

*Chapter One*

## **Exposing The Lie**

**I**n my journey to come up higher to the place Christ beckons me, I find myself constantly being jerked back down by the ropes of fleshly bondage that still tie me down to this earth. If you and I truly desire to be set free from “the body of this death” (Romans 7:24), then we will have to whole heartedly pursue Christ and His holiness, the holiness without which no one will see Him (Hebrews 12:14).

This will only happen if, by the Spirit, we put to death the works of the flesh (Romans 8:13). We need to let go of that which is holding us back and hold firmly, with both hands, to the Lord and His promises. It is a joint effort; the Holy Spirit convicting and revealing sin, and our confessing and letting go in repentance.

In the end, we will let go of either our earthly ties, or our inheritance (Jeremiah 17:4). To help force this eternal decision, the pressure of the Lord will be *strongly* applied at the end of this age, as it would mercifully, by the Lord, at the end of a human life that needed it. To some, He grants one more opportunity to turn in repentance before their final breath. He alone knows the heart of each person.

Many Christians, me included, have been taught that works play no part in our salvation. They base this on a couple of Scriptures that have been twisted by the devil. As we will see, there is a difference between what the Bible refers to as works of the law,

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and the works of faith (also referred to in John 6:28 as “the works of God”). One is led by the will of man, the other by the Spirit of God. Jesus has much to say about both.

The result of this teaching is that many of God’s people have become spiritually lazy, not understanding the necessity of submitting to the leading of the Holy Spirit in their lives. They do not understand their part in finishing the works of Christ on earth so as to bring to completion His redemption. On the brink of disaster, they apathetically sit in their pews with a false sense of security that is reinforced weekly by a deceived pastor or some other religious leader. The Lord refers to them as foolish virgins (Matthew 25:1-13).

The first thing mentioned by Jesus in His rebuke of the church in Sardis was “I know your deeds.” Works was the very first thing He brought up. This church wasn’t the only one of the seven mentioned at the beginning of Revelation to hear this. In fact, with five of the seven, works were mentioned in their rebuke. As we will come to acknowledge, the emphasis of the Holy Spirit in the Bible on this subject cannot be ignored.

### The Day Of God’s Vengeance

The judgment of God, His dreadful day of vengeance and wrath on all evil draws near and many Christians are presently unprepared. They have become careless in their walks with the Lord, causing them to be spiritually deaf to what the Spirit is saying to the church in these last moments. Without repentance, sudden destruction is inescapable.

Right after Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness, where He defeated the devil, He returned to Galilee in the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:14). By the way, this is our way of power as well. We too must first go through the trying school of testing. Satan will offer us an alternate route, as he did Jesus, one less difficult which avoids Calvary to get to Pentecost. The result is false gifts and power from the serpent.

When Jesus returned to Galilee He began His public ministry by teaching in the synagogues of Nazareth where He had been brought up. We are told He opened the scroll of Isaiah which had

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been handed to Him, and read the following passage;

*The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.* (Luke 4:18-19/NIV)

He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. He had just quoted Isaiah 61:1-2, leaving out the rest of the sentence in the beginning of verse 2. I believe He stopped at “the year of the Lord’s favor,” His compassion on mankind’s fallen condition, because it was that specific time in history when the Savior had appeared. Ever since then, God’s favor has been directed toward mankind.

The rest of the verse is, *and the day of vengeance of our God.* At that moment, this didn’t apply. It will soon, though, at the end of this age. The day of God’s wrath, His vengeance on all that is evil, is about to occur. There will be no mercy then. The day of His merciful favor is about to end, giving way to what the Bible refers to as, *the great and dreadful day of the Lord* (Joel 2:31). It is a *cruel day with wrath and fierce anger* (Isaiah 13:9).

This coming judgment is the ancient boundary of the fear of the Lord within the hearts of God’s children that the devil, through false doctrines, has successfully removed from many. The false prophets proclaim, “Peace, peace!” to the rebellious within the church, setting them up for the great end time slaughter of God.

We have very little time to waste before all hell is going to break loose on earth. Praise the Lord, though, that He is now exposing these lies for the sake of His children that desire to know the truth that will set them free! If this is you then stop right now, pray, and then continue reading.

“Lord, open our eyes to see Your truth before it’s too late and the doors of the ark of deliverance in these final moments are shut. Set us free from the bondage to false teachings that has leavened Your church in America. I ask for Your mercy one last time!”

*Chapter Two*

**Works Of The Law,  
Works Of Faith**

Using the example of Abraham in both cases, there are two passages, Romans 3:28 and James 2:14, which, on the surface, seem to completely contradict each other in regards to works and salvation. Through the grace of God in these last days, He is revealing the truth that, when accepted and adhered to, will prepare the hearts of His people by leading them to a safe place in Himself before He pours out His wrath on earth.

Paul says in Romans 3:28, *For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.* The reason Paul spoke so strongly against works of this nature was because he had been an extremely zealous, religious man before surrendering his life and will to Jesus Christ. The problem was his zeal as a Pharisee was not under the control of God, but his own will. As such he was a deceived persecutor of those who walked in the truth, fully believing God was pleased with him.

I understand Paul's zeal concerning the salvation of His own people. For years I had been under the bondage of Satan's deception regarding God's salvation. Every denomination has a different way. It's the major reason for our divisions. Some start the same way, through childlike belief in Jesus, but have totally differing opinions on how it is brought to completion. Once the

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Lord set me free through the knowledge of the truth, I became very zealous declaring it to others.

It is very important to me, and obviously to the Lord, to help others break free from the false sense of security that once held me captive. This is the number one revelation the Lord continuously discloses to me. It's His salvation and He will have the last word of truth concerning it so as to set His people free in preparation of His return!

In contrast to Romans 3:28, James 2:24 says, *You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone.* To be justified is to be declared as righteous, just, or innocent before God. Paul says a man is justified by faith, apart from works, while James declares that a man is justified by works. Whole church denominations have been built upon both statements. The great divide in the Body of Christ on this is proof of our enemy's infiltration. Satan has caused much confusion within Christianity in order to keep mankind in a guilty state before God.

The difference between the two works mentioned within these Scriptures is that Paul refers to *works of the law*, while James speaks of *works of faith*, or works that accompany faith. As we will come to understand, works of the law refers to those deeds which are separate from the Lord's will, performed by those who are seeking a righteousness of their own (Romans 10:3). As with the Pharisees in Jesus' day, those who live under this bondage always create additional laws not given by God.

This is what Jesus referred to in John 6:27 as *working for the food which perishes.* They are not of faith, referring to the works of God we are led into as we submit to His will. The Bible refers in numerous passages to these as "good works" in Christ Jesus. Again, Jesus referred in John 6:27 to these works as *working for the food which endures to eternal life.*

In Romans 3:28 Paul discusses "works of the law" which are deeds led by the flesh (see all of Romans 3-4). Preachers and teachers under this bondage give birth in the flesh to others who become just like them; converts born under the power and jurisdiction of the law. As such they are still under a curse with a false sense of security (Galatians 3:10). They believe they are saved when in fact they have become twice a son of hell as those

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who gave birth to them by their own will.

John 1:11-13 says, *He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Jesus said of the misled, religious zealots of His day, *Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.* (Matthew 23:15/NIV) All they made were like-minded Pharisees, worse Pharisees in fact, rather than followers of God.

The same thing is happening in America today within our denominations. In most instances we're more concerned with making more Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Pentecostals, etc., than we are disciples of Jesus Christ. We end up producing like kinds.

### Validation Through Good Works

When the Scriptures speak of the faith of a specific biblical figure, it will then be validated through a description of their "good works." As James 2:14-26 makes clear for us, their works are works of faith, or works that accompany "saving faith."

Works is another word for deeds, or actions. They are not actions per our own will alone, but rather per the will of God as revealed by His Holy Spirit to our spirit. They heard, they believed, and therefore they acted. This is what made the lives of those recorded in the Bible noteworthy in heaven.

In Romans 10, Paul helps us by explaining the difference between the two. He says, *Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.* (NIV)

This knowledge of the righteousness that comes from God is still

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misunderstood by many Christians today. Hebrews 5:13 refers to it as “the word of righteousness.” It is the teaching of truth regarding works and God’s righteousness. Please understand, I did not get this from any man, but God who revealed this to me. Again, it is His truth for those with eyes to see and ears to hear that, when understood and adhered to, will set us free!

*Chapter Three*

**Saving Faith and  
Works Of Faith**

**R**omans 10:17 declares, *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.* True faith, saving faith, comes to us through the word of Christ, His word of truth. As James 1:18 says, *In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth.* It is His word, not man's, according to His will, not man's, that we are saved.

James 2:14 says, *What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him?* The question every Christian must answer is; "Can that faith save him?" Can a faith with no deeds led by the Spirit of God save you? James, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, emphatically says "NO!"

Can a business owner survive if he does not do what is necessary to keep his business running? Will his claims alone of being an owner keep his business from going under? Of course not! He must do certain tasks or lose his business. Likewise, there is a human responsibility of obediently working together with the Lord in His salvation that the doctrines of demons has strategically removed.

The Judge will not declare you innocent (justified) if there is no evidence in your life to prove otherwise. A Christian that has no



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works of faith, the works of God Jesus spoke of in John 6, will not be saved in the day of God's wrath. They have not "put on" the protective covering of the Lord through obedience to His commands.

### Abraham's Saving Faith

It was revealed through Abraham's works that he believed God's promises. In an extreme test of His faithfulness, he was commanded by God to sacrifice his son, Isaac. Through the raising of the knife, God's substitutionary provision was granted. As he willfully obeyed the revealed will of God, no matter how difficult it seemed, the righteous provision of Jesus, the Lamb of God, was reckoned to him (Genesis 22).

Paul continues with his message regarding the righteousness which is by faith apart from works in, among other passages, Romans 9:30-33. He says, *What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, just as it is written, 'Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and he who believes in Him will not be disappointed.*

Again, we have to remember per James explanation of saving faith that when Paul speaks of pursuing righteousness by faith apart from works he is referring to the works of law, his context referred to in Romans 3:28. The lesson of Israel is that they did not submit to the Lord's will and way. He is the only One whose pure, good works are accepted by the Father. Following Christ obediently, who fulfilled the demands of the law perfectly, is the only way for us to be justified.

Paul continued in Romans 10:1-5, *Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them [Israel] is for their salvation. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the*

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*end of the law [the works of law] for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness.*

Jesus is the only way, the only One that can lead us into His victory over the curse of the law. When we join ourselves to Christ through repentance, we are released from the power of the law that keeps us in bondage (Romans 7:6). Once we are joined to the Vine, Jesus Christ, through repentance, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, the fruit of Christ's righteousness, begins to appear in our life. We cannot produce that which only God's Spirit is able to do. But He cannot do it if we fight against Him. We must submit to His lead and work together with Him (2 Corinthians 6:1).

To fight against Him is to receive His grace in vain. The desired fruit of the Spirit cannot be produced within the rebellious of heart who will not separate themselves from the unacceptable, evil deeds of the flesh.

### Justification By Faith In Christ

Paul spoke further on this subject in Galatians 2:15-16 where he stated, *We who are Jews by birth and not "Gentile sinners" know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.* (NIV)

Is Paul saying in this passage to not observe the law? No, as he made clear in Romans 7:12, the law is holy. Paul wrote this letter to the Gentile converts in Galatia after finding out that Jewish Christians were seeking to impose circumcision and the Mosaic Law on them as necessary for salvation. He confronted this error, reinforcing the need to continue by the Spirit in order to be perfected. Again, to walk by the Spirit is to walk by faith, doing the will of God as He directs.

In Paul's day, the Pharisees were zealously trying to serve God, even adding some of their own rules while doing so. Their error was to be found in the way they were serving. Paul revealed the acceptable way to serve God in Romans 7:4-6, saying, *Therefore,*

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*my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God. For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.*

It was this “newness of the Spirit” they didn’t understand. Neither do many today. After turning to Christ, we are to continue in our faith doing the works of His will, through the empowerment of His Spirit. As James said, that is what “saving faith” looks like.

This is why Paul says in Philippians 2:13, after telling us to *work out* our salvation with fear and trembling, says, *for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure* [“satisfaction, delight, pleasure, will, kindly intent”]. We need more fear and trembling in the church in America.

In Galatians 3:1-3 Paul bluntly asks the “foolish” Christians in Galatia who had bewitched them. One of the definitions for bewitched is “to fascinate by false representations.” The bewitching of God’s people today all over the world is the fruit of what’s being broadcast through the majority of Christian television and radio, and that mainly from within America.

Paul continues his rebuke by addressing those who were trying to be perfected in the flesh through the works of the law. He asked them, *Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?* Having received God’s Spirit by “hearing with faith,” they were now trying to finish by human might and strength, void of the Spirit.

As I said, what prompted Paul to write this letter was the infiltration of those who, after he left, were attempting to lead the Galatian Christians astray. Through persuasive argument they were successfully bringing them back into the bondage of law-abiding by the strength of the flesh that was so prevalent within Judaism. It got so bad that even Peter and Barnabas were influenced by these false teachers. They too joined in their hypocrisy, causing Paul to rebuke Peter to his face (Galatians 2:11).

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Paul declared in Galatians 5:1, *It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.* This is why young Christians in particular, after first turning to Jesus, are immediately worked over by the devil who tries to lead them into religious bondage (works of the law). If he couldn't stop them from starting the race, he will work even harder to cause them not to finish. Up to now, it's been a very effective plan.

Paul also says something very important regarding the need to mature in Christ within Galatians 4 that I need to stress at this point. He says in verses 1-3, *What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world.* (NIV)

Obviously, children are not mature enough to receive an inheritance. There is a time set by our Father, at the end of this age, when we, His children, are going to be forever released from the "basic principles" of this world. It will only happen, though, to those who hear the word of truth and *do* what the Lord commands. This is why we are commanded to be careful "how we listen."

Soon, the Body of Christ will be set free from this physical body of death. We will finally put on the imperishable (1 Corinthians 15:54). Death will be swallowed up in victory as we do what the Spirit instructs us to do. Those who do not take seriously the commands of God to prepare their hearts by faith will not be allowed to enter into the wedding feast of Christ and His Bride. Instead, they will find themselves on the outside where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

## *Chapter Four*

# **Practice Makes Perfect**

**H**ebrews 5:13-6:2 says, *“For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use [“practice”] have their senses exercised [“trained”] to discern both good and evil. Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection [“a completer”], not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. (NKJ)* Biblically speaking, therefore, it’s true; “Practice makes perfect!” By putting into practice God’s will, we are moving toward our perfection, our completion in Christ.

The writer of Hebrews speaks of those who are unskilled, which means inexperienced, in the word of righteousness. He says this is due to the partaking of “milk” only. Milk refers to the simple truths of Christianity that the immature Christian can handle, like an infant. The word of righteousness is referred to as solid food. As with humans, without solid food in your diet you will not be able to grow in a healthy manner. A steady diet of milk alone will stunt your growth, eventually causing you to die. It’s the same in the Christian life.

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We are exhorted in this passage to move on by partaking of meatier subjects that, by putting into practice, will move us on to perfection (i.e. completion in Christ). As you can see, if you do not move on into greater knowledge and understanding you will never grow up into maturity in Christ. Without the “meat” of the word of righteousness in Christ, you and I will never be perfected in Him.

Through the deception of Satan, many churches in America now give a steady diet of milk to their Sunday only congregations that, if kept in this state, will not survive. By the devil’s design, they are kept unaware of what is necessary to bring to completion their faith.

By putting into practice the revealed way of God unto maturity, our senses will be trained to discern that which is good from that which is evil. Many Christians in the church have very little, if any, discernment. The result is a confusing mix of truth and falsehood that has leavened the church, keeping the Lord’s people from ever pressing forward into maturity.

Satan does this because he knows that when we grow up into our mature state as a Body in Christ, his reign of terror over mankind is finished. Our rising up will be his falling down. When we finish, he will be finished. The time for our divinely appointed perfection, our rising up, draws near. Our finishing of the race set before us will bring to an end this age, causing Satan to lose his place of power over mankind.

### Dead Works

Dead works are those void of the life of God. Metaphorically speaking, it refers to that which is spiritually dead and is inactive as respects doing right. It’s also defined as “destitute of force or power, inactive, and inoperative.” The fruit of dead works is dead religion. It’s Christianity without the transforming power of the Holy Spirit actively working in and through us. This is the deceived condition of the religious spectator who is destitute of a life that recognizes and is devoted to God because they have been given up to their sin.

Dead works are performed by those who are seeking a righteousness of their own before God. They are like the Pharisees

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whose works were done for others to see, resulting in self-glorification. Jesus said in His prayer to the Father, *I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.* (John 17:4/NKJ) It is as we complete the work God gives us that He is glorified through us.

This lack of glorifying God through obedience to His word of truth is exactly what Paul spoke of in Romans 1 about those who knew God but had their foolish heart darkened. He said, *For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie...* (Romans 1:25) For this reason God gave them over to a depraved mind to do all sorts of evil. This is the spirit of antichrist so prevalent in the church today.

Notice also that the writer of Hebrews contrasted dead works with faith toward God. This brings more confirmation that dead works, the works of law, are opposed to the works of faith which result in the completion of our faith in God.

### Infants In Christ

In 1 Corinthians 3:1-5, Paul says those who are immature in Christ are not spiritual, but worldly. He says, *Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly; mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men? What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe; as the Lord has assigned to each his task.* (NIV)

In this worldly, immature condition they were not able to receive what Paul refers to as *solid food*. Their childish condition was revealed in their actions toward one another. There was jealousy and quarreling among them as they defended what MAN they were followers of, much like our denominations today. They were looking to *mere men* when they should have been following Christ alone. Paul was reminding them that he and Apollos' wisdom was from God, not themselves.

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I have had people tell me when I disagree with certain well known preachers and teachers of our day that these are “godly men.” I was accused of being arrogant when I dared to question their knowledge. Just because they’re popular doesn’t mean they are godly, or correct in their thinking. They’re not God, but mere men!

Truth is truth and falsehood is falsehood, period, no matter where it comes from. If they don’t align with Jesus then I don’t care who they are. You do not measure the Word by what men say, but rather we are to measure the men by what the Word says. We are not to worship men but Christ. The only way we’ll have one mind is when we possess His. I cannot, nor ever will “agree to disagree.” That thinking is one of selfish, unconcerned compromise and will put many into Hell.

Peter exhorts all Christians to, *rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.* (1 Peter 2:1-3/NIV)

To understand Peter’s exhortation in these verses you have to read the verses before them in chapter one. He was warning all Christians to conduct ourselves in fear as the people of God while on earth, not allowing ourselves to be conformed to the former lusts we had before turning to Christ. Our longings were to be for “pure spiritual milk” so that we would grow up in our salvation.

To crave means “to long for, to desire, to intensely crave possession of, to *pursue* with love.” This involves the *work* of pursuit by every believer. Why grow up, why intensely crave possession of something pure if it doesn’t really matter? If it doesn’t affect our salvation, why the very strong warning from Peter regarding growing up in it?

By definition, to be pure is to be unmixed, unadulterated, guileless, and without deceit. This is the exact opposite of what Babylon gives to her children. They are not taught why they need to grow up in their salvation. Their doctrines remove the need to mature. To them, whether or not you finish the race doesn’t matter, just that you started it. You’ll receive the “prize” either way.



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I need to add here a warning to those who are involved with feeding infant Christians. All nursing mothers are aware that what they eat affects not just themselves, but also their children. For instance, spicy foods, caffeine, alcohol, and drugs will have an adverse effect on a nursing baby. It's the same for those who are feeding spiritual food to infant Christians. What we allow to come within us affects what comes out of us to others. Purity in life is essential when discipling God's infants. Abstaining from wickedness causes us to be a "vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared ("to make ready") for every *good work*" (2 Timothy 2:19-21). We must be careful to practice what we preach for the sake of all who hear and take in what we proclaim.

*Chapter Five*

## Cleansing The Conscience

**I**n Hebrews 9:14, we are told the blood of Christ will cleanse our conscience from dead works in order to *serve* the living God. Christ's blood covering for sin (i.e. the atonement) is gained through surrender to Him as your Savior. It is then sustained by putting into practice His will as revealed by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit led walk is the highway of holiness (Isaiah 35:8) that the wise live by. Journeying in this manner will keep us from dead works that are empowered by the flesh.

As we saw in Hebrews 5:13-6:3, by putting into practice His revealed will, our moral compass, the conscience, is restored enabling us to discern the difference between good and evil, right and wrong. It's the only way that we can serve God acceptably by doing what He desires.

The Levites were commanded by God to go through a process of cleansing and purification before serving in the tent of meeting. Their physical cleansing is a picture of our inner cleansing required by God to serve Him.

Numbers 8:21 says they *purified themselves and washed their clothes*. The Hebrew for purified is *chata* [khaw-taw'] which means "to sin, to miss the way, to forfeit, to purify from uncleanness, repent." From the definition, to be purified from sinful acts that cause us to be unclean before God, there must be repentance. Like a filthy garment in need of cleaning, it releases

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the power of the blood of Jesus that washes the stain and defilement of sin from us.

Our God-given conscience is then given the sensitivity to see and the power to choose between right and wrong. At this point we're then able to minister unto Him in an acceptable manner by doing what is right and shunning what is evil.

The Greek for serve in Hebrews 9:14 is *latreuo* [lat-ryoo'-o]. It's defined as "to minister to God, to render religious service or homage, to worship." Again, by definition, to worship God acceptably is to come before Him with a repentant heart, one that has been cleansed in the blood of Jesus Christ and now walks in obedience to His commands.

### The Anointing Oil

There is one more essential requirement of God for the priests to minister before Him that I need to share before moving on. It concerns the anointing oil which the Lord spoke to Moses about. He said;

*And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister to Me as priests. And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: "This shall be a holy anointing oil to Me throughout your generations. It shall not be poured on man's flesh; nor shall you make any other like it, according to its composition. It is holy, and it shall be holy to you. Whoever compounds any like it, or whoever puts any of it on an outsider, shall be cut off from his people." (Exodus 30:30-33/NKJV)*

The Lord made the statement that the holy anointing oil was not to be poured out on man's flesh. The same qualification applies to the church today. Many ministers are serving God in the power of their flesh, by their own strength and abilities, without the anointing of God. The evidence of this is the dead, lifeless Christianity that survives on good entertainment, better programs, and worldly advertising. When you have to announce, as is often the case today, that someone is an "anointed preacher," or an "anointed singer," there's a good chance that they aren't.

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What we lack in the pulpits today are anointed ministers who proclaim God's word with Holy Ghost unction and authority. The majority have never sought this anointing from God. Instead, they minister like the Pharisees in Jesus' day from their own fleshly authority.

God's clear instructions were not to make any other holy oil except that which He had prescribed. Today, this would refer to those who are ministering under a different anointing that is not of God. They definitely have a power, but it's a cheap imitation from the devil.

Not only do they minister in a foreign power through false signs and wonders, but they are also placing their counterfeit, demonic power on "outsiders." If they continue in this manner, without repentance from their dead works, the Lord says He will cut them off from His people.

The phrase "outsider" refers to those who are strangers to God and His ways. As such, they are easy targets for Satan to place his false anointing on. Like Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:9-24), their desire for the so-called power of God comes from an impure heart contaminated with self-glorifying desires. Due to a lack of discernment, they are easily led into deception.

### True Worship

In most circles of Christianity today, worship consists of a shallow, external posture only. True worship, accepted by God, is an internal posture. It flows from a grateful heart that has experienced the forgiveness of sin through repentance. This is a worshiper who has embraced truth and become a "doer" of the word, not just a self-deceived pew-sitter.

In John 4, Jesus has a discussion with a Samaritan woman which, at one point, focused on true worship. Samaria was originally built as the capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel. It was located on the top of a hill and inhabited with a mixed race of Jews and Gentiles. As such, they were despised by the full blooded Jews in Jesus' time. This is why the disciples were shocked to find Him speaking with her.

The woman said to Jesus, *"Our fathers worshiped in this*

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*mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.” He replied to her, “Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father. You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”* (John 4:20-24) Jesus was making it clear to this woman that the location meant nothing to the Father. What matters most to Him is what’s going on in the inside.

The Greek for “seeks” in this passage is *zeteo* [dzay-teh'-o] which means “to seek, that is, to require, to demand, to crave, to demand something from someone.” To me this changes what most of us have always thought, or been taught, regarding this passage. It doesn’t mean that the Father is looking, hoping to find someone out there who is doing it right, externally. Instead, per the definition, He is saying that in order to be a *true* worshiper, we are required to do it in spirit and in truth. Ultimately, this has NOTHING to do with a physical location such as a church building, or the outward posture of any sort, or what day, or any other man-made requirement, but rather an internal condition of the heart.

### Serving The Institution

In Romans 1 Paul refers to those who know God but they suppress the power of truth in unrighteousness (v.18). Disobedience hinders the desired course and progress of truth in our lives. They did not glorify God, but rather themselves.

Verse 21 says the subject mentioned here is those who knew God. To know God implies intimacy with Him. Only those who turn toward Him and draw close can experience this. In other words, he’s describing a Christian who falls away in unbelief.

Paul says in verse 25 they exchanged the truth of God for a lie. Justifying the fulfilling of their evil desires, God gave them over to the degrading passions their hearts desired. Having then been

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given a seared conscience, one without acceptable moral understanding, they exchanged natural desires for unnatural (literally “against nature”) desires resulting in widespread practicing and acceptance of homosexuality and lesbianism. This is why, worldwide, we are now experiencing the same.

Paul says that God gave them over to the power of unnatural desires, desires that go against our natural sense of right and wrong. This occurred because they traded the Truth for a lie and *worshiped and served* [our Greek word *latreuo*] *the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever.*

The Greek for creature is *ktisis* [ktis'-is]. It's defined as “original formation; the act of founding, establishing, building, creating.” Interestingly, Thayer's also defines it as “an institution, an ordinance.” Worshipers of God being given over to an unnatural desire, which Paul defines as a seared conscience, is the end result of serving and worshiping that which God instituted, such as the religious institution, rather than God, of worshiping the building rather than the Builder, of worshiping the creation rather than the Creator.

Because of this, the foolish hearts of those professing to be wise are given over to a depraved, abnormal mind. Like the wicked mob at Lot's door, they will not be able to find the Door of Truth, who is Christ. Walking in this state of spiritual blindness, it's inevitable that they will trip and fall (away) from following the Way.

Again, I'm not even talking about the world, but those in the church who refuse to abide in Christ and submit to His ways. Instead, they have chosen an alternate route that, if not repented of, leads to death.

Paul continues his discourse in chapter 2, declaring God to be impartial in regards to His righteous judgment on the day of His wrath. He says in verse 3, *And do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?* Yes, we do! Many of our doctrines say this is true, first and foremost the doctrine of demons known as “eternal security.”

Romans 2:5-6 warns those of us who claim the name of Christ, saying, *because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you*

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*are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds [works!].* Again, the New Testament is clear regarding God's impartial judgment of our works. Without exception, there will be tribulation and distress for **every** person who **practices** evil on the approaching Day of God's wrath.

The key word here is "practices" which refers to a repeat, habitual offender who has no intent of repenting. Having rejected the conviction of the Holy Spirit to repent, they have lost all normal sensitivity that a Christian possesses when they have sinned against God. As Paul said in Romans 2:13, it's not the hearers of the law who are just before God, but rather the doers of the law.

### Weatherball Christianity

Recently, while driving on an expressway in the Grand Rapids, Michigan area, the Lord showed me something. There is a very large weatherball just west of the city that all motorists can see. It changes color per the weather conditions. It happened to be green the evening I drove by. The expression when green is "Weather ball green, no change foreseen." The thought that came to me was how this fittingly describes the current heart condition of many Christian's in America.

Without some Divine coercion in the near future, nothing will change. This is why we are about to experience a great increase in pressure in our nation before the Lord's return. It will mercifully be used to help purify God's children that have become apathetic and are asleep, spiritually. As I've said before, a purified people are a prepared people. In spirit and truth, they are acceptably serving God with a clear conscience.

The truth that has been removed by deceptive teachings is now being restored to God's people. Without its application in our lives, we will not be clothed with the proper wedding garments required to enter into the wedding feast of the Lamb (Matthew 22:1-14, Revelation 19:7-9). Difficult times will be used to prepare the soil of our hearts to receive that which can save us.

## *Chapter Six*

# **A Seared Or Cleared Conscience**

**E**very human being is born with a God-given conscience to reveal within them what is right and wrong. As stated earlier, it's our moral compass to help guide us to Christ. Based upon our response to God in the experiences of life, our conscience will either become seared or cleared, thereby determining our place in eternity.

A seared conscience is one which, having been given over to the power of sin, is no longer sensitive to it. A cleared conscience is one that has been cleansed in the blood of Jesus through the forgiveness of sin experienced through repentance and is very sensitive to right and wrong. Also, to their sheer delight, the burden and guilt of sin is removed.

Hebrews 10:22 exhorts us to *draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil* ["hurtful, of a bad nature or condition, ill"] *conscience and our bodies washed with pure water* [as pictured by the Levites in Numbers 8]. We are admonished to draw near with a genuine heart, having complete confidence in the Lord to heal our evil, sick conscience. The cleansing this verse speaks of is of a spiritual nature, by the washing of water by the word (Ephesians 5:26).

One of the definitions in Strong's Concordance for drawing near, figuratively speaking, is "worship." Acceptable worship in God's eyes isn't possible with an evil conscience. Again, man



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looks at external appearance, external posture, while God looks at the heart.

The preceding verses in Hebrews, chapter 10, speak of God's people, His Body, going behind the veil, the place where Jesus now beckons us to come. Verse 22 is a direct reference to the requirements of God in Leviticus 16:4 for the high priest to sanctify himself first by taking a ceremonial bath and putting on white garments on *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement (also known as the Day of Covering,) before he entered into God's presence in the holy of holies.

The time for the final *Yom Kippur*, the final day of judgment, draws near for the world which is why we are being urgently exhorted to draw near. Without our drawing near to the Door, who is Christ, allowing Him to cleanse our conscience, we will not be able to enter in and live. The sin of presuming on the goodness of God while walking in rebellion to His lordship over you would be disastrous.

Titus 1:15-16 says, *To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but by their deeds ["works"] they deny ["to contradict"] Him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed.*

These verses describe for us the defiled mind and conscience of those who claim to know God, but by their contradictory works they deny Jesus as their Lord. These are the worshippers of the institution described by Paul in Romans 1. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they are called "worthless," or "reprobate." Because of their defiled consciences, they are incapable of good works in God's eyes. If they continue in this state of rebellion, their faith will never be brought to completion. In the end, they will perish.

Works of law, those led by the flesh, will never cleanse the conscience. They cannot remove the guilt before God. As I've already said many times, because of this we can never serve or minister before Him in an acceptable manner.

Hebrews 10:1-2 says, *For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never*

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*by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect [“to complete, to finish”] those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers [latreuo], having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?*

Walking the way of religious deeds that are void of the Spirit will keep “the worshipers” of God from the promise of perfection, of completion in Christ, and of partaking of His fullness (Romans 11:25). They will not be numbered among those who finish the race set before us.

### The Great Apostasy

Paul warns us of the great apostasy that will occur in the last days. In 1 Timothy 4:1-2, he says, *But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron.* Liars refers to those who teach falsehood in the church. They are the mouthpiece of the devil that deceive God’s people. As such, their judgment will be the greatest (James 3:1).

According to Thayer’s, one of the definitions of seared is “to brand (cauterize), i.e. by implication to render insensitive.” The conscience of a person in this state has become insensitive to a God-given conviction when doing what is wrong. Without their natural brake system, a crash is inevitable.

There is someone who has not lost His consciousness of sin. While referring to the judgment of Babylon, John said in Revelation 18:4-5, *And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, “Come out of her, my people, that you may not participate in her sins and that you may not receive of her plagues; for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.”* The memory of the sin of those within the church who are part of the spiritual harlot that glorified herself (Rev. 18:7), are in the mind of God.

In Jeremiah 31:27-34, the Lord describes the new covenant He was going to make with His people. Hebrews 8:12 quotes this passage in which God said, *For I will forgive their wickedness and*

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*will remember their sins no more.* (NIV) He remembers the sins of Babylon because they are not covered by His blood of forgiveness.

On the other hand, when we repent, which isn't just a one-time event, the blood of Jesus removes it from His consciousness. This is why there will be no mention of that which we have already been forgiven for. The only one who likes to bring up to us our past sins that we have already repented of is the accuser of the brethren. The only reply he receives from Jesus is, "What sin?"

This is why it's so important for us to prepare our hearts through consecration as we near the end of this age. We are about to stand before the righteous Judge of all mankind. We do not want to be among those who shrink back in shame to destruction (Hebrews 10:39).

Hebrews 10:26-27 clearly warns those who have turned to Jesus, saying, *If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.* (NIV)

### Walk By The Spirit

Paul gives us the way of victory in Galatians 5:16-18. He says, *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.*

To walk is to live out one's life. It's the manner in which we conduct ourselves on earth. When we, as Christians, allow the Holy Spirit to control our steps, we will do what is pleasing and acceptable to the Lord. When the sinful nature gets its way, we will not be able to carry out the will of God.

The Greek for "carry out" is *teleo* [tel-eh'-o]. It means "to end, to bring to a close, to complete, to fulfill, to finish." When we gratify the forbidden desires of the flesh, the end result is always death. It leaves us guilt-ridden and empty, void of the life of Christ.

When we submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit, the law becomes powerless in regards to stirring up our sinful desires. Paul

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said in 2 Corinthians 1:9, *Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.* (NIV)

All followers of Christ possess an awakened conscience that senses this deadness still lurking within their fallen natures. It's there, as Paul said, to keep us aware of our dependence on Christ in order to stand firm until the end, lest we fall away through self-reliance. As Hebrews 3:12-13 strongly warns Christians, *Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," lest any one of you be hardened ["to render obstinate or stubborn"] by the deceitfulness of sin.*

We all live our lives under the power of the flesh, or the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul said in Romans 8:13-14, *if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds ["the habitual practice of evil"] of the body, you will live. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.* As with Galatians 5:16-18, Paul describes the path of living according to the direction of the flesh as the pathway that leads unto death.

He also said in Romans 8:2 that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (i.e. works of faith) has set the Christian free from the law of sin and of death (i.e. works of law). The Spirit of God will lead us to put to death the wicked deeds our sinful natures intensely crave.

The promise here is that if, by the Spirit, we crucify the flesh with its passions and desires (Galatians 5:24), we will live. This is because, as Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:9, *God raises the dead.* He cannot raise those who are alive in the flesh.

We become a "living creature" by the Spirit when we allow Him to put to death the works of our sinful natures. There is no other way. It's when we walk daily in this death to our wills that the life of Jesus is revealed in and then through us.

Dead works, dead deeds led by the flesh of His children, bind Jesus on earth. They hide His life from those who are dead in their sins. It becomes inactive and powerless, unable to overcome the darkness. May we all take a good look at our lives.

*Chapter Seven*

## **The Leaven Of The Pharisees**

**I**n Matthew 16, Jesus warns His followers of the false teaching of the religious leaders in their day. He said in verse 6, *Watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees*. It took them a bit of discussion with Jesus to understand that He wasn't talking about the leaven of bread, but the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. We also need to watch out and beware. Their leaven has leavened the church in America today, putting her to sleep.

Thayer's Greek Lexicon definition of the Pharisees states the following;

*"...they [Pharisees] sought for distinction and praise by outward observance of external rites and by outward forms of piety such as ceremonial washings, fastings, prayers, and alms giving; and, comparatively negligent of genuine piety, they prided themselves on their fancied good works."*

Their external form of righteousness that was void of the Spirit of life is still being practiced today within many in the church. To be honest, I think we all have a little Pharisee in us at times.

The church in Corinth had many issues that were being allowed to continue unchecked. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 5:6-8, *Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens*

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*the whole lump of dough? Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

The immorality in their midst was of such a kind that didn't even exist among the Gentiles. Paul is explaining to them that their sin affected others much like leaven in a lump of dough. In fact, in verse 2 of this chapter he said they were "puffed up," like bread with yeast, when they should have been mourning and removed the wicked man from among them. Church discipline, as commanded by God, is rarely enforced anymore. There's not much of a healthy fear of the consequences for sinning within the church that would drive us in love to confront.

The Greek for "clean out" is defined as "to cleanse thoroughly." The "old leaven" must be purged from our hearts before we can be a part of the new lump, the new thing. In these last days we must allow the Holy Spirit to search us and reveal what needs to be cast out of our hearts and minds. Rebellion might cost us our entrance into the New Jerusalem.

### Out With The Old, In With The New!

The Lord declared to Israel in Leviticus 26 the blessings that would occur through obedience, as well as the curses for disobedience. He said in verses 3-4, and 9-12, *If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit... So I will turn toward you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will confirm ["establish"] My covenant with you. And you will eat the old supply and clear out the old because of the new ["new thing"]. Moreover, I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul will not reject you. I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.*

Obedience to the Lord's commands confirms His covenant with His children. It establishes the dwelling place of the Lord amongst us. Notice the big "if" in verse 3 which makes the promise

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conditional. Over and over again in the Scriptures the Lord warns us, saying “If you... then I.” As Israel learned while on the way to the Promised Land, the promise alone wasn’t enough to get them in. They, and we, have a part in this journey to walk in compliance to the will of the Lord. Rebellion cost the children of Israel their inheritance. This is the strong warning from Hebrews, chapters 3-4, that, if not listened and adhered to, will cost us our right of entrance.

The “old supply” that once fed God’s people has now become stale and rotten. The demonic bacteria found within the old leaven of the Pharisees has worked its way into the lump of dough. Many spiritual leaders continue to feed contaminated food (false teachings) to God’s sheep causing them to become weak and sick, even causing death (1 Cor. 11:30). The appearance of the new thing the Lord is doing in our day will mercifully cause the old, decaying thing (dead religion) to be removed. It will force it off the shelf, so to speak. Amen!

John describes the new thing this way in Revelation 21:1-5;

*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.” And He who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” And He said, “Write, for these words are faithful and true.”*

### The New Order

According to the Scriptures, in the new order of God that comes to permanently dwell with man, there will be no more death, mourning, crying, or pain. This brings great hope and joy for all

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those who know Christ. It will no longer be just a visitation, but a permanent indwelling within the prepared Bride that has cleansed her heart by faith in joyful expectation of her Heavenly Bridegroom's return.

The writer of Hebrews 9:7-10 also speaks to us concerning the new order. On the Day of Atonement, when the high priest entered into the Holy of Holies with the blood of the sacrifice, they were merely fulfilling *external regulations applying until the time of the new order*. The Greek for new order is *diorthosis* [dee-or'-tho-sis]. In a physical sense, it signifies "a making straight, restoring to its natural and normal condition something which in some way protrudes or has gotten out of line, as broken or misshapen limbs." This aptly applies to the church in America today.

In recent years we have gotten "out of line." In fact, we are now broken, in desperate need of restoring. We call church that which is often not church, and a Christian that which is not anywhere near what the Scriptures call a Christian. The truth of God has been replaced with more *user-friendly* terms. The good news is that "the period of restoration of all things" spoken of in Acts 3:21 has begun. The Lord is now restoring that which His enemies have altered. He always has the last word. The old is fading as a new day is dawning.

May we be like the elderly Simeon and Anna in Luke 2:25-38 who were *looking for the redemption of Israel*. The word "looking for" means "to await with confidence or patience, to expect the fulfillment of promises." Walking by faith, and not by sight, may we have the same watchful heart, not missing out on what is about to take place because of unbelief.

On January 1, 2010, as the new year rolled in, I was all alone, praying in my living room. As the clock stroked midnight, I was asking the Lord to speak to me. In that moment I heard one simple statement; "Out with the old, in with the new." We must be careful to not hang onto that which is disappearing. His people are His building, His holy sanctuary that He will dwell in.

The religious system as we know it will soon be no more. Be warned, the entire man-made structure will come crashing down in the near future. Only that which has been built upon the Rock will be left standing. Look to the Lord, the Bread of Life. He will feed



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you from His uncontaminated storehouses so that you will be preserved. Obedience to what the Spirit is saying to the church right now will grant us the right to be a part of the “new lump.”

Like the children of Israel, we’ve never been this way before (Joshua 3:4). It’s in this new way, His “Way,” that you and I will be prepared for His coming when He comes to dwell among His obedient people forever. As the Lord spoke, get ready because it’s time; “Out with the old, in with the new!” Amen!

*Chapter Eight*

**Entering In**

**H**ebrews 4:6 declares that it remains for some to enter God's rest. In chapter 3-4 of Hebrews, the author likens the promise of God to the children of Israel and their entering into the Promised Land with the promise for all His people to enter into His Sabbath rest. Using the example of Israel's rebellion in the wilderness, he warns Christians to be careful not to fall by following the same example of disobedience.

The end of chapter 3 says God's people were not able to enter because of unbelief. Exodus 14:31 says they came out of Egypt believing. Later, according to Numbers 14:11, they no longer believed. This doesn't mean they didn't believe there was a God, but rather that they no longer followed His ways. To know God is to obey Him (1 John 2:3-6). "Knowing" refers to an intimate relationship resulting from steadfast obedience.

The writer of Hebrews, in chapter 3, quotes Psalm 95:7-11 which says, *Today, if you would hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the wilderness. When your fathers tested me, they tried me, though they had seen My work. For forty years I loathed that generation, and said they are a people who err* ["to vacillate, to wander, to go astray, to stagger"] *in their heart, and they do not know My ways. Therefore I swore in My anger, truly they shall not enter into My rest."*

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Part of the definition for “know” is “to know by experience, to be acquainted with.” The Hebrew for “ways” is *derek* [deh'-rek]. It's defined as “a road, a course of life or mode of action, a manner, a habit.” Putting these together we are able to understand that to know God's ways refers to walking in obedience to His revealed will.

In this case, it describes those who after turning to Christ do not, through continued experience, remain acquainted with His will. After the honeymoon experience of first being joined to Christ, like an unfaithful spouse they drift in their covenant commitment. They choose instead to walk in their own way, their own course of life. In this state of not holding fast their confession firm until the end, they will not be able to enter into the Lord's salvation, His Promised Land of eternal rest (Hebrews 3:6, 14; 4:14).

Using the disobedience of the children of Israel in their wilderness wanderings as an example, Hebrews 4:9-11 says, *There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall through following the same example of disobedience.* If we do not rest from our works (works of law), which means to work our ways per our wills, we will not enter into His final rest. Instead, we will be numbered with those who fall away from following Christ at the end of this age in the great apostasy.

Figuratively, the Sabbath rest is to restrain from doing our works. To some it means doing nothing, no works at all, including the “good works” they were created to do in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:10). Others argue whether Saturday or Sunday is the day we are to gather together and worship. It's not just a day, but a life of walking in the Spirit.

To be diligent, as mentioned in Hebrews 4:11, means “to use speed, to make haste, to exert oneself, to endeavor, to give diligence.” This is the “work” of salvation we must be working out in fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12-13) lest we miss through negligence and unbelief the fulfillment of the promise of entering in.

As Hebrews 4:1-2 warns, *let us fear lest, while a promise*

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*remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.* As James 2 clearly tells us, saving faith does what the Spirit is saying to do, bringing us to completion salvation.

Hebrews 4:6-7 continues to warn us, saying, *Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience* [defined as “obstinate opposition to the divine will”], *He again fixes a certain day, “Today,” saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, “Today if you hear His voice, do not harden* [“to become obstinate or stubborn”] *your hearts.”* Sin hardens the heart. Again, continued stubbornness to the will of the Lord without repentance will keep us from entering in.

Some within this generation will hear and obey this word of the Lord, this call of the Lord to submissively enter into the final resting place of Christ and “fill up” that part which is lacking in His Body. As we fulfill our Lord’s will, just as other brothers and sisters have done throughout history, bringing to completion His “works” on earth, this present age will be completed. It will usher in the return of Christ and His 1,000 year reign on earth. This seventh thousand of time since the creation is the seventh “day” rest of God (see 2 Peter 3:8) when no man will be able to “work.” It will finish the redemptive work of God.

“Some,” therefore, must enter in. They are the hearers and doers of this word. Some will not enter in because of disobedience which, remember, is defined as “obstinate opposition to the divine will.” Like Israel, they will harden their hearts in rebellion. Falling away from devotion to Christ, they will perish.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14, *Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.* Narrow is defined as “to crowd, to press hard upon, a compressed way.” Metaphorically speaking it means “to trouble, to afflict, to distress.” The way of entrance that few find is one of suffering, trouble, and affliction in this world. It’s the path leading to

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Calvary that Jesus willingly walked.

Many disciples, after turning to Christ, are not willing to follow Him to His cross. As the difficult terms of the New Covenant become clearer to them, they become open to an alternate route, the broad way, that the devil is more than willing to show them through his false teachers.

The less troubling way is where the majority choose to travel. Broadway doctrines are “the lie” of the devil. In the Greek, narrow is akin to the base of a word that means “a rut or worn track, a path.” The narrow way of following Jesus is the difficult rut few choose to remain walking in. The flesh naturally desires an easier, less restricting way that it can easily justify traveling on.

Proverbs 14:12 says, *There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.* Death is always the destiny of those who leave the path of obedience and submission to the leading of the Holy Spirit. This is what Paul referred to in Romans 6:16 when he said, *Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey-- whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?* (NIV)

### Entering The Vessel Of Deliverance

When the Lord was about to destroy mankind because of the continual wickedness of his heart, He came to Noah, a righteous man, and revealed to him the way to enter His place of deliverance. He told Noah, *And behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish. But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark-- you and your sons and your wife, and your sons' wives with you.* (Genesis 6:17-18) Don't miss the order of entrance; the establishing of the covenant with Noah was a prerequisite for entering in. This divine order is essential for all of us.

The Hebrew for establish in Genesis 6:18 is *quwm* [koom]. It's defined as “to rise, to arise, to stand, to rise up, to stand up.” It also means “to be established, to be confirmed, to endure, to be fixed,

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to be valid, to be proven.” As you can see from this definition, the rising of the sons of God will occur when the covenant has been established, confirmed in their life. This happens as we endure the refining process, standing firm in our faith to the end so as to be saved (Matthew 10:22, 24:13). The genuineness of our faith is proven through the fiery trials the Holy Spirit leads us into. Those who “rise up” at the end of this age through the establishing of the covenant within them will be delivered, just as Noah was.

While discussing His return with His disciples, Jesus said to them, *As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.* (Matthew 24:37-39/NIV) Once Noah entered in, the judgment began. That is reassuring for all who have ears to hear. As with Lot, unless those who have been declared righteous by God are in His designated safe place, the judgment cannot take place (Genesis 19:22).

By the way, please notice who was taken away, and who was left behind in the next few verses. The wicked were taken away in the judgment of God. The righteous, who were raised above the flood in the place of protection, were left behind to inherit the earth. This is the exact opposite of the satanic lie called “The Rapture.” It falsely claims, through the twisting of Scripture, that the righteous will be taken away and the wicked will be left behind. The fruit of this doctrine of demons is an unprepared heart, just like the devil wants. Many will not enter in if they believe they are already prepared.

Most Christians are taught that the establishing of the covenant occurs instantly, when you first turn to Christ. On the contrary, confirmation occurs after our faith has been proven genuine through trials. How do you know if your faith will stand the test unless it is tested? In order to be established in the covenant of God we must continue to abide in Him, *though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof [“genuineness”] of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found*

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*to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:6-7)*

Regarding our subject of entering in, Jesus, in John 3, has a discussion with a Pharisee named Nicodemus who was a ruler and teacher of the Jews. Jesus said to him in verses 5-8, *Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, **he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.** That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, "You must be born again." The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.*

Water represents the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin. This was John's baptism, preparing the way within people for what, or should I say *Whom* was next. He declared in Matthew 3:11, *As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming **after** me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.* It takes both in order to enter into the kingdom of God.

The true baptism of the Holy Spirit always involves His leading you into the fiery trials in order to burn off the dross, thereby establishing His covenant within His children. The false, or counterfeit baptism of the Spirit, never involves the fire, but rather an experience. Satan wants to create confusion with this in order to keep you from the cleansing property of the fire. It's a doctrine with no cross, no suffering. He will give people all the fleshly experiences they want as long as they don't follow the Lord to His cross. It's the place of his defeat! Colossians 2:15 says, *And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*

As previously discussed, the ordination process of God in Exodus 29 for His priests requires that they (we) be washed with water first, followed by the anointing oil being poured onto their head. The oil represents the Holy Spirit, given to those who obey by continuing in submission to His lordship over them. When they occasionally stumble, as all do, they get back up through repentance and continue in the process of sanctification. The Lord said in Exodus 40:15 that without the anointing they could not

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minister to Him as priests. Neither can we.

The word “anointing” has become ridiculously abused by the church. It’s a part of most modern, “religious” advertising; “Come and hear anointed preaching,” or “anointed singing.” If you have to advertise like the world, it’s probably not what is being claimed. When the true anointing of God is on someone, you won’t need advertising. The Lord will draw them in. For proof of this, study the past revivals in the world. With little or no technology, people came. They not only came, but were bent under great conviction asking what they must do to be saved.

There is a call for God’s people to enter into His presence. Unfortunately, there are satanic barriers in the church that are currently preventing the majority of God’s people from doing so. Being unable to see the Way in, the Lord is about to act on their behalf. Like the veil at the crucifixion of Christ, He will start at the top and work His way down. To God be the glory!



*Chapter Nine*

**Establishing The Covenant  
Before Entering In**

**I**n Exodus 6:4 the Lord says, *I also established my covenant with them [Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob] to give them the land of Canaan, where they lived as aliens.* Israel's patriarchs, even though living in the Promised Land, were still looked upon by the Lord as aliens. It was only in the establishing of the covenant that citizenship was gained, and the land granted.

There are those in the church today who are considered "aliens" in the eyes of God because His covenant has not yet been established within them. As such, they will never receive the right of ownership from the enemy. Satan retains his rights over mankind wherever the covenant of the Lord is defiled through disobedience and neglect.

This is why present Israel does not fully possess the physical land that God has promised them. Because of their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah, God's covenant will not be established within them until the Gentiles fully enter into their covenant. Their external lack of ownership of the land is a reflection of the lack of internal ownership God has of their hearts.

This will change in the near future. Through the righteous judgments of the Lord that are coming upon the face of the earth, Israel will be granted repentance. It will give them ears to hear and

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eyes to see, leading them to the knowledge of the Truth, who is Jesus Christ.

In the new covenant, through the blood of Jesus, we are no longer to be aliens. Paul says in Ephesians 2:18-19 that through Christ we *have our access in one Spirit to the Father*. As such, we are no longer strangers and aliens, but members of God's household.

The Greek for access is *prosagoge* [pros-ag-ogue-ay'] which is defined as "admission, the act of bringing to, access, an approach to God." You see in this passage confirmation of the need for water and the Spirit. As I said, the blood of Jesus is applied to the repentant heart, washing us from our sins. It is then through the Spirit that we are able to approach God.

In Revelation 7, John speaks of sealing the foreheads of God's servants before harming the earth, the sea, or the trees. In verse 2 John sees an angel ascending from the rising of the sun, *having the seal of the living God*. I don't believe this will be a literal stamp on our foreheads, but rather the marks of His righteousness reflected through the renewing of our minds. The way we think will be Christ-like. The former corruption of our fallen nature will be removed, evidenced through the authority of Christ in our lives. Praise the Lord for His promise of deliverance!

The Greek for "sealed" in verse 3 of this chapter is *sphragizo* [sfrag-id'-zo]. It means "to stamp (with a signet or private mark) for security or preservation, to mark with a seal." It's taken from *sphragis* [sfrag-ece'], the Greek for "seal" in verse 2, denoting "a signet, or by implication, the stamp impressed (as a mark of privacy, or genuineness)." It is also defined as a seal by which anything is confirmed, proved, or authenticated. In other words, it is God's stamp of approval verifying the genuineness of a person's faith. It will prove before all whether or not we are what we profess to be.

According to Nelson's Bible Dictionary, a signet was;

*"...a seal or ring used by an official much like a personal signature to give authority to a document. The Old Testament indicates several uses of the ring seal.*

*Pharaoh gave his ring to Joseph as a badge of his delegated*

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*authority (Genesis 41:42). Ahasuerus gave his ring to the wicked Haman (Esther 3:10, 12), then gave it to Mordecai after Haman's treachery was exposed (Esther 8:2). King Darius of Persia sealed the lion's den after Daniel was placed in it (Daniel 6:17)... Zerubbabel, who had been chosen by God to lead the returned captives in Jerusalem (Haggai 2:23), was compared to a signet ring, signifying that God had invested him with the highest honor."*

The eternal security and preservation of God's children is dependent upon the receiving of His mark (His seal, His stamp). The mark-giver is the Holy Spirit. He does this through the removal of our fleshly nature, conforming us to the image of Christ. This is what Paul refers to in Romans 2:29 as circumcision of the heart by the Spirit.

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, *I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you exceedingly... And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting ["perpetual, continuous existence"] covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.* (Genesis 17:1-2, 7)

God starts by commanding Abram to walk before Him. The Hebrew for "before me" is interpreted as "face" and "presence" in other passages. It implies a close relationship where we continue abiding in God's presence, facing toward Him in our hearts, rather than falling away in disobedience, behind His back so to speak.

By definition, to be blameless is to live a life of integrity, one which is undefiled and upright. James 1:27 says, *This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained ["spotless, unblemished morally"] by the world.*

The promises of God regarding the establishing of the covenant between Abram and Himself, as well as his "seed" for an everlasting covenant, and Abram being multiplied exceedingly, were not without conditions. What if Abram decided not to walk before God in a blameless manner? Would the covenant still be

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established between him and God?

God said further to the newly named Abraham;

*Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants. A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.”* (Genesis 17:9-14)

The application for us today is that if we do not, *after* turning to Jesus Christ, allow the Holy Spirit to circumcise our fleshly, fallen nature, we risk being cut off from the Body of Christ (John 15:1-6, Romans 11:17-24). This is how the covenant is established in our lives. Through submission to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, our faith is brought to completion and we are saved. Otherwise, we are of those who “fall short” of the finish line.

We must receive Christ’s mark, His likeness upon our lives for the preservation of our souls. This is why we must not continuously resist the work of circumcision on our inner man. It is the mark of His covenant, revealing who are the sons of obedience or disobedience.

Without the establishing of His covenant, manifested by His image in our lives through the signet stamp of the Spirit, we will never be allowed to enter the promised place of our spiritual inheritance. Receiving the qualifying mark of Jesus Christ through submission to the Holy Spirit’s inner work is the only way in (John 14:6). The Father must see His Son’s blood covering, the garment of righteousness, before entrance is granted.

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The Lord declared to Solomon in 1 Kings 9:4-9;

*And as for you, if you will walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you and will keep My statutes and My ordinances, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, just as I promised to your father David, saying, "You shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel."*

*But if you or your sons shall indeed turn away from following Me, and shall not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you and shall go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them, and the house which I have consecrated for My name, I will cast out of My sight. So Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples. And this house will become a heap of ruins; everyone who passes by will be astonished and hiss and say, "Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?" And they will say, "Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and adopted other gods and worshiped them and served them, therefore the LORD has brought all this adversity on them."*

God's promise to Solomon was that obedience to God would cause Solomon's rule over the land to be established forever. Disobedience, on the other hand, would result in Israel being cut off from the land the Lord had given them.

This is a warning for Christians today. The majority of the church in America does not believe this principle applies to us. Through a false sense of security encouraged by false teachings, we believe our "house" will never become a "heap of ruins." We are about to find out this isn't true.

Proverbs 12:3 states, *a man cannot be established through wickedness, but the righteous cannot be uprooted.* (NIV) The covenant can never be established within the heart of those who continue in wickedness. The lie of the devil that began in the Garden of Eden, questioning God's word, has been fortified through the mouth of the serpent's deceived mouthpieces in the majority of the pulpits in America. The blood of many in the

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church who will be cast into hell will be on their hands.

### Establishing A Firm Foundation

As we've seen through the example of Noah, Abraham, and Solomon, it's a priority with God to establish His covenant with His people. This foundational principle determined whether or not they would continue to stand before Him. Their response would result in blessings or curses to many other people.

With all three of them, a righteous, upright walk was not optional. Obedience to Christ was, and always will be, the key for the preservation of mankind. We now have doctrines that say otherwise.

Jesus said;

*Why do you call me, "Lord, Lord," and do not do what I say? I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice [a "doer" of the Word]. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete. (Luke 6:46-49/NIV)*

It is in being a "doer" of the word that our foundation is established. This is the way we become firmly rooted in Christ. The perfect storm of the Lord that now approaches the world will reveal to all the true condition of everyone's foundation. What we have built our lives upon will determine whether or not we will survive.

After discussing those in the church who had gone astray from the truth and were, through their ungodly teaching, destroying the faith of some, Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:19, *Nevertheless, the firm ["immovable, steadfast, solid"] foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from*

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*wickedness.*” The Lord’s command to Abram to walk before Him in a blameless manner is the same command expressed throughout the New Testament. On our own it can never happen. It’s only as we work together with the Holy Spirit, submitting to the cleansing process of sanctification, that the covenant is established within us, allowing us to joyfully enter into the glorious Presence of God.

## *Chapter Ten*

# The Lie

**I**n an earlier conversation, we talked about those in the church who now worship the institution of religion rather than Jesus Christ. Paul said in Romans 1:25, *For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

The King James Version of the Bible interprets “a lie” as “the lie.” It’s taken from *pseudos* [psyoo'-dos], a Greek word that means “a falsehood.” As Romans 1 clearly states, whenever “the lie” is accepted as truth, self-glorification is the result rather than God being glorified.

While describing the great falling away from the faith right before the return of Christ, Paul speaks in 2 Thessalonians 2 of those who did not receive *the love of the truth so as to be saved*. He says in verses 11-12, *For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie [“pseudos”] and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.* (NIV) If you believe, as many are deceptively taught, this is just speaking to “the lost,” you’ll miss the obvious. This warning is to those who defect from God (verse 1), falling away through self-exaltation (verse 4).

Those who continue to walk in unbelief, like those described in Hebrews 3-4, will be given over to “the lie” that brings destruction, the lie that says you can enter into God’s Presence



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while still wilfully enjoying the passing pleasures of wickedness. Their divided heart will not listen to the narrow way the love of God reveals through His truth.

To “receive” is to “accept, to embrace, to receive favorably.” In the stubbornness of their heart they refuse to diligently pursue the holiness without which no one will see God (Hebrews 12:14). Instead, they embrace an alternate route offered through the doctrines of demons, a flesh-pleasing route that results in the destruction of their faith, and life.

### The Lie And The Lake Of Fire

While describing the New Jerusalem, John says, *there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie [“pseudos”], but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.* (Revelation 21:27) The Greek word for “causes” is *poieo* [poy-eh'-o]. It means “to make or do, to produce, to construct, to form, to fashion.” All those involved with the rebellion of falsehood, whether it be promoting or doing it through habitual practice, will not be able to enter into the holy city, the New Jerusalem of God.

Earlier, in Revelation 21:7-8, the Lord declared what the liar's portion will be. He says in these verses;

*He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. But for the cowardly [“timid, faithless”] and unbelieving [“unfaithful, untrustworthy”] and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars [pseudes which means “untrue, lying, deceitful, false”], their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.*

This includes those who share them, and those who receive them. Only the overcomers, those who “subdue and conquer” the flesh per the leading of the Holy Spirit, will receive the inheritance in Christ. These are the sons of God (Romans 8:14). We cannot make it without the leading and power of The Guide, the Holy Spirit.

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The followers of Christ who have proven by their actions to be unfaithful and untrustworthy servants will be cast into the lake of fire with all the other unbelievers. They have become an unbelieving-believer whose last state has become worse for them than their first. It would have been better for them if they had never been shown the way of truth. Instead, having been awakened by the Spirit and been given eyes to see, they then turned away in defiant stubbornness (2 Peter 2:20-22). Greater judgment will come upon those who have had greater revelation knowledge and then turned away in unbelief. This is why America's judgment will be so severe if God's people within her refuse to repent from their wicked ways. We have been given so much spiritual wisdom and knowledge throughout our history. Therefore, much is required of us (Luke 12:47-48).

Discussing again those who have the right to enter through the gates into the New Jerusalem, John writes in Revelation 22:14-15, *Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie* [*"pseudos*]. (NKJ)

The NAS version interprets the first part of verse 14 as "Blessed are those who wash their robes..." Between these two versions, the NAS is much closer to the Greek definitions when it says those who "wash their robes" are the ones who may enter into the city. Revelation 7:14 says the only way to wash our robes and make them white is in the blood of the Lamb. Application of the blood of Christ occurs when we walk in repentance. Those who "love and practice" lying (the lie) will find themselves on the outside looking in with all the other foolish virgins.

It's interesting that there is such differing interpretations for Revelation 22:14 between versions. As I said, the NAS says "wash their robes," while the NKJ says "do His commandments." The word for "wash," or "do," is *pluno* [ploo'-no]. It means "to wash, to plunge." Doing, therefore, is comparable to washing, to cleansing.

The Greek interpreted, strangely enough, as "robes" and "commandments" is *stole* [stol-ay'] which means "a 'stole' or

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long-fitting gown (as a mark of dignity); an equipment in clothes, clothing; specifically, a loose outer garment for men extending to the feet, worn by kings, priests, and persons of rank.” I believe this is the priestly garment of the Lord’s righteousness that He covers us with. In this you can see that doing the commandments of God is what it means to “put on” the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 13:14).

The phrase “loves and practices lying” in Revelation 22:15 is interpreted in the KJV as “and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.” Like Revelation 21:27, by definition it includes both those who teach and promote the lie, as well as those who “do” it, or put it into practice. Both will find themselves on the outside of God’s Presence where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The Greek for “loves” in verse 15 is *phileo* [fil-eh'-o]. It’s defined as “to be a friend to, to approve of, to be fond of doing; to be accustomed to, used to doing something.” Romans 1:32 declared the same thing when it said, *Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.* (NIV) Walking in agreement with that which is directly opposed to the will of the Lord will keep you and I from finishing the race. We will not be allowed to enter in.

Back in 2 Thessalonians 2, Paul says in verses 3-4, *Let no one in any way deceive you, for it [the coming of the Lord and our gathering together to Him] will not come unless the apostasy [“defection from the truth, a falling away”] comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying [“declaring”] himself as being God.*

This chapter, which I often refer to, describes the self-exaltation and haughtiness of those in the church who fall away from Christ right before His return. You cannot fall away from something unless you have been joined together with it. Those being described are referred to as “the man of lawlessness” and “the son of destruction.” Like Judas, the spirit of antichrist has found a lodging place in their hearts. These defectors from the truth are said to oppose God, not submitting to His lordship over them.

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They have bought “the lie” of the serpent given to Eve in the Garden of Eden.

By appealing to her fleshly desires, he caused her to question God’s intent, even implying that through her disobedience she would actually become “like God” (Genesis 3:5). As the Bible declares, all lies have their origin in Satan (John 8:44). He is the father of falsehood whose only objective is to cause rebellion among God’s people.

The truth for becoming like God is discovered in Ephesians 4. Paul says in verses 22-25, *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life* [“manner of life, conduct, behavior”], *to **put off** your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to **put on** the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must put off falsehood* [“pseudos”; the lie!] *and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.* (NIV)

In this passage, Paul reveals for us God’s way of truth for becoming like Him, thereby allowing us to enter into His presence. We are told to “put off” our old self, our former manner of life, rather than exalt it by allowing it room to continue, as Satan’s doctrines promote. Again, this involves the work of pursuing Christ and His holiness (Hebrews 12:14). We are instructed by God to deny the passions and desires of the sinful nature and “do” what the Spirit is revealing to us.

In Romans 13:12-14 Paul exhorts us in the pursuit of holiness, saying, *The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds* [works] *of darkness and **put on** the armor of light. Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But **put on** the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.* Putting on the provision of Christ, His garments of righteousness and purity through obedience to the Spirit, will keep us from providing opportunities for the flesh to continue its dominance over us.

Satan deceives man into believing that doing works of law is the way to enter in. In John 8:44 Jesus called him a murderer and the

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father of lies, the father of falsehood. As I said, all lies originate from him. The definition for murderer is “manslayer.” This is his intent. He desires to take down as many people as possible, especially those who have begun to follow Christ.

Christ likeness will not happen apart from our working together with the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 6:1). As we have seen, we are commanded to “put on” the new self, referring to the cloak of God’s righteousness He covers His obedient servants with. The Holy Spirit not only shows us the way in which we should walk, but He also gives the power to overcome our sinful desires, if we ask.

The Greek for “put on” in Romans 13:12,14 is *enduo* [en-doo']. It’s defined as “sinking into a garment, to invest with clothing.” It’s taken from two words, one being *duno* [doo'-no] which means “to go into, to be plunged into, to enter.” As you can see, to put on the Lord Jesus Christ is to clothe ourselves in the covering He provides for us. As we willfully join ourselves to Him through obedience, we find ourselves sinking into the garment He provided for all of mankind through His sacrifice at Calvary. We then become like Him “in true righteousness and holiness.” These are the righteous garments of the Lamb of God required for entering into the wedding feast at the end of the age.

This will not occur automatically. Romans 1:18 says that we can hinder the clothing process through willfully practicing unrighteousness. In this midnight hour it is essential that we listen to what the Spirit is saying to the church because our Heavenly Bridegroom is coming soon.

*Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.* (Revelation 19:7)

*Chapter Eleven*

**Good Works And  
The Abundance Of Grace**

**P**aul says in 2 Corinthians 9:8 that *God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed.* This verse is clear that God is more than able to give from His ample supply, in abundance even, what we need for every good work.

The same Greek word, *perisseuo* [per-is-syoo'-o], is used for the words we interpret in English as “abound” and “abundance.” It’s defined as “to superabound, be in excess, to overflow.” As you can see, there is a definite correlation between walking within the boundaries of God’s instructions of grace and the receiving of His overflowing supply necessary for every good work. The problem is not on His end, but ours. Disobedience cuts off the flow.

At times, what I see within me is that my flesh is not willing to submit to His will in order to receive from His abundant supply. Desiring to do its own thing, it constantly battles the new Spirit of Christ Jesus I received through repentance. Hebrews 4:14-16 says, *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been*

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*tempted in every way, just as we are-- yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (NIV)*

All of this reveals our need of Jesus for our daily flow of sustenance and deliverance from all evil, and the carrying out of “good works.” Our part is to look to Him and then do what His Spirit leads us to do.

Being led is the key. Paul says in Romans 8:14 that those who are being led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. The Holy Spirit is the Guide on our Christian journey. He is the only One who knows the way to the Father. On our own, we will inevitably become lost. For the Christian, this would mean becoming lost *again*. At this point you become what Jude refers to as “twice dead” (Jude 1:12).

Motives of the heart is also a key in this. Proverbs 16:1-3 says, *The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the LORD. All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, but the LORD weighs the motives. Commit your works to the LORD, and your plans [which also means “thoughts”] will be established.* James 4:3 says, *You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.* From a pure heart flow pure motives to which God answers in abundance for His name’s sake.

The definition for “need,” also interpreted in some versions as “sufficiency,” is “self-satisfaction, a perfect condition of life in which no aid or support is needed, sufficiency of the necessities of life, a mind contented with its lot.” This is the desired place of contentment for mankind where all our needs are met.

In America we have many government assistance programs for those in need. It’s good to help the hurting, but not to have them become co-dependent upon you. For many, the government has become their God. In this state we cannot see our real need of the Lord and His supply. I see Him currently taking this away from us in America out of love. It will force us to look up in humility, seeking the true source of every “good and perfect gift” (James 1:17).

Jesus said in Matthew 6:31-34;

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*Do not be anxious then, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "With what shall we clothe ourselves?" For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

Ultimately, our sole reliance is to be Christ.

According to Paul in Romans 5:15-21, death reigns over us when we continue in sin, but God's "abundant" grace reigns over us when we walk by His Spirit within the boundary of righteousness (again, this is "the word of righteousness," the teaching of upright living from Hebrews 5:13).

This is why Paul says in Titus 2:11-12 that grace instructs us to *deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age* as we stay awake with watchful hearts, looking for Christ's coming. According to Titus 1:1, this is *the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness* (also see 2 Timothy 2:25-3:9). A watchful heart is one that works together with the Holy Spirit to guard the good deposit we have been entrusted with (2 Timothy 1:14).

In the end we'll either deny our sinful desires, putting them to death by the Spirit, or deny Christ and His power to overcome our sin. The Bible teaches that Satan has "power over death" (Hebrews 2:14-15). When we walk in the place of death, the place of sin, Satan has dominion over us. When we obediently walk in submission to God's grace, which is His way of escape from the sinful nature through the power of the Holy Spirit, he loses control over us.

This is why Satan continually attempts to deceive the church to return to the place where he can once again have power over them. All of his doctrines are set up to allow the Christian to walk in sin with a false sense of peace. As with Adam and Eve, he attempts through seduction of the fleshly senses to get us to doubt God's word (Genesis 3:1-5). When Christians turn away in unbelief, as Israel did in the wilderness (Hebrews 3-4), he has us.



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Yielding to Satan's seduction cost Adam and Eve their place with God. Through a similar deception of the enemy, many of God's children now believe this could never happen to them. Until they repent (Revelation 2:5, 16, 21; 3:3, 19), Christians who accept Satan's lies as truth will find themselves in the same position; in danger of being cast out of God's Presence.

Paul exhorts believers in Romans 6 to not let sin reign in our bodies. As Christians, we have been given God's power to be set free from our corrupt natures (2 Peter 1:3-4). This is the power of the Holy Spirit to transform that many Christians in the last days will deny (2 Timothy 3:1-5). In Romans 6 Paul tells us to not present ourselves to sin which results in death, but to offer ourselves to God as slaves of righteousness (good works in Christ Jesus) which results in sanctification. As a Christian we still have a choice, either to obey the new power within us, or not.

Paul confesses of his past ignorance in 1 Timothy 1:13-14 when he acted "ignorantly in unbelief," not understanding God's way. He speaks of when he was formerly, *a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. And yet I was shown mercy, because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus.*

God's mercy is revealed in these verses to those who act without possessing the correct knowledge. This is why it's so dangerous for a Christian to have the correct knowledge of God because of the Holy Spirit who has come to them, and then turn away. Their judgment will rightly be worse (2 Peter 2:20-22).

This is also why Hebrews 10:28-31 says;

*Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

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This should send a chill up every Christian's spine. The fear of the Lord is to keep us from sinning. A good, healthy respect of Almighty God will help us keep our place in Him. The sanctifying work of the Spirit is there to cleanse us, thereby empowering us to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood so that grace and peace may be ours in "fullest measure" (1 Peter 1:1-2).

The truth is that which will open our understanding to the grave danger of fighting the Holy Spirit in this process. Presumptive arrogance of His salvation while walking in stubbornness against His will for your life will cause many to be cut off from Christ (Romans 11:19-22).

Titus 3:5-7 says, *He saved us not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.* If we stopped right here many would say, "See, it says right there that our works of righteousness really won't affect my salvation one way or the other." In order to have a better understanding we need to read the next verse.

Verse 8 says, *This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, **so that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds.** These things are good and profitable for men.* The statement to "be careful to engage in good deeds" goes right past you if you don't really believe in the necessity of them. I pray that you now understand what the Spirit is presently declaring to the church. The knowledge of this truth, and then putting it into practice as doers of the Word, will determine our place in the coming judgment of the Lord.

### The Lord's Good Work Within Us

In declaring the faithfulness of God, Paul says in Philippians 1:6, *He who began a good work in you will perfect* ["to bring to an end, to accomplish, to complete, to perfect"] *it until the day of Christ Jesus.* This is a promise from God regarding the keeping of

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His part in the covenant, bringing to completion His salvation. By not continuing in belief, walking in obedience to the leading of His Spirit, we are calling Him a liar.

In Colossians 1:9-12 Paul makes known the vital importance of being *filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding*. It is, as Paul stated, *so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord*. This specific manner of life is pleasing to Him as we bear fruit *in every good work*.

Paul also speaks of our qualification by the Father to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. This is the necessity of trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord (Ephesians 5:10). Obedience to the word of righteousness is what enables us to enter in. This is not optional or something to take lightly. If you and I do not seek out His will we will not be able to “do” what is necessary to share in the inheritance of Christ, His salvation. The doctrines of demons have strategically removed mankind’s part in this.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 Paul says, *Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen* [“to make stable, to make firm, to render constant”] *your hearts in every good work and word*. A weak heart is an unstable heart, one that has not yet been established through obedience to the Spirit’s leading in good works.

Notice the word “eternal” in verse 16 being linked by Paul with God’s grace. As I’ve already said, it’s only as we continue in the boundary of God’s grace that the Holy Spirit leads us in that we find ourselves in a place of (eternal) security, of safety and deliverance. We forfeit all this when we fall away from Christ in unbelief, outside the boundaries of His “good works” that we should walk in (Ephesians 2:10).

Paul’s theme of good works in Christ Jesus continues in 2 Timothy. In chapter 2, verse 19, he warns Christians, saying, *“The Lord knows those who are His,”* and, *“Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness.”* In the following verses, 20-22, he explains why;

*Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor*

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*and some to dishonor. Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful [“easy to make use of”] to the Master, prepared for every good work. Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.*

Paul states that if we cleanse ourselves from dishonorable, wicked, disgraceful works we will be a “vessel of honor.” To cleanse ourselves is the ongoing *work* of a Christian. The Holy Spirit will convict us of our sin. We then choose to rid ourselves from it, or let it remain, causing us to be unprepared for every “good work.”

Within the tabernacle in the wilderness, and the subsequent temples, there was a holy place, and the most holy place (the holy of holies). In the holy place the priests were required to put oil in the lamps in order to keep them burning. This represents the age we still dwell in. The oil represents the Spirit of God who is poured out within the vessels of honor that turn to the Lord’s reproof in their life by doing what He commands (Proverbs 1:23). We still have a part in making sure the lamps are burning.

In contrast, within the holy of holies there was nothing but the light of God’s glorious Presence. This is the promised place in Christ where we are heading at the end of this age. The beginning of the age to come will be when mankind will have finally gained the glory of God. There will be nothing artificial in this place within His faithful servants, nothing man-made. Until then, the Lord expects us to work together with Him so as to keep our lamps burning. As I said, we have a responsibility in salvation that the doctrines of demons have intentionally removed.

Negligence in this “good work” has caused many Christian’s lights to go out. Through acceptance of the devil’s lies they now stumble about in the dark while declaring to be in the light. Jesus warned His followers in Luke 11:35, saying, *Watch out that the light in you may not be darkness.* He also said in Matthew 6:35, *If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!* Jesus taught that a person can gain His light within them and then lose it. If anyone teaches otherwise let him be accursed.

Paul commands us through the authority of Christ to flee from

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evil and to pursue what is right with others who desire the same. To pursue means “to run swiftly in order to catch a person or thing, to run after, to press on: figuratively, used of one who in a race runs swiftly to reach the goal.” Metaphorically it’s described as “to pursue, to seek after eagerly, earnestly endeavor to acquire.” This is the work of faith I’ve been speaking of that brings salvation to completion; the work of *pursuing* sanctification (holiness) without which no one will see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14)!

*Chapter Twelve*

**Good Works And The Light**

**J**esus told His followers;

*You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do men light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)*

According to the Lord, letting our light shine before men is associated with others being able to behold our “good works,” thereby bringing glory to God. Works of law do the exact opposite. They glorify self, hiding Christ’s light of salvation for those living in darkness.

The Lord has chosen to reveal His Way of salvation to the world through His servants. Our obedience to Him allows His light to shine through us. Our disobedience lessens, or even turns off His light. The level of our obedience is similar to a dimmer switch. The greater the obedience, the greater the light. The less the obedience, the less the light shines.

In his letter to the Christians in Rome, Paul refers in Romans 13:11-14 to the “deeds (works) of darkness.” He is warning them,

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and us, that certain works will actually remove their armor of light. He says;

*And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we [first] believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.*

In order to keep the light of Christ, His protection against the powers of darkness, Paul says we need to stop walking in sin and, instead, walk in obedience. This is why so many Christians walk in defeat. Our protective armor is removed through disobedience to God's commands. Putting on the armor of light is putting on the provision of Christ, His protective garment, through "proper" behavior. To act improperly is to provide for the flesh, keeping it uncovered, alive and empowered.

This is what the Lord referred to in Revelation 3:17, while rebuking the church in Laodicea, as being "naked." By not putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, our flesh, our corrupt sinful nature is exposed for all to see.

Those who choose to continue practicing evil deeds prefer to walk in the obscurity of darkness so as not to be exposed. They will not draw near to God, allowing the search light of His Spirit to examine their hearts. Jesus said,

*This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God. (John 3:19-21/NIV)*

Because I am a lover and a follower of Jesus Christ, I desire to move toward His light. As I do this, my sinful nature seems to

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become more stimulated. I have learned, as Paul did, that this is due to the greater knowledge of God's law, His commandments. Any area within me that has not been brought into submission under the control of the Holy Spirit is aroused at the presence of the law (Romans 7:5).

God's search light in my spirit is not meant to condemn me, but to make me aware of that which He desires to bring into submission. This is the difficult, sometimes discouraging way of the cross every Christian must walk in order to take off the condemned, sinful nature and put on the Lord Jesus Christ. It's easy at this point to fall into the devil's condemnation, agreeing with him of our "unworthiness" before God. Yes, I do have this area of exposed sin, but praise be to God, I will now look to the One who can set me free from it, covering me with His garment of righteousness!

One of the definitions for evil in John 3:19 is "hurtful, causing pain and trouble." Evil deeds, whether it be through a Christian or non-Christian, always affect more than just ourselves. It causes many problems and troubles for all within darkness' wicked influence (see Psalm 139:23-24 and 1 Chronicles 4:9-10). Its tentacles are far reaching.

Paul says in Ephesians 5:8-18 that we are to walk as the children of light, not participating in the unfruitful deeds (works) of darkness. Walking in this way is how the children of God will "arise from the dead" (dead works), resulting in Christ shining on us. This is how we will gain His glory at the end of this age. Only those who hear and do what we are being commanded in this midnight hour will rise and shine, proving ourselves to be doers of the word rather than just hearers who become self-deceived.

Jesus is crying out to His people, "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead and I will shine on you!" We are exhorted to be very careful how we live, *not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish* [a "foolish virgin"], *but understand what the Lord's will is.* A lack of pursuing this understanding will cause many to fall away from Christ.

Paul also refers in this Scripture to the fruitless deeds of darkness. Fruit bearing is very important in the Christian's walk. It



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shows how connected we are to the Vine, who is Christ, proving the authenticity of our faith (for much more on the subject of fruit bearing, see my book on small groups and discipleship titled “Walking In The Light”).

Jesus said in Matthew 7:19, *Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.* Good fruit, the fruit of the Spirit, is that which manifests the life and deeds of Christ through us to others. Unfruitful works, dead works that cause us to be cut down, result in the light of God’s glorious Presence being hidden to the world, as well as the removal of our armor. This is why we MUST be more serious in our avoidance of them lest we “shrink back to destruction.” Instead, let’s be among those who by their Spirit led good works, bring to completion their faith “to the preserving of the soul” (Hebrews 10:39).

Jesus said the scribes and the Pharisees did all their works to be seen by men. This is the case for all whose works are works of law. They’re not works of faith that bring glory to God. Instead, they are done with the purpose of self-glorification. Walking in this matter, they receive their fruitless reward in full.

## *Chapter Thirteen*

# “I Know Your Deeds”

**A**s I mentioned in an earlier chapter, the church in Sardis wasn't the only church to hear in their rebuke, “I know your deeds” (Revelation 3:1). Jesus said this to five of the seven churches mentioned in Revelation, chapters 2-3. Our works are very important to the Lord. This is why the devil has come up with his own doctrines of deception for God's people. Good works affect our effectiveness against the enemy, and, ultimately, our place in Christ.

In His rebuke written to the angel of the church in Ephesus the Lord declared;

*I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and **do the deeds you did at first**; or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place-- unless you repent. (Revelation 2:2-5)*

The Christians in Ephesus had left their “first love.” In this state, Jesus said they had fallen, and needed to repent. To fall is “to

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descend from a higher place to a lower, to fall from a state of uprightness, to fall under judgment.” Metaphorically, it means “to fall under judgment, to come under condemnation.” I hear some saying to me, “Romans 8:1 says, *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*” There’s more in the next verses which, because of spiritual blindness, they totally disregard.

Paul said in Romans 8:2-4;

*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak [“powerless”] as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”*

The works of “the law of sin and of death” are condemned works. As I’ve already stated numerous times, the only works that are acceptable to the Lord, fulfilling the law, are the works of faith which are done according to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Paul warns his fellow Christians in Romans 8:12-14, saying;

*Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation-- but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds [“wicked doings”] of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (NIV)*

In the previous chapter, Paul had shared his own frustration with the discovery of the sinful state of his fallen nature, referred to as “flesh.” He discovered, as all Christians will, that the desire from the new nature of Christ placed within us is in a constant battle with the old nature as to who is going to rule. It’s only as we work together with the Spirit, putting to death the wicked deeds He reveals within us, that we will live. In the end, this is how we become “living beings,” filled with God’s Spirit of life.

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Paul said in Romans 7:18-19, *I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good [the “good works”] I want to do; no, the evil [the “evil deeds”] I do not want to do-- this I keep on doing.* (NIV)

His total frustration with the war that was going on within him as a Christian brought him to the conclusion of the last two verses in chapter 7; *Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.* (NAS)

His frustration led to the way of escape he laid out for us in chapter 8 which, when put into practice, sets us free. As I have discovered, a lack of being a “doer” of the word is the reason for my continued bondage. The Lord has promised that in every temptation He will provide a way of escape for us (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Paul continues in Romans 8:20-23;

*For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.* (NIV)

This is the state of every follower of Christ. We are brought, as Paul was, by the plan of God, to the state of total frustration with our continuous inner sin problem. This occurs so that we will see the dire necessity of dependence upon unconditional surrender to the Holy Spirit in order to be liberated from the power of sin over us. “Doing” what God says is our only way out of this body of death.

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The Lord purposely brings us to this place so that we come to the realization that “apart from Me you can DO nothing” (John 15:5). In order to be “free indeed,” we must come to the place of utter abandonment to the will of God.

The deception of the devil in this process is there to cause us to fall away from Christ. He has another plan, another doctrine, whose goal is to create a false sense of security in the heart of a Christian. Because the time for our full liberation from the body of corruption draws near, the Lord is exposing his lies. Death will be swallowed up in the victory of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:50-57).

Paul exhorts us in 1 Corinthians 15:58, saying, *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in **the work of the Lord**, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.* Doing the good work of the Lord is never in vain. In fact, it’s how this mortal is going to put on immortality. There is no other way.

James speaks of being doers of the word, not just hearers who become self-deceived (James 1:22-25). Deception is always self-induced. It’s a result of not being a doer of *works*, “good” works of faith as led by the Holy Spirit.

Verse 25 is key in this passage. It says, *But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty **and continues in it**, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.* True and lasting liberty is found in doing the will of God, by continuing in it.

This is what our nation, the land of “liberty for all” no longer understands, or will even listen too. The result is the incredible amount of bondage within the church and, therefore, our society. It will get worse before it gets better. Pride must run its course before some will look up for their deliverance. Unfortunately, as the Lord spoke to my wife, many will instead curse God and die.

Verse 25 says that we must continue in God’s “perfect law of liberty,” doing the works it commands, in order to be blessed in what we “do.” The lack of God’s blessing on our land is the proof that God’s people, the channel of blessings or curses to the rest of the world, are walking in disobedience. We must remember from where we have fallen, repent, and do the deeds (works) we did at

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first (Revelation 2:5). We have not continued in the work He desires us to.

The lack of liberty within our nation is proof that the church in this nation no longer walks in God's perfect law (the law that leads us into His perfection). The removal of our "lampstand" among the nations is evidence that we are in a state of rebellion. Church leadership has become so stiff-necked and arrogant within the churches in America that judgment is our only cure. The hope of the Lord offered to us now is individual repentance for protection in the imminent discipline of the Lord that quickly approaches, and in fact, has already begun.

The judgments of God that are coming to the earth at the end of this age are to cause mankind to repent of the works we have done in our own strength, by our own power. It is God's last call to repentance before the day of His wrath is poured out upon us. Amazingly, even with all of the chaos and destruction all around them, many will still shake their fist in stubbornness at the Lord.

In Revelation 9:20-21 John describes the hard hearts of these people during this time of great tribulation. He says;

*And the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.*

Now is the time to repent. Today is the day of salvation. May God have mercy on us.

### The Finishing Work Of Jesus

"It is finished..." Through this proclamation on the cross, Jesus declared His accomplishment concerning all that was necessary for man to be redeemed. His full submission to the plan and will of God for His life on earth was brought to completion at Calvary. This is why Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1:18, *For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are*

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*being saved* [in the process of sanctification] *it is the power of God unto salvation.* The power of God's victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil are all found at the cross.

While on earth, Jesus humbled Himself and willingly took a lesser position. His identification with us in that place of humility, and the ensuing agony in death are what granted Him all authority in heaven and on earth. God has chosen to redeem His creation through those who willingly respond, like Jesus, to the call to enter into this lesser place in man's eyes.

Things on earth do not change when the Lord cannot find someone to stand in the gap. He has chosen to work through weak vessels to shame the things that are strong, that no man should boast before Him (1 Corinthians 1:27). It is only as we join Him in the death of our wills that God's name will be glorified on earth.

In order for this age to end, we must finish the course He lays out before us through daily submission to His Spirit. Our attitude should be that of Paul who said in Acts 20:24, *I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus...* The Lord's work of salvation will be finished on earth as we follow His example and do the "good works" we were created in Christ Jesus to walk in (Ephesians 2:10).

In John 17:4, Jesus said in His prayer to the Father, *I have brought You glory on earth by completing the work You gave me to do.* Again, this age will be brought to completion when God's people complete His good works, thereby glorifying His name on earth. This is why Satan has created false doctrines that deemphasize the need to walk in good works. It's for the continuation of his domination over fallen mankind.

The good news is that, through obedience to the truth, the complete truth now being revealed at the end of this age, the devil's lies will be exposed. His lies will be exposed in order to cleanse and expose the "feet" of Christ's Body, the ones touching, or on the earth. Once everything in creation has been brought in subjection under the feet of Christ, Satan will be crushed (Romans 16:20). A loud voice will then proclaim in heaven, *Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the*

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*authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down... (Rev. 12:10)*

May the Lord fill us with a spirit of wisdom and understanding in order to prepare our hearts for His glorious return. *He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen. (Revelation 22:20-21)*