therefore I handed her over to her lovers, the Assyrians, for whom she lusted. They stripped her naked, took away her sons and daughters and killed her with the sword. She became a byword among women, and punishment was inflicted on her.

"Her sister Oholibah saw this, yet in her lust and prostitution she was more depraved than her sister. She too lusted after the Assyrians-governors and commanders, warriors in full dress, mounted horsemen, all handsome young men. I saw that she too defiled herself; both of them went the same way.

"But she carried her prostitution still further. She saw men portrayed on a wall, figures of Chaldeans portrayed in red, with belts around their waists and flowing turbans on their heads; all of them looked like Babylonian chariot officers, natives of Chaldea. As soon as she saw them, she lusted after them and sent messengers to them in Chaldea. Then the Babylonians came to her, to the bed of love, and in their lust they defiled her. After she had been defiled by them, she turned away from them in disgust. When she carried on her prostitution openly and exposed her nakedness, **I TURNED AWAY FROM HER IN DISGUST, JUST AS I HAD TURNED AWAY FROM HER SISTER.** Yet she became more and more promiscuous as she recalled the days of her youth, when she was a prostitute in Egypt. There she lusted after her lovers, whose genitals were like those of donkeys and whose emission was like that of horses. So you longed for the lewdness of your youth, when in Egypt your bosom was caressed and your young breasts fondled.

"Therefore, Oholibah, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will stir up your lovers against you, those you turned away from in disgust, and I will bring them against you from every side- the Babylonians and all the Chaldeans, the men of Pekod and Shoa and Koa, and all the Assyrians with them, handsome young men, all of them governors and commanders, chariot officers and men of high rank, all mounted on horses. They will come against you with weapons, chariots and wagons and with a throng of people; they will take up positions against you on every side with large and small shields and with helmets. I will turn you over to them for punishment, and they will punish you according to their standards. I will direct my jealous anger against you, and they will deal with you in fury. They will cut off your noses and your ears, and those of you who are left will fall by the sword. They will take away your sons and daughters, and those of you who are left will be consumed by fire. They will also strip you of your clothes and take your fine jewelry. So I will put a stop to the lewdness and prostitution you began in Egypt. You will not look on these things with longing or remember Egypt anymore.

"For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am about to hand you over to those you hate, to those you turned away from in disgust. They will deal with you in hatred and take away everything you have worked for. They will leave you naked and bare, and the shame of your prostitution will be exposed. Your lewdness and promiscuity have brought this upon you, **BECAUSE YOU LUSTED AFTER THE NATIONS** and defiled yourself with their idols. You have gone the way of your sister; so I will put her cup into your hand.

"This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"You will drink your sister's cup, a cup large and deep; it will bring scorn and derision, for it holds so much. You will be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, the cup of ruin and desolation, the cup of your sister Samaria. You will drink it and drain it dry; you will dash it to pieces and tear your breasts.

I have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD.

"Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Since you have forgotten me and thrust me behind your back, you must bear the consequences of your lewdness and prostitution."

The LORD said to me: "Son of man, will you judge Oholah and Oholibah? Then confront them with their detestable practices, for they have committed adultery and blood is on their hands. They committed adultery with their idols; they even sacrificed their children, whom they bore to me, as food for them. They have also done this to me: At that same time they defiled my sanctuary and desecrated my Sabbaths. On the very day they sacrificed their children to their idols, they entered my sanctuary and desecrated it. That is what they did in my house.

"They even sent messengers for men who came from far away, and when they arrived you bathed yourself for them, painted your eyes and put on your jewelry. You sat on an elegant couch, with a table spread before it on which you had placed the incense and oil that belonged to me.

"The noise of a carefree crowd was around her; Sabeans were brought from the desert along with men from the rabble, and they put bracelets on the arms of the woman and her sister and beautiful crowns on

*their heads. Then I said about the one worn out by adultery, 'Now let them use her as a prostitute, for that is all she is.' And they slept with her. As men sleep with a prostitute, so they slept with those lewd women, Oholah and Oholibah. But righteous men will sentence them to the punishment of women who commit adultery and shed blood, because they are adulterous and blood is on their hands.*

*"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Bring a mob against them and give them over to terror and plunder. The mob will stone them and cut them down with their swords; they will kill their sons and daughters and burn down their houses. "So I will put an end to lewdness in the land, that all women may take warning and not imitate you. You will suffer the penalty for your lewdness and bear the consequences of your sins of idolatry. Then you will know that I am the Sovereign LORD."*

This is a hard reading, for most have never seen this before.

God's people, His chosen people have so rarely done what is good and right. And if God's people continue to desire to be just like the nations around them and rule with man made laws and vote in and out of positions those THEY FEEL are right for this or that job and use the worlds systems and ways to present a picture to the world of a God that does not exist, they too will be thrown down for the same reason as Israel before them.

How sad it is that while they feel they are worshipping God they are instead despising Him and rejecting Him.

***Deut 31:15-22*** Then the LORD appeared at the Tent in a pillar of cloud, and the cloud stood over the entrance to the Tent. And the LORD said to Moses: "You are going to rest with your fathers, **AND THESE PEOPLE WILL SOON PROSTITUTE THEMSELVES** to the foreign gods of the land they are entering. They will forsake me and break the covenant I made with them. On that day I will become angry with them and forsake them; I will hide my face from them, and they will be destroyed. Many disasters and difficulties will come upon them, and on that day they will ask, 'Have not these disasters come upon us because our God is not with us?' And I will certainly hide my face on that day because of all their wickedness in turning to other gods.

*"Now write down for yourselves this song and teach it to the Israelites and have them sing it, so that it may be a witness for me against them. When I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, the land I promised on oath to their forefathers, and when they eat their fill and thrive, they will turn to other gods and worship them, **REJECTING ME AND BREAKING MY COVENANT.** And when many disasters and difficulties come upon them, this song will testify against them, because it will not be forgotten by their descendants. I know what they are disposed to do, even before I bring them into the land I promised them on oath." So Moses wrote down this song that day and taught it to the Israelites.*

***1 Sam 8:1-9*** When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges for Israel. The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba. But his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.

*So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. your sons do not walk in your ways; **NOW APPOINT A KING TO LEAD US, SUCH AS ALL THE OTHER NATIONS HAVE.**"*

*But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. And the LORD told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; **IT IS NOT YOU THEY HAVE REJECTED, BUT THEY HAVE REJECTED ME AS THEIR KING.** As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, **FORSAKING ME AND SERVING OTHER GODS,** so they are doing to you. Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do."*

Why is it so hard to learn from others mistakes? Why do we so easily fall into Satan's trap of worldliness believing that this world has ANYTHING to offer us? Everything other than God is futile and we should have as little care for it as a dead person does.

***Col 3:1-4*** Since you became alive again, so to speak, when Christ arose from the dead, now set your sights on the rich treasures and joys of heaven where he sits beside God in the place of honor and power. Let heaven fill your thoughts; **DON'T SPEND YOUR TIME WORRYING ABOUT THINGS DOWN HERE. YOU SHOULD HAVE AS LITTLE DESIRE FOR THIS WORLD AS A DEAD PERSON DOES.** Your real life is in heaven with Christ and God. And when Christ who is our real life comes back again, you will shine with him and share in all his glories.



Many look at the life of Christ and imagine that He was the only one who could live as He lived and that when they read such things as Col 3:1-4 they believe that it really does not mean what it says because only a god could live that anyway, and so they see the cross as the *grace of God* and as long as they ask for forgiveness that God will look at them through His grace as being worthy enough to get into heaven. This has been taught to the masses for so long that they believe it to be truth even though it is nowhere to be found in scripture. And even though God asks for COMPLETE obedience over and over again, they will not listen to anything that calls for a change of the way they are living (as long as the church teaches otherwise.) And of course, why would they not do what they are told? For with that kind of belief they can do whatever they want and as long as they ask for forgiveness, the slate is wiped clean and they can continue on protected by God's grace. In human terms it is called easy religion. And then to further complicate things they demand that kind of preaching and turn away anyone who does not meet up to their demands that allow them to be the way they are. Just like Israel before them they do not want the kind of preaching that calls for a higher form of living, they want smooth things, things that do not push against them so they can live a peaceful life.

***Isa 30:8-11***

*Now go, write it before them on a tablet,  
And note it on a scroll,  
That it may be for time to come,  
Forever and ever:  
That this is a rebellious people,  
Lying children,  
Children who will not hear the law of the Lord;  
Who say to the seers, "Do not see,"  
And to the prophets, "Do not prophesy to us right things;  
Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits.  
Get out of the way,  
Turn aside from the path,  
Cause the Holy One of Israel  
To cease from before us."*

As Israel before them, most will not stop, look and listen before they act or react to the Truth. If it does not go along with their doctrine/s they will fight to stay with the status-quo. But for those who want more and are tired of being trapped in a never ending cycle of sin and the feeling it brings into their life, to them the Truth is a balm to the weary, a light in what was once a dark place.

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord.

Children of the Light will be living up to what standard? *ALL goodness, righteousness and truth and what pleases the Lord.* They no longer seek their own way but live for Him in everything they do and say. And His Way is the path of righteousness that purifies from ALL sin.

***1 John 1:5-7 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: GOD IS LIGHT; IN HIM THERE IS NO DARKNESS AT ALL. IF WE CLAIM TO HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM YET WALK IN THE DARKNESS, WE LIE AND DO NOT LIVE BY THE TRUTH. BUT IF WE WALK IN THE LIGHT, AS HE IS IN THE LIGHT, WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER, AND THE BLOOD OF JESUS, HIS SON, PURIFIES US FROM ALL SIN.***

The Way of God has never been anything less than the Way of Light. There is no darkness there because there is no darkness in Him or where He is. He is Light and if He comes into the life then there can be no darkness in that person. He is not like a light bulb that gives off only so much light, but is Light eternal that separates the dark from the light. There are no grey areas in separation, only light or darkness. And if we are truly the children of Light, then the darkness cannot do its work in us. Sin is shunned like a plague and falling is left to those who live in the dark.

Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes

visible, for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: **"WAKE UP, O SLEEPER, RISE FROM THE DEAD,** and Christ will shine on you."

The foundation of exposing lies is honesty, but woe to that person who exposes only parts of the story. But for those who are honest in their endeavors to live upright lives will live in such a way that nothing stays hidden, for why would anyone light a lamp just to hide it under a bowl, why would anyone who lives in the light then hide it? Anyone that lives in the light will be honest in every situation and will learn to live by that standard so that everything hidden will be revealed.

***Matt 10:27-31 "WHATEVER I TELL YOU IN THE DARK, SPEAK IN THE LIGHT; AND WHAT YOU HEAR IN THE EAR, PREACH ON THE ROOFTOPS. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.***

Be very careful, then, how you live-not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

For hundreds of years the discussion of the will of God has taken on various views and has been presented as everything from singing in the choir to mowing the neighbors lawn. And though there may be some things that are nice to do, it does not make it the will of God being worked out.

God has spoken of His will on a far deeper level than performing an act for the local church or doing something for a friend.

God's will is for our salvation and that salvation was given to us as our Savior and He wants to live in our hearts, and He will live in the hearts of those who love Him and obey Him. There is no other will to be done.

***Eph 1:3-10 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, WHO HAS BLESSED US IN THE HEAVENLY REALMS WITH EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING IN CHRIST. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world TO BE HOLY AND BLAMELESS IN HIS SIGHT. In love he predestined us TO BE ADOPTED AS HIS SONS THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS PLEASURE AND WILL-to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that HE LAVISHED ON US WITH ALL WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING. And he MADE KNOWN TO US THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL ACCORDING TO HIS GOOD PLEASURE, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment-TO BRING ALL THINGS IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH TOGETHER UNDER ONE HEAD, even Christ.***

Ok, let's see now:

He has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ  
to be holy and blameless in his sight  
to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will  
there is redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins  
he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding  
made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure  
to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head

God's will has always been about Him living in His people and for them to be witnesses of His power and might to free anyone from sin and to present them faultless before His throne to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head. It is about one body, one temple, one house and He as the Head of that house. Would we want it any other way?

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In other words, do not be filled with anything other than that food which comes from God. Eat Him, drink Him and you will never be hungry or thirsty again. And let the music of praise fill your heart.

***Matt 5:6** Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

***John 6:44-51** "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. **I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE.** Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. **I AM THE LIVING BREAD** that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. **THIS BREAD IS MY FLESH,** which I will give for the life of the world."*

***John 6:53-58** Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, **UNLESS YOU EAT THE FLESH OF THE SON OF MAN AND DRINK HIS BLOOD, YOU HAVE NO LIFE IN YOU.** Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For **MY FLESH IS REAL FOOD AND MY BLOOD IS REAL DRINK. WHOEVER EATS MY FLESH AND DRINKS MY BLOOD REMAINS IN ME, AND I IN HIM.** Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever."*

Our hunger and our thirst should be for righteousness, not for anything of this world. And our Righteousness has a name: King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ. But this is not promoting cannibalism or in any way talking about having to eat the literal body or flesh of God as the Pharisees tried to make it seem that Christ was saying (and as some still do today that claim to be eating the very flesh of God and drinking His blood.) But we are talking about God living in us and nourishing us and filling us with Himself just as He did while walking among us in the flesh.

***Matt 4:4** Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*

We are to eat the same food He ate for our nourishment and strength just as the disciples learned about what they were to eat.

***John 4:31-38** Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?" **"MY FOOD," SAID JESUS, "IS TO DO THE WILL OF HIM WHO SENT ME AND TO FINISH HIS WORK.***

This is our food, our nourishment. And this food will cause us to never be hungry or thirsty again.

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Think of that. What would the body of Christ, the church of God look like if everyone was so obedient to God that each person was submissive to each other as the hand is to the arm and the leg is to the thigh and the body is to the head. Wow! Think of that, a body living and acting as ONE.

Wives, submit to your husband's as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Uh-Oh! There you go. Now you've gone too far. This is the age of women's rights.

NO!!! Wait a minute! This is not about anyone's rights or a lack of them. This is how the body of Christ works when it is one.

Lets read the rest of the story before anyone throws a fit.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies.

Oh! So as Christ loves the church and He gave His life for her, men are to love their wives. There is no master/slave mentality or a thinking process that puts anyone in a lesser/greater position. And the reason for that is:

He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church-for we are members of his body.

What a wonderful message of love and care. The body working as One with God as the head and each one caring for and working with the other and husbands and wives as one that all may see the FULL picture of the kingdom of God and just how living in righteousness takes place with the husband being the priest and king of his domain and keeping his kingdom washed and clean from sin with the Word. Just as the Messiah did for His own, His wife, so men are to be the foundation of holiness so that all may see the True meaning of Peace and Joy.

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."

This has been for many a mystery. So many voices have been heard about the issue of marriage and its meaning and every possible explanation has been offered even from a psychological and pseudo-Christian viewpoint founded in worldly wisdom. And in the end, the divorce/marriage rate is just as great in church as it is in the world. But now is the time to see the true picture without any pride or prejudice, doctrine or dogma getting in the way so we may see God's view of how two people become one flesh instead of each being their-own-person. So let's read what God says about this issue.

This is a profound mystery-**BUT I AM TALKING ABOUT CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.** Never the less, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Think of that. The joining of two people is to be seen in the same way that Christ loves His own body, the church, His bride. But if that is true, then where is divorce? Isn't divorce just an accepted evil of life that happens because God's children cannot do as He has done and two people really cannot become one anyway (no matter what He says?) Those who go to church imagine that God has given divorce as a way out of a marriage gone bad, and because marriage is acknowledged by the state and a marriage license/certificate is given to justify the union of two individuals then an equal and opposing piece of paper can be issued to end the state ordained marriage, and the scriptures are used to back up that idea.

But if what God says is true that a union between a husband and a wife is to be like the relationship of God and His church then what do you think a true union would look like or be if each one was truly in Love with the other as much as God loves His own body? Think of it. A relationship where each person is giving what the other needs and obeying what the head (God) tells it to do. In other words, as God loves His body then what each part of the body needs would be taken care of by God. WOW!

When the Truth is told we find that the reason a man and woman are joined/united in the first place is because God is the head of each of them and can do with them as He desires, and as long as they are living in Him they have left behind their connection to this world and are His creation, not one made/born out of a husbands will or a human desire but a new creation that lives in Him. So each person leaves behind their earthly heritage (mother, father sister, brother) and becomes one with God, one with His body/temple that is not of this world or of this creation. This is a union of God, not one where man declares the power to join two people together (as if there were some place that God declared that He gave men that power) but where God is the ONLY reason for a man and a woman to become one. This is His Way.

## *Ephesians 6*

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

As God is our Father and we are His children, and He is the Head of the body, then the body can only obey the head, and children brought up in the Lord can only do as the rest of the body does. As the body is in submission to the will of the Mind, and as the wife is in submission to the husband so are children to be submissive to their parents. It is the perfect union. It is the body as one. A body not controlled by a sinful nature but by a heavenly divine nature where God is in control.

"Honor your father and mother"-which is the first commandment with a promise-"that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

Israel was given a law to live by and if they obeyed it then the Word of God would become alive in them and the power, authority and dominion promised them would make them co-rulers with Christ and lights to the world of the creator God. Their life would be good and long in the earth and Israel would welcome their Messiah with open arms. This was to be their lot and possession. But when they rejected God and crucified their Savior then the promises and inheritance were passed on to the Gentiles. But for those who chose to believe to them was given the chance that Israel could have had to be the body of Christ and to be the start of a new generation that would be the light to the world and a witness of how one could live in this world and yet be untouched by its evil habits and desires, and how their offspring would be examples of those who could be filled in the womb with the Spirit of God.

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Does a man hate his own body? Why then would he exasperate it or mistreat it? Instead he would care for it and nurture it in the instruction of the Lord.

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.

Under the rule of Jewish law, God had made a way for those who had gotten in trouble through debt or some other issue to be able to work it off through something called slavery. But this was not the kind of slavery that most perceive when they think of this term. This was a slavery where the slave was to be treated as family member (for they were in fact all related to each other.) And at the end of the set years (the time called jubilee) of slavery/servitude, all debts monetary or otherwise were to be forgiven and the debtor set free.

This kind of slavery was to be an object lesson of just how bad sin is (slavery) and the price that was being paid for getting into that situation in the first place, and also to point out the kind of forgiveness that comes from the heart of Love. And at the coming of the Messiah God would show just how much He Loves His people and would be Israel's kinsmen-redeemer and wash away the stain of sin/slavery and set the captives free.

***Rom 6:5-7 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. FOR WE KNOW THAT OUR OLD SELF WAS CRUCIFIED WITH HIM SO THAT THE BODY OF SIN MIGHT BE DONE AWAY WITH, THAT WE SHOULD NO LONGER BE SLAVES TO SIN-BECAUSE ANYONE WHO HAS DIED HAS BEEN FREED FROM SIN.***

***John 8:34-37 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, EVERYONE WHO SINS IS A SLAVE TO SIN. NOW A SLAVE HAS NO PERMANENT PLACE IN THE FAMILY, BUT A SON BELONGS TO IT FOREVER. SO IF THE SON SETS YOU FREE, YOU WILL BE FREE INDEED.***

Just as in being a slave to God and His will, we are bound to Love for each other to be what each other needs when each other needs it.

*1 Cor 9:19-20 Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.*

But this is not the end of the story in case anyone is trying to set in their minds that they can now own a slave and treat them any way they wish.

And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

In the discussion of slave/master a part has continually come up missing among those who believe in slavery, the discussion of how a master is to act.

God spoke His Word about this and we need not EVER say we didn't understand or see it.

*Matt 20:16 "So the last will be first, and the first will be last."*

*Luke 13:30 Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last."*

*Matt 20:25-28 Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave-**JUST AS THE SON OF MAN DID NOT COME TO BE SERVED, BUT TO SERVE, AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE AS A RANSOM FOR MANY.**"*

The Messiah made it very clear what it means to be a master or lord. A master (ruler, leader) is to serve and not expect to be served. But sadly that is not the way mankind has looked at this subject.

Just as in ALL of what we have discussed in this book, God's Word has an opposite meaning or understanding than most will admit or are even aware of. But because men would rather follow other men instead of knowing God's Word and living it in their lives, what God has to say (and the understanding that goes with it) is left behind and ignored for human wisdom.

Despite what others have done that shows where ignorance leads, there are still men today who take God's Word and try to make it say things that it does not say even to the point of the discussion of human slavery where men and women are treated as a possession not an equal. And as long as men buy into the idea of one human being over another, then this false idea will live even among those who say they are God's children.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

All of this, ALL OF THIS is about being strong in weakness. It is about wearing God (the robe/garment of righteousness) eating Him (feeding on His Word) and shining out the Light (and He is the Light) that lives in us so we may stand and not fall, but be victorious over SIN and ALL its trappings!

Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

When we realize that God means just what He says, we will stop looking at, fighting about and having anything to do with anything that is not a part of God's kingdom. In other words, this has all been about a personal relationship with our Savior and Lord that is built upon a foundation of power and dominion against the real enemy, Satan, and his kingdom.

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to **STAND!**

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth (*John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and **THE TRUTH** and the life.*) buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, (*Heb 7:2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation **KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of Peace;...*) and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. (*2 Thess 3:16 Now may the **LORD OF PEACE** himself give you peace at all times and in every way.*)

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, (*Rev 19:11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called **FAITHFUL** and True.*) with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation (*Acts 4:12 **SALVATION IS FOUND IN NO ONE ELSE**, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.*") and the sword of the Spirit, **WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD**. (*Rev 2:15-16 Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with **THE SWORD OF MY MOUTH**.*)

All these things said in His Word, **ALL THESE THINGS**, are Him and are about Him. Therefore we must put on our Lord and Savior and wear Him into the battle so we may be the victors He has made us to be. For He is our Salvation and the Light that lights our way.

**Rom 13:12-13** *The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and **PUT ON THE ARMOR OF LIGHT**.*

**John 8:12** *When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "**I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. WHOEVER FOLLOWS ME WILL NEVER WALK IN DARKNESS**, but will have the light of life."*

It is to be said as clear as any sound can make that nowhere in God's Word does He say that there will be times when we are left in the dark to stumble and fall. Therefore if He really lives in those who proclaim to have Him in their life then His Light will chase away any darkness.

But lest we forget, there is something we will do if we live in the Light.

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.

**John 14:12-14** *I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. **YOU MAY ASK ME FOR ANYTHING IN MY NAME, AND I WILL DO IT**.*

So...

With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

What do you think that the body of God would be like if His Word was believed and lived out in each persons life who says they believe? What would happen to all the human struggling that so often takes place? What would husbands and wives begin to experience being one flesh, one mind and one body, and what kind of families would they raise as they obey the Head of their body (God?) And what would happen to all the needs of that body?

As it has been said (even in the world) *Love is the answer*. But we know that Love and His name is Lord, Savior, the Word of God, God, Emanuel, the Branch, Creator, Kinsmen Redeemer, the Light of the world, Melchizedek, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace, Wonderful Counselor. So put your trust in Him, cling to Him and live in Him that your days will be filled with peace and praise in all things.

Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Paul did made known *the mystery of the gospel* which is **CHRIST IN YOU** that we may read today and understand with clear vision every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God. There is no mystery yet to be

unveiled and no work yet to be accomplished so that the body may finally be one. That work was complete and we may live in that knowledge and by the Power and Authority it brings.

Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.

With all the earnestness this writer can employ,

*Peace to the brothers (and sisters) and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.*