

DR. VICTOR GILL



**SPIRITUAL
WARFARE**
**AND THE REALITIES OF
THE END TIMES**

Spiritual Warfare
And Realities Of
The End Time

*Exposing the warfare behind
the scenes - the methodology
of Satan to enslave society
and undermine the church -
and a provocative analysis of
the End Times.*

*Guaranteed to sharpen your
spiritual discernment
and challenge your life.*

By Bishop Dr. Victor Gill

Table of Contents

Copyright	1
Dedication	2
Foreword	3
Introduction	7

PART ONE: SPIRITUAL WARFARE

1. The Walk of Society	15
2. The Courses of The World	33
3. The Controller of The Course of The World	65
4. How Satan Enslaves Society	81
5. Called To A New Walk	105

6. Three Offensive Weapons 123

PART TWO: THE END TIME

7. The Concept of The Last Days 157

8. A Historic-Prophetic View
of The Church Ages 177

9. The Last Church Age 193

10. Unprecedented Deception 233

11. The Second Coming of
Christ 289

12. The Kingdom of God 311

Conclusion 355

SPIRITUAL WARFARE AND REALITIES OF THE END TIME. Copyright© 2006 by Bishop Dr. Gill. All rights reserved. Printed in the twin island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations. For more information address Bishop Dr. Victor Gill, Church Street, Success Laventile, Trinidad West Indies, or call 1 868-626-0634.

All Scripture references have been taken from the New King James Version except where otherwise mentioned.

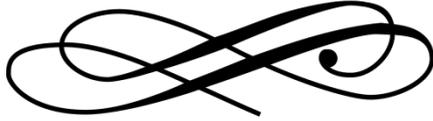
ISBN: 987-976-8194-90-1

Published by:
Dr. Victor Gill Ministries
www.victorgill.org

Cover Design:
Marlon Nicolls and Associates
www.marlonicolls.org



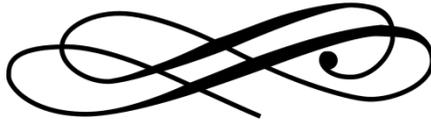
Dedication



This book is dedicated as a personal note to all my spiritual children at home and abroad, and to the whole Body of Christ.

Stand firm in Christ to the very end. Be not deceived. Let nothing turn you aside from your holy walk and steadfast commitment to Jesus Christ. Remembering always that *"...He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ"* (Philippians 1:6)

Foreword



Congratulations for presenting the people of this present day with the biblical truths so plainly rendered in *Spiritual Warfare and Realities of the End Time*.

I heartily recommend broad circulation of this book of pertinent importance. It is easily read and understood. It is sound doctrinally, and if acted upon, its propositions will guide many through the gates of pearl and to be ready for the rapture at the coming in the air of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dr. R. E. Anderson

*President, Founder
School of Bible Theology
Seminary and University
San Jacinto, California*

Spiritual Warfare and Realities of the End Time is truly a gripping treatise of the great deception of the forces of darkness behind day to day activities. It carries a consistent flow and a wealth of information.

*Bishop Desmond Austin
Pastor and Bible School Lecturer*

It is said of the making of Books there is no end. Nevertheless, Spiritual Warfare and Realities of the End Time is a profitable exceptional book. The writing is simple, clear, and luminous. The

books is good. it is worth having in one's possession. I heartily recommend it to anyone. It is an excellent text for Bible Student, preachers and teachers and the people of God.

Errol Christopher (Dip. Theology)

Spiritual Warfare and the Realities of the End Time is the most in-dept analysis and presentation of truth concerning deception and the end times I have ever read. Gill presents a challenge which demands reconsideration and change of mind. It is a must read.

Wayne E. Baptiste
Christian Business Man

Spiritual Warfare and Realities of the End Time is eye opening and explosive. It is one of the few books I have read that has a good balance of church and secular history, penetrating insight, scholarly exposition and contemporary application. It is a must read for those who truly love God and are passionate for truth. It shows the way forward in a time of spiritual crisis and confusion.

Bishop Patrick Rondon

Introduction

Some time ago I came upon an aviation story where the captain came on, gave his regular greetings, then went on to say, “...*at present we are traveling at an altitude of thirty five thousand feet, at the speed of five hundred miles per hour. I have some good news, and some bad news. The bad news is that we are lost. However, the good news is that we are making excellent time.*”

As ridiculous as it may sound, this story gives a picture of the real situation in our world today. According to revelation of Scripture, the world is morally and spiritually lost. Yet at the same instance, upon the Information Super Highway of the Internet, by the means of technology with all its ramifications, the world is making excellent time. But, in its

moral and spiritual condition, where will this excellent time land our world? It is rightly said: The noonday of mankind will be the midnight of the world. The Scripture testifies, *For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape (1Thessalonians 5:3).*

The Bible clearly predicts intensified spiritual warfare and moral decline as this world advances closer toward the end. Even right now, prophetic fulfillment cascades upon this planet. Winds of doctrines blow across the landscape of contemporary Christianity. In such an alarming time as this, the children of God need to be alert as never before. We need to be wide awake to the reality of an all-out spiritual war for the souls of men, and more so against those who have indeed

laid claim to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

As much as anyone might like to, no one can objectively deny that the prophesied forces of apostasy are increasingly at work today. The battle lines are drawn in an unprecedented manner.

Today there are many books written on the subject of Spiritual Warfare. However, this one takes a unique approach, in that it focuses primarily on the masses of people, rather than the individual. It begins in the first part with a detailed analysis of Ephesians 2:2, showing the bondage of the general society, and builds on that concept. In the latter part it emphasizes the realities, and challenges of living in the end time.

Spiritual Warfare And Realities Of The End Time will take you behind the

scenes of everyday life and expose the working of Satan. Your eyes will be opened, and your discernment sharpened, as you receive a clear view of, and come to grips with dimensions of satanic activities not usually articulated. This book will enhance your perception of a great diabolic conspiracy against humanity, and the body of Christ in particular, in these closing days of time. Notice what the word of God says concerning these end times, “*So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him*” (Revelation 12:9).

The Bible prophetically says, *Satan will deceive the whole world*. He did it in the time of Noah (Genesis 6:5-7), he also did it in the time of Nimrod (Genesis 10:8-11:9), and Scripture

clearly predicts he will do it again in the end time (*Revelation 12:9*).

Even now one may observe elements of his plot, as future events cast their shadow. As you read, you will see how Satan operates behind the scenes of everyday life, in a very subtle manner; how he uses deception in order to accomplish his goal ...*to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10)*. He is the master deceiver.

When one considers the fall of angels, the annals of human history, and even the present; it becomes clear that deception is the devil's main strategy. Regarding his deceptive capabilities, no one should consider them self immune. He that thinks he stands should take heed.

However, as Christians we have some reassuring words. The apostle Paul speaking about our warfare against this

arch enemy referred to, *the wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6:11)*. The Greek word for wiles is “methodeia” from which we get the English word method, and it means: cunning arts, deceit, craft and trickery. The inference is that Satan operates with fixed methods; he has a basic game plan. What he cleverly does, is play a kind of mind game, by using the same schemes repeatedly. He only dresses the same old methods in new clothes in order to elude and catch his victims. Therefore, once you learn his methods, you can avoid his traps.

Again the apostle Paul referring to Satan said, “...*for we are not ignorant of his devices*”(2Corinthians 2:11). The Greek word for devices is “noema” which also means: methods, schemes, designs, or evil purposes. Another translation puts it this way, “...*avoid being outwitted by Satan, whose scheming we know only too*

well” (2 Corinthians 2:11 NJB). Yes, we know Satan’s scheming only too well. Very often however, it is not ignorance, but *ignoring* Satan’s devices, or methods, which causes many professing Christians to get into unnecessary problems and snares. Dear reader, this does not have to be your experience. If it was in the past it doesn’t have to be in the future.

As you read this book, I pray that God Almighty will further increase your awareness of spiritual warfare and realities of the end time. Moreover, I pray that the contents of this book stir your compassion for a world that is making excellent time but lost. May it also cause you to guard your own life, to contend for the faith, and labor in the gospel with persevering faithfulness. Grace and peace!

**PART ONE:
SPIRITUAL WARFARE**

CHAPTER ONE

The Walk of Society

Bible scholars agree that the Book of Ephesians is one of the most profound, and in-depth books of the Bible. It is the most insightful of Paul's epistles, and one of the richest out-flows of biblical revelation. Donald C. Stamps, the general editor of The Full Life Study Bible said, "Ephesians is one of the mountain peaks of Biblical revelation." On this mountain peak is where we begin. Showing first of all the reality of the bondage of society, by paying particular attention to some key words used in Ephesians chapter two and verse two.

A Brief Contextual Analysis Of Ephesians 2:2

Before we proceed, a brief contextual analysis is necessary. The book of Ephesians emphasizes: (1) The believer's old life under the influence of Satan. (2) The believer's new life and position in Christ. (3) The believer's present life on earth. (4) The eternal purpose of God for all believers. In Ephesians 2:1-6 the author emphasized the believer's old position in this world, under the influence of Satan. Ephesians 6:10-20 makes us to know that the old enemy remains a real and constant challenge to all believers at this present time.

The light of Scripture reveals, that due to the influence of Satan, the general human society unwittingly walks in a particular manner, a reality to which the professing church in every age is not immune. We are told in Ephesians

2:2, *“In which you once **walked** according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.”*

A Close-up Look At The Word “Walked”

Let us define the word “walked.” The word “walked” comes from the Greek word *peripateo*, which means to regulate one’s life, to conduct oneself, to go about, to live one’s life. It is connected to the word “according,” a Greek preposition, which means, “corresponding to, just as, or in the same way.” It is also important to point out that (in Greek grammar) this preposition is in the accusative case, which conveys the idea of limit, and therefore suggests a confined manner of walking.

The extremely significant revelation here is that people in general don't just walk as they choose, but they walk "according." Their lives are directed and shaped in accordance with the dictates of an unrecognized force, and influence. They walk according to something outside of their independent will. Something that motivates them, and controls the way society thinks, and acts. This is precisely what the word of God says. The Amplified Bible brings it out clearly, ...*you were following the course and fashion of this world [were under the sway of the tendency of this present age]...* (*Ephesians 2:2 Amplified Bible*).

Notice carefully, the word of God says, you were *following*, you were *under*, and you were *swayed* by the tendency of this present age. The word of God is specifically revealing the fact that society is in bondage. The masses of people who comprise human

society are enslaved. They think they are free, but they are not, their perceived freedom is fallacious, and deceptive. The fact that though in bondage, they are convinced that they are free only magnifies the gravity of their situation, and the darkness of their minds.

In Genesis 1:3-4, when God created the world He said, *Let there be light*, and out of darkness light appeared. We are told, *and God saw the light that it was good*. God never said those words concerning the darkness. The fact that God saw the light as good seems to imply that darkness on the outside is not good, and if that be the case with the outside how much more on the inside. Inward darkness is terrible. Yet this is the case with many, and hence the reason Jesus said, “...*If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!*” (Matthew 6:23).

The Big question is: How great is the darkness of the mind (inner darkness)? Truly it is a lamentable condition. Because of inner darkness many are sincere but sincere wrong. They are certain that they are leading their own lives, but they are not. They are convinced they are liberated but that is not their reality. They believe they are free because they can go wherever they like, do whatever they desire, and say whatever pleases them (or so they think).

What they don't know however, and what the Bible clearly reveals, is that there is a subtle force that superimposes itself upon them. It influences them, and predetermines their thoughts, feelings, values, choices, and actions.

They are in bondage to something very subtle; so subtle, it causes them to believe the very opposite of what their

real situation is. That is the true and amazing state of affairs, according to the revelation of the infallible Scriptures. This would become much more apparent as you continue. Let us now consider the word “course.”

A Close-up Look At The Word “Course”

*“In which you once walked according to the **course** of this world...”*
(Ephesians 2:2)

According to Webster’s dictionary, the word “course” means: the act or action of moving in a path from point to point. The path over which something moves, the direction of travel.

The Greek word for course is “*aeon*” which means, “the contemporary age with its particular emphasis, or movement in a particular direction.”

Something that is contemporary is something that is taking place now. Therefore, the course specifies a way of life unique to a particular age or time.

The Bible is evidently telling us that the walk of society, the way people go about their lives, is according to the emphasis of the contemporary age in which they live. People's way of thinking, their values, choices, and actions are manipulated by external pressure. This pressure is due to the direction in which the multitude of society is moving. The Bible calls this, *the course of this world*. It is also called by many biblical scholars, *the spirit of the age*.

What clearly unfolds to us is this: In every respective age society generally follows a particular course. In every age society invariably goes in a particular direction. Society moves like

a flock of birds, or a school of fishes. People are swayed by the emphasis, and tide of the time. They blend into the way of life, and values of the time.

It is said that an IQ of 130 or more is genius, yet amazingly we are told that Albert Einstein had an astounding IQ of 212. He is recognized as probably the greatest secular thinker of all times. In his book, “Ideas and Opinions” Einstein wrote,

“Few people are capable of expressing with equanimity (level-headedness) opinions which differ from the prejudice of their social environment. Most people are even incapable of even forming such opinions. The majority of the stupid are invincible and guaranteed for all time.”

“...there is also such a thing as a spirit of the times, an attitude of mind

characteristic of a particular generation, which is passed on from individual to individual and gives its distinctive mark to a society.”

“There are few enough people with sufficient independence to see the weakness and follies of their contemporaries and remain themselves untouched by them” (Excerpts taken from: Ideas And Opinions by Albert Einstein. Pages 28,29,68. Published by Wings Books, New York, New York Inc. Copy right 1954.)

Emmm... What profound words. I am forced to believe Einstein has read his Bible well. However, what is to be pitied most of all regarding this amazing collective movement of society in a particular direction, is the fact that in every case the age is in rebellion against God; a rebellion with severe and eternal consequences. Let us look again at Ephesians 2:2. *“In*

which you once walked according to the course of this world according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.”

The age is disobedient and rebellious to God. And this is so because, it is calculatedly, and by design influenced by Satan. Society is in bondage to the crafty and sinister power of Satan. It is amazing that many believe Satan is only a mythological figure, but this only lends credence to the reality of his existence, and the enormous extent of his deceptive capabilities. The evidence of his activities is made vivid by a troubled, perplexed, and hurting world.

The truth is, Satan is very active on this earth. He is very much involved in the course (the emphasis and direction) of the ages. This is the reason that the Bible equals the salvation of a soul

with a critical deliverance from the present age. The Bible says, “*who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father*” (Galatians 1:4). It is of crucial importance for the child of God to understand that salvation is a deliverance from the course and values of every contemporary age which is invariably contrary to God’s way. The Bible further reveals that the loftiest wisdom of this age is in contradistinction to the wisdom of God. It is misleading and false. We are told, “*Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise*” (1 Corinthians 3:18).

To be truly wise one must not conform to the standards (the wisdom, mindset and values) of this age. You must be prepared to be looked upon as a fool in

the eyes of the men, and even by some professed followers of Christ. The Bible says: *become a fool that he may become wise*. Now, nothing happens in isolation, for every effect there is a cause. It is not by chance the world is on the course it is on right now. The cause of the state of the world according to Scripture is the satanic influence.

Therefore, if you are wise according to this present the world's standard, you need to examine yourself carefully. Chances are you are being influenced by the course of this world, and by the arch-enemy of mankind. It is of vital importance for one to comprehend that salvation is essentially deliverance from this age. From its wisdom (1Cor. 3:19), its values (Eph. 4:17), its mindset (Rom. 12:2), and most of all, the spirit behind it (Eph.4:23).

A Close-up Look At The Word “World”

We have looked at the words “walk” and “course.” Let’s now consider the word “world.” *“In which you once walked according to the course of this **world**, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, (Ephesians 2:2).* The word “world” comes from the Greek word *cosmos*.

The word *cosmos* means “order” or “system.” The opposite of *cosmos* (order) is chaos (disorder). The world therefore, is an organized system. However, in this context, the emphasis of the word is on the world of people, who are a part of the order, and organized system.

The world with all its functional entities (culture, entertainment, education etc.) is systematically, and

methodically ordered, and coordinated by Satan, and so too are the majority of the people involved. Moreover, the word of God says, *“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them”* (2 Corinthians 4:4 KJV).

Notice that Satan is called, *“the god of this world.”* Though this may apply in a broad sense, it also specifically implies that Satan is the god of every false religion. He is the one whom multitudes of false religionists worship. He is the spirit which permeates, and infuses false religion. He gives birth to, organizes, and controls every false religion.

Not only is he the god of this world, but Scripture also calls him the prince of this world. He is called the prince because, by and large, he dominates

the governmental system, and all the major systems of this world. Jesus said, “...*the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me*” (John 14:30 KJV).

In His sovereignty and unsearchable wisdom, God has allowed Satan to some extent the right to dominate this world until the return of Christ, upon whose able shoulders the leadership of the world will rest (Isaiah 9:6-7). In acknowledgement of this truth Jesus Himself said, “*My kingdom is not of this world...*” (John 18:36).

The Bible also makes it clear that the world in general is in a fixed state of bondage, *We know that we are of God and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one* (1 John 5:19). The Scripture says the world lies under the sway of the wicked one. The word “lies” in the original Greek is *keitai*, which means: to lie prostrate. This

word is in the indicative mood, which indicates reality, as opposed to possibility or wish. It is in the present tense, which means the action is taking place now. It is in the passive voice, which means the subject is not acting but is being acted upon.

To sum it all up, the word of God is literally saying: at present the world of unregenerate people like helpless victims, lie prostrate under the power and influence of Satan. Black or white, rich or poor, wise or unwise, popular or unpopular, it makes no difference. Let God be true and every man a liar.

Something To Remember

...in every age society generally follows a particular course. In every respective age people invariably go in a particular direction, like a flock of birds, or a school of fishes. They are swayed by the emphasis, and tide of

the time. They blend into the way of life, and values of the time.

Something To Do

Examine your life to know whether there are values you have adopted that are mainly based on the emphasis of this age and not on God's word, and if so dare to make the necessary changes.

CHAPTER TWO

The Courses of The World

In the previous chapter we have focused on the words: “walk,” “course,” and “world.” Basically, we have seen that in every age society follows a particular course. Since the word course in Scripture means, “the contemporary age with its emphasis,” and people generally conform to the particular age in which they live, it would be helpful to consider several courses (ages) the world has passed through. Take the time to read through the account of some past ages. The importance of this is as you look back at history, you would observe different ages, and how even the church was affected by the emphasis of those times. As a result of this knowledge

you would be better able to interpret, and face the challenges of the present age in which we now live. Let us now consider a few ages the world has passed through since the birth of the church in the first century A.D.

The Dark Ages (A.D. 590-A.D. 1517)

With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), the church was birthed. Very soon it became a powerful force in the earth. The impact of the church on the world was so phenomenal, it was said that they had turned the world upside down. “... *These that have turned the word upside down are come hither also;*” (Acts 17:6 KJV)

In these early times Satan stirred up murderous hatred against the church. The church was severely persecuted, beginning with Nero in A.D. 64 and

succeeding emperors. However, persecution and martyrdom never quenched the fire of the church. Many sealed their faith with their blood, and the blood of the saints became the fuel to spread Christianity further and more rapidly. When Satan realized he could not stop the church by rejection and death, he devised a subtle plan to infiltrate the church. He used acceptance and favor to accomplish what rejection and death failed to do. When Constantine became emperor of Rome in 313, he professed to be born again. He embraced Christianity, and made it the official religion of the Roman Empire. With this paradigm shift many joined the church with ulterior motives. As a result, the church was gradually corrupted with pagan beliefs and practices. Eventually, the church entered the period called the Dark Ages.

The Dark Ages refer to a period in Europe dating from the collapse of the Roman Empire in the west around the 6th to the early 16th Century. It is called Dark Ages because of the cultural and religious darkness that prevailed in that era. Scholars believe that the fixing of dates for the beginning and end of the dark ages is arbitrary, since during neither time was there any sharp break in the cultural and religious development of the European continent. However, A.D. 590 is generally given as the year the Dark Ages is dated from. Probably this is due to the fact that it is the same year Gregory the Great was universally recognized as the first pope in the West.

The Dark Ages is also called the Middle (or Medieval) Ages. It was called the Middle Ages because it was the time between the classical Greek / Roman era and the Modern era. One of

the greatest contributors to the religious darkness of this age, was that the word of God had been confiscated from those who led the church. Those who led the church did not know the word of God. The priests were unable to read the Latin manuscripts of the Bible. Consequently superstition and fictitious stories were believed and propagated instead of the word of God. As a matter of fact it is said, it was illegal to own a Bible in Italy up until the year 1870.

During this time of the Dark Ages, the church which turned the world upside-down through its devotion to Christ was now in a backslidden state. The church's view of itself as the heavenly city in exile had become a thing of the past. There was such a shift that not only was the church secularly involved in everything, the church itself became the centre of everything. There was no line of demarcation between the

church and the secular world. Religion and politics were married, and the church became an earthly monstrosity. Throughout this time “Christianity” ruled unchallenged. Naturally speaking, it was a time when the church was most powerful. The church even had its own military called the Crusaders. They engaged in what was called crusades, or holy wars for the purpose of freeing the holy places in the Middle East from the control of Muslims. The first crusade was initiated by Pope Urban II in 1095, and crusades continued until 1291 (Approx. 200 years). According to historians, there were eight major expeditions carried out by the Crusaders.

The blood that was shed in the name of Christianity, even of the Jews, has given the name Christian a negative connotation in the eyes of many and in particular the Jewish people. Closely

associated with the concept of holy war, was the religious practice of pilgrimage to a holy shrine. Europe in the eleventh century abounded with local shrines housing relics of saints.

There were three great centers of pilgrimage that stood out above all others: Rome, because it is believed that the tombs of Peter and Paul are there; Spain, and Jerusalem, with the tomb of Christ. Pilgrimages were considered an act of devotion, penance, and expiation for serious sin.

In this age the church practiced the sale of indulgence which meant, a person could have paid their way to heaven, and then lived as they pleased.

It is said that St Peter's Basilica in Rome was built by the sale of indulgences. According to encyclopedia Britannica: "The first to grant a plenary, or absolute,

indulgence was Pope Urban II on the occasion of the first Crusade in 1095” (Copyright © 1994-2002 Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.). It was also believed that a person could have paid even for their dead relatives that they would escape the suffering of hell, or purgatory, and enter into heaven.

In this age, many unscriptural and ungodly traditions of men proliferated in the church. For example the church engaged in Simony, which was the selling of the offices of the church.

The church engaged in trafficking of relics; a piece of bone, some hair or a tooth from one of the early apostles, were sold at very exorbitant prices. By doing these things, the church became a very wealthy institution.

In the Eleventh Century, for the first time there arose special interest in devotion to Mary. The latter part of the

Dark Ages, namely the eve of the Reformation, was characterized by an intense search for truth and experience of God. Movements sprung up, like the Brethren of Common Life, and the Spiritual Franciscans.

Sometimes they endeavored to reform the church from within, to lead it back to apostolic simplicity and purity, but to no avail. At other times they completely disengaged themselves from the existing institution.

The Renaissance Age (A.D. 1400-A.D. 1700)

The word Renaissance is the French word for “rebirth” and it refers to the period of time from approximately A.D. 1400 – A.D. 1700. It was a time of transition from the Dark Ages to the modern world, which was characterized by a series of literary, and cultural movements.

These movements started in Italy, and expanded across Europe. The printing press invented by Johannes Gutenberg in 1450 contributed to the development of this era.

During this age, there was a developing trend and movement toward the aesthetic, and artistic values of ancient Rome. This trend or rebirth came into being from the belief that the people of Europe had rediscovered the superiority of Greek and Roman culture, after many centuries of what they saw as a fall in cultural, and intellectual standards.

Although Christianity was not abandoned, it was largely discarded. Generally speaking, the people of this time believed that they lived in a new age, free from the pollution of darkness and ignorance that were characteristic of the previous Dark Ages.

In this age, there was a shift from the Middle Age perception of reality with God occupying the central role; to one in which humans occupied the central role. Therefore, this period is often depicted as an era of humanism, which is a philosophy that emphasizes the dignity and worth of the individual. A basic belief of humanism is that people possess within themselves the capacity for truth and goodness.

This age was also marked by an intense interest in the visible world. It turned away from interest in life after death, which was a primary conviction of the Dark Ages.

The Age of Enlightenment (17th-18th Century A.D.)

The Age of Enlightenment, also called the “Age of Rationalism” refers to an age of philosophical frame of mind, and thinking among the Seventeenth,

and Eighteenth Century western intellectuals.

The phrase “Age of Enlightenment” was frequently used by writers of this period, who were convinced that they were moving from centuries of darkness, and ignorance, into a new age of enlightenment, by reason of science, and respect for humanity.

In the Eighteenth Century, a German philosopher by the name of Immanuel Kant defined that time as the time in history when mankind is coming of age. Kant said the motto of the age should be, “*Dare To Know.*” External authorities, including the Bible, were rejected as sources of knowledge, and consequently even the historicity of Jesus Christ came under attack.

In this era human reasoning was deified. It was believed that human reasoning was the best way to bring

about an understanding of the world. Deism (an impersonal view of God) was pervasive.

One of the important characteristics one should know about this age is that it was an age in which religion was tailored to suit the ideas and concepts of men. The order of the day was Rationalism (confidence in human reason), Skepticism (doubts about established religious standards), Empiricism (an emphasis on natural experience) and Pantheism (the belief that God is in everything in nature). As a result of this mindset, original sin was rejected, worldly happiness was placed before religious salvation, and nothing came under more attack than the church with all its wealth and political power.

Probably the most pronounced mindset of this age was the abiding faith in the power of human reason. The age was

immensely impressed by Isaac Newton's discovery of universal gravitation. Therefore, it was reasoned that if mankind could so unlock the laws of the universe which are God's own laws, then surely man can discover the laws governing all of nature, and society.

People came to believe that through the use of reason an unending process of development would be possible.

They believed that through proper education humanity could be transformed. Many were convinced that truth could be discovered through the observation of nature, rather than by the study of the inspired, authoritative, and infallible word of God. Bear in mind that through these ages multitudes of professing Christians were swayed and ensnared by the trends and winds of doctrine.

The Age of Modernism (The Late 19th-Mid 20th Century)

Modernism was a distinctive theological movement during the late 19th to mid 20th Century. Modernism (also called Liberalism) can be defined as the liberal attempt to harmonize Christianity with modern, philosophical, social, and scientific views. In their attempt to do so the liberal theologians, and many churches of that era propagated that there was no virgin birth, no miracles, no redemptive death, no historical resurrection, and no ascension.

As a result Christianity was left with no abiding significance in the world. Many ministers forsook the ministry, and became liberal scholars. The liberal churches which continued their operation focused their attention on what they considered to be the relevant and abiding virtues of Christianity. To

them their particular church organizations were too prominent to relinquish.

Against this background emerged a social gospel. Christianity became a social institution existing to take care of the physical suffering, and social concerns of the people of the world.

The emphasis was no longer on people being evangelized, but on people being socially reformed. It was believed that the means of salvation was a process of education, and not regeneration (not a radical spiritual rebirth).

It was held that the problems of the world were not as a result of the sinful heart of man, but as a result of his unsavory environment. Therefore, it was calculated that if man were properly educated, the society would be transformed. Needless to say, they failed to take into account the fact that

sin originated in a perfect environment.

It was during this era that liberal Bible scholars tried to reconcile the subversive theory of evolution with the biblical doctrine of creation. To do so, they coined a concept called, “Theistic Evolution;” which is to say, God created the world, but he did it through a process of evolution. Therefore, the world is still evolving.

Evolution was popularized by a renowned evolutionist called Charles Darwin born in 1858. Darwin was a Christian, and theology student, who when he was exposed to, and began to believe in the theory of evolution, backslid and became an atheist.

It is important to note, this era was also a time of unprecedented scientific breakthrough. Most of the inventions we enjoy today were invented during

the age of Modernism. The television, telephone, radio, airplane, cars, trains to name a few, were all invented in this era. Because of the enormous advancement that was made through science, science took the place of God in the hearts of many people, and the supernatural was rejected.

An important thing to note about this age is that stemming from the breakthrough in scientific discoveries, the general belief was: truth is also something you discover and not something revealed in the Scripture.

Therefore, it was strongly held, that through scientific discoveries, all of the world's problems would be solved, and science would usher in a utopian age.

Unfortunately however, this euphoria would not last. The world was in for a big surprise. World War 11, the threat

of nuclear weapons, increased social and environmental problems, brought major disappointments, and shook man's faith in science.

The Post Modern Age (Mid 20th Century and Onward)

The Post Modern Age is the age we live in right now. Post Modernism is fundamentally a reaction to and a rejection of the values of the age of Modernism. Christianity says Truth is something revealed, the Modernist said Truth is something you discover through science. But since science did not deliver the utopia men hoped for, the Postmodernist goes to an even greater extreme. The Postmodernist says, Truth is something you decide for yourself. Therefore, Truth is subjective, and not objective. Truth is determined by every individual's fancy.

This is an age of Pro-choice (free choice) which is an ideology that says everyone ought to decide for themselves what is right and what is wrong. What may be right for one may not be right for the other. Many people will not admit that they are for homosexuality, euthanasia or abortion.

What they will say is that they are for choice. They are for the right and the freedom of the individual to choose. Therefore, morality is based on whether or not you make your own choice, and not on what your choice might be. One can hear the serpent's hiss in such reasoning.

According to this postmodernist mindset, there are no moral absolutes. Good and evil are relatives (this is called relativism). It is all a matter of being "politically correct," correct according to the public interests, and not according to the biblical standard.

There is no such thing as sin, or wrong, it all depends on the situation, or on one's perception. The only sin is to call sin by its name, SIN!

This is also the age of plurality; diversity (and syncretism) is embraced in religion. Diversity of moral standards is embraced. To many God is not a personal being but a cosmic consciousness. There is no judgment. There is no Hell to shun, and no Heaven to gain. Heaven and Hell are states of the mind. The world is evolving. It is making a quantum (significant) leap to the next level of the evolutionary continuum. Therefore, the best is yet to come. Such is the general mindset, and spirit of this age.

To the previous modern age, science was very important. However it is said, the postmodernist cares little about science, but he loves technology. He loves the television that confuses

acting and entertainment with the real world. He loves the computer, with its projection of the fantasy world of cyber space, and virtual reality.

According to the post-modern mentality, nothing is to be taken seriously because everything is only virtual reality.

Consonant with the Post-modern ideology, is a new theological concept called Mega-shift. The Mega-shift concept is a kind of numerical interpretation to truth. Quantity is placed before quality. Gain is equated with godliness. Sin is seldom rebuked.

One's spiritual and eternal wellbeing is no longer the emphasis. The emphasis has now shifted to one's social, financial, and physical well being.

It is not that the messages holiness, heaven, final judgment, and the return

of Jesus Christ are not on the lips of Mega-Shift preachers, but those things are not what they emphasize. For the sake of church growth, attracting, and keeping the crowd, certain adjustments, and compromises are made. People are seeking an atmosphere of tolerance, therefore sound doctrine must be significantly minimized. Notwithstanding, it is true to say that not every mega-church holds to a Mega-shift philosophy.

History Always Repeats Itself

It is said that history is always repeating itself, and that is bad enough, but that is not all. It is also acknowledged that each time history repeats itself, the price goes up. Every time history repeats itself the fallouts are more severe.

History reveals that the church has been profoundly impacted in one way

or another by every age it has passed through. In general the people of the respective ages were seemingly blind, and numb to the ills of their time. It would take a future generation to look back and see the false and damnable ways of the previous one. This present postmodern age is the most subtle, and devious of all the ages that have gone before.

It is important to notice that the Lord had predicted what the experience of the church would be like through the ages and the end times in particular. Jesus said,

³¹"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field,

³²which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come

and nest in its branches." (Matthew 13:31-32)

Here the Lord revealed that the church will begin small and insignificant as a mustard seed when it is planted in the earth, but when it grows and becomes influential it will become corrupted.

The birds of the air will come and nest in its branches. In Scripture the birds of the air are usually referred to as demonic influence. Observe the following references. *And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! (Revelation 18:2). As a cage is full of birds, so their houses are full of deceit. Therefore, they have become great and grown rich (Jeremiah 5:27). "And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the*

birds came and devoured them. (In verse 19 Jesus interpreted the birds to mean the evil one Matthew 13:4).

No one is immune to the spirit, and influence of this age. The word of God says “*Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he falls (1Cor. 10:12).*” It is when you think you stand that you need to take heed the most.

The question we need to ask ourselves is how are we today as the church, and as individuals, allowing ourselves to go down in history? Everyone is accountable for the way they spend their transitory lifetime on this planet.

It is very easy to become so enamored with the cares of daily life, our creature comfort, and our personal ambitions, that we are unwittingly caught in the vortex and trap of the time. Jesus said,

³⁴"But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly.

³⁵"For it will come as a snare (trap) on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth.

³⁶"Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:34-36)

Beloved you have a choice to either go downstream with the current of the time, or go upstream against the odds.

In consideration of the above and profound words of Albert Einstein, seek to be one of those people who are capable of expressing with equanimity (level-headedness) opinions which differ from the prejudice of your social environment. Cultivate a mindset that

is forged by the infallible word of God. Refused to be numbered with the stupid who are invincible in their stupidity and guaranteed for all times.

It is very important for one to understand that the world has passed through several courses (ages). Right now the world is on a course and one that might very well be its last. As was said above, every age has its peculiar emphasis. Every age generally moves in a particular direction, and the masses of people invariably go with the tide of the time. Consider again what the word of God says,

“in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.” (Ephesians 2:2)

“...You were following the course and fashion of this world [were under the

sway of the tendency of this present age..." (Ephesians 2:2 Amplified Bible)

In sober recognition of the fact that Christians possess the propensity to succumb to the ways of the old life, or the course of this world, the apostle Paul said to the Ephesians saints,

¹⁰Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (Ephesians 6:10-13)

It is important to always remember that we are in a war against highly intelligent, and unseen forces.

Fortunately, one of the great advantages that we have in this age is the comprehensive testimony of history, which confirms certain patterns of human behavior, contrary to the will of God. With such time proven knowledge of how Satan operates behind the scenes (to manipulate and enslave society and undermine the church), and with God's help, you do not have to go down in defeat. You do not have to go along as another victim of the time, and of circumstances. You need to face reality. Refuse to be naive and easily fooled. Don't allow the spirit of the age to mold your thoughts and perception. Think for yourself, and let your choices, and actions be based on the solid rock of, *the word of God*, and not on personal or popular opinions.

Something To Remember

History is always repeating itself. It is also acknowledged that each time it does, the price goes up. Every time history repeats itself the fallouts are more severe.

Something To Do

Examine your mindset and values in the light of the emphasis of this putrid (decaying) age. Dare to make the necessary adjustments. Dare to pay the price of being right with God.

CHAPTER THREE

The Controller of The Course of This World

We have seen that people by and large live their lives according to the course of this world, the emphasis of the age in which they live, and not according to their own independent choices. We have also seen that the world has passed through several courses. Now then, we need to pay attention to the one who generally controls the course of the world, and enslaves society, the one who influences billions of people of all nations, and all walks of life.

A Spirit

*"In which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, **the spirit** who now works in the sons of disobedience." (Ephesians 2:2)*

The Bible makes it clear to us that behind the scenes there is an enemy who is malicious and wicked. This is the archenemy of all mankind, an enemy that has proven to be no easy pushover. What makes this enemy a force to be reckoned with is that he operates undetected. And the reason that he is undetected according to Ephesians 2:2, is that he is a spirit. You cannot see him; as a result, you cannot deal with him as you would with flesh and blood. You cannot tie him, you cannot shoot him, you cannot drown him, and you cannot strangle him. He is a spirit, and therefore he is very elusive, and hard to pin down.

Now, we live in a world today where many people don't believe in the unseen world. They tend to believe only in what they can perceive with their natural senses. Many who claim to believe in the unseen world have only a superficial attitude about it. However, there is a very real spiritual world, and a real spiritual enemy at large against society. According to the Bible, his ultimate goal of this spirit is, *to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10: 10).*

A Prince

*“In which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to **the prince** of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.” (Ephesians 2:2)*

It is terrible enough to know that we are up against a spirit, but it does not

stop there. The word of God goes on to tell us in Ephesians 2: 2 about the rank of this spiritual enemy that we are up against. The word of God makes us to know, that this enemy is no petty little spirit, but a spirit of very high rank. This spirit is a prince.

The fact that he is called a prince indicates that this spirit is of the highest position in the order and rank of evil spirits. The word prince in the original Greek is “archon” from which you get the English prefix “arch” (e.g. arch-angel) which means a ruler, or a chief. Therefore, this spirit is the ruler among evil spirits. He is the prince of darkness, of all uncleanness, and ungodliness.

The Power

*“In which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the **power** of the air,*

the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience." (Ephesians 2:2)

Not only is the spiritual enemy a prince, but the Bible also reveals that he is a prince exercising power (authority), which suggests that there exists a well organized demonic system. The word for “power” in the original Greek is *exousia*. This word means the power of ruler-ship, or government. It indicates to us that the enemy’s kingdom is not disorganized and haphazard, but well organized and well ordered. The word *exousia* indicates that under the prince there is a descending order of evil spirits, according to their respective ranks and files. Over this descending order of spirits, is the archenemy (the prince) exercising power, and authority.

It is important for us to understand, that the world of evil spirits is systematically organized into ranks,

for the purpose of destroying human souls. The Bible sheds further light on this truth: *‘And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and, "By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons”’* (Mark 3:22). Here the Bible indicates that there is a ruler over the demonic. Again the Bible says, *“And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon”* (Revelation 9:11).

Demons have a king over them. Even demons know that if they are going to accomplish anything in the earth, they must be organized; they must submit to a ruler, a higher authority. If the demonic world is well organized for the sake of evil, how much more the followers of Jesus Christ for the sake of the Gospel? Again the Bible says,

23 So He called them to Himself and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan?"

24 "If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand."

25 "And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand."

26 "And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end." (Mark 3:23-26)

Jesus says to us in essence, the reason Satan's kingdom continues to stand is because it is not divided but well organized. It is systematically structured, with different ranks and files of evil spirits. In the world of evil spirits there is no love, but there is recognition of authority.

Those who would overcome the devil must recognize the principle of authority and submit themselves to a higher authority than his, even to Jesus Christ. He is the highest authority in

the universe. The church needs to be in submission to the authority of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the Gospel and the defeat of the enemy. The church needs to be united but not in an ecumenical sense, for how can we defeat Satan by joining with Satan. It is rightly said: it is better to be divided on truth than to be united on error.

The Air

*“In which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of **the air**, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.”(Ephesians 2:2)*

We are told the place and base from which the enemy operates, where his headquarters is set up. He is the prince of the power of *the air*. The word in the Greek is transliterated *aer* and it means the immediate air or atmosphere around the earth, particularly the lower

air as distinguished from the higher and rarer air is what is meant. This is also called the first heaven.

The Bible reveals that there are three heavens; the following verse makes this plain. *“I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago -- whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows - - such a one was caught up to the third heaven”* (2 Corinthians 12: 2).

Notice that the Bible speaks about a third heaven. If there is a third, there must also be a second, and a first. According to Isaiah 14:12 and Ezekiel 28:14; Lucifer who became Satan was cast out of God’s presence in the third heaven. Bible scholars agree that since that time, the place from which Satan operates, where his kingdom is set up, is in the first heaven. The first heaven is the immediate atmosphere around

the earth. second heaven is the stellar heaven, or the realm of the stars.

If you can imagine right now the earth suspended in space with a dark and dirty mist around it; that dark and dirty mist would represent the kingdom of Satan. Satan's kingdom occupies the immediate atmosphere around the earth. From that position, Satan influences decisions, and activities on the earth.

There are some Christians who believe that the Satan is in hell; therefore, when they pray they say, "I bind the devil in hell." The truth is, if the devil were in hell we would not have to bind him, nor would we have anything to worry about. However, according to the word of God, the devil is not in hell, but in the atmosphere surrounding the earth. From there he and his demons move back and forth to the earth, to do their mischievous works.

Just as the fishes of the ocean do not comprehend a world above them, even so, mankind in general is ignorant of the reality of a highly intelligent world above them. Concerning this unseen world the Bible says, *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places”* (Ephesians 6:12). There are heavenly places that are occupied by the enemy, and his evil host, as their base of operation. However, though the first heaven is the enemy’s base his real business is on the earth. The following references make this clear,

‘And the LORD said to Satan, “From where do you come?” So Satan answered the LORD and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.” (Job 1:7)

“You were in Eden, the garden of God...” (Ezekiel 28: 13)

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” (1 Peter 5: 8)

While we should not over magnify the enemy, at the same time we don't defeat him by ignoring him, by referring to him as stupid and powerless or as having sponge teeth. Such an attitude is simply tomfoolery.

We must pray, study the word, live holy and learn from history. I am amazed when I see some of my beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, living as though the devil has taken a vacation, or has changed his nature.

Some conduct their lives as though grace means license, and as though they have ascended into a sacrosanct

and devil proof environment of invincibility.

Pleeeeeease...! Wake up! Satan will always be Satan. He will always be what he has always been cunning, crafty, misleading, wicked, and merciless. Don't play around with the devil. The only thing God's word tells us to do with him is, resist him, bind him, and cast him out.

I know that there are those who think if you speak about Satan's capability it is because you lack faith. However, be informed that as great and astute as Paul was, from time to time Satan hindered him. To the saints at Thessalonica Paul said, "*Therefore we wanted to come to you -- even I, Paul, time and again -- but Satan hindered us*" (1Thessalonians 2:18).

There is a real spirit world, a real devil, and a real spiritual warfare

against society and the body of Christ (Ephesians 6:10-13).

It is important for the Body of Christ to remember that it is not excluded from, or immune to the evil intentions of the enemy of this world. As a matter of fact, the enemy's main target is the body of Christ.

History reveals that in every age the Church in general has sought to fit in with the status quo, and way of life of the particular age. There were influential figures who sought to remove the offence of the cross and make Christianity inoffensive and palatable to the contemporary taste, even to the ignoring and twisting of the clear counsel of Scripture. Generally the simple minded are caught in the current, and trap of the time; and today it is no different.

Something To Remember

It is important for the Body of Christ to remember that it is not excluded from, or immune to the evil intentions of the enemy of this world. As a matter of fact, the enemy's main target is the body of Christ.

Something To Do

Submit to the authority of God and His word, when you do that you give no place to the devil.

CHAPTER FOUR

How Satan Enslaves Society

It has been made clear that society does not operate freely; on the contrary society follows the emphasis of the contemporary age. A spirit controls the age. That spirit is a prince. As a prince, he has power over other spirits. His kingdom is well organized to carry out his malevolent purpose. He continues to lead multitudes of souls into eternal perdition. At present his kingdom is not in hell but in the immediate atmosphere above the earth.

We now seek to answer the question: How does Satan accomplish his evil work to enslave society and cause it to go in a particular direction? As we

shall see, Satan enslaves society through two basic means.

(1) Satan Uses Communication

One of the fundamental ways in which Satan controls the society is by communication. Needless to say, the point here is not to give a negative impression about any medium of communication. Indeed there is a positive side to communication.

However, the purpose here is simply to expose the way Satan works. The case of Adam and Eve is the earliest example of how Satan uses communication to enslave mankind.

Eve was influenced to sin due to her communication with the serpent. The Bible says, *Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God*

indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" (Genesis 3:1).

Adam was also influenced by Eve through communication. The word of God says, *"So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate."* (Genesis 3: 6)

Eve probably told Adam, "There is nothing to worry about, I am eating it, you can too." We don't know in actuality what she might have said to Adam. However, the Bible says, *She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.* The story of Adam and Eve is only a case in point par excellence of what happens continually on many levels of the social dynamic. The word of God says, *"Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good*

manners” (1 Corinthians 15:33 KJV). “He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm” (Proverbs 13:20).

Satan communicates in many ways and through various mediums. He communicates through loved ones, friends, associates, television, radio, magazine, music, books, bill boards etc. Once something is given a certain amount of emphasis generally it eventually becomes accepted. It becomes the way of life of that particular age.

Many things sell because of the advertisement they receive from the media. It may be something to eat, or something to drink. It may be a certain style as seen on the television, worn by a popular figure; or it may be a more serious moral issue as seen on the soap operas. Just look at the television, and compare what takes place there with

what is taking place in today's society, and you will understand.

Through communication, Satan influences the thoughts, and behavior of multitudes. One of the reasons that this is possible is because naturally, as human beings, we thrive on the acceptance of our social environment. We are inclined to depend on the affirmation of the people around us. Therefore, once something is given a certain measure of emphasis and becomes popular in society we feel pressured to go along with it. That is a psychological fact.

By and large mankind is naturally the products of our environment. Notwithstanding, as children of God we have been given grace to live, not just naturally, but supernaturally. We have access into a new and superior environment of the saints, holy angels, and of God Himself. We have no

excuse for giving in to the emphasis of our time. The word of God says,

²²But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,

²³to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect,

²⁴to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. (Hebrews 12:22)

“That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” (1 John 1:3)

The Psychodynamics of Communication

It is said that the brain has over ten billion nerve cells, each with thousands of possible connections to other cells throughout the body. This means that there is virtually an infinite number of pathways to the brain.

Moreover, the brain is said to be composed of two areas: the conscious, and subconscious. They are electro-chemically connected to exchange messages. The subconscious part of the brain receives messages from the natural senses (*the ability to see touch, taste, hear, and smell*) and plays a major part in producing feelings (emotions).

This subconscious part of the brain transfers received messages to the conscious or rational part of the brain. This simply means that as the

conscious, and subconscious parts of the brain are connected, so too feelings and facts are also connected through the brain. Therefore, feelings have the potential to distort the facts that you see and know, and also influence your perception of reality, and in due course your behavior.

An example of this is the fact that many who as children have been sexually or emotionally abused, struggle with their perception of sex, or their self esteem, even into their adult lives. The sexual abuse affects the way they view sex. The emotional abuse affects their perception of themselves.

Another example of how feelings can distort facts is the impact of junk music on the subconscious minds of many young people today. Their perception and judgment of right and wrong become distorted because of the

music they muse on. The music and the words of the song, play on their emotions. Consequently, the music affects their perception of reality, and their behavior. Junk music negatively affects the perception of many young people today, to the extent that they no longer distinguish between right and wrong. And the end result of a confused mind is confused conduct: gangs, violence, drug abuse, sexual promiscuity, and revelry. They rant, rave and commit ruthless acts because of the subversive and inflammatory lyrics they ingest.

Today there are many Christian young people who take certain controversial styles of music and put Christian lyrics to them. This is a dangerous precedence. It is important to understand that the music by itself can play on one's emotion, and carry messages of its own to the subconscious mind. Therefore, it is

possible for the music in a song to be in conflict with the words of the song, and in that case, even though the words may be godly, the music can be inspired by a different source. To be quite frank, some styles of music are inspired by the devil. They incite wrong emotions and feelings. Some food for thought is that the most powerful messages in some songs might not be the words of the songs, but the music behind the words of the songs.

You need to guard your emotions as much as is possible. It is said that feeling is the world we live in, and a large part of what we will become has a lot to do with how we understand and respond to feelings. Your understanding of feelings is one of the keys to the mastery of yourself.

There are many people today who are simply living out their feelings without

even realizing it, without checking the source or what has triggered of their feelings. The point is that Satan uses subtle and diverse means of communication to enslave society. He communicates through different mediums. He knows fully well, that your subconscious mind picks up things which affect your conscious mind. Therefore, except you are rooted and grounded in the word of God, the negative things in your environment, can affect the way you think and act. Depending on the kind of atmosphere you dwell in, it can help to either make or break you.

Note this: Your environment determines your feelings. Your feelings determine the way you perceive things. The way you perceive things determines your values. Your values determine your choices and actions. Your choices and action

determine the outcome you receive in life, and your ultimate destiny.

As a child of God you have been exposed to a new environment of God's presence and word. It is a superior and supernatural environment. The door of your new environment is prayer and the word of God. Prayer is both communication and communion with God. The good news is that a praying person will be influenced by the quickening environment of God's holy presence and His word.

(2) Satan Uses Fear

Satan does not use communication alone. Fear is another effective weapon that Satan uses to enslave souls. This is very important for you to understand. Fear is an unseen force that moves society. Fear controls. When people are afraid they do things that they normally would not do and really don't

want to do. Satan knowing this takes advantage of the emotion of fear. Satan uses basically two kinds of fear to enslave people.

1. The Fear of Being Different.

Generally, people are afraid of being different from the majority. They don't want to stand out in the crowd, usually because of fear that they might look weird or foolish. No one relishes being looked upon as weird or as a fool. There our natural psychological defense mechanism is fear. The fear of being different. Contextually speaking, this kind of fear is a subtle force that can blind the eyes and bind the will of people. As a result many would find it easier to blend, and fit in with the crowd, and with the popular opinion, than it is to stand up even for the truth.

Many would rather float downstream with the crowd, with the course, and with the values of the contemporary age, than to persevere upstream against such current. They fear looking silly and uncanny in the eyes of men. It might surprise you to know, how many people are victims of this kind of fear.

Satan uses the fear of being different to stifle the sound judgment and personal conviction of many. By this means he brings society into bondage, and produces indifference even among many professing Christians. Albert Einstein was correct when he said,

“There are few enough people with sufficient independence to see the weakness and follies of their contemporaries and remain themselves untouched by them” (From page 68 of Ideas And Opinions by Albert Einstein. Copy right 1954, Published by Wings Books, New York, New York Inc.)

When something is accepted or practiced by a popular person in society, it quite often becomes the standard. Invariably is just a matter of time and the multitude at large usually goes along like a domino effect. In his book “What Jesus Would Say” Lee Strobel said the following about the basketball icon Michael Jeffrey Jordan:

He was king of the cash flow. His income approached \$100,000 per day, enough money every year to stretch in dollar bills from New York to San Francisco and beyond. His endorsements boosted the bottom line of Nike shoes, McDonald’s, Chevrolet cars and Hanes underwear. In fact, when he started publicly gulping Gatorade, sales of the thirst-quencher squirted up by twenty percent. He was the most famous athlete on the planet. For years, when Chicagoans went overseas and told people where they

were from, foreigners would chant “Al Capone! Al Capone!” and pretend to fire a machine gun. But now, when Chicagoans reveal where they’re from, people grin and respond, “Michael Jordan! Michael Jordan! You get me poster?” (Excerpt taken from, “What Jesus Would Say” by Lee Strobel, page 73 & 74. Published by Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49530. Copyright1994).

Indeed Michael Jordan is a great influential figure and role model to multitudes. One is left only to imagine how much his gambling habit has boosted the gambling industry. And how many have become hooked on gambling not only in the USA but around the world because of his influence. The fact is, once Satan can get someone who is famous under his control, someone with a big name and influence, usually he controls the people. Once the multitude goes in a

particular direction, few are those who will dare to be different. Never forget, when Lucifer defected he influenced one third of the holy angels to defect with him. We are told in 2 Peter 2:4 *For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment* (See also Revelation 12:4& Jude 1:6). There is still another kind of fear Satan uses that further explains the fear of being different.

2. The Fear of Rejection.

One of our basic needs as human beings, from childhood, and throughout our lives, is the need to be accepted by others, and to feel acceptable. This is normal. Acceptance is necessary for a child's emotional growth. A child goes through several stages of emotional development and the proper development of any stage is

contingent on the proper development of the previous. Even when we become adults there is never a time in our lives when there is not to varying degrees, the desire for the affirmation and acceptance of others.

And though many have resiliently overcome the impact of an emotionally abusive childhood, the truth is, the opinion of you held especially by someone you look up to can affect the way you see yourself. Satan, who has been dealing with human beings since the time of Adam and Eve, understands all too well the psychology of man and human nature.

He knows that we possess a strong desire for acceptance by our contemporaries and peers and superiors. Knowing this, Satan pressures many to seek acceptance, even contrary to the word of God. He pressures many to compromise the

truth of God's word, just to be accepted. Through the fear of rejection he forces many to twist, and even reject the counsel of Scripture, in order that they might feel acceptable and be accepted by men.

Many desire to be accepted by the people around them, and by the world. They hate the thought of being rejected and looked upon as intolerant and narrow-minded fools. Therefore, they trifle with truth for their own vested interest, for their creature comfort, and to be accepted by society. They have ignored the following words of Scripture,

“We are fools for Christ's sake...” (1 Corinthians 4:10)

*²²Blessed are you when men hate you,
And when they exclude you, And revile
you, and cast out your name as evil,
For the Son of Man's sake.*

*²³Rejoice in that day and leap for joy!
For indeed your reward is great in
heaven, For in like manner their
fathers did to the prophets. (Luke 6:22-
23)*

Beloved, we were not called to be competitors in the race for human affection. We are not called to be servants of men's opinions, or to be men pleasers, but to be servants of the living God. As such we must obey His voice. Make up your mind, more often than not, you would not be able please the multitude if you are going to please God.

Whenever we compromise to be accepted by men, we come into a state of self-deception and sin. The Bible says, *“The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe”*(Proverbs 29:25). The apostle Paul said, *“For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please*

men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ” (Galatians 1:10).

The best thing we can do for ourselves and the world, is to be the people God intended for us to be, and that is a called out and separate people. The fact of the matter is that Satan cleverly controls the course of this present world. This is not the writer’s opinion or idea; it is exactly what the word of God reveals. By means of communication, and fear (the fear of being different and the fear of rejection) Satan continues to do what he has always done: deceive the world, subvert the church, and enslave the masses. He continues to keep the world prostrated in wickedness.

If you think you are beyond this snare, think again and take heed for it was this very thing that led to the downfall of a king. The Bible says, “*Then Saul*

said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice"(1 Samuel 15:24).

If many will be honest today, they would have to say with King Saul ***"I have sinned because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice."*** It is the calculated plan of the powers of darkness to get you to shift focus from God to man. You should resolve to fear God alone. Remember, that the fear of man brings a snare or a trap, but whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe. The only fear you should have ought to be for the present and final judge, God. The Bible says,

...by the fear of the LORD one departs from evil. (Proverbs 16:6)

“The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; Let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread.” (Isaiah 8:13)

Something To Remember

The best thing we can do for ourselves and the world, is to be the people God intended for us to be, and that is a called out and separate people.

Something To Do

Seek to cultivate an environment that will lend itself to your spiritual growth and strength. This can be done by: prayer, the word of God, the books you read and the friends you keep etc.

CHAPTER FIVE

Called To A New Walk

There is a clever satanic system in place to enslave society, and undermine the church. The pitchfork and the cross are in serious combat. Through communication and fear people generally conform, in one way or another to the spirit and emphasis of the age in which they live. That is why the apostle Paul charged the saints in the following verse. *“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:2).*

In other words, don't allow yourself to be intimidated and molded by the

opinion of the majority, regardless of their status in life. Neither try to be on the outside what you are not on the inside, but let what you are on the inside be seen on the outside. Be transformed; go through a metamorphosis, a complete change that the world may see the glorious difference that Christ has made in your heart. We are called to a new walk. The word of God says,

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind. (Ephesians 4:17)

²³and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

²⁴and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:23-24)

Satan, who is the prince of the power of the air, is moving busily on the earth in these last and closing days. He is manipulating people's walk through the course of this world. The battle rages on. Everywhere you turn, if you have eyes to see, you can see his wicked and destructive works, even among professing born-again Christians. Apostasy is a hush-hush but dread reality that few have the nerve to acknowledge and address.

Sin is on the rise; there is an alarming increase of corruption in Christendom today. Some have gone so far into apostasy, that they are now debating whether they should have homosexuals in the leadership of their church organization. It is no longer a matter of whether one can be a homosexual and be a Christian, but whether such a person can be in leadership. My God...! Yet, as Pentecostals instead of seeing this development as a great

warning, to my utter surprise we are ready to unite with these ludicrous people and call them our brothers and sisters; what a big joke!

The marriage covenant which is the most sacred earthly covenant and the cornerstone of a godly society (Malachi 2:15-16), is being tampered with and desecrated. We hear of same sex marriage, the alarming increase in divorce and remarriage. Even preachers and professing Christians are leading the way to the divorce courts, to put asunder what God has joined together.

It is said that in the USA the divorce and remarriage rate is higher among professing Christians than it is in the secular world. Many are afraid to speak about these things and by now you should know why. One of the reasons why this is so prevalent is because of the many high profile

leaders who are involved, thus history repeats itself, and the contemporary age is set on its course. I am not seeking to be judgmental but to simply state the facts. And whosoever the cap fits...

It remains fascinating to me that a marriage is usually performed by a religious person but divorce is never performed in any religious setting; instead divorce is performed by a judge in a courtroom. I ask myself, is it because God witnesses to one but not to the other? This always brings to my mind the words of Christ, *what God has joined together let not man put asunder.*

Some professed Christians are now in their second and third marriages while their first and second spouses are still alive. It seems like the broad way has become the way, and the cross has been crossed out. However, the Master

said, *"Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able"* (Luke 13:24). The NIV says, *"Make every effort to enter through the narrow door..."* The Amplified Bible says, *"...force yourself through..."* The Basic Bible English translation says, *"Do your best to go in by the narrow door..."*

The prevailing mindset today is that God is love, He wants you to be rich and happy, and everything is going to be all right. However, many have forgotten Noah's generation. In Noah's generation the people mocked him because he believed in the holiness and judgment of God, but didn't it rain? It sure did. Even though they had no Bible, and even though Noah was in the minority.

How we need to fear God today! It is the fear of God that is the beginning of

wisdom, not the fear or validation of men. Hell is still real, it is still forever and Satan is still working round the clock to fill it. That is worth repeating: Hell is still real, it is still forever and Satan is still working round the clock to fill it. Remember, there is a way into Hell, but there is no way out, make no mistake about that. A few years of pleasure can never makeup for eternity in hell.

Moreover, it is a sobering reality that we don't leave this life and enter the other life as a congregation, a group, a family, not even as a couple, but as individuals. Your friends and associate aren't going with you. And it does not matter what your name was in the church world, or that it was on the church roll. Each one must answer for them self.

Be Committed To The Truth

As Christians we are called to walk a new walk not according to the course of this world that is manipulated by Satan. We are called to live according to the word of God, by the power and influence of the Holy Spirit. We should take the early disciples, church fathers, and apostles as our examples. Many of them sealed their faith with their own blood for the sake of holding on to, and dispensing the truth. History tells us that all the apostles of the early church in Acts, with the exception of John, were martyred for their faith. No doubt, they were able to do that because they were fully cognizant of the stupendous responsibility that was placed on their shoulders, and the eternal significance of the purpose they represented.

It is rightly said, “He that does not have a purpose for which he is willing

to die has no purpose for living.” And though as Christians we should not live with a fatalistic mentality, yet our commitment to the truth should be unswerving.

For you who are suffering now because you desire like the three Hebrew boys and like the prophet Daniel to live holy all the way, be encouraged and remember these words of the Master, *“Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy”* (John 16:20).

While many Christians in the West are becoming at ease in Zion, in the Eastern countries Christians are being persecuted for the truth more than ever before. According to the New Fox’s Book of Martyrs, *“More Christians were martyred in this century alone than in all the past centuries*

combined.” (Taken from the back cover of the New Foxe’s book of Martyrs, copyrighted 1997 and published by Bridge Logos Publishers, North Brunswick NJ08902 USA).

Grace Much More Abounds

Notwithstanding all the negative things that are taking place, Almighty God is calling all His faithful ones to awake to a fresh commitment and to a new spiritual walk.

*“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”
(Galatians 5:16)*

*“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”
(Romans 8:14)*

“For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the

people; but the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you." (Isaiah 60:2)

Paul the apostle said, "*...But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more*" (Romans 5:20). In the time of the prophet Malachi, even though the nation was filled with deceit, selfishness, and backsliding, God's eyes were upon the faithful who served Him with fear.

¹⁴You have said, 'It is useless to serve God; what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked as mourners before the LORD of hosts?

¹⁵So now we call the proud blessed, for those who do wickedness are raised up; they even tempt God and go free.' "

¹⁶Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard them; so a book of

remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name.

¹⁷"They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "on the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him."

¹⁸Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him (Malachi 3:14-18)

In the book of Ezekiel we see that before judgment fell, God put a mark on all those who weep for the condition among his people.

¹Then He called out in my hearing with a loud voice, saying, "Let those who have charge over the city draw near, each with a deadly weapon in his hand."

²And suddenly six men came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with his battle-ax in his hand. One man among them was clothed with linen and had a writer's inkhorn at his side. They went in and stood beside the bronze altar.

³Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub, where it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man clothed with linen, who had the writer's inkhorn at his side;

⁴And the LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it."

⁵To the others He said in my hearing, "Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity.

⁶"Utterly slay old and young men, maidens and little children and

women; but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary." So they began with the elders who were before the temple.

⁷Then He said to them, "Defile the temple, and fill the courts with the slain. Go out!" And they went out and killed in the city. (Ezekiel 9:1-7)

The principle we see in the above passages in the books Malachi and Ezekiel, is that God marks for good those who are honest, and burdened over the prevailing ungodly trends. If you are burdened over the present condition of the world and the church, it is a good sign. If the things you hear and see cause you to feel sad, and upset, take courage, you are among the faithful. The apostle Peter said, "*For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds*" (2 Peter 2:8 KJV).

God preserves and keeps those who are broken in heart, and mourn over the manifestation of ungodliness, and compromise with evil. Those that are honest with God and themselves, and are willing to repent and amend their ways, will find God's favor. He is married to the backslider (Jeremiah 3:14). He has promised to revive the heart of the humble.

¹⁵For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

¹⁶For I will not contend forever, nor will I always be angry; for the spirit would fail before Me, and the souls which I have made. (Isaiah 57:15-16)

Today creation is groaning for the manifestation of the sons of God. The

planet groans for you to assume your rightful place in God. It is time for you to take your stand like never before. God is raising up men and women of purpose, who would not be moved by consensus, nor look to the dollar sign for direction.

Like David they would say, “Is there not a cause.” Like Esther they would say, “...if I perish I perish.” Like Joshua they would say, “...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” Like Elisha they would say, “...is it time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants?” (2 Kings 5:26). Like Caleb they would say, “...Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.” Like Paul they would say, “...now I go bound in the spirit.” Like Jesus they would say, “...I must be about my Father’s business.” Yes, it is time to awake out

of sleep and slumber, and answer the call of God to a new walk ...*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*” (Romans 13:11).

Something To Remember

Through communication and fear people generally conform, in one way or another to the spirit and emphasis of the age in which they live.

Something To Do

Dare to walk the new walk in the light of God’s word. If you have faltered confess it to God, accept His pardon and begin anew. God loves you and stands ready to pardon and restore you; believe this.

CHAPTER SIX

Three Offensive Weapons

Prayer Warriors, Preachers, Saints of God, there is no more time to play church. There is an all-out war taking place right now for the souls of men. The battle is more intense now than it has ever been. It is time to awake out of sleep and slumber. It is time to rise up, get on the offensive, and fight the good fight of faith.

If you are going to overcome the subtle onslaught of Satan, there are three highly important offensive weapons you must employ.

The Weapon of Prayer

It was a defining moment in Israel's history, when their enemies the Philistines confronted them with a critical battle challenge. The Philistines were gathered together at Shochoh in Judah, on a mountain. The army of Israel was gathered together on another mountain on the opposite side, and there was a valley between them.

This battle was a critical one, because it would decide once and for all, who would be the masters, and who would be servants in the land of Canaan. The decisiveness of this battle is brought out in the following verses,

⁴And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.

⁸Then he stood and cried out to the armies of Israel, and said to them, "Why have you come out to line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me.

⁹"If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us." (1 Samuel 17: 4, 8-9)

Notice the words of Goliath, "*...Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us.*"

There are certain battles we will face in this life, as individuals, and as the church; battles that will determine whether we will become subservient

to, or victorious over, certain powers of darkness.

The word of God further reveals, this battle was not simply a battle between flesh and blood, but a highly spiritual battle. It was a supernatural battle. Observe what the word of God says,

“So the Philistine said to David, ‘Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?’ And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.” (1 Samuel 17: 43)

‘Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.”’ (1 Samuel 17:45)

It is very important for one to see that Goliath, as big and armed as he was, he first cursed David by his gods. He

never made mention of his size, strength, or armor. The Bible says, *And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.* David also responded in the same manner and said, *“I come against you in the name of the Lord of host the God of the armies of Israel.”*

Usually we tend to highlight the natural aspect of this battle. We give attention to Goliath’s size, his armor, and compare them with the insignificance of David and his sling. In so doing, we often fail to take into account the most important point about the whole scenario. It was more a spiritual than a natural battle.

It is the same today. Many of the challenges facing the church are spiritual in their source. Satan who is the prince of the power of the air, with his emissaries, is seeking to reclaim the grounds and positions that our spiritual fore-parents have taken.

Many of the issues confronting the church are not natural. They have their roots in the spirit world. Therefore, they must be dealt with spiritually. Before David employed his sling he said, *“I come against you in the name of the Lord of host the God of the armies of Israel.”* He first dealt with the problem spiritually, and victory followed. Goliath was destroyed. Some things must be addressed first of all through prayer. We see another example of this principle in the time of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah. The Bible says,

¹It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat.

²Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they

are in Hazazon Tamar" (which is Engedi).

³And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

⁴So Judah gathered together to ask help from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

⁵Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court,

⁶And said: "O LORD God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?

⁷"Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever?

*⁸"And they dwell in it, and have built
You a sanctuary in it for Your name,
saying,*

*⁹"If disaster comes upon us -- sword,
judgment, pestilence, or famine -- we
will stand before this temple and in
Your presence (for Your name is in this
temple), and cry out to You in our
affliction, and You will hear and save.'*

*¹⁰"And now, here are the people of
Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir --
whom You would not let Israel invade
when they came out of the land of
Egypt, but they turned from them and
did not destroy them --*

*¹¹"Here they are, rewarding us by
coming to throw us out of Your
possession which You have given us to
inherit.*

*¹²"O our God, will You not judge
them? For we have no power against
this great multitude that is coming
against us; nor do we know what to
do, but our eyes are upon You."*

¹³Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the LORD.

¹⁴Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly.

¹⁵And said, “Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the LORD to you: ‘Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God’s.

¹⁹ Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with voices loud and high.

²²Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against

Judah; and they were defeated. (2 Chronicles 20:1-15, 19, 22)

This was a serious situation. The enemies of Judah came to throw them out of the possession that God had given to them. However, Jehoshaphat dealt with the matter spiritually. He called upon the whole nation to seek God by praying and fasting. We are told *...Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah (V.3)*. He also humbly acknowledged his inadequacy to deal with the situation. He said unto God *...nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You...(V.12)*, and God intervened. Many times we think we know what to do when in fact we don't, but when we humble ourselves and seek God he will deliver us and bless us. In response to Jehoshaphat's prayer the Bible says, *Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel...in*

the midst of the assembly. And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah...Thus says the LORD to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's...And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.

God will always respond to a genuine cry and give a word in season. Some today say let us praise God as the children of Israel did in the time of Jehoshaphat, and the problem would be solved. However, we need to realize that praise was the specific leading of the Spirit of God in that time to Judah, after they sought God in praying and fasting. After intense prayer, God said to Judah, *you will not need to fight in this battle.* They had already fought spiritually though prayer and

prevailed. Therefore the only thing left for them to do was to praise God. Your praise will mean nothing, if it is not backed up by strong prayers. Moreover, it is the voice and leading of the Lord that is critical in a time of crisis. We need to know what God is saying today for the present challenges, and the way to know is by ardent prayer.

In the time of Hezekiah the king of Judah, Sennacherib king of Assyria sent words of threat against him. Here again we see this principle of responding to the challenges of the enemy first spiritually, through urgent prayer. The Bible says that the king of Assyria came against Jerusalem with a very great army and sent a letter of threat to Hezekiah the king of Jerusalem. We are told,

¹⁴And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and

read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.

¹⁵Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said: "O LORD God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.

¹⁶"Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God.

¹⁷"Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands,

¹⁸"and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands -- wood and stone. Therefore they destroyed them.

¹⁹"Now therefore, O LORD our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know

that You are the LORD God, You alone."

³⁵And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses -- all dead.

³⁶So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home, and remained at Nineveh.

³⁷Now it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the temple of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place. (2 Kings 19:14-19, 35-37)

In all the above examples we see that the challenges were dealt with spiritually through prayer . This is the only way to overcome the challenges

of the contemporary time. Nothing else will do; no fad, no hype. The Bible says,

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” (Ephesians 6:12

³For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.

⁴For the weapons of our warfare are mighty through God for pulling down strongholds.

⁵Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

Today the enemy is not against our physical lives and material possessions as much as he is against our

consecration to God. If we fail to confront and deal spiritually with certain challenges that militate against our consecration to God then the devil will assume the right to enslave us.

The fact of the matter is that we desperately need to return to the position of prayer. The church needs to awake from its sleep and take a firm grip on the horns of the altar in ceaseless prayer. Sermons, songs, discussions, and debates are not sufficient to deal with the onslaught of the enemy. We need to deal with issues spiritually, through vibrant and incessant prayer.

The Weapon of The Word of God

The Bible is a collection of 66 books, written by around 40 different authors over a period of approximately 1500 years, yet it has no contradiction. It reads as one book. This is proof of its

divine inspiration. Many years ago the Bible began with only five books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. They were called the Torah (the Law). They were written by Moses to the generation who were about to enter the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua. Their parents had died in the wilderness after wandering for forty years. They perished because they refused to believe and obey the word of God. If the new generation were going to be successful where their parents, and many before their parents had failed, they needed a substantial knowledge of the ways and the council of God.

Sometime during his eighty days of praying and fasting upon Mt. Sinai, Moses received revelations about human history, from the very beginning of the creation of this planet. It was revealed to him how God

created the world, how sin entered the world, and the repercussion that followed.

God revealed to Moses all his major acts of judgments and mercies that are covered in the book of Genesis. After Genesis, Moses recorded the story of Israel's bondage in Egypt and all succeeding history to the time of his departure from this life. The mature generation that came out of Egypt did not enter the land promised to them, but wandered in the wilderness for forty years, and died in the wilderness because of their unbelief

On the plains of Moab overlooking the Promised Land, Moses rehearsed the law and dedicated the first five books of the Bible to the new generation which was about to enter the land of Canaan. The word of God says,

“On this side of the Jordan in the land of Moab, Moses began to explain this law, saying” (Deuteronomy 1:5)

“For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people.” (Hebrews 9:19)

Many of the members of the new generation were babies when they began to wander in the wilderness, and many were born in the wilderness. Therefore, before the new generation could enter the Promised Land, it was necessary for them to have the word of God. It was important for them to see the goodness and the severity of God in a comprehensive way. The story of Eden was vital for them, to cause them to see God means exactly what He says. The story of Joseph and his

dreams was important for them, that they might see the faithfulness of God. The story of the flood was fundamental for them, producing the fear God. The story of the patriarchs would have caused them to know where they were coming from and where they were going.

It was imperative for them to comprehend the failure of their parents and why they wandered in the wilderness. The word of God was essential to produce faith and godly fear - these are always two necessities for the victory, and the progress of God's people. The new generation was victorious, they possessed the land, and credit must be given to their knowledge of the word of God, which contained even the very cause for Moses not entering therein. Moses included in the writing that he could not enter because he himself did not obey God. Therefore there can be no

victory and progress without a substantial knowledge of the word of God in the first place.

The earthly Promised Land was before the Israelites, but today, the ultimate Promised Land of eternity with God is before us. We need to meditate and apply the word to our entire lives, in order to enter therein. Satan is not going to sit back, and watch you go to heaven, just because you call yourself a child of God.

It is possible that Jesus can come in our lifetime. Jesus said the generation that sees the budding of the fig tree will not pass away until that generation experiences His second coming. Most prophetic scholars agree that the budding of the fig tree refers to the national rebirth of Israel in the Promised Land, which took place in 1948.

*²⁹Then He spoke to them a parable:
"Look at the fig tree, and all the trees.*

³⁰"When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near.

³¹"So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near.

³²"Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. (Luke 21:29-32)

Israel was restored as a nation into her land on May 14th 1948. There are people who were alive in 1948 who are still alive today. Therefore, we are the generation that saw the national rebirth of Israel. Though we will not know the precise time of the Lord's coming, we can know that it is near. We can know the season.

The point is, if we are the generation that will experience the rapture, then,

more than ever we need the word of God. For the generation that will experience the return of Christ, Scripture predicts intense spiritual warfare (2 Timothy 3:1-8). For that reason, the word of God and not the opinions of men, must be taken with utmost seriousness. As a matter of fact the Bible says, *“Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come”* (1 Corinthians 10.11).

Notice the Bible says that that things that transpired many centuries ago in the Old Testament were written for us... *upon whom the ends of the ages have come*. Those words indicate an intensification of evil upon the earth in the closing days of time. Therefore, God has fortified us with increased knowledge. He expects us to faithfully read, interpret and apply His word to our lives.

The Weapon of The Anointing

The anointing is your great strength, and your most valuable asset. It is the anointing that destroys the yoke, quickens, sanctifies, and makes the church an indomitable force in the earth. The word of God says. *So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts"* (Zechariah 4:6). To understand the value of the anointing let us use Samson as a case in point (Judges 13-16). Samson is the only one-man army in the Bible. Because of the anointing of the Lord upon Samson's life five Canaanite nations were subjugated and living in fear. The Scripture mentions these five Canaanite nations led by five lord's. *From Sihor, which is east of Egypt, as far as the border of Ekron northward (which is counted as Canaanite); the five lords of the*

Philistines -- the Gazites, the Ashdodites, the Ashkelonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites...(Joshua 13:3).

None of these Philistine lords could stop Samson. Therefore, they joined forces together to hire a woman whom Samson loved, by the name of Delilah.

The important thing one needs to see here, is the incredibly high price that she was paid in order to destroy the anointing on Samson's life. The Bible says, *And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, "Entice him, and find out where his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to afflict him; and every one of us will give you eleven hundred pieces of silver" (Judges 16:5).*

The woman's job and mission was simply to discover the secret of his

great and unconquerable strength, and how it can be taken away from him. For that purpose she was highly paid. Notice the words, “...*every one of us will give you eleven hundred pieces of silver.*” Eleven hundred multiplied by five equals 5,500 pieces of silver. The woman was offered probably the biggest pay cheque a person ever received in bible times. To understand fully what that amount of silver implies one would have to compare it with ten pieces of silver offered to a Levite in the following chapter of the book of Judges as a whole year’s wage. The word of God says, “*Micah said to him, "Dwell with me, and be a father and a priest to me, and I will give you ten shekels of silver per year, a suit of clothes, and your sustenance." So the Levite went in*”(Judges 17: 10).

There were no minted coins in Bible times; before 700 B.C. financial business was carried out according to

the barter system; animals, grain, and pieces of precious metal were used as mediums of exchange. According to biblical weights and measures a shekel is the same as a piece of silver.

Moreover, it is interesting to note that Joseph was sold as a slave for twenty pieces of silver (Genesis 37:28). The Lord Jesus was also sold for thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave (Zechariah 11:12, Matthew 26:15). Consider that the price Jesus was sold for was enough to purchase a piece of land, called in Scripture the potter's field (Matthew 27:3-10).

When you consider such information, you don't need to be a mathematician to figure out that Delilah having been offered 5,500 pieces of silver, was literally offered a mind-blowing amount of money. The purpose for the big pay-off was simply to seduce Samson and rob him of his anointing.

It took five lords of the Philistine to join forces together in order to pay that bill.

The point is that this ought to cause us to see how exceedingly precious the anointing is. The anointing is incredibly precious and Satan knows that. Satan offered Jesus the kingdoms of this world in exchange for the precious anointing he received on the bank of the Jordan River.

Be warned, Satan will pay virtually any price to destroy the anointing on your life, and on your ministry. Satan doesn't mind if you go to church, or if you have lots of money. What really bothers him is the presence of God, the anointing on your life. For the Bible says, *“It shall come to pass in that day that his burden will be taken away from your shoulder, and his yoke from your neck, and the yoke will be*

destroyed because of the anointing oil” (Isaiah 10:27).

It takes the power of the Holy Spirit to save, sanctify and keep souls. It takes the anointing to pull down the strong holds of darkness in this world, and against your life.

The anointing is our ultimate weapon in our warfare against Satan. Without the anointing you are no match for the devil. Without the anointing your prayer life would be dead, and the word of God loses its attraction and power to you. It is the Spirit that quickens the word and causes it to live in our hearts. Without the anointing we are helpless. That is what Jesus meant when He said to His disciples, “*..for without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).*

With the blessings of education, money, sophistication, and people of

influence in the church today, we need very much to remember it is ... *'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts. (Zechariah 4:6)*

William J. Seymour Still Speaks

William J. Seymour the great leader of the Pentecostal revival (which began on Azusa Street, Los Angeles USA, in 1906) in one of his few documented sermons had this to say,

“It is the office work of the Holy Spirit to preside over the entire work of God on the earth (John 10:3). Jesus was the Bishop while on earth but now he has sent the Holy Ghost to take His place, not men (John 14:16; 15:26; 16:7-14).

The Holy Ghost is to infuse with divine power and to invest with heavenly authority. No religious assembly is legal without his presence and His

transaction. We should recognize Him as the teacher of teachers... when He is in us in all His fullness, He will manifest himself. Signs and miracles will follow. This is the office and work of the Holy Spirit in the churches...

When the Holy Ghost comes He will cleanse out dead forms and ceremonies, and will give life and power to His ministers and preachers, in the same old church buildings. But without the Holy Ghost they are simply tomb stones. Thank God for this holy way. I am so glad that sham battles are over” (Taken from the magazine Pentecostal Evangel “Sermons that Shook the World,” August 30, 1998).

Something To Remember

If we are the generation that will experience the rapture, then more than ever we need the word of God. For the generation that will experience the

return of Christ, Scripture predicts intense spiritual warfare (2 Timothy 3:1-8). Therefore, the word of God and not the opinions of men must be taken with utmost seriousness.

Something To Do

Guard the anointing on your life by meditating in God's word daily and by developing a regular prayer time.

PART TWO: THE END TIME

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Concept of The Last Days

*“But know this, that in the last days
perilous times will come.”
(2 Timothy 3:1)*

Indeed we are living in the last days, a time of intensified spiritual warfare. It is important to understand when the last days actually began. The last days do not only describe this present time, continuing into the future, but they actually began virtually two thousand years ago. They began on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the early disciples, as is recorded in Acts chapter two. The whole history of the church from the descent of the Holy Spirit, up to this

present time, and toward the appearing of Christ, constitutes the period called the last days.

Signs of The Times

Today in accordance with the predictions of Scripture there is a convergence of convincing signs, showing beyond any reasonable doubt, that we are living well advanced into the last days.

We are witnessing drastic changes in weather patterns. We hear about increase in earthquakes, forest fires, hurricanes, floods, and the roaring of the sea (Tsunamis). The ice of the Polar Regions is melting at an alarming rate. It is said that the ice cap on Mt. Kilimanjaro in Africa has already decreased by 70%. Recently CNN reported that in some places up to twenty meters of ice have already melted.

In the field of Genetic Science they are now going to eerie extremes. Old boundaries are being crossed regarding cloning and the placing of animal cells into human bodies etc. This shows us how the prophecy in the book of Revelations concerning locusts on the earth can suddenly be fulfilled. It appears that Locusts would be creatures that are part animal and part human (Revelation 9: 3-11).

The world's population explodes even more rapidly as time advances. In 1970 the world population was said to be 4 billion, in 1996 5 billion, between 2000 and 2005 it is estimated to be 6.7 billion. In just about 30 years the world population has virtually doubled. On the 12th of May 2000, Astha a baby girl brought the population of India alone to one billion people. It is said that India grows by 15 million a year.

Major breakthroughs in technology have made the world a global village. The technology for the Mark of the Beast is now stale news. It is already in use by millions. Another vivid sign of the end time is the explosion of knowledge as has been prophesied by the prophet Daniel (Daniel 12:4). From the very beginning of time, men have been riding on horses and asses. Also, the ships that were used in the days of the Apostle Paul were not much different than those used by Christopher Columbus and others after him. However, all of that changed just about one century ago with the invention of the automobile, airplanes and steamships. At present technology explodes at an uncanny and exponential rate.

Today we hear not only about wars, but rumors of wars. The rumors of wars we hear about today are the new twist to warfare called terrorism,

nuclear, chemical and biological warfare. Violence plagues the nations as it was in the days of Noah. The same obtains for sodomy, as it was in the days of Lot. Jesus said as it was in the days of Noah and Lot so it will be in the Last Days (Luke 17:26-30). All these signs mentioned above are realities of the end time. The stage is set for the final showdown. The hand of God is writing on the wall for this end time generation. But how many will recognize it and take heed, is a question only God can answer, but no doubt, the wise will take heed. But, where are all these signs leading to. Well, for one thing, it seems apparent that God Almighty in His mercy is giving this world a big and final chance to acknowledge Him as God and to submit to the revelation of Scripture. Before we go further let us consider some important details regarding the end time.

Nebuchadnezzar's Vision

In the book of Daniel chapter two, God Almighty gave to Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon a vision of a majestic metallic image. That image serves as God's end time prophetic time clock to us. The image represents the successive world empires from the time of Nebuchadnezzar, unto the final and closing days of time. It helps us to discern, and clearly identify where we are positioned in time. The following are the features of the image, and what each part represents.

1. Head of gold --- The Babylonian Empire 606 BC, Daniel 2:28-31, 32, 38.
2. Breast and arms of silver --- The Medes and Persians Empire 539 BC, Daniel 2:32,39.

The two breasts and two arms represent the duality of that

kingdom of the Medes and Persians.

3. Belly and thigh of brass --- Grecian Empire, 336 BC, Daniel 2:32, 39.
4. (A) Legs of Iron --- Roman Empire 196 BC, Daniel 2:40. The two legs of iron represent the division in 300 AD, between west and east. The western empire fell in 476 AD, the eastern empire fell in 1453 AD.

(B) Feet of iron mixed with clay --- Revived Roman Empire (The European Confederacy) Daniel 2:34, 41-43. This is the part of the image which represents the dominant governmental power that will be in existence when Christ returns.

Today we are not living in the time represented by the head of gold. We are not in the time represented by the

breast and arm of silver. We are not living in the time of the belly and thigh of brass; nor the time of the legs of iron, for that time came to an end in 1453 AD. We are living however, in the time as it were, of the feet and the ten toes mixed with iron and clay. As you can see, the feet represent the last era of man's empire and reign. It also represents man's weakest era because iron and clay cannot hold together. Moreover, according to the word of God, the feet upon which the image stands are the part of the image that will receive a catastrophic blow of divine judgment when Christ appears. The Bible says, *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 (Daniel 2:34).*

Isn't it amazing how what we see today confirms the word of God. Today we have the Revived Roman

Empire in the form of the European Union just as it has been prophesied in Daniel chapter two. This clearly tells us that we are living very close to the return of the Jesus Christ and the end of time as we know it.

Seven Dispensations

Consider also that from a biblical standpoint, the history of mankind is divided into seven dispensations, all of which ended in judgment. They are as follows:

1. The Dispensation of Innocence.
Biblical scholars believe it lasted for a few days. It ended with the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden.
2. The Dispensation of Conscience.

It lasted 1,656 years and ended with a worldwide flood of cataclysmic proportion.

3. The Dispensation of Human Government.

It lasted 427 years and ended in confusion of tongues and the dispersion of the people across the earth.

4. The Patriarchal Dispensation.

It lasted 430 years and ended with the twelve tribes of Israel in bondage in Egypt.

5. The Dispensation of Law.

It lasted for 1,800 years and ended with Israel in exile in Babylon.

6. The dispensation of grace.

This dispensation began with the birth of the church as recorded in Acts chapter two. It will end with great distress, deception, and the departure of the church from this earth. Leaving behind a sinful world

and an apostate church to experience unprecedented tribulation.

The Dispensation of the Millennial Kingdom.

This dispensation is yet to come and when it does it will continue for a thousand years. It will end with the resurrection of the wicked dead, who will be judged and eternally consigned to the lake of fire (Revelation 20).

We are now living in the sixth dispensation, which is the dispensation of grace. This sixth dispensation is to us the last dispensation, because it is the final dispensation of man's reign on earth. It is not coincidental that man's reign ends with the sixth dispensation, for six is the number of man. Man was created on the sixth day of the creation week (Genesis 1:26-31).

The Bible further says, in Revelation 13:18 (NIV), *“This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man’s number. His number is 666.”* The Bible says a trinity of sixes is the number of man. Nebuchadnezzar’s image was 60 cubits high.

On the other hand seven is God’s number; it is the number of perfection, therefore six speaks of falling short of perfection. Without God, whatever man does falls short of perfection. The Bible says *“All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God”* (Romans 6:23). Because man came short of God’s glory, he comes short in everything else. This final dispensation of man’s reign will come to an end leaving much to be desired. Man seemingly at his best would actually be man at his worst. To put it another way, as it is said, even the best of men are only men at best. That speaks

volumes. The Bible says, *For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape (1Thessalonians 5:3).*

How close are we to the climax of this final dispensation and Christ's return? All indications seem to tell us that we are closer than we tend to think. This dispensation has been running for approximately 2000 years.

It is absolutely noteworthy that none of the previous dispensations lasted so long. The point and reality is, not only are we in the final and closing dispensation of this present order of man's kingdoms, but we are very advanced in this dispensation. It is as though we are living on borrowed time. This truth ought to concern us and arrest our attention. And no doubt this is the very thing that God expects.

God wants His children to be alert and conscious of where they are in time, in the chronology of the ages. He wants us to know that we are actually living in the count down to the appearing of Christ. It is that time when satanic activities will rapidly accelerate in the earth, and everything that can be shaken will be shaken. Only that which cannot be shaken shall remain as is stated in Hebrews 12:26-28.

Therefore to simply define the Last Days by stating that it began two thousand years ago and continues today and into the future is not enough. We need to acknowledge that from the beginning of the Last Days with the birth of the church, up to this present time, many years have come and gone.

The Seven Church Ages

Let us take it even further. To compound and deeply impress upon

the consciousness of His people, the reality of how close we are to the end, God has divided this sixth and closing dispensation of man's reign, into seven church ages (Revelation 2-3:22). And, can you guess which church age we are in right now? If you said the last one you are absolutely correct, we are actually living in the last church age.

It is important to understand that the messages to the seven churches in Revelation chapters two and three had not only contemporary but also prophetic significance. End Time prophetic scholars agree with this. Hal Lindsey who is probably the foremost authority on End Time Prophecy wrote,

“In a book that is overwhelmingly prophetic in content, it's only reasonable to think that the messages to the churches in chapters 2 and 3 would also have prophetic application.

I believe this is the main reason Jesus chose these particular seven churches, and place them in this order... Here in seven typical churches we see the predominant characteristics of seven successive eras of church history” (Quote taken from: There A New World Coming by Hal Lindsey, pages 22 & 23. Copy rights 1973 by Vision House Publishers).

In that same book Lindsey made it clear that that both history and the prophetic words of Jesus confirm that we are living in the final church age.

Many biblical scholars agree that the seven churches represent a pattern of historical chronological progression from the early church unto the present time and future. Therefore, it is agreed that the messages to the seven churches had both contemporary and prophetic meaning. The prophetic implications of these letters to the

seven churches could not be seen in looking forward but in looking backward we can see them, since sufficient history has unfolded. Today we can look back and see obvious agreement with what Jesus said about each church age and the historical features of those ages, right up to this present time.

All of this is saying to us, not only are we in the final part of Nebuchadnezzar's image. Not only are we in the final dispensation of the ages before the return of Christ. But we are also in the final church age of the final dispensation, before the millennial and kingdom reign of Christ. We are indeed in the finals, we are in the final countdown to the end. It cannot be overstated how much we need to see this, and deeply consider its inferences. **Without a doubt, we live in a very crucial time, a time unlike any other.**

Note that while the characteristics of each church represent the general spiritual climate of each, some elements of the characteristics of each church can be found in all, so that the words of Christ to each church apply to all.

Something To Remember

God wants His children to be alert and conscious of where they are in time, in the chronology of the ages. He wants us to know that we are actually living in the count down to the appearing of Christ. It is that time when satanic activities will increase in the earth, and everything that can be shaken will be shaken. Only that which cannot be shaken shall remain (Hebrews 12:26-28).

Something To Do

Be constantly alert to the reality of the unique end time period in which you live. See to it that your garment abides spotless and wrinkle free. Practice forgiveness and humility.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A Historic-Prophetic View of The Church Ages

No sooner the church of Jesus Christ was birthed Satan came against it with vehement hatred, and persecution. He stirred up the killing and confiscating of the property of countless Christians. When persecution did not fulfill his purpose to snuff out the early church, he changed his strategy and introduced false teachings, and many pagan compromises into the church. As you look at the different church ages and the things they went through, bear in mind the activity of Satan behind the scenes.

(1) Ephesus A.D. 33-100: The Backslidden Church (Rev. 2:1-7)

Ephesus means desirable, this is the first church age. It is the apostolic church age. It began with Christ fully in charge. Jesus referred to Himself as the one who is in the midst of the church, and who is in control of the church, the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand.

However, although this church started well it eventually backslid from its glorious position. It left its first love. History reveals that a Jewish proselyte by the name of Nicholas became converted to Christianity, and founded a Gnostic sect called the Nicolatians (conquerors of the people). The Nicolatians brought Babylonian and Gnostic teachings into the early church, including idol worship, and sexual immorality. The Nicolatians believed that the spirit of a person was

pure, but the body was evil. They believed that whatever they did with their bodies had no effect on their spirit.

To this church Jesus said, “*you have left your first love, remember from where you have fallen.*” False teaching led to a fall. The word of God says, *Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners (1 Corinthians 15:33)*. Our belief will affect our behavior, our hymnology, and our theology, will influence our morality.

(2) Smyrna A.D. 100 – 313: The Persecuted Church (Rev. 2:8-11)

To this church Jesus said, “*I know your tribulation...*” Smyrna means sweet fragrance. The word Smyrna comes from the word myrrh, which when it is crushed it gives out a sweet

fragrance. This church, due to its loyalty to Christ was crushed by persecution, yet it became a sweet fragrance to God.

History confirmed the words of Jesus to this church age. This church went through tribulation and severe poverty because of the persecution it underwent from A.D. 100 to A.D. 313.

As was said in Chapter two, persecution was enforced by several Roman emperors, beginning with Nero in A.D. 64. From A.D. 100 to 117 Trojan persecuted the church. From A.D. 137 to 161 Pius persecuted the church, and killed a renowned church father named Polycarp, who was a disciple of the apostle John. From A.D. 193 to 211 Severus persecuted the church, and killed Origen's father. From A.D. 235 to 238 Thecian commanded all Christian leaders to be killed.

Between A.D. 249-251 Decius was determined to bring an end to Christianity. From A.D. 284-305 Diocletian persecuted the church. He was the last and most vicious of all the persecutors. During his time believers were hunted down in forests and caves. The only refuge for the church was the Catacombs, a tunnel that was dug out by hands and ran for miles below the city of Rome.

It is said that only believers could find their way through the Catacombs without being lost. They lived there, conducted church meetings, and also buried their dead there. It is estimated that approximately seven million Christians were buried in the Catacombs.

To this church Jesus spoke these words, “...*Be faithful until death and I will give you the crown of life*” (*Revelation 2:10*). Again, to comfort a

church threatened daily by death He said, “...*He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death*” (Revelation 2:11).

Faithfulness to Christ caused this church to become very poor materially, yet Christ said to them you are rich. On the contrary, to the materially prosperous church of Laodicea He said you are poor. Some modern day preachers will call those in similar situation to the church of Smyrna poor and lacking faith, but those who live like the Laodiceans they would call rich. However, Christ had it the other way around.

(3) Pergamos A.D. 313-590: The Worldly Church (Rev. 2:12-17)

To the church of Pergamos Jesus said, I know where you dwell where Satan’s seat is. Satan’s seat is this world. He is the god of this world (2 Corinthians

4:4). The word Pergamos comes from two Greek words *pergos* which means “tower” (a symbol of the world’s system stemming from the time of the tower of Babel) and *gamos* which means married. Therefore Pergamos means, married to the world. The church was married to the tower (the world), which is Satan’s seat.

When Constantine became Emperor of Rome in A.D. 313 the persecution of the church ended. Constantine did not only legalize Christianity, but he also made it the official religion of Roman Empire. During that time the pendulum swung from one side to the next. The church entered a period of peace and prosperity, and became married to the world. The church of this age united with the world under Constantine and his successors.

With this worldly matrimony came *religious syncretism*, which is the

fusion of diverse religious beliefs and practices. Syncretism is the modern day version of Gnosticism: a religious dualistic system that incorporated elements from the Oriental pagan religions, Judaism, Christianity, and philosophical concepts in to one melting pot. Gnosticism was prevalent during the period of 300 BC - AD 300.

(4) Thyatira A.D. 590-1517: The False Church (Rev. 2:18-29)

This is the church of the Dark Ages. A detailed account of this church has been already given in chapter two. In this church age there was an amazing departure from the standards of the early church.

It is interesting to note that the name Thyatira comes from two Greek words *thya*, which means continual, never ending and *tira*, which means sacrifice. Therefore, the name Thyatira means,

never ending sacrifice and coincides with the mass of transubstantiation, performed by the priests during that time. The mass was performed at every service, including christenings, funerals and weddings. It is estimated that the mass would have taken place more than 200,000 times a day.

According to the doctrine of transubstantiation every time the bread and wine (the Eucharist) is blessed by the priest performing the mass, it literally turns into the body and blood of Jesus. Therefore, that practice was indeed a “thyatira” (a never ending sacrifice), as every day the Son of God was supposedly being sacrificed afresh on the altar of Roman Catholicism. Every day He was sacrificed many thousands of times. This was indeed the era of the false church.

(5) Sardis A.D. 1517 – 1750: The Dying Church (Rev. 3:1-6)

This church age began on October 31st 1517, when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses on the door of the Wittenberg Castle in Germany, commencing the Reformation and Protestant movement. Many great religious movements were founded during this era. Among them were the Lutheran Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Church, the Church of Scotland to name a few.

This was the age of the reformers. To this age Christ identified Himself as He who has the seven spirits of God. This refers to the fullness of the Holy Spirit and is indicative of His responsibility for the breakthrough, and light of the Reformation.

Notwithstanding the breakthrough of the reformation, Jesus said to this

church, “*you have a name that you are alive but you are dead*” (Revelation 3:1). The problem this church age had was not ending well. It began well with many great leaders who brought great breakthroughs, and pioneered many great religious movements. There were men like Martin Luther (1483-1546), John Calvin (1509-1564), John Knox (1514-1572), and George Fox (1624-1691). However, when the founders died, the movements slowly died. The people backslid into the world, but the systems of the movements continued. History has proven that this is invariably the case over and over again.

When a denomination dies men tend to exploit it rather than revive it. History testifies to the fact that no denomination that died spiritually has ever been revived. For this reason God has said to many of His servants from

time to time, “*move on...*” Speaking on the gift of healing and the working of miracles, the great Pentecostal Pioneer, and Apostle of Faith, Smith Wigglesworth said,

"For many years the Lord has been moving me on and keeping me from spiritual stagnation. When I was in the Wesleyan Methodist Church I was sure I was saved and was sure I was all right. The Lord said to me, "Come out," and I came out.

When I was with the people known as the Brethren I was sure I was all right now. But the Lord said, "Come out." Then I went into the Salvation Army. At that time it was full of life and there were revivals everywhere. But the Salvation Army went into natural things and the great revivals that they had in those early days ceased. The Lord said to me, "Come out," and I came out.

I have had to come out three times since... God has no use for any man who is not hungering and thirsting for yet more of Himself and His righteousness” (Excerpt taken from, Smith Wigglesworth, The Complete Collection of His Life Teachings by Roberts Liardon pg.342-343).

(6) Philadelphia A.D. 1750 -
1925: The Soul Winning Church
(Rev. 3:7-11)

This is the church age of great soul winning campaigns. Jesus refers to Himself as, “*He who has the key of David, He who opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens*”(Revelation 3:7). He said to the church, “*...I have set before you an open door which none can shut...*” (Rev. 3:8).

Indeed there was an open door of Soul winning to this church age. This was the time when God raised up great soul winners like, John Wesley (1703-1791), George Whitfield (1714-1770), Charles G. Finney (1792-1875), D. L. Moody (1837-1899), Billy Sunday (1862-1935), Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892), Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) and many more.

This was the soul winning age, the age when the church reached out to its fellow men. The word Philadelphia is a combination of the words *philio* which means love and *adelphos* which means brother. Therefore, Philadelphia means brotherly love, and that is what was displayed by the church of Philadelphia.

The church of Smyrna (the persecuted church), which suffered to keep its message pure, and the church of Philadelphia (the soul winning

church), which reached out to lost humanity, are the only churches Christ did not rebuke. Yet, ironically, today we shun suffering for the truth, and put evangelism on the back burner. But, the fact remains that he who wins souls is wise (Proverbs 11:30, Daniel 12:3). And for souls to be truly won our doctrine must remain pure, which inevitably invites suffering. For the Scripture says, “*Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution*” (2 Timothy 3:12).

Something To Remember

*God has no use for any man who is not
hungering and thirsting for yet more of
Himself and His righteousness.*

Something To Do

*Be quick to repent when there is a
need to.*

CHAPTER NINE

The Last Church Age

Laodicea A.D. 1925 - The Man Centered Church. The word Laodicea means the will of the people.

Revelation 3:14-22

¹⁴"And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

¹⁵"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

¹⁶"So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

¹⁷"Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' -- and do not know that you

are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked –

¹⁸"I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

¹⁹"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

²⁰"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

²¹"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

²²"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

As you have seen in the previous chapter, history glaringly bears witness

to the prophetic accuracy of Jesus' words to the church ages. This consciousness will help you to take to heart these words of Jesus, regarding this last church age in which we now live. You will be better fortified against blindly following the course of this world

The fact that the prophetic content of Christ's messages to the previous six church ages were historically confirmed, ought to sober us up regarding what He has said in reference to this final church age in which we now live. The passage above (Revelation 3:14-22) speaks directly to us in this time. Therefore, it is to us one of the most relevant, and eye opening pieces of prophetic literature.

No other church age could have looked back as we can and vividly see the prophetic significance of Christ's words to them. God has given to this

church age precious information because He knows we are living in the most difficult time.

Preachers and teachers will come and go, but the word of God remains the ever unchanging bedrock of our faith. And because of this very fact, it never ceases to amaze me when I observe the little attention that is given to these words of Christ in a time when their relevance and fulfillment are glaringly apparent. It seems like we ignore these words of Christ because they cannot fit into the contemporary emphasis.

Moreover, the accommodative and materialistic gospel which is being propagated and accepted by many professing Christians, in the face of approaching end time and eternal realities, seems to be very contradictory. Yet, ironically there is no contradiction when one considers that these things must come to pass in

order for the very words of Christ to be fulfilled. This is an amazing fact! It is truly said that the same sun which melts the wax hardens the clay. Even so, the falling away of the unfaithful though it will cause grief, yet more than anything else it will be a sign, and source of encouragement to the faithful, as they observe the things coming to pass that are written in the word of God.

The truth of God's word will inevitably make some different and others indifferent. Satan's goal is to make the believer indifferent to the truth. He is not as concerned about destroying the church as much as he is about controlling and perverting it. A dead and lukewarm church, controlled by Satan, serves his purpose far better than no church at all, or any ungodly institution. A dead church is worse than any secular business devoted to sinful pleasure. This is why Jesus said,

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves” (Matthew 23:15). It is a serious state to have the truth but lack the corresponding passion, and devotion *that ought to go with knowing it.* To be in such a state is to be like a corrupt fountain, and a troubled spring. It would be better not to have known the truth, than having known it, not to give it the response it deserves. It is either our knowledge of eternal realities condemns us for our indifference, or we deny eternal realities altogether in order to justify our indifference.

Two Extremes To Avoid

Before I share with you some insights that I believe I received from the Holy Spirit, on what it means to be a lukewarm Christian, let us establish an

important point. There are two philosophical extremes we must avoid regarding our approach to the word of God. The first one is Religious Existentialism, this means that God speaks today and what he speaks today has no bearing on what he spoke in time past (as is recorded in the Bible). The second one is Antiquarianism, this means that God spoke in time past but He is not speaking today. The truth is God spoke in times past, and He is still speaking today. However what he speaks today must be judged by what he spoke yesterday (in Scripture). The Bible was not given to substitute hearing the direct voice of God but to confirm it, and protect the claims of having heard it from abuse. God speaks to us today by prophets, and by the anointing within us (the Holy Spirit), through dreams and visions. The apostle John said,

“But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things.” (1 John 2:20)

“But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.” (1 John 2:27)

Every believer has the anointing. The anointing is the Holy Spirit who guides, and illuminates the believer’s understanding of the word of God. He caused the believer to behold wondrous things in the word. Let me share with you a case in point.

What It Means To Be Lukewarm

One day as I was alone in the church building where I pastor, praying and

seeking God, I began to experience a sick sensation on the inside. As I continued praying suddenly the Holy Spirit began ministering to me. He began saying to me: “lukewarm, lukewarm, lukewarm...”

There on my knees the Holy Spirit arrested my full attention and began to teach me something very profound and life impacting. He began to illuminate my understanding concerning the lukewarm state of the church in these end times. Here are some very precious things the Holy Spirit shared with me. I have checked the Scripture on these things and found no contradiction.

The problem with the Laodicean church was its lukewarm state. Jesus said to the church *you are neither hot nor cold*. I had no difficulty interpreting the meaning of hot and cold, as they are self-evident. Hot and

cold are opposites, like true and false, right and wrong, good and evil. Hot means to live like a saint, and cold means to live like a sinner.

What challenged my thoughts however, was these words by Jesus, “*I rather you were cold...*” I asked myself the question, “how can the Lord say, *I rather you were cold...* in view of the fact that to be cold means to live like a sinner?” I wrestled for a while with this thought; I said to myself, “I can understand Him preferring His people to be hot instead of lukewarm; but knowing what it means to be cold, how can the Lord prefer His people to be cold?”

It was there and then that the Holy Spirit said to me something simple yet profound. It would clear up my confusion and make a deep impression on my heart and mind. He said in a clear and gentle whisper “*Being*

lukewarm is worse than being cold.” Immediately I saw it. All of a sudden the confusion departed, and I understood what it means to be lukewarm in a way I never did before. Being lukewarm is worse than being cold, worse than living like an all-out sinner.

As I remained on my knees at the altar, the Holy Spirit continued to speak to me, again He spoke and said, *“Lukewarm means not genuine.”* Those words cut through my spirit like a sharp knife. I was stunned as I knelt there at the altar. I was amazed by the clarity of understanding that flooded my mind. Most of all I was awe-struck by the meaning and implications of what I heard. Being lukewarm is worse than being cold. Being lukewarm means not genuine.

Dearly beloved, until we see that being lukewarm is worse than being cold,

worse than living like a common sinner. Until we see that we miss the seriousness of what Jesus said to this final church age.

We need to see that when Jesus spoke those words the point was not on hot or cold, but to expose the true nature of a lukewarm state. In my spirit what I heard made perfect sense. In a flash I saw the truth, and I also saw the miserable condition and horrific plight of many professing Christians. I saw a truth that I can never afford to ignore, let alone forget. When you come to know something through the Holy Spirit, it is difficult to continue living as though you don't know it. Revelation knowledge changes our attitude. Our attitude today ought to be according to the following words of an old saint.

I must look to God to make the means effectual. I fear that my devotions are

too hurried, that I do not read the Scriptures enough. I must grow in grace; I must love God more; I must feel the power of divine things more. Whether I am more or less learned signifies nothing. Whether I execute the work I deem useful is comparatively unimportant. But beware my soul of lukewarmness. (Excerpt taken from E.M. Bounds On Prayer, page 52. Published in 1997 by Whitaker House 30 Hunt Valley Circle New Kensington, PA USA).

The Holy Spirit wants us to see that to be lukewarm is to be in a state of sin that is more obnoxious to God than what he initially saved us from. To be lukewarm with the truth is worse than being cold and without it. To be Lukewarm is a more serious dilemma than many perceive, are willing to admit, and more so, are willing to confront and change. The Bible says,

²⁰For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.

²¹For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. (2Peter 2:20-21)

Notice the Bible says ...*the latter end is worse for them... For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.* Jesus Himself said,

⁴⁷And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

⁴⁸But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few... (Luke 12:47-48)

⁴³When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none.

⁴⁴Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order.

⁴⁵"Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first..." (Matthew 12:43-45)

It is better one never knew the truth, than to know it and make light of it. To be lukewarm is worst than being cold.

Thank God, the Holy Spirit loves us so much that He never shows us the

problem without also showing us the solution. As I continued on my knees, the Holy Spirit drew something else to my attention. He caused me to notice that at the beginning of every message to the seven churches, Jesus referred to Himself in a particular way that said something to each of the respective churches. To this church of Laodicea Jesus said, *“I am the Amen. The faithful and the true witness.”* Amen means, *so be it*. The Holy Spirit caused me to see that the only solution for the lukewarm problem in the last church age is to have faithful and true witnesses.

There is a great need for the bold and uncompromising declaration of the pure word of God. We need more amen (so be it) preachers. Oh, how we need men and women who will agree with God’s word and declare it humbly, yet with unflinching

faithfulness, without mixture, and without apology.

The subtle problem we face today is not that we are not hearing the truth, but the mixing of the truth, and the compromising with the world. Such practices have become common, and acceptable. We wink at sin, but God is holy and cannot change. He said, *I am the LORD, I do not change* (Malachi 3:6).

Today we have some fine teachers and preachers of the word of God. We are privileged to have some of the greatest scriptural revelations by virtue of increased knowledge. The problem is not a lack of truth, but the mixing of the truth. It is the compromising of the truth.

One night in the latter part of 2003 God gave me a vision. In this vision I saw church services being conducted

in complete darkness and I cried out, “How can we have church in darkness!” Then the Holy Spirit said, “*Mixture, mixture, mixture.*” The Holy Spirit was telling me that there is a serious mixture taking place in the Body of Christ. Today there is an amazing mixture between the holy, and the unholy, the sacred and the secular, the church and the world, the children of God and the children of the devil, true and false doctrine. If Paul lived in our day he would have said, *Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? (1 Corinthians 5:6).*

Another problem is being silent on topics and issues we cannot afford to be silent on. We communicate a whole lot by our silence. At times we communicate more by what we don't say than by what we do say. If we refuse to use the sword of the word of God because we don't want to offend

people we offend God. The word of God says’ “*Cursed is he who does the work of the LORD deceitfully, and cursed is he who keeps back his sword from blood*” (Jeremiah 48:10).

Meeting One of God’s Generals

In May of 2001, by the leading of the Holy Spirit I went to New York City. I can never forget the experience I had when I put down my luggage in that basement apartment. Instantly the Holy Spirit spoke and said, “*You will know that I have sent you here.*” After a day or two, for the very first time, I felt a strong compulsion in my spirit to go visit the World Trade Centre. I went to the Centre, for the first time, and as I entered one of the towers and was about to join the line for a ticket to tour the top of the building, suddenly I was overtaken by a spirit of intense prayer. I turned to the wall, and prayer was profusely gushing out of my belly (in

unknown tongues). I felt like a great river was flowing through me.

When it was over, I literally asked myself what was the reason for this sudden deep flow of prayer? The answer would come five months later; when I would witness on CNN live the collapse of those beautiful and majestic towers that stood out in the skyline of Manhattan, New York. The Holy Spirit had led me to New York City and to the World Trade Centre to pray but I did not know it. Things only unfolded as I stepped out in obedience.

When I left the World Trade Centre, based on a vision I had, I went to David Wilkerson at Time Square and told him some things the Holy Spirit had told me. I told him God sent me to him, to tell him that He has made him a father of the nation of America, and that he should not apologize for the

stance he has taken through the years, concerning coming Judgment.

I also told him that he should read Zechariah 4:6. He said to me, “tell me what it says.” and I responded, “...*Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, said the LORD of hosts.*” This was after the Sunday evening service.

I remember the response of this legendary man of God, whom I was honored to meet. A man who over the years has made a profound impact on my life by his bold preaching and the video, *The Cross And The Switchblade*. He said to me, he had just spoken a stern message in the morning service and he had no intention of apologizing. Again with emphasis he said, very soon the president of America will see what he has been declaring concerning America. Then he put his hands on my shoulder,

prayed with me and said to me: “There is a touch of God on your life....”

The truth is that America’s greatest need and the church in general, is for faithful and true witnesses of the unadulterated word of God. The spirit of compromise and mixture neutralizes the church and makes it lukewarm in a day of great satanic onslaught. Oh how sad! The word of God says, “... *if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle*” (1 Corinthians 14:8). However God is in control. In September of 2004 I saw in a vision the people of America bending down their heads in sadness and disappointment saying: “***Is this what our nation has come to?***” Following this was a spiritual awakening that began in America and impacted the world.

Money And Materialism

Jesus predicted that the dominant attitude of the last church age will be one that says, *“I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing.”* Yet to this end time church that makes such claims He said, *“you do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.”*

All it takes is a little honesty to see that material prosperity has become the emphasis of today’s church. Many have mistaken financial strength for spiritual strength, thereby fulfilling the prophetic words of Jesus to this last church age, and also the words of the apostle Paul. Paul said there will come in the last days, *useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself (1 Timothy 6:5).*

Nothing is wrong with prosperity of itself, as long as you remember that your life does not consist in the abundance of things you possess (Luke 12:15), as long as it does not get to our heads, but often times it does. It is rightly said, prosperity has more power to hurt than adversity, and history testifies to the veracity of that statement. We see it in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, The Bible says,

"Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy."(Ezekiel 16:49)

Abundance of bread, ease, and prosperity, produced pride, and pride produced the moral decay of Sodom and Gomorrah, including many other nations. Also in the case of Uzziah, as we see in 2 Chronicles 26:16 the Bible

says, “*But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense.*” Uzziah’s success led to self-confident pride.

The same can be said of David and Solomon. David stayed at home in ease and comfort, while kings went out to war, consequently he fell into lusting. Stemming from his lust, he committed adultery, murder, deception, and cover-up. Solomon was led astray by his many foreign wives. Through his foreign wives he secured diplomatic ties (internationally), peace and prosperity. Thus he took his eyes off of God, and placed it on things, and on man. He also transgressed the word of God to the kings of Israel which said, *Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he*

greatly multiply silver and gold for himself (Deuteronomy 17:17).

The reign of Jeroboam 11 (in the northern kingdom of Israel) was a time of great prosperity, second only to the reign of Solomon. However, prosperity produced an environment of religious and moral indifference. Moral indifference caused the eventual fall of the northern kingdom. It was during that time that the prophet Amos said, “*Woe to you who are at ease in Zion...*” (Amos 6:1).

Even the early church may be considered as a case in point, for it was when the persecution ceased, and the church became accepted by the state, then the church began to decline spiritually, doctrinally, and morally.

It is said, the people who are in a state of satisfaction and comfort, because their material needs are taken care of,

can rarely be persuaded that their spiritual state is wrong. The truth is, if God prospers you, and you remain humble and holy before Him, you would have succeeded where many have failed.

Since 1974 (when there was not the slightest notion of the concept, “Prosperity Gospel”) David Wilkerson said,

“The number one temptation for the last days will be prosperity (page 46). In my vision I see Satan appearing before God one last time as he did to accuse Job in the Bible. But this time he comes to ask permission to tempt the last Christians... See what happens to your last Christians when they become full, rich, increased with goods, and are in need of nothing. They will forsake God and become self centered... In my vision I see Satan standing back and laughing with glee:

'look at all the money mad Christians...pour it on them it is getting to a lot of them and it's making my job easier'' (Page 48, excerpts taken from The Vision And Beyond by David Wilkerson. Copyright 2003, published by World Challenge publications Lindale TX.75771. N.B These words were taken from the original book Copyrighted in 1974)

Material success though not evil in itself, has the power to deceive the hearts of men. In such a state it is difficult even for the head of the church to convince many, and cause them to see their true condition.

Jesus counseled the Laodicean church to anoint their eyes with eye salve that they may see. Material success, and the deception it brought had so dimmed their eyes that they could not see their true condition. They were wretched (afflicted), miserable (to be

pitied), poor (destitute), blind (spiritually blind), naked (spiritually unclothed), but they could not see it.

That they were naked, implies that they were not prepared to receive their heavenly and glorified bodies at the return of Christ. The word of God says,

²For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven,

³if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. (2 Corinthians 5:2-3)

They were bound for eternal shame and corruption instead of eternal glory except they repented. Today we espouse that we need the money to advance the kingdom, and that is true. Notwithstanding, money is not our greatest need. Without a return to our first love, wholehearted devotion to

God, and biblical holiness, our money does not have much value. The value, and benefit of money is determined by whose hands it is in, for money can be used to spread good or evil. For it is still, “*Not by might, not by power but by my Spirit said the Lord*” (Zechariah 4:6). Notice what the word of God further says,

*⁶Those who trust in their wealth and boast in the multitude of their riches,
⁷None of them can by any means redeem his brother, Nor give to God a ransom for him. (Psalm 49:6)*

When we walk in sanctification, and true devotion to God, then the value of our money is maximized. Moreover, the word of God cautions us with regards to overburdening ourselves to become rich in this world. In other words, God tells us, don't make wealth your top priority.

⁴Do not overwork to be rich; because of your own understanding, cease!

⁵Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away like an eagle toward heaven. (Proverbs 23: 4-5)

⁶Now godliness with contentment is great gain.

⁷For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

⁸And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

⁹But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

¹¹But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

¹²Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (1 Timothy 6:6-12)

Jesus also said, *buy of me gold tried in the fire.* That gold tried in the fire is none other than Himself. He is the priceless gold we should be seeking; He has proven to be of highest value, because he has been tried with the greatest trial of rejection, suffering, and even death. Yet He arose from the dead, a mighty victor from the dark domain.

Why seek anything less than the best? Wisdom is the ability to make not the good choice, but the best choice. Not simply the best choice according to

this world's standard, but the best choice according to the ultimate standard, according to God's standard.

This writer is not advocating a poverty mentality, if I were, the same would have to be said of Jesus, for I am only elaborating on what he has said: *you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' -- and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked --* I am firmly stating that we simply need to put the emphasis where it belongs, and that is where Jesus put it, on Himself and not on things. He is the Pearl of great price, the True Riches that will last forever.

Among the greatest needs facing the church today is the need for a return to her first love, and to biblical holiness. Biblical holiness is not a cloistered or fanatical isolation but an uncompromised insulation from this

world and its inherent evil. *What fellowship has light with darkness, or he that believes with an unbeliever, what agreement has Christ with the devil (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).* If we cross over the line to win the world, then the world has won us.

Christ Or The World

Another challenge facing the church today is the question of where do we draw the line between the church, and the world? We cannot afford to ignore this challenge. Like men in a boat fishing on the deep and dangerous ocean, so the church has been sent into the world to be fishers of men (Matthew 4:19). However, when the ocean begins to seep into the boat there is need for serious concern. It is one thing for the boat to be in the water it is quite another thing for the water to be in the boat. It is one thing for the church to go into the world it is

another thing for the world to come into the church. The word of God says, *“Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God”* (James 4:4).

If in our and zeal to reconcile the world from its enmity with God biblical principles are violated, ironically we run the risk of bringing ourselves again into enmity with God. This is not difficult to understand, except one is deceitful. When a Grammy and other awards from the world are accepted and treated as a benchmark we have missed the mark. What right does the entertainment industry of this world has to make any judgment in the business of the church of Jesus Christ? The Bible says, *“Woe to you when all men speak well of you,*

for so did their fathers to the false prophets” (Luke 6: 26).

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” (1 John 2:15)

¹⁸If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.

¹⁹If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

²⁰Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. (John 15:18-20)

“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” (2 Timothy 3:12)

“Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin” (1 Peter 4:1)

God may bless and use us in this world, but if needs be, we must be willing to face rejection and suffering. And even pay the ultimate price as Christ, the first apostles, and many martyrs through the centuries. Many have sacrificed their lives to obey God, and to preserve the faith for future generations. This is the faith that we have today. Therefore, we should cherish, and pass on what we have received. Never sacrifice the faith for friendship, fellowship, or finance. Be a true and faithful witness. Be an amen witness all the way.

In the final analysis Jesus said to the church of Laodicea, *“Except you*

repent, I will vomit you out of my mouth.” In other words, I will reject you. I will say to you in the end,...‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ (Matthew 7:23).

The overall solution to the lukewarm problem is genuine repentance, returning to God in Spirit and in truth. The Lord said, "*As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent (Revelation 3:19).*" Thanks to God, for the door of His mercy is always open wide to heal every backslider in heart.

Stubborn Facts

What the Lord said about every church age has been fulfilled in their historical time. What the Lord said about this last church age is glaringly being fulfilled today. Jesus said this church age will be lukewarm, between hot and

cold, good and evil mixed, true and false doctrine mixed. Those who love God and perceive this mystery of iniquity taking place will no doubt watch and pray with much diligence.

Something To Remember

Being lukewarm is worst than being cold. Lukewarm means not genuine. No other church age could have looked back as we can and vividly see the prophetic significance of Christ's words to them. God has given to this church age precious information because He knows we are living in the most difficult time.

Something To Do

Practice and declare the word of God without any compromise.

CHAPTER TEN

Unprecedented Deception

One of the major perils of the days just before the return of the Lord Jesus Christ is deception. Approaching Jesus' return there will be an onslaught of satanic deception like this world has never experienced. Deception will ascend to dizzy heights. The devil will cause many who have come to know the truth to believe that they can trifle with it, and yet abide in it.

The word of God reveals that in the end times there will be a departure from the faith (the body of truth committed to the church). Many will not love the truth of God's word, which He revealed unto them. For this reason, God Himself will allow a

strong delusion to come upon them, which will cause them to believe a lie. The Bible says,

¹⁰And by unlimited seduction to evil and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing (going to perdition) because they did not welcome the truth but refused to love it that they might be saved.

¹¹Therefore God sends upon them a misleading influence, a working of error and a strong delusion to make them believe what is false. (2 Thessalonians 2:10-11 Amplified Bible)

Even though Noah's generation had no Bible as we do today, yet God sent upon them the judgment of a great deluge. According to the word of God, in these last days God will not send a great deluge again but a strong delusion. He will send a great flood of deception, a misleading influence, a

working of error. He will cause those who refuse to embrace the truth to embrace and believe what is false.

The Bible clearly says that the reason for this deception will be because they did not welcome the truth, but refused to love it. According to Jesus, if a person does not love the truth more than everything else, they are not worthy of it (Matthew 10:37-39, Luke 14:26) and it is just a matter of time before God gives them over to their own love.

The count down towards the end, and the time of the false Christ (Antichrist), and false Christians (the followers of the false Christ), will be ushered in by a flood of deception. The prophet Daniel said,

21"And in his place shall arise a vile person, to whom they will not give the honor of royalty; but he shall come in

peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue (deception).

²²"With the force of a flood they shall be swept away from before him and be broken, and also the prince of the covenant. (Daniel 11:21-22)

The Bible in Basic English version says, "...but he will come in time of peace and will get the kingdom by fair words" (V.22). It is said in the Psalms, "You carry them away like a flood..." (Psalm 90:5).

To Whom Much Is Given Much Is Required

Noah's generation had longevity, many lived close to a thousand years (Genesis 5:25-32). Probably this is one of the reasons that they were so severely judged by God. They had something we do not have today. However, we also have something they

did not have back then. We have the word of God and increased knowledge. We have the inexhaustible and glorious knowledge of God's redemptive love, which offers us infinitely more than longevity, even eternal life. Needless to say, we have the greater benefit. Therefore, this makes us more accountable and blameworthy if we should come short. The Bible says,

"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17:30)

"...For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more." (Luke 12:48)

From the time of the invention of the printing press in Europe by Johannes

Gutenberg around 1450 up to this time, there has been an unprecedented and increasing flow of information available to man as never before. Today the word of God is available in every major language. This present age is called the age of information. It is an age of increased knowledge, just as the prophet Daniel prophesied many centuries ago, “...until the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase” (Daniel 12:4).

The Danger Of Not Fully Embracing The Truth

It is immeasurably critical what we do with the knowledge of the truth that has been generously given to us. In Genesis chapter three, we see that Eve was deceived by the serpent (Satan). She was deceived because she did not fully embrace and believe the word of God that was spoken to her. Eve had to

learn the hard way that God means what he says. There is a principle in Scripture that we would do well to heed. Whenever people do not love and embrace precious truth that has been graciously lavished upon them by God, consequently they open themselves to the spirit of error and deception. They open a door for the devil. For example because the Jews did not embrace their Messiah, God will cause them to embrace the false messiah (Antichrist). Jesus said, *I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive (John 5:43).*

Furthermore, if God permitted the fall of Eve the first woman, whose fall through her husband Adam accounted for the fall of all of humanity, how much more will he allow the fall of single individuals who will for the most part account for their own lives

before God. For it is written, “*So then each of us shall give account of himself to God*” (Romans 14:12). Thank God for the documentation of the fall of Adam and Eve, Noah generation, Israel, and many other examples in Scriptures. They are documented to serve as warnings for us in these last days, when satanic deception will reach its highest pinnacle. The word of God says, “*Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come*” (1 Corinthians 10:11).

In the book of 1 Kings 22:4-23 we have a striking story that elaborates on the subject in discussion. King Ahab was about to go to war against Syria. He consulted four hundred prophets concerning whether or not he should go to war. Ironically, his mind was already made up to go to war. Therefore, he consulted those prophets

whom he knew would tell him exactly what he wanted to hear. And with one accord they all encouraged the King saying, *“Go to war, the Lord is with you and you will be successful.”*

After the King consulted the false prophets, he sent his servant ahead to Micaiah the true prophet of God. The servant of Ahab told the prophet of God, *“...Now listen, the words of the prophets with one accord encouraged the King. Please let your words be like the word of one of them and speak encouragement” (V.13)*. He tried to cause the true prophet of God to say what the others had said. Moreover, the word of God reveals that Ahab was in the habit of resisting the word of God.

⁷And Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not still a prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of Him?"

⁸*So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the LORD; but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." And Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say such things!" (1 Kings 22:7-8)*

Because Ahab had no regard and love for the truth, God Himself sent a lying spirit in the mouth of four hundred prophets, and caused him to believe the lying spirit to his demise. The word of God says,

¹⁹*"Then Micaiah said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by, on His right hand and on His left.*

²⁰*And the LORD said, 'Who will persuade Ahab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?' So one spoke*

in this manner, and another spoke in that manner.

²¹Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, 'I will persuade him.

²²The LORD said to him, 'In what way?' So he said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And the LORD said, 'You shall persuade him, and also prevail. Go out and do so.

²³Therefore look! The LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours, and the LORD has declared disaster against you." (1 Kings 22: 19-23)

The King went to war but he did not return alive. God's purpose was that he would be deceived and destroyed since he refused to believe and love the truth. This story reveals a principle in God's dealings.

Here are a few more Scripture verses confirming the same principle; which shows when people are reluctant to embrace the truth, God might give them over to satanic deception, to follow their own darkened ways.

¹¹"But My people would not heed My voice, and Israel would have none of Me.

¹²So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart, to walk in their own counsels. (Psalm 81:11-12, See also Romans 1:28)

Barnes commentary paraphrases verse twelve this way: *"I gave them what they ask for, I left them to themselves to work out the problem about success and happiness in their own way. To let them see what must be the result of forsaking the true God."*

³“...*Just as they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations.*

⁴“*So will I choose their delusions, and bring their fears on them; because, when I called, no one answered, when I spoke they did not hear; but they did evil before My eyes, and chose that in which I do not delight.*” (Isaiah 66:3-4)

"Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets: 'Did you offer Me slaughtered animals and sacrifices during forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel.' (Acts 7:42)

"Who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways.” (Acts 14:16)

“As he loved cursing, so let it come to him; as he did not delight in blessing,

so let it be far from him.” (Psalm 109:17)

*“For the LORD has poured out on you
The spirit of deep sleep, and has
closed your eyes, namely, the
prophets; and He has covered your
heads, namely, the seers.” (Isaiah
29:10)*

*"Ephraim is joined to idols, let him
alone.” (Hosea 4:17)*

*With Him are strength and prudence.
The deceived and the deceiver are His.
(Job 12:16)*

*"As for you, O house of Israel," thus
says the Lord GOD: "Go, serve every
one of you his idols -- and hereafter --
if you will not obey me; but profane
My holy name no more with your gifts
and your idols.” (Ezekiel 20: 39)*

²¹Because, 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.

²²Professing to be wise, they became fools,

²³And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man -- and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

²⁴Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,

²⁵Who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. (Romans 1:21-25)

"He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be

righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still." (Revelation 22:11)

No Room For Compromise

As we move closer towards the end, we need to be all the more careful that our lives are in line with the truth of God's holy word. The following is a profound prophetic vision which was given to Charles Capps.

"Several years ago while teaching a series of satellite meetings, the spirit of prophecy came upon me. The prophecy pertained to the triangle of the end. I saw in the Spirit a large acute triangle, and these words came forth: "As you approach the triangle of the end, time shall grow faster and closer, faster and closer...until the wicked shall be cut off."

As those words came forth, I saw in my spirit, as it were, a large acute

triangle. It was standing on end, looking somewhat like an inverted pyramid, with a line drawn down the center from the wide top to the narrow point at the bottom. Being wide at the top and very narrow at the bottom, it resembled a funnel. Inside this triangle was light, but outside was darkness.

The prophetic word continued: “There was a time when you could be off from the center line of the triangle and still be inside the triangle of light. But as you approach the end of the triangle, you must move to the center line, for line must be upon line, precept upon precept.”

I could see that if you were off from the center line, at the bottom end of the triangle you would be outside of the triangle of light and in darkness. I understood that was the way the wicked would be cut off. Even though they were to one side of the center line

of God's Word at the top of the triangle of time, they were still in the light. But at the narrow end, which represented the end of the age, everyone who was not on the center line (precept of God's Word) at the end of the age would be in darkness.

As we approach the Seventh Millennium, time seems to have accelerated and prophetic events are being compressed together. We have entered the triangle of the end, in which both time allotted and prophetic events are being compressed to maximum density to fulfill all the prophetic Scriptures and end this age in God's own time frame.

Time is reacting much the same as liquid flowing through a funnel, being drawn into the narrow end and released into a container of larger dimensions. It seems that there is not enough time to go around, and time

controls us. We all, in one way or another, sense that we are being drawn by the vortex created by time itself. We are spiraling faster and faster through the narrow end of the triangle of time for the purpose of being released into a new Millennium that will forever change planet Earth.” (Quoted with written permission. From pages 19-20, of the book *End Time Events-Journey To The Edge of The Age*, by Charles Capps, Copyright 1997. Charles Capps Publishing, P.O. Box 69 England, AR 72046).

Not Everything God Permits Is For Your Ultimate Good

If contrary to God's will a person wants his or her own way, after a while God may allow him/her to have it. It is important for you to understand that there are things that God would permit that He is not pleased with. Does that

surprise you? Well don't close the book.

In the wilderness the children of Israel, contrary to the will of God, and in unbelief murmured for meat, and though they miraculously received the meat, disaster came with it. The Bible records,

²⁶He caused an east wind to blow in the heavens; and by His power He brought in the south wind.

²⁷He also rained meat on them like the dust, feathered fowl like the sand of the seas;

²⁸And He let them fall in the midst of their camp, all around their dwellings.

²⁹So they ate and were well filled, for He gave them their own desire.

³⁰They were not deprived of their craving; but while their food was still in their mouths,

³¹The wrath of God came against them, and slew the stoutest of them, and

*struck down the choice men of Israel.
(Psalm 78: 26-31)*

¹⁴But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tested God in the desert.

¹⁵And He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul. (Psalm 106:14)

Notice the word of God says, they received the food they lusted and murmured for but with leanness of soul. One can receive lots of things, and receive leanness of soul at the same time. The prophet Ezekiel said the following amazing words, ***“Therefore I also gave them up to statutes that were not good, and judgments by which they could not live” (Ezekiel 20:25).***

Moses in disobedience smote the rock a second time, when he should have spoken to the rock. Though water

came out abundantly God was very wroth, and Moses was not allowed to enter the promise land. The Bible says,

⁹So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him.

¹⁰And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?"

¹¹Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.

¹²Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." (Numbers 20:9-12)

False Prophets

The Bible reveals that false prophets, inspired by Satan will play a key role in misleading the masses of people in the last days ...*with all power, signs, and lying wonders, (2 Thessalonians 2:9)*. These agents of Satan will be at their deceptive best, appearing as angels of light and ministers of God.

¹³For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.

¹⁴And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

¹⁵Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works. (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)

If a prophet arises among the people of God and he works signs and

wonders yet his doctrine is misleading, the Bible says do not listen to that prophet.

¹"If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder,

²and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods' -- which you have not known -- 'and let us serve them,'

³you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. (Deuteronomy 13:1-3)

In other words, if a man is operating in the supernatural, but his doctrine and lifestyle are questionable, if he is saying and doing things that are influencing the people of God to go

after false gods, they should not listen to him. It is a test from God to His people. Notice carefully what the word of God states, “...for the Lord your God is testing you...” It did not say, for the devil is using a false prophet to deceive you (be that as it may). It says however, God Himself is testing His people, to see whether they truly love Him with all their heart and with all their soul. No doubt Satan is behind the false prophet. However, in the ultimate sense God in His sovereignty is testing His people. The Bible goes on to say,

“... false prophets, will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” (Matthew 24:24)

"Then many false prophets, will rise up and deceive many.” (Matthew 24:11)

The false prophets in Bible days were never recognized as false by the multitude they led astray. Instead they were seen as genuine prophetic voices in their time. Even so it will be in these closing days of time.

¹But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.

²And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.

³By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber. (2 Peter 2:1-3)

The above passage says that the destructive works of the false teachers

and false prophets, would be introduced into the church secretly. The word “secretly” in the original Greek is *pareisago* and it literally means, *to bring in something under false pretence*. Many will appear to be concerned for the cause of Christ, but in reality they will be agents of Satan, who are deceived while they deceive others.

Notice further, the word of God says that these false prophets and false teachers will not only secretly (under false pretense) bring into the church destructive heresies, but also, *denying the Lord who bought them*. According to Strong’s Greek Lexicon, the word “bought” in verse one (*agorazoin* the Greek) means to redeem, to purchase in the market. It is the same word used for “redeem” in Galatians 4:5. *To redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons*. Therefore, the reference is not to

people on the outside, who never knew the Lord but to those who have been blood bought (purchased from the slave market of sin) and are operating inside the church.

However, while they profess to be the Lord's servants, they deny Him as Lord over their lives. The word "deny" comes from the Greek word *arneomi*, which means to contradict. The implication is that by their conduct they contradict the professed lordship of Jesus Christ over their lives. While they profess Him to be their Lord, in reality they are driven by their own agenda and deceitful motive. Therefore in reality they tell the Lord No! The Word of God refers to them as ... ***false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves (Matthew 7:15).***

The New Age Movement

The New Age movement is not a religious organization. There is no recognized leader, and no statement of faith. It is a mysterious power that seems to be moving humanity in a particular direction. It is a pervasive, dynamic, all-encompassing end-time phenomenon that is shaking virtually every institution. Elements of it in varying degrees are found almost everywhere. It is a mysterious wave of satanic deception like the world has never seen before.

The New Age disciples proclaim that mankind is taking a journey within. Man is experiencing a time of conscious evolutions. There is a new world order. They declare that all over the world people would begin to see the “*light*,” of the new order and come together with a new sense of unity.

The anthem of the New Age movement is one love, one world, one religion. They propagate the brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God. They believe in the doctrine of Universalism, which is the belief that everyone will be saved. They advocate that religious walls need to be torn down. Roman Catholics and Evangelicals should come together with a sense of tolerance and brotherhood. There are no moral absolutes. There is no such thing as sin except to call something sin. Good and evil are relatives, what might be good for one might not be good for the other. All these are elements of the New Age movement, and constitute the spirit and emphasis of this present age. This is the course the world is on right now

And don't think for one moment that the Body of Christ is not impacted by this end time onslaught of Satan.

Today there is a very strong move of deception among professing believers. This New Age spirit has infiltrated the church in many ways. This is one of the reasons why there is not much preaching on sin, eternal judgment, and holiness in many churches today. This is why there is a shocking move toward secularism and religious syncretism.

The emphasis of today is the almighty dollar and not the Almighty God. It is on self improvement and not on Christ. It is on how to relax, how to enjoy yourself, how to be cool, and how to live a more self fulfilling life. The emphasis is on how to enjoy this life and not on how to prepare for eternity, not on fleeing from the eternal wrath to come. We need to return to God and put the emphasis where it is needed most.

The divorce and remarriage issue in the church is now out of control. Yet the emphasis is on material prosperity, with little or no emphasis on marital fidelity, which is the foundation for a blessed society. Something is wrong! Many are seeing the so-called light. It appears that the stage is being set for the final countdown and the appearance of the Antichrist. It is rightfully said, if the Antichrist will profess to be Christ then his followers would be professing Christians. You might ask, how can Satan pull this off? The Bible says, *“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders”* (2 Thessalonians 2:9).

Not just power and signs but also lying wonders, stupendous lies, big lies, which will gradually capture vast multitudes and dam countless souls in eternal perdition. Probably, the most

sobering thing about biblical end-time prophecy is that it must come to pass. Think about that and fear God!

Was It In Vain

Probably some of the biggest and the most critical questions the church of this generation needs to ask are: Was the Reformation a mistake? Was Martin Luther deceived? The river of blood that has been shed to come out of Roman Catholicism was it in vain? History records the horrific and mind boggling St Bartholomew's Day Massacre in France by Catholics against Protestants on August 24, 1572. Almost 100,000 Protestants were slaughtered for their faith.

“They threw the bodies into the Seine River until the water was red as blood. The butchery was so continuous that along the street gutters in Paris blood ran like water... In the village of

Barre, these servants of Satan cut open the stomachs of small children and pulled out their intestines... Men, women, and children were indiscriminately slaughtered and every street was strewed with dying Protestants.

Priests ran through the streets holding a crucifix in one hand and a dagger in the other and warned the leaders of the murderers to spare neither relatives or friends” (Taken from The New Foxe’s Book Of Martyrs pages 264, 265,266).

The Inquisition of the Roman Catholic Church began in 1231 by Pope Gregory 1X and continued unto the 1800s. Many were tortured and burned to death because they did not embrace the doctrines of Roman Catholicism. During this 600 years period it is said that approximately 68 million people were slaughtered.

The apostle John looked down through the corridors of time and saw an amazing religious system, which he described as a woman.

“I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.” (Revelation 17:6)

It must be asked whether the present embrace and inclusive approach of Roman Catholicism today is not a more subtle and destructive approach than all that has been perpetrated before. Is this the golden opportunity or the gas chamber of Protestantism? According to David L. Smith,

“The old Roman Catholicism excluded all who would not receive its message and become a part of it. But the new Catholicism has reached out to embrace all humankind... Under the

system of modern Catholicism; the crucifixion of Jesus becomes a representative of salvation rather than constitutive.

It is no longer necessary to trust personally in Christ; it is sufficient to emulate His character. Thus, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and any other religion which seeks to help humans overcome their sense of alienation from Ultimate Reality are valid avenues of salvation” (Taken from, Handbook of Contemporary Theology, by David L. Smith, page 100. Copyright 1992 published by Baker Books, Grand Rapids MI, USA).

Let those who have eyes to see, see, and ears to hear, hear, and consider that the word of God emphatically says, “...Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues”(Revelation 18:4).

Conditions In The End Time Church

In view of the grim picture Scripture paints of the end time leading up to the return of Jesus Christ, it is no wonder that our Lord Himself said, *...if it were possible even the elect would be deceived (Matthew 24:24)*. The apostle Paul gave us a modest preview of what things will be like, not in the world but within the church, during these seasons of evil.

¹But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come. (Notice that “times” kairoi in the Greek, is plural)

²For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

³unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,

⁴traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! (2 Timothy 3:1-5 Emphasis mine)

Paul was not referring to those on the outside. If Paul were referring to unbelievers on the outside there would have been no need to say to Timothy, “...*From such people turn away!*”(V.4) Timothy had a long time turned away from the world. Timothy’s problem was not the wicked on the outside, but the phony, and counterfeit on the inside. It is the little leaven on the inside that causes the whole batch of dough to be affected. Confirming that Paul was speaking about professing Christians, again in chapter two of the same book he said to Timothy,

²⁰But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.

*²¹Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.
(2 Timothy 2:20-21)*

The great house is referring to Christendom, the broad sweep of Christianity, also called the professing and visible church. The word of God is clearly telling us, within the end time church there will be seasons of departure from the faith. There will be a mixture of the true and the false. Satan's children will be planted inside the professing church.

And, while some things we will not know, like the difference between the tares and the wheat; however, those things which we do know we are

responsible for how we deal with them. The word says, *from such turn away*, and also *purge yourself from these*. Beloved that is the reality we will have to face in these closing days of time. It is rightly said, “*It is better to be divided on truth than to be united on error.*”

Probably the most phenomenal truth about this end time is the fact that those who will be a part of the predicted seasons of departure from the faith would be incapable of admitting that they are actually falling away. If they could admit they were falling away, then “falling away” would have no meaning, and the word of God would appear to be void of effect. If they truly knew that they were falling away, they would not have allowed themselves to fall away in the first place. But at last, prophecy must be fulfilled. Let God be true and every man a liar (Romans 3:4). Indeed,

God is worthy of our fear, for no flesh shall glory in His sight, neither does he respect anyone's person. Only those that humbly fear Him shall prolong their days in his presence.

Holiness Is Not Negotiable

Holiness is not only an attribute of God like omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence. Holiness is the very summation and essence of all that God is. The emphasis of the Old Testament is the holiness of God. The long detailed and meticulous injunctions in the Pentateuch are not so much about hygiene and health as they are about holiness. The deeper message to the people of God, is that God takes holiness (separateness) very seriously and so too must His people. To miss this is to miss the very heart of Scripture.

The challenge of holiness becomes greater day by day, as we approach the *final day* and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Word of God also says concerning many in the church of the last days, “*having a form of godliness but denying its power thereof: And from such turn away!*” (2 Timothy 3:5). What the Word of God is actually saying, is that in the last days many would hold on to an outward form of godliness, an outward form of holiness, of religion, claiming membership to a religious denomination etc, but they would not believe in the power to actually live the life they profess. All they would hold to is the form, while they would refuse to believe in the power. The truth is, if God, by His power, can save you from spiritual death, from satanic bondage and from sin, then that same power can cause you to do anything God commands in His Words. For it is... *'Not by might nor by power, but by*

My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts
(Zechariah 4:6).

Satan will deceive many into believing grace means license to sin. However, grace is not license to practice sin but power to overcome it (John 1:12).

Many will also believe that because the gifts of God operate in their lives their ungodly lifestyles are overlooked by God. It is important to understand that the Bible says, *For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable (Romans 11:29)*. Like Sampson of old many operate in the gifts of the Spirit without the fruit of the Spirit. However, Jesus said *“You will know them by their fruits...” (Matthew 7:16)*. By their fruits, both in terms of conduct and doctrine you will know the true servants of Christ, from the false. Our theology and our morality reveal who we are. Our theology and morality are inseparably linked

together. Holiness is both a gift and a responsibility.

(1) Holiness is a gift.

“To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.” (1 Corinthians 1:2)

(2) Holiness is a responsibility.

“I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” (1 Corinthians 9:27)

“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.” (Hebrews 12:14)

Jesus said,

²²Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in

Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

²³And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' (Matthew 7:22-23)

Those who would say Lord, Lord, would not be those who only pretended to prophesy, cast out demons, and do many mighty works. They would have actually done those things. The following words of Jesus confirm that one can actually do great works in the name of the Lord, and still be disqualified in the end. The Bible says,

¹⁷Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."

¹⁸And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."

²⁰"Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:17,18 & 20)

The seventy disciples that Jesus sent out returned to Him rejoicing because of the miracles they were able to perform, and that even demons were subject to them in His name. However, Jesus said to them, do not rejoice because demons are subject to you in my name, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven. Again, by this Jesus was inferring, one can do mighty works on earth in His name, and yet not have one's name recorded in heaven. In the end it will not be a matter of how mighty your works were, but how faithful one continued in the truth to the end. Remember, even Judas was among those who were empowered by Christ, and went out performing miracles. The Bible says,

“For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” (Romans 11:29)

“You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive; You have received gifts among men, even from the rebellious, that the LORD God might dwell there.” (Psalm 68:18)

Self Deception

There are four major kinds of deception: (1) Moral Deception. (2) Doctrinal Deception. (3) Mystical Deception (this is deception based on dreams, visions and apparitions etc). (4) Self deception. The most outrageous kind of deception is self-deception.

The tale called, “The Emperor’s New Clothes” by Hans C. Anderson is a fitting illustration of self-deception.

The tale is about an Emperor who was more concerned about himself, and how he looked than anything else. Knowing this about the Emperor, one day two swindlers convinced him that they could make him an outfit of gold, the most beautiful outfit ever made. They told him they could fashion the outfit in such a way that all those who are hopelessly foolish and unfit for his position would not be able to see the fabulous clothes.

This was a splendid idea to the Emperor because it would feed his ego and, make him a great ruler at the same time. So he gave the swindlers a huge sum of money and, the material they requested. The swindlers took the money and material for themselves while they pretended to make the clothes.

Unsure of his own capability, the Emperor sent two of his most

competent aides to check on the progress of the clothes. When the aides arrived they saw nothing, yet the swindlers pretended to sew. However, because the aides were afraid of being looked upon as hopelessly foolish and unfit for the king's position, they pretended to see what was not there, and gave elaborate praise to the clothes that did not exist.

The aides returned to the Emperor with joy and excitement, telling him about the beautiful clothes they had seen, and how they were convinced he would also like them. Not long after, the Emperor himself went to see the clothes, but when he arrived, to his amazement, he could see nothing. However, fearing he will be seen as hopelessly foolish and unfit for the position he held, he joined the bandwagon of pretenders. The aides then suggested a parade through the streets for the Emperor to show off his

new and expensive clothes. The Emperor obliged, pretended to put on the clothes, and went on the parade.

The people of the empire, knowing that all who could not see the clothes were hopelessly foolish, and unfit for the Emperor's position, pretended to see the clothes. They cheered and praised the Emperor even though he was actually naked.

Eventually, a little child, who was too innocent to be deceitful said, "*The Emperor is naked.*" The word traveled very quickly and people began to realize that they were not the only ones not seeing any clothes. When the words of the people got back to the ears of the Emperor he said to himself, he had gone too far with the parade to turn back now, so he continued with the foolish pretence. Three important lessons of this tale are:

(1) Those that fear being looked upon as fools in the eyes of people, in reality make fools of themselves.

(2) Because of the fear of being rejected, people can deceive themselves into seeing what does not exist.

(3) Many would rather continue with a shameful and foolish parade than to humble themselves and submit to the soul saving truth. Pride is a hell of a thing.

Birth Pains Of Planet Earth

Generally speaking the Bible reveals to us that in the latter times this world will be on steady downward spiral of civil, religious and natural disaster. From a religious standpoint the word of God says, *“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons” (1 Timothy 4:1).*

Notice the words: *in the latter times*. The word “*times*” (*kairoi* in the Greek) is plural, which indicates more than one. It infers that in the last days, there will be several seasons (times) of apostasy. I believe there will be revivals and awakening between these apostasies, but after every major revival and awakenings the world will plummet deeper into darkness and chaos.

There will be a progressive moral decline, “...*evil men and impostors will grow worse, and worse, deceiving and being deceived*” (2 Timothy 3:13). There will also be record breaking events of natural disasters.

²⁵“And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; ²⁶men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those

things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken (Luke 21:25-26).

Concerning all the above mention things that will come to pass in these last days Jesus said, “*All these are the beginning of sorrows*” (*Matthew 24:8*). The word sorrow in the original Greek is *odin*, and it literally means *birth pains*. The NIV says, *All these are the beginning of birth pains*. The important revelation here is that birth pains come at intervals. The pains usually begin mild and become sharper after each interval, while the times between the intervals become increasingly shorter. Then the final period of pain comes and the child is born.

The word of God is telling us this is exactly the way it will be in the last days. There will be distinct seasons of satanic onslaughts (perilous times, and

apostasies), with intervals between the seasons. After every interval the satanic onslaughts will intensify and the intervals between the onslaughts will become shorter and shorter. During the intervals of considerable peace, many will forget history, and believe things are not so bad. With exponential increase in technology many would be convinced the world is making excellent time.

This gradual increase of evil in the world explains how Satan will be able to deceive the world and bring it into the trap of the final period of pain called the Great Tribulation. The world would be caught between the promise of modern technology, the quest for global peace, and the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. Multitudes would be caught in the trap of confusion, perplexity and the paralysis of analysis, as they try to figure out what in the world is taking place.

In the midst of the confusion, false prophets and prognosticators will promise the world a better day. The world like sheep for the slaughter will be herded into the dark valley of final judgment on this planet. The fantastic news however, is that like a pregnant woman, the rising degrees of evil, pain, sorrow, and deception are ordained by God to give birth to the return of His Son. Praise God!

Something To Remember

The Bible clearly says that one of the primary reasons for end time deception will be because many will refuse to love the truth they heard and received. According to Jesus, if a person does not love the truth more than everything else, they are not worthy of it (Matthew 10:37-39, Luke 14:26) and it is just a matter of time before God gives them over to their own love.

Something To Do

See to it that love and obey the truth.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Second Coming of Christ

One of the Christian doctrines that Satan hates very much is the doctrine of the second coming of Christ. No doubt, he hates it because it hails his demise, and also because it is one of the most central doctrine in all of Scripture. Therefore, Satan will viciously attack this fundamental and vital doctrine of the Bible.

It is very important for us to understand that under the old covenant, atonement was never considered complete, until the high priest returned to the people alive, from behind the veil, where he made atonement for the sins of the entire nation. Therefore, the people looked

and waited patiently, until the high priest returned unto them. For His return was the confirmation, and completion of the atoning work.

On the Day of Atonement, the atoning blood was shed at the brazen altar in the court yard, where the people gathered, but atonement was made behind the veil, on the mercy seat, in the Holy of Holies. In fulfillment of this Old Testament type, Jesus' blood was shed on the cross, but the completion of atonement for our sin was made in heaven after his resurrection. That is why He said to Mary Magdalene after his resurrection, *“Touch me not for I have not yet ascended to my Father...”* (John 20:17). For the said reason the Holy Spirit was not sent into the world until Jesus ascended to heaven. The blood had to be presented on our behalf to the Father, in the heavenly Holies of

Holies of which the earthly was just a replica or shadow.

As the Old Testament saints waited for the high priest to return from the Holy of Holies we too ought to look forward and wait patiently, for the return of Jesus Christ from heaven. Therefore the Bible says,

“So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait (look) for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.” (Hebrews 9:28)

The Amplified Bible says Christ will appear the second time for...*those who are [eagerly, constantly, and patiently] waiting for and expecting Him.*

Though the believer's salvation is complete in Christ, it does not follow that once saved always saved. It is important to understand that there is a

sense in which, we are saved, we are being saved, and we will be saved. Hebrews chapter nine records three appearances of Christ, on account of our salvation.

(1) *He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Hebrews 9:26).* This is His appearing on the cross to put away sin, by which we are saved.

(2) *For Christ has...appear in the presence of God for us (Hebrews 9:24).* This is his appearing in the Father's presence to intercede for us, by which we are being saved.

(3) *To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation (Hebrews 9:28).* He will appear in the sky to rapture us. At that time we will be saved.

Take note of the people the Bible says Christ is coming for...*those who are [eagerly, constantly, and patiently] waiting for and expecting Him.* Is that your attitude? Jesus is coming for those that are looking for him, as Israel looked for the high priest. Those are the kind of people He is coming for, and not for those whose focus is gaining this world. Are you looking for Him? Our focus ought to be on Him, and His the second coming. Your passion ought to be: “...*thy kingdom come*” (*Matthew 6:10*) and your heart’s longing “...*come Lord Jesus*”(*Revelation 20:22*).

We ought to be looking for Him with fervent love, because it is only when Jesus returns that our faith will come to an end and our salvation will be fully completed, think about that. The Bible says,

⁷that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

⁸whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

⁹receiving the end of your faith -- the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:7-9)

Our present faith has an end, and it will end when Christ returns and saves us out of this evil world. I have heard some sincere and well meaning Christians say the Lord cannot come now. However, anyone who says the Lord cannot come now, or is not coming now needs to rethink their position. The word of God says, "*But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,'*"

(*Matthew 24:48*). Three times Jesus Himself said, “*Behold I come quickly...*” (*Revelation 3:11, 22:7, 12, 20*).

The word of God emphatically says Jesus is coming quickly. If we believe the word of God is inspired and infallible, then we should stick with the revelation of Scripture. Jesus said he is coming quickly, and that is what we are supposed to preach. Get my point clear, there is nothing in the word that says Jesus cannot come now, nothing! Understandably, the reasoning of those who declare such may be logical, but evidently not biblical. And right there is where the danger lies, and the deception is obvious.

As in the case with Eve the serpent said, “*...thou shall not surely die...*” and though it seemed reasonable, yet, there was something more that God

did not choose to explain concerning death. It is apparent that God did not explain the spiritual side of death. The point is that this ought to teach us, that if the word of God says something, we should stick with the word and not allow our puny minds to fool us.

With regards to the word of the Lord, *behold, I come quickly*. We need to consider that time is relative. Therefore, our attitude toward the quick return of the Lord is based on what we measure time by. For a little child, the next Christmas one year away might seem long, but for the man who is told he has one year to live, time is very short.

The question is, by what are we measuring the quick return of Christ? Are we measuring it against the backdrop of our present and temporary view of things or by eternal realities? Are we measuring time from God's

perspective or our own? If we sincerely consider and grasp eternity, we will find it is wise to emphasize what is written, “*Behold I come quickly...*” (*Revelation 3:11*). Needless to say, if that is what is written we need no other argument. Some also say the Lord cannot come now because the church is not ready. The truth is, ready or not Jesus Christ is coming soon. He said so. To His holy church He is coming as a groom for a prepared bride, but to a lost world and an apostate church He is coming like a thief in the night. Concerning the true church 1 Thessalonians 5:4 says, “*But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.*”

Ten Things about the Second Coming of Christ

1. It is the first prophecy of Scripture. The word of God Says,

“And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.” (Genesis 3:15)

2. At His first coming Satan bruised His heel but at His second coming He will bruise (crush) Satan’s head. Notice what the word of God says,

“And the God of peace shall bruise (crush) Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.” (Romans 16:20 KJV)

The bruising of Satan's head is reserved for the future when Christ comes.

It is the last prophecy of Scripture.

"He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly..." (Revelation 22:20

3. It is the last prayer of Scripture.

".... Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20)

4. It was prophesied many centuries before the first coming took place

"Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, 'Behold, the

Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints.’” (Jude 1:14)

“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.” (Zechariah 12:10)

5. It is the first official message of the New Testament, spoken by John the Baptist. John emphasized the wrath of the Son of God, which is clearly a feature of His second coming as Judge.

¹In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,

²and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matthew 3:1-2)

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? (Matthew 3:7)

"His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Matthew 3:12)

6. Jesus spoke more about His second coming than His first. Even when he was interrogated by the Jewish elders He never spoke of His first coming and

miraculous birth, but His second coming. It is written,

⁶³But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!"

⁶⁴Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven. (Matthew 26:63-64)

7. Knowing the importance and certainty of His second coming, wanting His disciples to have this same conviction, Jesus took Peter, James, and John up into a mountain to show them a preview of it.

¹Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves;

²and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. (Matthew 17:1-2)

Peter testifies of that great experience, and calls it the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁶For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

¹⁸And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. (2 Peter 1:16 & 18)

8. The last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, is all about the revelation of Christ at His second coming. It is all about Him being revealed, and the impact it will have on this planet.

¹The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John.

⁷Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

⁸"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:1, 7-8)

9. The book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ is the only book in the Bible that promises to its readers a blessing when they read it.

“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.” (Revelation 1:3)

Many major doctrines and exhortations of the New Testament are connected with the doctrine of the second coming of Christ.

The second coming of Jesus is connected with the doctrine of the resurrection of the righteous dead, victory over death, the rapture of believers, the transformation of believers, and the glorification of believers. It is connected to the

doctrine of divine son-ship as it is written in the first epistle of John,

“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”
(1 John 3:2)

It is connected to the sanctification of the church. The word of God says,

²Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

³And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.(1 John 3:2-3)

¹³Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

¹⁴Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless. (Peter 3:13-14)

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

It is connected to the communion table.

“For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.” (1 Corinthians 11:26)

Every time we take communion we show the Lord's death till He comes.

It is connected to the comfort of those who mourn for their departed loved ones. The apostle Paul said,

¹³But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

¹⁴For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

¹⁵For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

¹⁸Therefore comfort one another with these words. (1Thessalonians 4:13-16&18)

It is connected to the encouragement of the saints who are striving to

remain faithful to the Lord. The word of God says,

⁷Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.

⁸You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

⁹Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! (James 5:7-9)

With so much biblical emphasis on the second coming of Jesus, it should not surprise you that Satan will attack this doctrine. However, the truth remains, Jesus is coming soon! Let us declare that.

Something To Remember

As the Old Testament saints waited for the high priest to return from the Holy of Holies (which was a type of heaven), we too ought to look forward and wait patiently, for the return of Jesus Christ from heaven.

Something To Do

Keep on looking up in prayer. Jesus said to His disciples, “could you not watch with me for one hour?” (Matthew 26:40). You should for the least, spend one hour in prayer daily.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Kingdom of God

Today there is a lot of emphasis on the subject of the kingdom of God, and many are jumping on the bandwagon without understanding what they are getting into. Because of the present heavy emphasis (or over emphasis) it is very important for you to have a clear understanding on this subject. In the New Testament we come across the phrases: “kingdom of God,” and “kingdom of heaven.” The phrase “kingdom of God” is used by Luke and Mark, derived from Daniel 2:44, 7:13, 14. The phrase “kingdom of heaven” is used by Matthew. The two phrases speak of the Messiah's kingdom, as a whole, both in its present spiritual (invisible) sense, and also in its future manifestation on earth, at which time

heaven and earth shall be finally joined (John 1:51; Rev. 21,22). Concerning the subject of the kingdom one must be clear on the answers to the following questions:

(1) Is the kingdom of God intended to be now? Are we to take over the world and establish the kingdom that Jesus said to pray about, after this manner: *Your kingdom come your will be done on earth as it is done in heaven?*

(2) Is the kingdom something that will come in the future when Christ returns?

Make no mistake about it; our concept of the kingdom will affect us positively or negatively in the long run. Our belief will always affect our behavior. This is why the word of God says, *“Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in*

doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you” (1 Timothy 4:16). Now, regarding the kingdom of God, one should consider the following:

(1) In the Old Testament we see the King and the kingdom in prophecy and promise.

(2) In the Gospels the King and the kingdom are offered and rejected.

(3) In Acts there is a transition, the King and the kingdom are reoffered to Israel, rejected and withdrawn.

(4) In the Epistles the King is exalted as head of the body and the kingdom is postponed.

(5) Paul referred to the message of the kingdom as synonymous with the message of the gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ. *"But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify*

to the gospel of the grace of God. "And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more (Acts 20:24-25).

Consider what the word of God says,

'You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.' (Hebrews 2:8)

The Bible says, *But now we do not yet see all things put under him.* These words indicate the postponement of the literal Kingdom.

(6) In Revelation the King is enthroned and the kingdom is set up in judgment and glory. This is to come in the future.

Not Of This World

Jesus clearly said, “*My kingdom is not of this world...*” (John 18:36). Nothing can be plainer. It is rightly said, when the word of God makes plain sense any other sense is nonsense. Again the word of God says,

²⁰Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation;

²¹"nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:20-21)

The kingdom of God is both now and not yet. The church is not the kingdom but a witness to it, by the manifestation of kingdom power and principles. Only in that sense of a witness by the church is the kingdom to be seen as in the earth now.

As far as the literal earthly kingdom is concerned, Jesus only inaugurated (ceremoniously introduced) it by His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, as was prophesied centuries before,

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.” (Zechariah 9:9, See also Matt. 21:4-9)

However, because the Jews rejected their King (Matt. 27:22-25) the enthronement of the King and the establishment of the kingdom, which was said to be at hand, was postponed for the end. The heavens received Christ, and He will be there until that time when Israel is restored in her land, and repents. Peter in his

Pentecost sermon to the Jewish nation made this clear.

¹⁹"Repent therefore and be converted, that your " sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

²⁰and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,

²¹whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 3:19-21)

Some are confused regarding what Peter meant when he spoke about the restoration of all things. However, the Scripture interprets itself. Like Peter, Jesus also revealed the need for Israel to be fully restored in righteousness before the kingdom is reintroduced.

³⁷"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those

who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!

³⁸"See! Your house is left to you desolate;

*³⁹"for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'"
(Matthew 23:37-39)*

Both Peter and Jesus mentioned the need for Israel to repent and be restored in righteousness before the kingdom is established. Moreover, the revelation given by Peter and the Lord was echoed long before in the Old Testament by the prophet Daniel, "Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and

prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy” (Daniel 9:24).

The anointing of the Most Holy refers to the literal anointing of the Messiah when returns, and is accepted by Israel - a nation that has repented and been restored from spiritual blindness. Today the church is an ambassadorial witness of the kingdom of God. The word of God says: *Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:20).* The kingdom that will fully come in the future, and replace the kingdoms of this world. The Bible says: *Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (Rev. 11:15).*

At present, the church's mandate is not to take over this world, but to witness to it about the coming King who will take over when He comes. The church's business is to tell the world they should make peace with the King. They should prepare for the coming kingdom by surrendering to the King, become His servants, and witnesses to the kingdom. Then, when the King comes they would not be rejected by Him, but would be invited to share in His eternal kingdom.

Moreover, the threefold office of the Son of God is: Prophet, Priest, and King. And though He is a king right now and forever, and we may approach Him as such, yet according to a right dividing of the word of truth, the first time He came He functioned more so in His prophetic office. At present, He is functioning in His priestly office, and when He returns He will function in His kingly office.

No One Knows When

When Jesus arose from the dead he appeared unto his disciples for forty days speaking about things pertaining to the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). Just before he ascended up to heaven, His disciples asked Him concerning the particular time when He would establish the kingdom. The Bible says,

⁶Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

⁷And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. (Acts 1:6-7)

Notice, Jesus said to them they cannot know the time when the kingdom will come. Now, regarding His personal appearing in the last days He also said, *"But of that day and hour no one*

knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only” (Matthew 24:36). Here we see that Jesus acknowledged as one and the same thing, His second appearing, and the beginning of His earthly kingdom. Concerning both of them, He clearly said no one knows when. Moreover Jesus mentioned his coming and kingdom in one statement. "Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom" (Mathew 16:28).

Jesus was referring to Peter, James and John; pillars in the church whom he wanted to assure that though the kingdom might be delayed, it would not be denied. Therefore, before they died He gave them a preview of His coming and kingdom on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-9). In the preview of the kingdom Jesus’

presence was literal. He was on earth, and he was the focal point of attention.

Observe the words: “...*coming in His kingdom...*” (*Mathew 16:28*). Here both the coming and the kingdom are mentioned as one. The coming of the Lord is also the beginning of the kingdom. Listen to what the apostle Peter said,

¹⁶For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

¹⁸And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. (2 Peter 1:16 & 18)

Your Kingdom Come

In essence Peter said although the kingdom has been postponed, I can

assure you it is coming, and this time is for us to prepare to be counted worthy to enter it. The fact is that the kingdom will not come until the King of the kingdom literally comes. Until that time, we ought to pray the following prayer, “*Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven*” (Matthew 6:10).

If the kingdom were here now, it would not make sense to pray for it to come, but if it is yet to come then such praying makes sense. Furthermore, the command to pray that prayer indicates that the future kingdom of God, (and not the present kingdom of this present world and of Satan) ought to be our goal, and our ardent desire. The kingdom will fully come, and God’s will would be done on earth as it is in heaven during the millennial reign of Christ on earth.

Some may ask, if the kingdom is future, if it is bound for a preordained time, then why pray for it? The answer is simple. Although Jerusalem's peace is also preordained for the future when her King comes, yet the word of God commands us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. *'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you"'* (Psalm 122:6).

Psalm 122:6 is simply the O.T. counterpart to Matthew 6:10. It is truly said, the New Testament is in the Old concealed and the Old is in the New revealed. To pray for the kingdom to come, for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, and to pray for the peace of Jerusalem is in essence one and the same thing. For there will be no peace on earth until the Prince of Peace comes. Peace on earth will begin at Jerusalem, the city of peace. From that headquarters Christ will reign for one thousand years.

Therefore my beloved brethren, to teach that the kingdom is now and to propagate the need to take over or to develop a “kingdom now” mentality is to teach something that cannot be supported by Scripture, and to open the door to a false teaching. Remember the problem in Eden was one word, “**not**” “...*You shall not surely die...*”The problem in discussion here is one word, “**now**”(kingdom now).

This apparently slight difference may seem insignificant but the long term implications can be very far reaching. It is said that if in departure a plane traveling from San Francisco to Tel Aviv is one degree off, it can end up in Moscow. The same is true doctrinally. It is the little foxes that spoil the vine. The little dead fly that causes the perfume to give out a stinking odor. It is the little acorn that grows into the huge oak tree.

The Kingdom And The NT Epistles

According to the New King James Version, Paul used the word kingdom only fourteen times. Of the fourteen times Paul spoke about the kingdom, eleven times he refers to it as a future reality. Here are some of those references.

“And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen.” (2 Timothy 4:18)

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.”(1 Corinthians 15:50)

Since flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, it stands to

reason that the kingdom cannot come in its fullness until the rapture and translation of the church takes place. Again Paul wrote,

“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom.” (2 Timothy 4:1)

“And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!” (2 Timothy 4:18)

James’ only mention of the kingdom is as a future promise.

“Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?”(James 2:5)

Similarly Peter mentions it as a future hope, *“For so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:11).*

Jude made no mention of the kingdom. In 1st 2nd & 3rd John, John made no mention of the kingdom. It seems apparent that the emphasis, (and note I say “the emphasis”) given by some on the “Kingdom Now concept” cannot be supported by Scripture. If such emphasis does not come from the apostle’s doctrine and sacred Scripture, we ought to seriously ask ourselves the question, where does it come from?

The Gospel Of The Kingdom To All Nations

Some will ask, what about the verse of Scripture that says: *“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations,*

and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14). Many are confused when they read Jesus’ Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24, and come across statements like the above quoted and also, “... pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath (Matthew 24:20). However, a careful analysis will prove that the Olivet Discourse was addressed to the Jews.

It is very important to understand that the Bible addresses three distinct kinds of people: Jews, Gentiles, and the church. One needs to consider that while all of the word of God has been written **for** everyone, all of the word of God was not written **to** everyone, and there is a big difference. If our interpretation of Scripture is going to be accurate, we need to acknowledge that certain parts of it are addressed to specific people, and must be interpreted with them in mind.

What is written to the Jews must be interpreted with the Jews in mind. The same goes for the Gentiles, and also the church. It will be misleading to take what is written to the Jews and interpret it to the church, or what was written to the church and interpret it to the Gentiles. The word of God has been written for everyone but not to everyone. Because it was written for everyone, on any part of it we can make many applications, based on universal principles and timeless truths found therein. There can be many applications but one interpretation. One of the ways the interpretation is uncovered is by discovering to whom, or what the speaker was addressing when he spoke in the actual historical settings. In Matthew 24 Jesus was speaking to the Jews.

It should also be noted that the ministry of Christ on the earth was mainly focused towards the Jews.

Jesus came as the King of the Jews, and offered to them the kingdom prophesied centuries before (Isaiah 9:6-7). Due to spiritual blindness caused by sin they rejected their King and missed the time of their visitation.

Consequently they forfeited the immediate establishment of the kingdom. Had the Jews received their King, the kingdom would have been given to them, and subsequently the entire world would have been affected. The kingdom message would have gone from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth, and history would have been written much differently.

However, in the Last Days just before Christ comes the Scripture reveals that the Temple which was destroyed in 70 A.D. will be rebuilt in Jerusalem and the Jewish nation will be restored to God. This will signal more than ever, the imminent return of the Messiah Jesus Christ. For just as Peter said to

his Jewish brethren, *the heavens must receive Christ until the restoration of all things*. That statement is restricted to Israel - as far as the world is concerned, the bible emphatically says, *as it was in the days of Noah and Sodom so it will be when Christ returns* (Luke 17:26-30). During this time of the restoration of Israel the kingdom message will be preached again just as it was by John the Baptist, Jesus and Jesus.

The Bible makes it clear that the gospel will be proclaimed worldwide sometime during the final seven years of this age, when it is believed the church would have already been taken away. The apostle John said, *Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth -- to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people* (Revelation 14:6).

If the church will not be on the earth at this time then it stands to reason that the fulfillment of Revelation 14:6 must be the task of the restored Jews whose eyes have been recently opened to see Jesus as their true Messiah and the Savior of mankind. Many biblical scholars believe that the 144,000 Jews who will be sealed will preach the gospel of the kingdom of God (Revelation 7:1-8). There will also be two Jewish prophets who will witness to the world for three and a half years, with convincing signs and wonders; even defying death, in the sight of the whole world. (Revelation 11:3-12).

No doubt the gospel of Jesus Christ and his salvation ought to be preached by the church in all nations in the last days, and according to the word of God, such has already been done. The apostle Paul said,

²⁵Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the

preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began
²⁶but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith.
(Romans 16:25-26)

“If indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.” (Colossians 1:23)

Nevertheless, today we might refer to “the gospel of the kingdom” and “the expansion of the kingdom” and apply it to the reign of Christ in the heart of men. The concept of “kingdom now” might be used loosely without the need to split hairs, or bicker among

ourselves. However, when it comes to doctrine, we are under moral obligation and divine command to be sound, and to rightly divide (cut straight) the word of truth.

Through the centuries Christians have always been rejected and persecuted for their faith. Even today, there are thousands of Christians that are being severely persecuted for their faith in foreign lands. We need to be clear on the fact that in the Old Testament, faithfulness guaranteed material prosperity. But in the New Testament, faithfulness does not guarantee material prosperity. To say the least, if faithfulness guaranteed material prosperity, then the early apostles and Stephen would have all been millionaires. On the contrary with the exception of John, all the apostles were martyred for their faith. In the light of this truth, when the expansion of the kingdom of God is interpreted to mean

material abundance, lots of money and worldly influence; then we have crossed the threshold of truth into another gospel.

To preach another gospel is to preach another Jesus and embrace another spirit. It is that serious. Notice carefully what the Bible says: *For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him (2 Corinthians 11:4 KJV)*. Having said that, and needless to say, does it mean that the author is against material abundance? Certainly not! but I am under obligation to withhold nothing that is profitable for edification of the saints. Many believers are so over fed with prosperity preaching, if a great persecution breaks out they would faint.

If one is going to use Matthew 24 to apply the kingdom message to this present time, any serious student of the word of God ought to know that the correct thing to do, is to first give a Historical-Contextual Analysis. You must show first of all, to whom that particular portion of Scripture was originally and contextually addressed. Once that is done, you are free to make contemporary applications, so long as they are based upon timeless truths found in the particular passage of Scripture.

If we believe that Matthew 24:14 is originally addressed to the church and consequently interpret it to mean that the church must propagate a literal “Kingdom Now Theology” to all nations before Jesus comes, then we must account for the words in the same chapter that says: *“And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the*

Sabbath (Matthew 24:20). The point is self evident. Matthew 24 was addressed to the Jews and must be interpreted thus. Our responsibility is not to butcher, but to rightly divide, or cut straight the word of God. The man who handles the word of God, should do so with more precision and sobriety than a heart or brain surgeon. The medical doctor affects the body, and he does so only temporarily. However, the preacher affects the total man; the body, soul and spirit, and does so not temporally, but eternally.

While the suggestion to take over and establish the kingdom may do well as a passing motivational expression on the height of sermonizing; the truth is, it cannot be taken as serious doctrinal teaching, without wresting (forcing) the Scripture. Our clear mandate is not to take over and establish the kingdom, but to be witnesses to the kingdom, to witness to ...*the power of a world to*

come(Hebrews 6:5). We are called to win souls for the building up of **the church** (the called out), **the Body of Christ**. In the proper sense, the kingdom will come in the time ordained by God.

Telescoping of Time

According to the prophetic principle called “Telescoping of Time,” the prophets of the Old Testament saw the mountain peaks of prophecy but they did not see the valleys between the mountain peaks. They did not understand exactly when and how many of the things they saw would be fulfilled. And so it was with Peter. Observe what Peter himself said, “*Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, ¹¹searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when*

He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow” (1 Peter 1:10-11).

None of the Old Testament prophets understood the sequence of the suffering and the glory (kingdom) of Christ. Even so, when Peter proclaimed to the Jews, that the heaven must receive Christ until the times of restoration of all things (Acts 3:21), he had no clear concept of the time between his proclamation and the actual fulfillment. His expectation was that the Jews would have repented, be restored and received the kingdom in his lifetime. But that did not happen, and almost two thousand years have since passed. Nevertheless, Israel will repent and be restored, and the kingdom will be offered again to them and by extension to all nations through them, in the last days.

Therefore, the Gospel of the kingdom message spoken of in *Matthew 24:14*: *"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come"* is the same kingdom message that was presented to the Jews by John the Baptist, by Jesus, and by Peter on the day of Pentecost. Hence the reason, in the following chapter of the book of Matthew (Matthew 25) Jesus revealed that when He returns there will be a judgment of the nations to determine the nations that will enter His literal earthly kingdom reign. The Bible says,

³¹"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

³²"All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd

*divides his sheep from the goats.
(Matthew 25: 31-32)*

The Church A Mystery

It is important to understand that the early apostles and disciples did not understand the concept of the church. It was a mystery to them. The Bible says,

“and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;” (Ephesians 3:9)

²⁶the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.

*²⁷To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
(Colossians 1:26-27)*

The expectation of the early apostles and disciples was an earthly kingdom. This is why after Jesus' resurrection from the dead the apostles asked him, "... will you at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel" (Acts 1:6). After some time Peter got the revelation that Gentiles could be saved but it would be Paul who would receive the full revelation of God's plan for the Gentiles and the Church, made up of Jews and Gentiles.

At the inception and birth of the church, the apostles were still very much Jewish in their frame of mind and focus. Notice, in the beginning of his Epistle James addressed the twelve tribes scattered abroad, "*James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.*" (James 1:1)

Peter and John were still going up to the temple to pray (Acts 3:1). Peter was commanding the saved Gentiles to live like Jews. In Galatians 2:14 Paul said to Peter “...*why do you compel the Gentiles to live like the Jews*”?

The following passage of Scripture reveals that for some time the early apostles continued in many of the rituals of Judaism.

¹⁷And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

¹⁸On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present.

¹⁹When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

²⁰And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have

believed, and they are all zealous for the law;

²¹"but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.

²²"What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come.

²³"Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow.

²⁴"Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law.

²⁵"But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols,

from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality."

²⁶Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having been purified with them, entered the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at which time an offering should be made for each one of them. (Acts 21:17-26)

Israel Still Has Her Place

We must remember that the reason for God choosing and blessing Israel in the first place, was that through them He might do the same to all nations. Notice what He told the patriarch Abraham: *...I will bless you ... And you shall be a blessing... And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed (Genesis 12:2-3)*. The purpose of the blessing on Abraham, was that Abraham might become a blessing to all nations. The same goes for Israel; the purpose for their blessing was that

they might be a blessing to all the world. Israel was to be the launching pad for the kingdom of God in all nations. God's purpose has always been the reconciliation of all nations to Himself. This is why there was a Gentile court in the temple (Revelation 11:2).

The nation of Israel was chosen to be the mediator between God and the nations. If you miss this you miss the key to understanding all of Scripture, and more so the Old Testament. Notice when Israel left Egypt the Bible says, *Many other people went up with them, as well as large droves of livestock, both flocks and herds (Exodus 12:38 NIV)*. A key revelation in the book of Esther is the fact that after all that was said and done many of the people became Jews. The Bible says, *“And in every province and city, wherever the king's command and decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and*

a holiday. Then many of the people of the land became Jews, because fear of the Jews fell upon them” (Esther 8:17).

One of the key revelations in the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego is impact their testimony had on the Gentile world. This is revealed in the decree of the King of Babylon: *“Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this” (Daniel 3:29).* The same applies to story of Daniel in the lion’s den: *“Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. ²⁶I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the*

God of Daniel. For He is the living God, and steadfast forever; His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall endure to the end. ²⁷He delivers and rescues, and He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions (Daniel 6:25-27).

It was always God's purpose to evangelize and bless the nations through Israel. However, because of Israel's rejection of her King, the kingdom was postponed for the end time. The King and the kingdom promised to Israel, which will be a blessing to all nations will not come, until there is a national restoration of Israel. As it was in the beginning so it must be in the end. It was through the ministry of the Jewish brethren, that the Gentiles came into the blessings of Christ. Again it will be through the ministry of a restored Jewish nation

that that the world will be offered the literal and earthly kingdom of Christ.

Sure we must seek to win as many souls as possible. By all means we ought to carry out that mandate to, ... *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15)* with astute diligence. However, at the same time we must be careful of having "a savior syndrome," where we believe we must save as it were everybody. Over-ambition is the devil's ploy to rub us of everything. We must be humble enough to admit that we cannot save everybody. Not even Jesus in His earthly ministry was able to do that.

Remember, every truth taken too far becomes erroneous and misleading. Furthermore, if we believe we must establish the kingdom before Christ comes, then we put ourselves in danger of downplaying the vital doctrine of

Christ Second Coming (which so many signs point to today). In so doing we would inadvertently minimize many fundamental doctrines connected to it. For if the kingdom can come without the King, then, why focus on the king's coming? Just go ahead, establish and enjoy the kingdom. Our emphasis should not be on the kingdom more than it is on the coming of the king of the kingdom. True, the horse and the cart go together, but think about what will happen if you put the wrong one in front.

False Doctrine

Beloved, the word of God speaks with emphasis and solemnity regarding the fact that there will be false doctrine in the church, in the last days. As a result of these false doctrines some will be led astray (1 Timothy 4:1, 2 Peter 2:1-

2). Notice, that the familiar and often referred to discourse on the power of the tongue, in James chapter three, was contextually given as a warning to teachers, and would be teachers in the church. This can be seen from the opening statement.

“My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. (James 3:1)

Something To Remember

Make no mistake about it; our concept of the kingdom will affect us positively or negatively in the long run. Our belief will affect the way we behave.

Something To Do

If this book has been a blessing to you share it with a friend.

Conclusion

As you would have seen, the underlying burden of this work is the tremendous need for the people of God to realize the subtle war Satan has been waging behind the scenes, throughout all ages, and even right now. Also, it is to cause the people of God to be aware of the reality of how advanced we are in the count down to the end, and the implications of such a unique position in time, thus producing a keen sense of soberness.

Far from being a postmortem of failure, this book is meant to be a pertinent wake-up call to all who would hear the Father's loving voice through its pages. It is never too late to make right the things that can be made right. As it is aptly said, *the time is always right to do right.*

It is my hope and prayer, that the Holy Spirit will provoke positive and necessary change in your life, and that there will arise in your heart a renewed sense of sobriety, discernment and passion for the truth. If you have faltered along the way you can begin again. The Bible says,

²²It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.

²³They are new every morning great is thy faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23)

P.S. If perchance you don't know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of your life, know that He loves you and wants to save you. Call upon Him now in sincerity and faith and He will save you. Please say the following prayer:

Oh God, have mercy upon me a sinner, please forgive me of all my sins, I believe and confess that Jesus

Christ died for my sins and rose again from the dead. I now receive Him and confess Him as Lord and Savior of my life. Thank you Jesus, amen.

The Bible declares, “*For whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved*” (Romans 10:13).