

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

IN THIS WORLD, WE EXPERIENCE SUFFERINGS: BUT GLORY IS COMING

SECOND CORINTHIANS

✠ II CORINTHIANS

An overview of the Book of Second Corinthians, by Given O. Blahely

Lesson #43

COMMENTARY ON: 11:1-4

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4

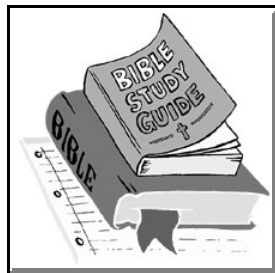
"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

A REASON FOR CONCERN

The spiritual posture of the Corinthians had opened the door of concern in Paul. He knew that no individual or church that is walking in the light, living by faith, and walking in the Spirit could experience the conditions found in Corinth. They were the result of carnal mindedness and living "after the flesh." The Corinthians had not mortified the deeds of the body, and therefore all manner of carnality had surfaced among them. Although they were making progress back to the norm of spiritual life, there were some among them that were exerting unholy influences – not the least of which was the derision of Paul, whom Jesus had given to them (1 Cor 3:5). Now Paul affirms that he is concerned about them being deceived by Satan's cunning, so that their minds would become corrupted, and they stray from pure and sincere devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-2

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. for in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven"



Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



The Epistle of Second Corinthians

Lesson Number 43



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO BUILDING THE FAITH AND ENHANCING THE HOPE OF THOSE WHO ARE WORKING OUT THEIR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: AMPLIFIED or AMP = Amplified Bible, (1965), ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ESV=English Standard Version (2001), IE = International English, ISV = International Standard Version (1967), JPS = Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LIVING = Living Bible (1971), MONTGOMERY = Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD = Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS = J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT = BISHOP'S New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakh (1985), Webster=The Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS = William's New Testament (1937), TNK = JPS Tanakh (1985), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE= Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862).

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG=Friberg Lexicon, UBS=UBS Lexicon, LOUW-NIDA=Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT=Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER=Thayer's Greek Lexicon

AN EPISTLE WRITTEN TO A CHURCH THAT WAS MOVING AWAY FROM ITS CARNALITY, YET LACKED MUCH INSIGHT. HERE IS A STRONG APPEAL TO PERFECT HOLINESS IN THE FEAR OF THE LORD.

----- Lexicon and Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----

A CAUSE FOR CONCERN

“^{10:14} Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me.² For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.³ But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.⁴ For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.” (2 Corinthians 11:1-4)

INTRODUCTION

How serious is it when a church does not “grow up into” Christ “in all things” (Eph 4:15)? What can be said in favor of dawdling in spiritual infancy, never advancing beyond the toddler stage? What about remaining unable to receive “meat,” and having to remain on a diet of “milk?” What can be said of a church that is not capable of edifying and admonishing one another? What of a congregation that is taken in by false teachers, being brought to the point where they embrace false views of Christ, the Spirit, and the Gospel? What does Jesus expect from His church – all of it? Or is it even necessary that the church be

measured at all? Is it a kind of end of itself, with nothing more expected from it than mere existence?

We know from Scripture that the church is assessed by Jesus – while it remains in this world. Anyone or anything that is represented as being associated with Jesus is subject to Divine measurement and assessment. This heavenly manner was revealed to John on the isle of Patmos. “*And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein*” (Rev 11:1).

Notice what is said.

“**Given to me.**” The measuring rod was given to John himself. He was to perform the measurement with this Divinely supplied media. God had purposes and expectations for what was to be measured. The angel would not perform this measurement, or assessment, but will demand that John get up and do it.

“**A reed like unto a rod.**” This was a fixed standard of measurement – “like unto a rod.” It was not subject to variation, whether reduction or

The rise of carnality in any person or church also gives rise for concern about being thoroughly deceived— by Given O. Blakely

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enlargement – “like unto a rod.” What was measured with this “reed” might vary, but the standard of measurement would not.

“Rise and measure the temple of God.” This is where God is intended to dwell, and is a depiction of the church in its entirety. As it is written, “*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are*” (1 Cor 3:16-17). Again, it is written concerning the people of God, “*In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit*” (Eph 2:21-22). This is a call to measure what calls itself the “church,” wherever it is found. God Himself has no need to perform the measurement, for “*the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity*” (2 Tim 2:19). This is a measurement that man will be asked to accomplish, and the means by which it is to be measured is supplied from heaven. No human measurements

are allowed! What is the church? How do men define it? What is its purpose? Measure the temple!

“Rise and measure . . . the altar.”

This is the means of atonement, the basis for reconciliation, and the means for the expiation of sin. What is being presented as the means of Divine acceptance? What kind of altar is used to feed the people and sustain their souls? What is the declared ground of their acceptance? What are they being told is the reason for God receiving them – or have they even been told that He does receive them. Measure the altar!

“Rise and measure . . . them that worship therein.”

What about the “*worshippers?*” – the people – individual members of the church? What kind of individuals are they? Do they measure up to the Divine standard? Are they “*washed,*” “*sanctified,*” and “*justified?*” Are they separated from the world, living by faith, and seeking the things that are above? Are they born again, and do they live by every word of God? Do they have new hearts and new spirits, and do they conduct themselves in the world as Jesus did? Measure the people!

“Leave out” the “court which is without the temple, and measure it not.”

John is told NOT to measure the outer court – the place where people milled about, close to the temple, but not actually in it. That part of the professed church represents those who “*know not God*” – the Gentiles. These have a form of godliness, but deny its power (2 Tim 3:5). They “*profess that they know God, but in works deny Him*” (Tit 1:15). Such people are left out of the measurement because they have “*neither part nor lot in this matter*” (Acts 8:21). Their religion is nothing more than chatter. They have neither interest in, nor access to, the things of God. They are excluded. Do not measure them!

Think of some of the “*measuring*” that is recorded in the Epistles.

- ☛ ROMANS. “*Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God*” (Rom 2:17). “*Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?*” (Rom 2:23). “*And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed*” (Rom 13:11). “*Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way*” (Rom 14:13).
- ☛ CORINTHIANS. “*For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*” (1 Cor 3:3). “*Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?*” (1 Cor 6:7). “*For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it*” (1 Cor 11:18).
- ☛ GALATIANS. “*O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?*” (Gal 3:1) “*Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace*” (Gal 5:4). “*Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?*” (Gal 5:7).
- ☛ EPHESIANS. “*Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him*

Are they born again, and do they live by every word of God? Do they have new hearts and new spirits, and do they conduct themselves in the world as Jesus did? Measure the people!

labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph 4:28). "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph 5:14).

- **PHILIPPIANS.** "I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord" (Phil 4:2).
- **COLOSSIANS.** "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances" (Col 2:20).

AWAY?

Paul said Jesus would not come until "there come a falling away first" (2 Thess 2:3). He spoke of a time, future to his own time, when "some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim 4:1). It would be a time when "they will not endure sound doctrine," but would "gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear."^{NIV} Indeed, Paul said, "they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned to fables" (2 Tim 4:3-4). Elsewhere he declared that such people would not become altogether irreligious, but would maintain a shell of religiosity, while having an unchanged

own (Phil 3:8-9), other things have now moved into the forefront. There are religious careers, the making of successful religious institutions, worldly recognition, the satisfaction of carnal masses, and security in this world. Even though Jesus stated that a man's family, as well as his own personal life, must not come before Him (Luke 14:26), yet such pursuits are now considered noble and advantageous within the church. Churches no longer require what Jesus did – that if a person does not forsake "all that he hath," he "cannot" be Christ's disciple (Luke 14:33).

Christ is no longer the theme of preaching, but is merely an adjunct to the church's agenda. For the most part, professing Christians are fundamentally ignorant of Christ, His nature, His accomplishments, His purpose, His present activity, and His soon return. This is the day of "another Jesus" (2 Cor 11:4) – when a Savior is being preached that does not fit into the Scriptural representation of the Son of God.

For some time, insightful men have known this falling away has, indeed, taken place. In fact, we are experiencing its universal sway in the world. It is our hope that it is in its last stages.

It is this departure from the centrality of Christ that has caused the condition of the modern church. Its failure to embrace the real Christ has made it vulnerable to the devil. The world has thus been more appealing to it, and the Word of God is not seen as essential to the maintenance of spiritual life. Too much room has been made for the devil, and too little for Jesus! All of this has occurred in spite of the frequent and focused exhortations of the Spirit.

- **THESSALONIANS.** "For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies" (2 Thess 3:11).

In the Revelation, the Lord Jesus measured the seven churches in Asia: "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea" (Rev 1:11). He told them of the good things found in two of them, and of things He had against five of them. **They were measured.** He measured their assemblies, their doctrine, and the individuals among them.

I do not believe enough has been said about these things – things like Paul is saying to the Corinthians. There is too much allowance of things with which Jesus has absolutely no tolerance at all.

WHAT HAS CAUSED A FALLING

character or nature. They would have "a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (2 Tim 3:5). **Their corruption would be so deep, and their defection so extensive, that believers are admonished, "from such turn away"** (2 Tim 3:1-5).

For some time, insightful men have known this falling away has, indeed, taken place. In fact, we are experiencing its universal sway in the world. It is our hope that it is in its last stages. This departure has allowed universal division within the body of Christ, a staggering diversity of wayward teaching, immorality, the introduction of the wisdom of men, and an unquenchable love and quest for the things of this world. It is like Corinth on an exaggerated scale. **What has caused this to happen?**

This is the result of Jesus Christ, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, being upstaged. He is no longer the focus of attention in the nominal church. Whereas the kingdom standard is to "win Christ" and "be found in Him not having a righteousness" of our

- "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses" (1 Tim 6:12).

- "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col 3:1-2).

- "... let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the

joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb 12:1-2).

- “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor 7:1).
- “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” (1 Pet 5:8-9).

Why Are These Things Not Being Said?

These are representative of a host of similar exhortations that are both fervent and frequent. How is it that so many are unaware of them? It is because they are not being shouted from the

housetops! And why is this so? It is because exhortations like this do not have a place in the agenda of the modern church. **What it is doing does not require words like this, and that is the reason why they are not being declared!** There can be no other reason for the suppression of the clarion call to separation, godliness, and a heavenly mindset! There is no epistle where such admonitions are not found. There is no Gospel record of Jesus’ words and deeds that do not contain them. The book of Acts is replete with them. Even the book of the Revelation cries out for the churches to hear what the Spirit is saying. **Only a stubborn and twisted will can ignore these things. Only an insensitive and hard heart can be diverted to lesser things.**

See, this is why Paul is so fervent in his quest to correct the Corinthians. He is not simply trying to get them to act better. **If they continue in this bent to unrighteousness, they will be excluded**

from the kingdom of God, for “*the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God*” (1 Cor 6:9-10). What they had done was unrighteous – there is no other way to identify divisions, carnality, immorality, disruption, not discerning the Lord’s body, and denying the resurrection of the dead – all of which were present in their assembly! What else can such things be called? They are beyond all controversy, “*unrighteous!*” And, if salvation does not, in fact, deliver us from such things, precisely how can it possibly be termed “*salvation?*”

WHAT PAUL IS DOING

Paul is seeking to rescue the Corinthians from the sin that has ensnared them. They had been diverted to the broad road that leads to destruction, and he is calling them back to the highway – “*the way of holiness* – that God Almighty had raised up for men (Isa 35:8). Like David protected his sheep, Paul is fighting for their souls, and doing battle for their salvation.

BEAR WITH ME A LITTLE

“^{11:1} **Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me.**”

In this text, Paul is, as is was, thinking out loud. We are reading the thoughts of his heart as he seeks to break through the crust of carnality that had been forming on the heart of the Corinthians. We will find there is a certain poverty to language that necessitates the presence of insight on the part of the readers.

WOULD TO GOD

“*Would to God . . .*” Other versions read, “*Oh,*”^{NKJV} “*I wish,*”^{NASB} “*I hope,*”^{NIV} “*would that,*”^{ASV} “*If only,*”^{NAB} and “*I earnestly wish,*”^{WEB}

Etymologically, the expression “*would to God*” comes from a single Greek word – *Οφελον* (of-el-on). Lexically it means “*wishing a thing had happened which has not happened, or that a thing will be done which probably will not be done,*”^{THAYER} “*To express an interjection*

concerning an unattainable wish, would that (if only),^{FRIBERG} “*a fixed form introducing an unattainable wish,*”^{UBS} and “*that which ought to be if one only had one’s wish.*”^{LOUW-NIDA}

As I have said, there is a certain poverty in language, so that it is often unable to deliver the thorough thought of the person. From the standpoint of language alone, this appears to be nothing more than a personal desire. But that is not at all the case, for Paul’s entire quest was live unto the Lord. His life confirmed the truth of his confession,

“*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me*” (Gal 2:20). That was not the mere expression of a distant desire! It was actually how Paul lived. **It is also the only kind of life that is acceptable to God, for salvation does not deliver men, only to leave them living for themselves alone.** The truth of the matter was that Paul had taken hold of the Gospel he preached, and set himself before us as an example of the regenerated life (Phil 3:7-14). Having

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stated the purpose and quest he had adopted, he urged believers, *“Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you”* (Phil 3:15).

Paul’s desire, therefore, was

and he knows it. He also knows that, as James affirmed, *“A double minded man is unstable in all his ways”* (James 1:8) – and listening to contradicting messages does produce a double mind!

These words unveil that Paul was not accustomed to speaking about

little or no value to those who are at home in this world. We also ought to note that this is the only place Paul provides such an extensive listing of the difficult experiences into which his commission led him. **The fact that he endured them, continuing to be faithful to his calling, confirms his legitimacy.** It also serves to expose the nature of his opponents, who criticized him for things that may very well have resulted from his afflictions.

It at once becomes apparent that this is not the kind of boasting in which “the flesh” engages. Such things are of little or no value to those who are at home in this world. We also ought to note that this is the only place Paul provides such an extensive listing of the difficult experiences into which his commission led him.

actually before the Lord, and he uttered it as though it was accompanied by a prayer that God would bring it to pass. While the English expression *“would to God”* does not precisely reflect the grammatical structure of the Greek text, it does convey its spirit. I do not believe it can be supported by either Scripture or logic that Paul had any desire for the church that was not filtered through his faith, and laid open to the Lord.

BEAR WITH ME A LITTLE

“ . . . ye could bear with me a little in my folly . . . ” Other versions read, *“bear with me in a little folly,”*^{NKJV} *“bear with me in a little foolishness,”*^{NASB} *“put up with a little of my foolishness,”*^{NIV} *“be patient with me as I keep on talking like a fool,”*^{LIVING} *“have borne with a little foolish boasting on my part,”*^{WEYMOUTH} and *“bear with me while I indulge in a little [so-called] foolishness.”*^{AMPLIFIED}

Paul realizes that the Corinthians are only partially listening to him. **They are tuned into other people and messages that compete with what Paul is saying,**

himself, which he ordinarily considered nothing more than *“folly,”* or foolishness. **Yet, the boasts of his critics have now compelled him to speak up, declaring what is involved in being a faithful apostle.** He will tell them how he has not sought any form of financial or material gain from them (vs 7-12). In this, he distinguishes himself from those false teachers to whom they had been listening. He also speaks extensively about the reproach that had been heaped upon him, and the unparalleled afflictions through which he has passed (vs 16-33). He will even tell them of his *“thorn in the flesh”* – an affliction given to him because of the abundance of revelations that had been given to him (12:1-11). He will also remind them that he wrought *“the signs of an apostle”* when he was among them (12:12) – although he does not stoop to itemize those *“signs,”* being unwilling to have that much *“folly.”*

It at once becomes apparent that this is not the kind of boasting in which *“the flesh”* engages. Such things are of

INDEED, BEAR WITH ME
“ . . . and indeed bear with me.”
 Other versions read, *“and indeed, you do bear with me,”*^{NKJV} *“but indeed, you are bearing with me,”*^{NASB} *“but you are already doing that,”*^{NIV} *“Do bear with me,”*^{NRSV} *“you do put up with me,”*^{BBE} *“and, indeed, ye suffer me,”*^{GENEVA} *“Do bear with me, and let me say what is on my heart,”*^{LIVING} *“Please do listen to me,”*^{WILLIAMS} and *“please try!”*^{PHILLIPS}

Under normal circumstances, Paul would have spent no time speaking of himself, for he considered that to be vain pursuit. Jesus had not sent him to tell of his own experiences, but to make known *“the unsearchable riches of Christ”* (Eph 3:8). Notwithstanding, because of the boasting of false teachers, and because of their influence upon the Corinthians, Paul sees fit to unveil more of himself – how he thinks, and what it has cost him to bring the Gospel to the Corinthians. **He knows that his critics can offer no evidences like this.** Thus he asks the Corinthians to bear patiently with him as he provides some facts that can be compared with those teachers who have been subverting them. He views the Corinthians differently than those who declare *“another Jesus,”* *“another Spirit,”* and *“another Gospel.”* He has different objectives than his critics. **His vision reaches further, and his intentions are more noble.** He will now ask them to consider the truth of the matter – how he really feels about them.

I AM JEALOUS OVER YOU

“ 2a For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy . . . ”

Every person who comes in the name of the Lord, or thinks himself to be in the service of the King, must consider

his attitude toward those to whom he ministers. What is his objective for them? What kind of future does he seek for

them? What is the purpose of his ministry to them? **These are the considerations of one who knows he is a steward, and will be called into to account for what he taught, and why he taught it.** Preaching and teaching are not religious careers, or a means of gaining wealth or fame.

I AM JEALOUS OVER YOU

“For I am jealous over you . . .”

Other versions read, *“I am jealous for you,”*^{NKJV} *“I feel,”*^{NRSV} *“I have a very great care for you,”*^{BBE} *“the jealousy that I feel for you,”*^{NJB} *“for I am zealous for you,”*^{YLT} *“I am anxious for you,”*^{LIVING} and *“My jealousy over you.”*^{PHILLIPS}

The word “jealous” comes from a word meaning, “to burn with zeal . . . to be zealous in the pursuit of good . . . to desire one earnestly, to strive after, busy oneself about him, to exert oneself for one (that he may not be torn from me),”^{THAYER} “a strong personal concern for someone,”^{FRIBERG} and “to be deeply committed to something, with the implication of accompanying desire – to be earnest, to set one’s heart on, to be completely intent upon.”^{LOUW-NIDA}

It is interesting that this same Greek word (ζήλω) is used in First Corinthians. There is has to do with earnestly desiring the “best” spiritual gifts. *“But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way”*(1 Cor 12:31). Here, however, Paul is not speaking of a zealous pursuit of spiritual gifts, but of an intense and unrelenting interest in those to whom he had ministered – those who were his own “work” in the Lord (1 Cor 9:1).

Only those who labor together with God (1 Cor 3:9) have such a passion for, and interest in, the welfare of those on whom their labor is expended. Such individuals stand out from mere religious professionals who, *“seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s”*(Phil 2:21). This involves a genuine love for the people of God, particularly those who have come within the sphere of the laborer’s influence.

Over the years, I have been privileged to come into contact with a few souls like this, who maintained an intense interest in my own welfare in Christ Jesus. I must confess that they have not been numerous, but all of them have had a calculated effect for good

upon my spirit. These dear souls were never guilty of setting meaningless trivia before me, or ignoring a carnal bent they may have detected in my walk. They always maintained a kingdom perspective of things, and earnestly sought to feed the flock of God.

There is a certain fervency that comes with serving the Lord. It is the sort of quality that drives mediocrity and casualness out of the chambers of labor, knowing they have no place in endeavors that are related to men obtaining the things God has reserved for those who love Him.

GODLY JEALOUSY

“. . . with godly jealousy . . .”

Other versions read, *“a Divine jealousy,”*

There is a certain fervency that comes with serving the Lord. It is the sort of quality that drives mediocrity and casualness out of the chambers of labor, knowing they have no place in endeavors that are related to men obtaining the things God has reserved for those who love Him.

^{NRSV} *“a jealousy which is of God,”*^{DARBY} *“with the jealousy of God,”*^{NAB} *“God’s own jealousy,”*^{NJB} *“the jealousy of God Himself,”*^{NLT} *“with zeal of God,”*^{YLT} *“with the deep concern of God Himself,”*^{LIVING} *“with a jealousy from God,”*^{IE} *“with a godly eagerness and Divine jealousy,”*^{AMPLIFIED} and *“is the right sort of jealousy.”*^{PHILLIPS}

The “jealousy” that has consumed Paul is actually the jealousy of God Himself – “godly jealousy.” In this matter, he has become a “partaker of the Divine nature.” You may recall that God has spoken concerning this aspect of His character. **He is a jealous God.**

☛ *“Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me”*(Ex 20:5).

☛ *“For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God”* (Exodus 34:14).

☛ *“Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee. For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God”* (Deut 4:23-24).

☛ *“Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and*

fourth generation of them that hate me”(Deut 5:9).

☛ *“Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you: (For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth”* (Deut 6:14-15).

☛ *“And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for He is an holy God; He is a jealous God: He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins”*(Josh 24:19).

☛ *“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for My holy name”* (Ezek 39:25).

- “Then will **the LORD be jealous** for his land, and pity his people” (Joel 2:18).
- “**God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies**” (Nahum 1:2).
- “So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; **I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy**” (Zech 1:14).
- “Thus saith the LORD of hosts; **I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury**” (Zech 8:2).

Also, intruders had come into the house of God and were placing wood, hay, and stubble upon the foundation that Paul had put in place. They were also corrupting those who were already in Christ, allowing for the outbreak of all manner of carnality.

Thus Paul, who not only worked together with God (1 Cor 3:9), but fellowshiped with the Lord Jesus (1 Cor 1:9) rose up in defense of the work of the Lord. **He would purge the offenders from the spiritual temple, like Jesus twice cleared them out of the Temple that was in Jerusalem** (John 2:13-17; Mk 11:15-17). During the first occasion, the disciples, upon beholding the purging of the Temple, “remembered that it was written, *The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up*” (John 2:17).

soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto **another gospel: which is not another;** but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Gal 1:6-8).

Paul was also jealous for them, with a “*godly jealousy*.” It was stated in these words, “*Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? They zealously affect you, but not well: yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them. But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you. My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you*” (Gal 4:19).

In this text, we are beholding the zeal of God’s house eating up Paul. This man, noted for his gentility, has been awakened like a sleeping giant. He will aggressively seek the retrieval of the Corinthians from the hands of the wicked imposters that had entered their gates.

THE RELEVANCE OF THIS TEXT

When Paul wrote this epistle, false teachers were just beginning to spread. They were preaching a Jesus, but not the real one. Paul said of them, “*For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s*” (Phil 2:21). Again he said of them, “*For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things*” (Phil 3:18-19). At the time, their influence was being felt here and there. Now, however, the condition is not the exception, but it is the rule. Those with a heart for the Gospel know this to be the case. The theological waters have been so muddied that scarcely an elemental statement can be made without the filth of the earth upon it. Division, though strictly forbidden by the Spirit (1 Cor 1:10), and is declared to be a work of the flesh (heresies, or factions – Gal 5:20). Those who cause divisions are to be avoided after they have been identified (Rom 16:17), yet they reign supreme and nearly altogether uncontested within professing Christendom. Some even imagine that divisions are wholesome.

This “*jealousy*” had to do with two conditions. **First**, God’s jealousy was aroused when His people prostituted their affections, giving them to other gods. **Second**, it flamed up when His people were abused or opposed by others. Now, both of these conditions had occurred in Corinth.

Some of the people in that congregation had turned their attention to “*another Jesus,*” “*another Spirit,*” and “*another gospel*” (11:4). They had been turned from the Christ who united, to a false Christ who allowed division. They were turned from the God who had sent Paul to them, to teachers who had come in their own name. They had given their hearts to those who were not sent forth by God. It was not something innocent! Paul was not content to see people be drawn to other lovers.

In this text, we are beholding the zeal of God’s house eating up Paul. This man, noted for his gentility, has been awakened like a sleeping giant. He will aggressively seek the retrieval of the Corinthians from the hands of the wicked imposters that had entered their gates.

A SIMILAR STANCE

Paul took a similar stance toward the Galatians, even though their defection differed slightly. They were involved in a backward motion toward the Law. Yet, their condition had also been caused by the subtle entrance of false teachers. He said of them, “*O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?*” (Gal 3:1). They had also been subjected to “*another Gospel,*” and it had pushed them backward. “*I marvel that ye are so*

Since the mid-1500's there have been a few unusual men who have arisen and displayed a zeal for the recovery and purity of the church. Each of them

accented what they felt to be the key missing elements of their generation. However, it is generally true that all of them perceived their generation was marked by a gross ignorance of the Gospel, and of the Person and

accomplishments of the Lord Jesus. Empty religious form prevailed, and understanding was at a minimum.

It is time for more men of this caliber to arise – men who have a fervent

zeal for the church, and for the formation of Christ within the members. There is no difficulty within the church, whether moral or spiritual, that this formation would not address and resolve. Men are really “complete” in Christ (Col 2:10).

ESPOUSED TO ONE HUSBAND

“^{2b} . . . for I have espoused you to one husband . . .”

Having been exposed to a phenomenal amount of “evangelism” and “church growth programs,” I can tell you that the professing church has not done well in defining precisely what they are attempting to do in such activities. It is not enough to speak of “winning souls.” The Spirit has spoken “expressly” concerning the objective of Kingdom labors. This verse will identify one of those objectives.

I think it wise to enumerate some of the other statements concerning the purpose for preaching the Gospel, whether to bring men initially to Christ, or to bring them to maturity in Him. The nature of these statements will undergird the seriousness of the thought before us.

- ☛ “. . . that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me” (Acts 26:18).
- ☛ “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God” (Eph 3:10).
- ☛ “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God” (Eph 3:17-19).
- ☛ “That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father

of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 15:6).

- ☛ “. . . that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 1:8).
- ☛ “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power”

☛ “That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph 5:27).

Much of the condition of the modern church is owing to the fact that the objectives of those leading it are too low. They are nearer to the earth than they are to heaven. The above is but a sampling of the revealed objectives of God for the body of Christ. **I hardly see how anyone can in any sense be said to**

Now Paul will state the purpose that drove him when he first preached to the Corinthians – when he remained them for eighteen months, and in the writing of his two epistles to them. It will be apparent that his aim is in perfect harmony with what has elsewhere been stated as the purpose for the church.

(Eph 1:18-19).

- ☛ “That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God” (Phil 1:10-11).
- ☛ “. . . that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God” (Col 4:12).
- ☛ “Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2 Pet 3:14).

be serving Him if they are at variance with those objectives.

Now Paul will state the purpose that drove him when he first preached to the Corinthians – when he remained them for eighteen months, and in the writing of his two epistles to them. It will be apparent that his aim is in perfect harmony with what has elsewhere been stated as the purpose for the church.

I HAVE ESPOUSED YOU

“. . . for I have espoused you . . .”

Other versions read, “I have betrothed you,” NKJV “I promised you,” NIV “I promised you in marriage,” NRSV “you have been married by me,” BBE “I have prepared you,” GENEVA “I gave you all in marriage,” NJB “for I have coupled you,”

PNT and "I am presenting as fiancee."
PHILLIPS

As you can see, some of the translations come miserably short of what is intended by this expression.

The word "espoused" comes from the Greek word ἡρμοσάμην (har-mod-zoa-maan). Lexically it means, "promise to, give in marriage, be engaged to,"^{FRIBERG} "to fit together . . . to fit, adapt, prepare, make ready . . . hence, in marriage, to betroth,"^{LIDDELL-SCOTT}

Although the word can sometimes

". . . to one husband . . ." Other versions read, "to her one husband,"^{RSV} "unto one man,"^{BBE} "to a single husband,"^{NJB} "for one man only,"^{LIVING} and "to your true husband."^{PHILLIPS}

The "one Husband," is the Lord Jesus Christ, for whom believers are being reserved. He is not our husband yet, but that is the intention behind our conversion. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ: **that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised**

catches us unawares, our future will be nothing but fearful and dismal. Jesus made this clear in the parable of the ten virgins. Five of them were ready for the Bridegroom's return, and five were not. Only those who were ready were allowed to enter with the Bridegroom. The unprepared – all of them – were excluded. When the unprepared made what they felt to be adequate last-minute preparations, they asked to be granted entrance into the presence of the Bridegroom. "Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not" (Mat 25:11-12). Our Lord then gave this solemn word: "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Mat 25:13).

The truth of the matter was that the Corinthians were not ready for the return of the Bridegroom! They had allowed conditions to rise among them that were at variance with the Divine nature and with the very purpose of the Almighty God. Thus Paul accelerates his efforts to get them ready for the presentation of the bride to the Bridegroom. He wants them in that approved number, and he will labor zealously to that end. If they, as he also desired for the Thessalonians, are not his "crown of rejoicing . . . **in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming,**" his labor would all have been expended on them in vain (1 Thess 2:19). Men take counts now – and even glory in them. Real counts are yet to come.

The ultimate purpose of salvation is not to suite us to live a better life in this world. It is not to obtain more, have less difficulties, and be the envy of this present evil world. Rather, it is that we might be presented to "one Husband." That "husband" is not the world.

mean "join together," that is not its meaning here. **The idea behind espousal is preparation, not experience.** The marriage of the Son has not yet taken place, for the church has not yet been presented to Him pure and without spot. **Our espousal vows are now being put to the test.** However, the objective of every true laborer with God is to prepare the bride for her eternal union with the Bridegroom.

TO ONE HUSBAND

from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Rom 7:4).

The ultimate purpose of salvation is not to suite us to live a better life in this world. It is not to obtain more, have less difficulties, and be the envy of this present evil world. Rather, it is that we might be presented to "one Husband." That "husband" is not the world.

The aim is to be ready when the Bridegroom returns! If that return

PRESENT TO CHRIST

^{2c} . . . **that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.**"

What Paul did through his ministry was to reserve the Corinthians for Jesus. His purpose for doing so was that he might present them "as a chaste virgin to Christ." His intention started in this world, but that was never where it was intended to end!

THAT I MAY PRESENT YOU

" . . . that I may present you . . . "

Other versions read, "to give you,"^{BBE} and "for presentation."^{NJB}

There is a kind of holy hierarchy in the Kingdom of God. It begins with God, passes to Christ, then to Christ's laborers, then to Christ's body. The Father has delivered the kingdom to Christ (Dan 7:14; Matt 28:18; Eph 5:5; Rev 1:9). His aim is to bring the sons home to glory (Heb 2:10; 1 Pet 3:18). Christ has dispatched Paul to the Corinthians. His aim is open their eyes,

turning them darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they might receive forgiveness and an inheritance among the sanctified (Acts 26:18). In the end, when Christ's enemies have been publicly made His footstool, Paul will present the Corinthians to Christ (2 Cor 1:14; Phil 2:16; 1 Thess 2:19). Christ will present all of the saved to God the Father (1 Cor 15:24).

Paul knows that at that time, everyone that has been converted or

nourished under his ministry will pass through the fire of Divine scrutiny. Those who pass the “fire-test” will be proved to be like *“gold, silver, and precious stones.”* Those who fail that test will be shown to be nothing more than *“wood, hay, and stubble.”* In the first case, Paul will receive a reward. In the last case, he will suffer loss. In the case of the Corinthians, however, the loss would not be owing to his own labors, but to those false teachers who had penetrated the ranks of the Corinthians. Now Paul is laboring to get them back among those who will pass the “fire-test,” give credit to his own ministry so that he will lose nothing, and at last be forever with the Lord.

Over the years I have observed how very few ministers give the slightest indication of possessing such noble objectives. It seems to me that it has become fashionable to have an aim that is so low as to seek only earthly advantages for the people. If they are well, domestically advantaged, and economically independent, everything is thought to be all right. If there is no debt, no illness, no moral waywardness, and no physical hardship, it may seem as though everything is all right. However, when the blazing light of the glory of Christ shines all about us, none of those matters will be of any dominating significance. Then, all that will matter is if the Son of man will *“find faith on the earth”* (Lk 18:8). Will the individual be found *“in Him,”* not having a righteousness of his own (Phil 3:9). Will he be in *“fellowship”* with Christ (1 Cor 1:9), walking in the light (1 John 1:7), and walking *“in the Spirit”* (Gal 5:16-17).

Is it possible that a man will have given anything in exchange for his soul (Matt 16:26)? Will he be found living *“by every word of God”* (Lk 4:4). Will he have separated himself from the ungodly, and touched not the unclean things, as God admonished him to do (2 Cor 6:17). **Those are the things that will be of paramount importance.**

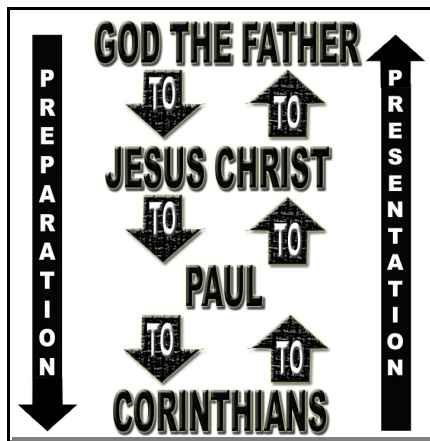
What advantage will it be to have lived in a time when very little was ever said about the resurrection of the dead, the coming of the Lord, and the day of judgment? What will be the lot of a people who were rarely, if ever, challenged to be holy, as God Himself is

holy (1 Pet 1:15-16). What if they have not been warned with persistence and power to *“love not the world, neither the things that are in the world”* (1 John 2:15)? Those who have been confined to such surroundings will **not** be ready for the coming of the Lord, and for a presentation to Him! What is more, those preachers and teachers who have cultured such a miserable environment will be trembling as unfaithful stewards before the Lord of glory. Their position will not be an enviable one

A CHASTE VIRGIN TO CHRIST

“... as a chaste virgin to Christ.”

Other versions read, *“to Christ... a pure virgin,”* ^{NASB} *“a pure virgin to Him,”* ^{NIV} *“to Christ... a pure bride,”* ^{RSV} *“completely holy to Christ,”* ^{BBE} *“a virgin pure for presentation to Christ,”* ^{NJB} *“a pure maiden,”* ^{LIVING} *“a faithful bride,”* ^{WEYMOUTH} and *“a fresh unspoiled girl.”* ^{PHILLIPS}



In the Revelation, John saw the presentation of the bride to the Lord Jesus, her *“husband.”* *“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away”* (Rev 21:2-4).

Later that glorified city is said to be the bride herself – the Lamb’s wife.

“And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal” (Rev 21:9-11).

Until that grand occasion, the bride is making herself ready for the marriage – to be joined to a spotless Husband. Therefore, it is written, *“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints”* (Rev 19:7-8).

I must acknowledge that as I consider the modern church, I am **NOT** brought to think of a *“chaste virgin”* – one that is unspoiled with the contaminants of *“this present evil world.”* The smell of the world is upon it, and the *“garments of salvation”* are not evident. It is too difficult to distinguish between the professed church and the world. In fact, sometimes such a distinction cannot be made at all.

The church has always had to deal with defilement within. However, this is a day when it can be said of it was once said of Israel: *“... the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment”* (Isa 1:5-6). If you were to remove professionals from the church whose ministry has solely to do with addressing problems, a significant reduction in staff numbers would occur.

A Serious Work

Rescuing the fallen is a noble work, indeed, but when it is the fallen within the church, it is very dangerous work as well. **It is of such a serious nature, that only the advanced are to**

engage in it. As it is written, “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, **ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted**”(Gal 6:1). Such a work is to be entered into with much fear, and a determination to avoid being contaminated by the situation. Jude wrote of such efforts, “And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others **save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh**” (Jude 1:22-23). This does not mean we save them by causing them to fear, threatening them with hell. The fear is to be in the one doing the rescuing, lest he be defiled by the very people he is seeking to save. One versions reads, “be careful that you aren’t contaminated by their sins.”^{NLT}

This by no means suggests that it is in order to leave those who have fallen to remain in a state of condemnation. Indeed, this is precisely why Paul is laboring so diligently with the Corinthians. **However, it is every believer’s business to avoid being in a situation where such a ministry is required.** The grace of God may very well, indeed, recover those who have fallen back into sin. But grace was not given primarily for that purpose! **It teaches a person to avoid retrogression, moving forward maturity and readiness for the appearing of the Lord.** As it is written, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ”(Titus 2:11-13). **If these conditions are not taking place, then the grace of God has been “frustrated” and rejected,** for these the things that grace unfailingly does.

TOO MUCH OF THE WORLD

Who does not know that there is too much “world” in the professing church? If this assessment is true, we have a serious contradiction on our hands. Jesus affirmed of Himself, “I am **not of this world!**”(John 8:23). He said of His kingdom, “My kingdom is **not of this world**” (John 18:36). He said of His disciples, “ye are **not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world**” John

15:19). He confessed to the Father, “they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John 17:14). And again He prayed, “They are **not of the world, even as I am not of the world**” (John 17:16). How, therefore, is it possible for a person to be effectively united to Christ and translated into His kingdom, yet remain fundamentally like the world? **The experience of salvation cannot contradict the revealed purpose of salvation.**

Add to this that one of the fundamental purposes for Jesus giving “himself for our sins,” was that He might “**deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God our Father**” (Gal 1:4). Add to that the solemn admonition of John: “**Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is **not in him****”(1 John 2:15). Add

description that is given of those who have been “redeemed **from the earth.**”

“These are they which were not defiled with women; for **they are virgins.** These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were **redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.** And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God”(Rev 14:4-5). Notice these unique traits.

- ☛ **PURE.** “Not defiled with women.” These are not guilty of spiritual fornication, prostituting their affection to the world.
- ☛ **NO UNHOLY INVOLVEMENTS.** “They are virgins.” These are presented wholly to the Lord Jesus.

The grace of God may very well, indeed, recover those who have fallen back into sin. But grace was not given primarily for that purpose! It teaches a person to avoid retrogression, moving forward maturity and readiness

to that the word of James: “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the **friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God**”(James 4:4). The gravity of that statement is sufficient to compel one to avoid friendship with the world at all cost.

One of the descriptions of those aligned with Christ is particularly pertinent to this lesson. This is a trait ascribed to the 144,000 “which were redeemed from the earth.” In particular, this vast throng is said to be “**all the tribes of the children of Israel**”(Rev 7:4). **Yet, their true uniqueness is said to be that of being with the “Lamb,” “having the Father’s name written in their foreheads,**” and being “redeemed from the earth”(Rev 14:1,3). In this respect, they are characterized as having been saved by Christ Jesus. Here is the

Their past has been removed, and they have been given a new nature that can only be wed to the Lord.

- ☛ **FAITHFUL.** “They follow the Lamb wherever He goes.” These people are **not** wayward, recalcitrant, unfaithful, and disobedient.
- ☛ **SEPARATED.** “They are redeemed from among men.” These people have been taken from among men “for His name”(Acts 15:14).
- ☛ **EXCLUSIVELY FOR GOD.** They are a “firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.” This is the Lord’s harvest, and is intended for the use of no one else.
- ☛ **WITHOUT PRETENSE.** There is “no guile found in their mouths.” These have been delivered from self-serving interests, and corrupt speech.

☛ **FAULTLESS.** *They are 'without fault before the throne of God.'*

Is there a single person in all of the world who can successfully defend the postulate that any individual or group of individuals will be **"forever with the Lord"** that cannot be so described? And, should such a thing be possible, what kind of honor will Jesus receive for it? If He died and rose again that we *"should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again"* (2 Cor 5:15), then precisely how can any other kind of life

Let there be an end to miserable attempts to justify sin remaining among the children of God! It does not belong in the house of God, which is *"the pillar and ground of the truth"* (1 Tim 3:15). The church is to rid itself of its garbage, whether it is practices or people! **Corinth had to do both, and Paul would not rest until it was done!**

That is the reason for these words of Paul, and for his threats to come against certain in the church who had vaunted themselves above what was right. Like Diotrephes opposed John,

are to be exposed – publicly and forthrightly. Paul is straightforward about this. The approach is to be done correctly, and in the spirit of Christ – **but it is to be done.** *"Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. **Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear**"* (1 Tim 5:19-20). There should be no fleshly fear in doing this where it is warranted.

All of this is intended to prepare men to be presented to Christ in a state of purity and thorough commitment. No person laboring together with God can allow himself to be turned aside from this objective. It is Christ's intention, and it must be ours as well. It is true that Babylon has inculcated a religious hierarchy upon men that is not from God. Men are made leaders of the church who have little or no acquaintance with the Lord and His ways. They are not engaged in leading and feeding the flock of God, and yet are said to have dominance over those who speak the Word of the Lord. This is not the truth, and it must not be treated as though it is true. **If ever it can be established that what has been declared is from the Lord, and accurately depicts His will and purpose for His people, no person must be allowed to oppose it, and treat the matter as though it was optional.**

I will go so far as to say the salvation of men is at stake in this matter. If *"the word of this salvation"* can be successfully opposed, how is it possible for the salvation of which it speaks to be experienced by the hearers? Seeing this, Paul waxes bold, and speaks with unusual clarity, that he might rescue the Corinthians from their downward plunge, and free them from false teachers.

If ever it can be established that what has been declared is from the Lord, and accurately depicts His will and purpose for His people, no person must be allowed to oppose it, and treat the matter as though it was optional.

be justified? How can a person live for self and gain advantage from Jesus?

Where is the soul who will dare to affirm that Jesus will gather a people to Himself who have **not** lived *"for Him?"* ^{NKJV} Where is there the faintest Divine whisper that such a thing is remotely possible? If it is possible, then what kind of work will the Holy Spirit be said to have done in such a people? How will the grace of God have worked in them? Precisely in what sense were they *"delivered from this present evil world"* and *"translated into the kingdom"* of God's dear Son?

these were opposing Paul. Paul would conduct himself toward them precisely as John said he would toward Diotrephes. *"I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church"* (3 John 1:9-10).

When wicked men oppose the truth and the messengers of Christ, they

THE SERPENT BEGUILLED EVE

^{3a} ***But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety . . .***

What a marvelous concern Paul has for the church – and how exceedingly rare it is to behold such a thing! This is something of what was involved in this

particular class of Paul's sufferings: *"besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches"* ^{NKJV} (2 Cor 11:28).

I FEAR

"But I fear, . . ." Other versions read, *"But I am afraid,"* ^{NASB} *"But I have*

a fear," ^{BBE} *"But I am frightened,"* ^{LIVING} *"But I am apprehensive,"* ^{WILLIAMS} and *"But [now] I am fearful."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

This is the same word Paul used when expressing a deep concern for the churches in Galatia, who were drifting back to a system of Law, and were in

The rise of carnality in any person or church also gives rise for concern about being thoroughly deceived– by Given O. Blakely

danger of falling from grace: *"I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain"* (Gal 4:11). It is a word of spiritual alarm. This is not the sound of ordinary concern for the spiritual growth of the brethren. **Rather, this is an expression that is precipitated by indications that faith is waning, and flesh is gaining the ascendancy.**

Here is a word that has a strange sound to those snared by Babylon the Great. The word *"fear,"* as used in this text, means *"terrified, frightened, to be seized with alarm."*^{THAYER} A shallow thinker might say, "Where is your faith, Paul? Do you not have any trust in Christ Jesus? Why do you have such fear?" Such poor souls do not have the faintest perception of kingdom realities. Their religion has blinded them.

Paul *"feared"* because many of the things that were seen in Corinth were not things that came from God! They were not the result of the work of the Holy Spirit or the teaching of the grace of God. They were not produced by faith, they did not yield hope, and did not show the evidence of love. These unacceptable works were in no way associated with the salvation of God. They were connected to the world, and Paul knew that the world is condemned, and its *"fashion"* is passing away (1 Cor 7:31). If they were not retrieved from this condition, it would be finally said of them as it was of Israel, *"They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation"* (Deut 32:5).

BY ANY MEANS

" . . . lest by any means . . . "
Other versions read, *"lest somehow,"*^{NKJV} *"lest as,"*^{NASB} *"that just,"*^{NIV} *"that as,"*^{NRSV} *"that in some way,"*^{LIVING} *"with a clever trick,"*^{IE} and *"somehow or other."*^{WILLIAMS}

It seems to me that we are living in a generation that has largely underestimated the danger of the devil. It is true that Jesus has *"destroyed"* him (Heb 2:14), that he can be successfully resisted (1 Pet 5:8; James 4:7), and that we have been delivered from the power of darkness (Col 1:13). **However, all of this can only be realized by faith.** That is why we are called to a most sober and vigilant posture. As it is written, *"Be sober, be*

vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (1 Pet 5:8-9). Where people are not living by faith and walking in the spirit they have not so much as a single advantage over the devil. When men are living according to the flesh, and unto themselves, **Satan has the advantage** – and it is a decided one at that, for *"the flesh"* is his domain of unquestionable power. Our past lives confirm this beyond all controversy.

All of the *"means"* employed by the *"old serpent"* obtain power in *"the flesh"* and through unbelief. **If a person or a congregation is dominated by *"the carnal mind,"* the domain of Satanic *"means"* has been entered, and there is no hope of surviving.** In such a state, there is no Divine assistance, for *"the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be"* (Rom 8:7).

The reason for Paul's concern for the Corinthians is their lapse back into the flesh, for the sins that had surfaced in their assembly, and among their people, were incontrovertible evidence of living in the flesh.

condition of humanity was impacted by this single event. Paul traces the human dilemma back to this occasion – when *"the serpent deceived Eve"*^{NKJV} (Rom 5:12-20). This is the point at which *"sin entered into the world"* (Rom 5:12). It is imperative that we have a working acquaintance with this event. It is the third thing humanity is said to have done.

- Adam names the animals – Gen 2:19-20.
 - Adam speaks concerning the creation of Eve and marriage – Gen 2:23-24
 - Satan deceives Eve, she eats the forbidden fruit, and gives to Adam, who also ate of it – Gen 3:1-7
- It is important to note the sequence of events in this deception.
- The *"serpent"* was noted for craftiness – able to reason, plot, trick, deceive, and manipulate thought (Gen 3:1a).
 - He approached Eve concerning what God had said (Gen 3:1b).
 - The women engaged in a dialog with the serpent, sharing with him what God had said concerning the tree of

This refers to the pivot upon which human history turned. The condition of humanity was impacted by this single event. Paul traces the human dilemma back to this occasion – when *"the serpent deceived Eve"*

AS THE SERPENT BEGUILED EVE

" . . . as the serpent beguiled Eve . . . " Other versions read, *"as the serpent deceived Eve,"*^{NKJV} *"just as Eve was deceived,"*^{NIV} *"as Eve was tricked,"*^{BBE} *"As the serpent seduced Eve,"*^{DOUAY} and *"with a clever trick."*^{IE}

This refers to the pivot upon which human history turned. The

the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 3:2-3).

- Satan precisely contradicts what God has said, affirming they would not die if they ate from the forbidden tree (Gen 3:4).
- Satan reasons with Eve, saying that God knew that when they ate the

fruit of this tree their eyes would be opened, and they would become “as gods, knowing good and evil” (Gen 3:5).

- ☛ The woman reconsidered the tree, now seeing that “*the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desired to make one wise*” (Gen 3:6a).
- ☛ She ate of the fruit (Gen 3:6b).
- ☛ She gave of the fruit also to her husband, and he did eat (Gen 3:6c).
- ☛ The eyes of both of them were opened, they knew they were naked,

Paul elsewhere makes clear that this event impacted upon the entire human race for all time. The stream of humanity became contaminated at its source – something from which it could not recover itself. There would have to be another progenitor, and a new generation. Concerning the effects of this occasion, here is what is written.

- ☛ By “*one man sin entered into the world*” (Rom 5:12a).
- ☛ Because of sin death also “*entered into the world*” (Rom 5:12b).
- ☛ Death “*passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*” – that is, the

5:18).

- ☛ “*By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners*” (Rom 5:19).

There can, therefore, be no question about the epochal nature of the fall of man. This was more than a mere event involving only Adam and Eve. Some general observations are in order.

- ☛ So far as the record is concerned, this was the first time humanity confronted the devil. If this conclusion is true, no man or woman apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, and those who are in Him, has ever survived encounters with the devil.
- ☛ When Eve was tempted she was morally pure, completely innocent, and uncontaminated with any moral or spiritual pollution. She was not “*weak*” because of failure. She, was, together with Adam, in a state of moral spotlessness.
- ☛ Eve did not survive a discussion with the devil – even though she knew what God had said, and the implications of it as well.

When you choose to enter the arena of subtlety, you are in the devil’s territory. The only person that has ever defeated him in his own domain is the Lord Jesus. Everyone else had to be delivered from his clutches.

and they “*sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons, or “loin coverings”* NASB (Gen 3:7).

- ☛ When they next heard the voice of God, they “*hid themselves from the presence of the Lord amongst the trees of the garden*” (Gen 3:8).
- ☛ Upon Divine inquiry, Adam said he was afraid, because he was naked, and hid himself (Gen 3:9-10).
- ☛ As a result, the serpent was cursed, the woman was cursed, the man was cursed, and the ground was cursed (Gen 3:11-20).
- ☛ God made them both coats of skin (Gen 3:21).
- ☛ The couple were expelled from the garden, and the entrance of it was blocked, prohibiting them from ever entering into it again (Gen 3:22-24).

thorough contamination of humanity was confirmed by the presence of sin in everyone (Rom 5:12c).

- ☛ Death “*reigned from Adam to Moses,*” even though there was no revealed moral code. That is, men sinned, even though there was no specific commandment to break. It was Adam’s infraction that brought the judgment of death, not their own sin. Their own sin was confirmation that the whole of humanity fell in Adam (Rom 5:13-14).
- ☛ Death is traced back to a single sin by a single man – “*the offence of one*” (Rom 5:15).
- ☛ The judgment was “*by one to condemnation*” (Rom 5:16).
- ☛ Death reigned “*by one man’s offence*” (Rom 5:17).
- ☛ By “*the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation*” (Rom

THROUGH HIS SUBTLETY

“... *through his subtlety* . . .”

Other versions read, “*by his craftiness,*” NKJV “*the serpent’s cunning,*” NIV “*by the deceit of the snake,*” BBE and “*by his craft.*” DARBY

Those who insist upon making religion more cerebral and intellectual than spiritual must “*give the more earnest heed*” to this text. If Eve, armed with a pure mind, and an intellect that was at its highest level, could not meet Satan on his own ground, what folly it is to suppose that man may do so today!

When you choose to enter the arena of subtlety, you are in the devil’s territory. The only person that has ever defeated him in his own domain is the Lord Jesus. Everyone else had to be delivered from his clutches.

The word “*subtlety*” is worthy of special note. It comes from the Greek word πανουργία (pan-oorg-ee-ah), which means “*specious or false wisdom . . . skill in undertaking and carrying on affairs,*” THAYER “*capability for every work . . . in a negative sense cunning, craftiness, trickery,*” FRIBERG and “*knavery, roguery,*

villainy.” LIDDELL-SCOTT This is wisdom and shrewdness devoted to evil. **With Satan, it is not that he merely wants to deceive, he is capable of deceiving.** This is seen in his very first attack of humanity. Even at that time, the battle of whits was not back and forth. It was a lop-sided battle from the beginning. Men may choose to theorize about this, speculating on the possibility of Eve overcoming the devil. However, when all is said and done, and the very best arguments have been presented, the cold fact of the matter is that she did not survive this bout with Satan. There really was no battle, but she was felled with a single argument from the wicked one.

It appears from the Genesis account that Eve was near to the tree, for as soon as Satan spoke to her, she “saw” the tree, viewed it from Satan’s perspective, apparently forgetting what the Lord had said. **Satan still is found around the forbidden. That is the territory in which his power is enhanced, and his corrupted wisdom becomes attractive.** Once a person comes into the devil’s domain, he is in the midst of remarkable disadvantage and danger. **If a person’s religion allows them to traffic in the places occupied by Satan, moral and spiritual decline are sure to follow.** This is one reason we have been “delivered from the power of darkness,” and “translated into the kingdom” of God’s “dear Son” (Col 1:13). If we choose flirt with “darkness,” we will be overcome.

WHY PAUL HAS MENTIONED THIS

The conditions among the Corinthians has confirmed that they had, in fact, been listening to the devil – just as surely as Eve listened to him. **There is no other way to account for their divisions, carnality, assembly disorder, lack of brotherly love, inappropriate conduct at the Lord’s table, and tardiness in gathering their offering for the poor saints in Jerusalem.** These are certainly **not** the results of believing. They are **not** the result of the working of the Holy Spirit. Neither love nor hope can produce such things. They are **not** the consequence of living unto God.

The church in Corinth was in the danger zone – like Eve standing near the forbidden tree. That is why Paul “feared”

when he thought upon them. That is why he thought of what the devil was able to do instead of what the Lord could do in them. It is not that the “old serpent” was superior to Christ, or that there was really any contest between his power and that of the Lord. **They were conducting themselves with the door wide open to the devil, for that is precisely what carnality does.**

More was involved than simply

It is not that the “old serpent” was superior to Christ, or that there was really any contest between his power and that of the Lord. They were conducting themselves with the door wide open to the devil, for that is precisely what carnality does

doing things in an incorrect manner, or not adhering to the rules. **They had done what is strictly forbidden by the Lord – made a place for the devil** (Eph 4:27). Wherever there are “divisions,” a place has been made for the devil! Wherever carnality is found, Satan has a place in which he can freely work! When brethren have a disregard for one another, there is a place made for Satan. Where edification is lacking, or there is disorderliness in the assembly, Satan has a place to work. If there is confusion, a place is made for Satan, for “*God is not the author of confusion*” (1 Cor 14:33). Satan always has a place where the Lord’s body is not discerned. If, as in Corinth, there are questions about the resurrection of the dead, a place is made for the devil himself.

Paul is fearful of the Corinthians’ complete overthrow because they had managed to create an environment in which it was easier for the devil to work. That is why sin surfaced among them. They were in imminent danger!

THE DANGER OF A “LAW” MENTALITY

Paul’s approach to the conduct of the Corinthians differs vastly from that of one possessing, what I will call, a “law mentality.” By “law mentality,” I mean

an approach to sin that is strictly upon the basis of moral obligation. In such a case, it would have been enough to say there should be “no divisions” among the people (1 Cor 1:10). Because Christ is not divided (1 Cor 1:13), it is simply wrong for there to be divisions among the people. And, indeed, all of this is true.

However, Paul did not end the matter there. He did not speak as from Sinai, but as from “*the Jerusalem which*

is above, which is free” (Gal 4:26). In this case sin is not simply perceived as wrong. **It is also seen to be the footsteps of the devil himself – evidence that he has been in the camp.** The presence of sin reveals that Satan has had a certain freedom to work among the people. In such a case, the spiritual weaponry that God has been provided has **not** been donned (Eph 6:10-18). The devil has **not** been resisted by faith (1 Pet 5:8-9), and thus has made encroachments within the church. In addition, the people have ceased to be receptive to the appointed instruction of the grace of God, which effectively teaches men to “*deny ungodliness and worldly lusts*” (Tit 2:11-12).

The presence of sin and spiritual retardation among the people of God is always serious. It reveals a state of vulnerability that, if not corrected, will result in the undoing of the people. This is because more is involved in transgression than the transgressors themselves and the transgressions they commit. **The devil himself is present,** together with principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph 6:12). The flesh and the world, from which the people were once delivered (Rom 6:6; Gal 1:4) have once again become prominent. “*Self,*” which had to

be denied in order to follow Jesus (Matt 16:24) has risen to sit upon the throne of the heart. **Men cannot afford to theorize**

about sin, or treat it as anything but spiritually malignant and lethal. It is not something to be associated with a

religious career! If sin required the suffering, death, resurrection, and enthronement of Jesus, it is serious!

CORRUPTED FROM SIMPLICITY

“^{3a} . . . so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”

Here Paul specifies the great danger that is troubling him. He knows that all sin, all defection, and all hardness of heart proceeds from this dreadful condition. If Satan can corrupt

minds might be polluted too,”^{1E} “so your minds might somehow be lured away,”^{1SV} “your minds should be seduced,”^{MONTGOMERY} and “so your minds may be corrupted and seduced.”^{AMPLIFIED}

Corrupt

The word “*corrupted*” is an especially strong one. Lexically it means

The advantage or disadvantage of the mind is determined by the things upon which it is placed – the focus of one’s attention. Satan seeks to corrupt, or contaminate and pollute, the mind. This involves provoking us to focus on the wrong thing, viewing matters from an improper perspective, and being curious about the forbidden. For example, Satan could not provoke Eve to eat of the fruit of the tree until she saw that tree differently than God had presented it. Once perceived incorrectly, what was clearly declared to be a means to death was thought to actually be the means to being “*as gods*” (Gen 3:5).

There are examples of corrupted minds in Scripture. Take, for example certain teachers from whom Timothy was admonished to “*withdraw*” himself. “*If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness: he is proud, knowing nothing, but dotting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself*” (1 Tim 6:3-5).

Again, Timothy is warned of two particular teachers: “*Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith*” (2 Tim 3:8). Note that there are two sides to their condition: (1) “*men of corrupt minds*,” and (2) “*reprobate concerning the faith*.” The more corruption is found in the mind, the more distant faith becomes – and faith is the sanctifying element in the newness of life (Acts 26:18). That is, corruption of mind is the path that leads to reprobation, or being rejected and cast away by God. Jeremiah once referred to fallen Israel as “*Reprobate silver. . . because the LORD hath rejected them*”

The advantage or disadvantage of the mind is determined by the things upon which it is placed – the focus of one’s attention. Satan seeks to corrupt, or contaminate and pollute, the mind. This involves provoking us to focus on the wrong thing, viewing matters from an improper perspective, and being curious about the forbidden.

the stream of thought, he will have his way with men.

Apart from Christ, the human mind is a tremendous liability. It is bent in the wrong direction, focusing upon self. Although salvation involves the “*renewing of the mind*” (Rom 12:2), we do not live in a moral vacuum. There are contaminating influences all about us, and they all function under the dominion of the wicked one. This is involved in John’s remarkable statement, “*We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one*” NKJV (1 John 5:19).

THE CORRUPTION OF THE MIND

“*. . . so your minds should be corrupted . . .*” Other versions read, “*your minds should be led astray*,”^{NASB} “*your thoughts will be led astray*,”^{NIV} “*your minds should be turned away*,”^{BBE} “*your wits should be corrupted*,”^{TNT} “*your*

“*to corrupt, destroy*,”^{THAYER} “*ruin, destroy . . . mislead . . . be deprived*,”^{FRIBERG} “*ruin, destroy, lead astray, seduce*,”^{UBS} “*to ruin or destroy something, with the implication of causing something to be corrupt and thus cease to exist*,”^{LOUW-NIDA} and “*to ruin, waste, spoil, destroy*.”^{LIDDELL-SCOTT}

A corrupted mind has lost all utility in the kingdom of God. It cannot lay hold of the things of God, or think properly concerning matters pertaining to life and godliness. The corrupted mind cannot “*think on these things*” – things that are honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtue, or praise (Phil 4:8). One of the chief areas in which men are transformed – the mind – is thus destroyed for holy purposes. **Just as surely as a grain of arsenic spoils a glass of water for drinking, so corruption spoils the mind for godly thinking.** Satan knows if he can contaminate the minds of people they at once become his vassals.

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(Jer 6:30). Because the Gentile world *“did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind”* (Rom 1:28). Paul reminded Titus that there were some who professed *“that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate”* (Titus 1:16).

This is the inevitable conclusion if the minds of men become corrupted. Yet, Paul is even more definitive in the articulation of his deep concern for the church in Corinth.

THE SIMPLICITY THAT IS IN CHRIST

“... from the simplicity that is in Christ.” Other versions read, “from the simplicity and pure devotion to Christ,” NASB “from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ,” NIV “from their simple and holy love for Christ,” BBE “from a sincere (and pure) commitment to Christ,” NAB “from single-minded devotion to Christ,” NJB “from the singleness that is toward Christ,” PNT “from their single-heartedness and their fidelity to Christ,” WEYMOUTH “single-mindedness and purity toward Christ,” MONTGOMERY and “wholehearted and sincere and pure devotion to Christ.” AMPLIFIED

The danger of the mind being corrupted is found in the fact that it severs one from commitment to Christ. **Christ cannot be served with a defiled mind!** When, for example, a person becoming involved in sin, there is an abrupt termination of service to Christ. He will not be served with defiled hands!

Simplicity

The word “simplicity” does not refer to intellectual inferiority or a childish manner of thought. Men often say, “Keep it simple!” – i.e., keep it uncomplicated so as not to encourage protracted or profound thought. But this is not the manner in which the Scriptures use the word. Lexically the words means, “singleness, sincerity, mental honesty ... without self-seeking ... openness of heart,” THAYER “purity of motive, sincerity, integrity,” FRIBERG “Singlehearted devotion,” UBS and “The quality of sincerity as an expression of singleness of purpose or motivation – sincerity, purity of motive.” LOUW-NIDA

Christ cannot be served or

enjoyed with a double mind, a divided heart, or apportioned affection. He will not share the throne of the heart with anyone or anything. It is only when the eye (or the capacity of the human heart to give attention) is “single,” that *“thy whole body shall be full of light”* (Matt 6:22). Upon their initiation into the

PRESENCE

The presence of moral and spiritual corruption within the professed church is staggering. One can scarcely find a person who is wholly devoted to the Lord. Should one be found, they are an exception within the modern church, and generally considered to be peculiar.

Most, if not all, of this condition is owing to the lack of spiritual maturity. While all of the children of God begin the kingdom tenure with a single heart, it is only by means of growing up into Christ in all things that this singularity of heart can be maintained.

kingdom of Christ, the early church was unalloyed with worldly appetites. It is said of them that they *“did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart”* (Acts 2:46). Even servants were admonished to be obedient to their masters according to the flesh *“with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ”* (Eph 6:5; Col 3:22).

One of the promises concerning the time of the new covenant was that God would give the people *“one heart”* (Jer 32:39; Ezek 11:19) – a heart that was single. This is the kind of heart that David sought: *“unite my heart to fear Thy name”* (Psa 86:11). It is the kind of heart that was experienced from the very beginnings of the church: *“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul”* (Acts 4:32).

There is not the slightest evidence that God ever promised to, or ever does in Christ, acknowledge a people of divided hearts to be His own. **If the heart becomes diluted with contaminates of this world it becomes alienated from the Lord.** If this was not the case, Paul would not have feared that the Corinthians might be *“corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”*

CORRUPTIONS ASTOUNDING

Most, if not all, of this condition is owing to the lack of spiritual maturity. **While all of the children of God begin the kingdom tenure with a single heart, it is only by means of growing up into Christ in all things (Eph 4:15) that this singularity of heart can be maintained.** I have come to be persuaded a person cannot maintain a small spiritual stature. If growth is not taking place, and a change from glory to glory is not occurring, **then the light of the soul is gradually being extinguished.** In such a case, corruption has been introduced, and corruption always spreads like an infection. **Neither singleness nor corruption is static. Neither one can be inactive, motionless, or unchanging.**

It is no wonder that Paul has such a deep concern for the church in Corinth, or that part of his suffering was the daily care that came upon him concerning the churches (2 Cor 11:28). He knew the inevitable outcome of corruption – the place where all carnality ends! The solemn word from heaven is, *“If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die”* (Rom 8:13). There is not the slightest chance that this word can be successfully contradicted! Wherever men choose to live after the flesh, or be dominated by a carnal mind, they are being pushed toward the precipice or eternal ruin!

ANOTHER JESUS

“^{4a}For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached . . .” Other versions read, *“preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached.”*^{NIV} *“proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed.”*^{NRSV} *“preaching another Jesus from the one whose preachers we are,”*^{BBE} *“preach about a different Jesus than the one we preach,”*^{NLT} *“preaching about another Jesus who is different from the Jesus we preached unto you,”*^{IE} and *“preaching a different Jesus from the one we told you about.”*^{PHILLIPS}

died for men, and said to be presently saving men.

Jesus warned His disciples, *“For there shall arise **false Christs**, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect”* (Mat 24:24; Mk 13:22). He also affirmed that other personalities would arise, coming in His name and saying, *“I am Christ”* (Matt 24:5; Mk 13:6; Lk 21:8). All of these operated under the auspices of the devil.

Perhaps it is a Jesus who, together with His Father, and in stark contradiction of Christ’s own words, loves people “unconditionally” (John 14:21,23; 15:10; 16:27). It may be a Jesus who entertains an intense interest in all of your problems, and extends himself to become involved in all of them – even though that contradicts the revelation given to us of Christ (Matt 11:17; Luke 12:13-14; John 2:4; Acts 1:6-7). Perhaps it is a Jesus who can tolerate being rejected, and endure unbelief among the people – something for which the real Jesus is not noted (Matt 11:10-24). Maybe it is even a Jesus who wants everyone to know the mysteries of the Kingdom, even if they are not interested – even though Jesus was thankful these things were *“hidden from the wise and the prudent”* (Matt 11:25-27).

The point is that there are, indeed, *“false christ’s.”* These are Christ’s who do not save – yea, cannot save. They cannot do the things *“the Christ of God”* does (Luke 9:20). They only serve temporal interests.

The Jesus of Scripture

Perhaps it would be good to briefly consider what the real Jesus really does. Precisely what is said of Him? Then you can judge for yourself whether or not this is the Jesus that is being preached in our time.

- ☛ He is presently sitting on David’s throne (Acts 2:30-33).
- ☛ He is giving repentance, as well as the remission of sins (Acts 5:31).
- ☛ Faith comes from Him (Eph 6:23).
- ☛ Men believe through His grace (Acts 15:11).
- ☛ It is by Him that we believe in God (1 Pet 1:21).
- ☛ By Him all that believe are justified from all things (Acts 13:39).
- ☛ His words will never pass away (Matt 24:35).

The particular things said about this other Jesus are not specified. However, this was a “Jesus” who allowed division. It was one who permitted people to call themselves after the names of men (1 Cor 1:12-13). This other Jesus did not move people to expel a fornicator from their presence, but rather moved the people to endure such a monstrosity in their presence.

Paul now gets straight to the point. He will tell them what is involved in fearing Satan would deceive them, luring them away from single-heartedness toward the Lord Jesus. His immediate concern is not the local temples to idols, or the sports arena, or the occultist books. He knew Satan would be more cunning in his attempt to infect and pollute the minds of the Corinthians. In fact, the beginnings of corruption had already taken place. This was evidenced by the unacceptable conditions that had surfaced since Paul had left them.

ANOTHER JESUS

There is such a thing as *“another Jesus.”* This is not a real person – unless it be a demon – but a fictitious *“Jesus”* that is preached. This *“Jesus”* is not announced to be *“another Jesus,”* but is represented as being the One God sent, and declared in the Gospel. It is a *“Jesus”* that is said to be the Son of God, having

Paul is clear about this matter, the other Jesus is one that is *“preached,”* or declared. The particular things said about this other Jesus are not specified. However, this was a *“Jesus”* who allowed division. It was one who permitted people to call themselves after the names of men (1 Cor 1:12-13). This other Jesus did not move people to expel a fornicator from their presence, but rather moved the people to endure such a monstrosity in their presence. It was a Jesus who, when embraced, allowed the people to fail to discern Christ’s body when eating at His table (1 Cor 11:29) – and think they still maintained identity with Christ.

“Another Jesus” is one who seems better suited to address the ails of humanity – at least that is the way He is presented. It is not the Messiah foretold by Moses (Deut 18:15,18), or promised by the Prophets (Isa 9:6-7; 11:3-4; 40:11; 61:1-4; Jer 23:6; 33:15-16; Mal 3:3).

The rise of carnality in any person or church also gives rise for concern about being thoroughly deceived– by Given O. Blakely

- ☛ When He comes, He will be ashamed of those who were ashamed of Him (Mk 8:38; Lk 9:26).
- ☛ A person who does not forsake all, take up their cross every day, and follow Him, cannot be His disciple (Lk 9:23; 14:27,33).
- ☛ Whoever does not regard his relatives, family, and own life less than Christ, cannot be His disciple (Matt 10:37).
- ☛ No man can come to the real Christ unless the Father draws him (John 6:44,65).
- ☛ No man knows who the real Jesus is except the Father (Matt 11:27a; Lk 10:22a).
- ☛ No man knows who the Father is except the Son, and he to whom the Son wills to reveal Him (Matt 11:27b; Lk 10:22b).
- ☛ The real Jesus has ended the Law as a means to righteousness (Rom 10:4).
- ☛ The real Jesus has destroyed the devil (Heb 2:14).
- ☛ The person who is believing the real Jesus is the Son of God overcomes the world (1 John 5:4-5).
- ☛ God the Father puts people into the real Jesus (1 Cor 1:30).
- ☛ God calls us into fellowship with the real Jesus (1 Cor 1:9).
- ☛ By the obedience of the real Jesus, *“many were made righteous”* (Rom 5:19).
- ☛ The real Jesus has delivered us from *“this present evil world according to the will of God and our Father”* (Gal 1:4).
- ☛ God made the real Jesus *“to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we*

might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor 5:21).

- ☛ The real Jesus was *“made a curse for us . . . that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles”* through Him (Gal 3:13-14).
- ☛ There is *“neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female”* in the real Jesus (Gal 3:28).
- ☛ Everything is presently under the feet of the real Jesus, and He is ruling in the interest of His church (Eph 1:22-23).
- ☛ Grace reigns through righteousness

they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them” (Psa 115:4-8). While *“another Jesus”* may not be made of silver or gold, like the idols of old, such has been fashioned after the likeness of sinful man. *“Another Jesus”* suits the fancies of those who are not living by faith, but is utterly impotent when it comes to empowering one to do the will of God and overcome the world.

While we dare not embrace mere suppositions here, or be swift to judge the eternal destiny of men – which God has not freed us to do – something ought to

While we dare not embrace mere suppositions here, or be swift to judge the eternal destiny of men – which God has not freed us to do – something ought to be noted here. It is entirely possible that those who insist on remaining religious, yet who do not appear able walk in a manner that is pleasing to God (1 Thess 4:1), have actually embraced “another Jesus” – one that is wholly spurious.

to bring eternal life through the real Jesus (Rom 5:21).

- ☛ The fruit of righteousness is produced in believers by the real Jesus (Phil 1:11).

A *“Jesus”* who does not do these things is a *“another Jesus,”* and is not to be confused with the real One. Such a person is nothing more than *“false Christ,”* and, like all idols, is impotent, not being able to see, hear, or speak. As it is written, *“Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but*

be noted here. **It is entirely possible that those who insist on remaining religious, yet who do not appear able walk in a manner that is pleasing to God (1 Thess 4:1), have actually embraced “another Jesus” – one that is wholly spurious.**

It is the business of every professing believer to confirm through self-examination whether or not they have embraced the real Jesus. This is the intention behind the solemn exhortation, *“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”* (2 Cor 13:5). This is a sobering, yet essential, work to be done – and no one can do it for you.

ANOTHER SPIRIT

“^{4b} . . . or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received . . . ” Other versions read, “receive a different

The rise of carnality in any person or church also gives rise for concern about being thoroughly deceived— by Given O. Blakely

Spirit which you have not received,^{NKJV} “a different Spirit from the one you received,”^{NIV} “or ye get a different Spirit, which ye have not got,”^{DARBY} “a different spirit than the Holy Spirit you received,”^{LIVING} “a different kind of spirit that you did not receive,”^{IE} and “a Spirit other than you once received.”^{MONTGOMERY}

Not only has Satan sent out his emissaries declaring “another Jesus,” they also bring the message of “another Spirit.” It is the proclamation of a Spirit that is not received by the children of God. It is not the Spirit that Jesus sends, or that God gives (Gal 4:6).

Although some neglect to affirm that those in Christ receive the Holy Spirit, this is a point that is repeatedly

- ☛ “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, **but the Spirit which is of God:** that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Cor 2:12).
- ☛ “Who hath also sealed us, and **given the earnest of the Spirit** in our hearts” (2 Cor 1:22).
- ☛ “Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also **hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit**” (2 Cor 5:5).
- ☛ “And because ye are sons, God hath **sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father**” (Gal 4:6).

the Spirit into our hearts (Gal 4:6). The Holy Spirit is, in fact, the earnest, down-payment, or pledge of the inheritance that is to come (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5). This is such a foundational proclamation that it is also written, “**But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His**” (Rom 8:9).

Now, some present a Holy Spirit that is given independently of salvation – a second work, as it was, of empowerment. Others teach concerning as Spirit that “slays” people, knocking them down, and rendering them virtually helpless. Some also affirm that the giving of the Spirit is always attended by utterances in an unknown language, and strange bodily sensations. Still others set forth Spirit that compels men to convulse in laughter, and even make animal sounds. Is this the Spirit that is proclaimed in the Word of the Lord? Is it the One that was promised? Did the holy prophets give any indication of this kind of Spirit? Did John the Baptist foretell such a Spirit? What of the Lord Jesus Himself? Is this the type of Spirit He promised? And, did the Apostles ever speak to the church of a Spirit of this kind? If they did not, then this is the declaration of “another Spirit.”

There can, therefore, be no question about the fact that everyone that is in Christ Jesus receives the Holy Spirit. The promise of the Holy Spirit is given to those who obey the Gospel. It is affirmed that God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey Him. Because we are sons, God sends the Spirit into our hearts

declared in God’s word.

- ☛ “Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and **you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**”^{NKJV} (Acts 2:38).
- ☛ “And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit **whom God has given to those who obey Him**”^{NKJV} (Acts 5:32).
- ☛ “Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by **the Holy Spirit who was given to us**”^{NKJV} (Rom 5:5).
- ☛ “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; **but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father**” (Rom 8:15).

- ☛ “He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also **given unto us his holy Spirit**” (1 Thess 4:8).
- ☛ “And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, **by the Spirit which he hath given us**” (1 John 3:24).
- ☛ “Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because **He hath given us of his Spirit**” (1 John 4:13).

There can, therefore, be no question about the fact that **everyone** that is in Christ Jesus receives the Holy Spirit. The promise of the Holy Spirit is given to those who obey the Gospel (Acts 2:38). It is affirmed that God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32). Because we are sons, God sends

The Spirit of Scripture

The Scriptures speak of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, so that there is no need for confusion on the matter. The prophets, Jesus, and the Apostles deliver clear words on the subject. John the Baptist spoke of the fact of the Spirit being given, but did not elaborate on His ministry (Matt 3:11).

Prior to Jesus

Prior to “the day of salvation,” there was enough said about the Holy Spirit to formulate some sound concepts about what He does. He is depicted as striving with men (Gen 6:3), causing men to be discreet and wise (Gen 41:38-39), and imparting wisdom, understanding, and knowledge (Ex 31:3). He is identified with instruction (Neh 9:20), wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and judgment (Isa 11:3). When prophesying the coming Messiah, the Spirit was connected with preaching, binding up broken hearts, and freedom

(Isa 61:1). Speaking through the prophets, God announced that putting His Spirit within men would result in them walking in His statutes, keeping His judgments, and doing them (Ezek 36:27). Joel announced that the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit would result in prophesying – a rationale message declaring Divine intentions and accomplishments (Joel 2:28).

The Lord Jesus associated the Holy Spirit with teaching men what they were to say, teaching them “all things,” and bringing to their remembrance His own matchless words (Luke 12:12; John 14:26). He said that when the Spirit came, He would convict the world of sin, righteousness, and the judgment of the devil (John 16:8).

Following the Exaltation of Jesus

Following the exaltation of Jesus, considerable is said about the ministry of the Holy Spirit – the Holy Spirit that is given to the children of God.

- **EXPERIENCE OF COMFORT.** “Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the **comfort of the Holy Spirit**, they were multiplied” (Acts 9:31).
- **GOD’S LOVE SHED ABROAD.** “And hope maketh not ashamed; because **the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost** which is given unto us” (Rom 5:5).
- **MORTIFY THE DEEDS OF THE BODY.** “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye **through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body**, ye shall live” (Rom 8:13).
- **WITNESSES TO OUR SPIRIT.** “The Spirit itself **bearth witness with our spirit**, that we are the children of God” (Rom 8:16).
- **MAKES INTERCESSION FOR US.** “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself **maketh intercession for us** with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Rom 8:26).
- **EXPERIENCE OF JOY.** “For the kingdom

of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in **the Holy Ghost**” (Rom 14:17).

- **REVELATION OF DIVINE PROVISION.** “But God hath **revealed them unto us by his Spirit**: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Cor 2:10).
- **WASHING, SANCTIFYING, JUSTIFYING.** “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and **by the Spirit of our God**” (1 Cor 6:11).
- **DIVIDING VARIOUS GIFTS TO THE BODY.** “But all these **worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit**, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ” (1 Cor 12:11-12).
- **PROGRESSIVE CHANGE.** “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, **even as by the Spirit of the Lord**” (2 Cor 3:18).
- **WAITING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.** “For we **through the Spirit wait** for the hope of righteousness by faith” (Gal 5:5).
- **SPIRITUAL FRUIT.** “But the fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance**: against such there is no law” (Gal 5:23).
- **INNER STRENGTH.** “That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be **strengthened with might by his Spirit** in the inner man” (Eph 3:16).
- **OBEYING THE TRUTH.** “Seeing ye have purified your souls in **obeying the truth through the Spirit** unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pet 1:22).

These are only representative of the marvelous ministry of the Holy Spirit. **The Holy Spirit is not a showman,**

drawing attention to Himself by doing things that catch the attention of the ungodly. He is never represented as creating a sort of euphoria in people in which they become oblivious to reality and are wafted away on the wings of raw emotion. His purpose and ministry always relates directly to our identity with the Person of the Lord Jesus, and the purpose of God the Father. When He speaks, He does not speak of Himself. As Jesus said, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come” (John 16:13). He is not a kind of heavenly freelancer, operating by His own private agenda. **So far as men are concerned, He only has relevance within the context of the salvation of God and all that it entails.**



Summarized, we see there are at least three major areas addressed by the real Holy Spirit.

- **PREPARING.** He plays a vital role in preparing us to stand before the Lord on the day of judgment, and readying us to dwell forever with the Lord. In this grand work He leads us in mortifying the deeds of the body, or perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. He acquaints us with the things of God, unveiling through the truth of the Scriptures the marvelous things that God has prepared for those who love Him.
- **CONFORMING.** Flesh and blood “cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor 15:50), nor can those who are dominated by the same. Men must be

transformed – changed into the same “Image” as their Savior. This cannot be done in the energy of humanity, but is wrought by the Spirit Himself. **Those who are being “changed” by the working of the Holy Spirit are becoming more and more like Jesus.** They think more like Him, viewing iniquity and righteousness as He does.

- **MINISTERING.** It is the purpose of Christ to minister to His body through its various members –

referred to as “*joints and bands,*” and which are joined to Him (Col 2:19). The process itself is referred to as “*the effectual working in the measure of every part*” (Eph 4:16). The abilities themselves are referred to as “*spiritual gifts,*” and are said to be given and administered by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:1-6). The purpose of everyone of these gifts is to “*profit withal,*” or “*for the common good*” – to bring good to all of the saints through the process of edification (1 Cor 12:7; 14:12,26).

Wherever there is a Spirit preached or embraced that is not engaged in these ministries, men are being confronted with “*another Spirit.*” It may be an intriguing and interesting Spirit, but it is not the One sent forth by God into the hearts of His “*sons*” (Gal 4:6). It is rather a “*Spirit*” that will contribute to condemnation. Such a “*Spirit*” is a thief and a robber, and brings absolutely no advantages to the people of God – all claims notwithstanding. We must be sure we have not received “*another Spirit.*”

ANOTHER GOSPEL

“⁴⁰ . . . or another gospel, which ye have not accepted . . .” Other versions read, “*a different gospel which you have not accepted,*”^{NKJV} “*a different sort of good news from those which came to you,*”^{BBE} “*a different kind of gospel than the one you believed,*”^{NLT} “*or shows you a different way to be saved,*”^{LIVING} “*a gospel*

- **SIN** – “*Of sin because they believe not on Me*” (John 16:9). This is the preeminent sin, and will surely condemn those who are not delivered from its guilt and power. This is sin that does not embrace Jesus as God has presented Him (1 John 5:10-11). It is a sin that rejects the atonement

judged” (John 16:11). Satan has already been judged, and expelled from heaven (Lk 10:18; Rev 12:9). As a consequence, all who remain under his control are also condemned. If a person is not delivered from Satan’s dominion, there is no hope of him being saved, for such are nothing more than his children (Matt 13:38; John 8:44).

To those who have experienced this conviction, the Gospel is “good news.” A gospel that is appealing to anyone who has not been convicted of these things is really no gospel at all. It is spurious and only serves the purposes of men. It is a gospel through which God will not work.

To those who have experienced this conviction, the Gospel is “*good news.*” A gospel that is appealing to anyone who has not been convicted of these things is really no gospel at all. It is spurious and only serves the purposes of men. It is a gospel through which God will **not** work.

different than the first one you accepted,”^{IE} “*a Good News different from that which you have already welcomed,*”^{WEYMOUTH} “*a glad message different from the one you did accept,*”^{WILLIAMS} and “*a different gospel from the one you [then] received and welcomed.*”^{AMPLIFIED}

Precisely what is “*the Gospel?*” It is essentially “*good news*” to those who have been convicted by the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that when the Spirit came, He would “*reprove [convict] the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment*” (John 16:8). He went on to explain what is meant by these three convicting works.

made by Jesus, and refuses to leave all and follow Him.

- **RIGHTEOUSNESS** – “*Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more*” (John 16:10). That is, Jesus is, in fact, the only truly righteous Person. That is why He is referred to as “*Jesus Christ the Righteous [One]*” (1 John 2:1). To be convicted of righteousness is to be convinced of the necessity of righteousness, to perceive that you have none of your own, and that it is only available in Christ Jesus.

There is such a thing as “*another Gospel*” – a “*gospel*” that has nothing to do with the real Jesus, and does not announce the giving of the real Spirit. It announces a strange message, makes false promises, and anchors men to this present evil world, instead of declaring deliverance from it.

The Case of the Galatians

The seriousness of the presence of “*another gospel*” is accented in Paul’s letter to the Galatians. “*I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have*

- **JUDGMENT** – “*Of judgment, because the prince of this world is*

preached unto you, **let him be accursed.** As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach **any other gospel** unto you than that ye have received, **let him be accursed**" (Gal 1:6-9).

The "other gospel" that had been embraced by the Galatians de-emphasized "the grace of Christ" and accented the "works" of men. It was essentially the same as the weak and beggarly Law, delivered in a tattered "Christian" garb. It was much like a lot of what is being spouted from many of the pulpits of our day. Men were declared as achieving Divine acceptance BECAUSE of what they did – which is the whole principle of "the works of the law." Early on, some Jewish teachers had said, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). These teachers had intruded into the Galatian assemblies, and had corrupted the people. Paul told them that being accepted by God upon the basis of works – even the works of a holy Law – really yielded nothing more than a curse: "For as many as are of the works of the law **are under the curse**: for it is written, **Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them**" (Gal 3:10). Serving God upon the basis of Law requires absolute, total, and unwavering obedience. Not a single infraction is permitted – ever. **To come to God upon such a basis makes Christ ineffective toward the individual, and causes a fall from grace.** Therefore Paul wrote, "Christ is become of **no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace**" (Gal 5:4).

The Galatians had, then, been exposed to "another gospel" that actually caused Christ to be "of no effect" to those who accepted it. Rather than bringing the grace of God to the people, it promoted a fall from grace – that is, it caused them to no longer have access to the grace of God. Grace, in such a case, become irrelevant to the people, and their own imagined ability was seen as paramount.

CLARIFYING THE GOSPEL

The Gospel is like a beautiful Divine melody in which several harmonious heavenly notes blend. It centers in heaven, accenting the activity

of the Lord and offering eternal benefits to men. The way the word "gospel" is used by the Holy Spirit will accent this reality.

- **THE KINGDOM.** "And this **gospel of the kingdom** shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Mat 24:14; 4:23; 9:35). In the midst of fourth of the kingdoms prophesied by Daniel (Dan 2:44), a superior kingdom is announced that rules over all. Salvation would be wrought out under the strict, thorough, and effective administration of heaven.
- **KINGDOM OF GOD.** "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto **the gospel of God**"

man. That relationship is the context in which the entirety of salvation is accomplished.

- **CHRIST.** "For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ**: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom 1:16; 15:16,29; 1 Cor 9:12,18; 2 Cor 4:4; 9:13; 10:14; Gal 1:7; Phil 1:27; 1 Thess 3:2). The Good News is that Jesus has not only been designated to deal effectively with sin, but He, as the exclusive anointed One, has also been empowered to bring all of the sons home to glory.
- **LORD JESUS CHRIST.** "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know

Serving God upon the basis of Law requires absolute, total, and unwavering obedience. Not a single infraction is permitted – ever. To come to God upon such a basis makes Christ ineffective toward the individual, and causes a fall from grace.

(Rom 1:1; 15:16; Mk 1:14; 2 Cor 11:7; 1 Thess 2:2,8,9; 1 Pet 4:17). The Gospel announces a kingdom that is carrying out the purpose of God, reflecting His mind, and fulfilling His desires for fallen humanity.

- **JESUS CHRIST.** "The beginning of **the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God**" (Mark 1:1). The Gospel announces a Man into whose hands God has placed everything. Concerning His manhood, He is "Jesus" – the One who will "save His people from their sins." Regarding His role, He is "Christ," the anointed One – the One God has appointed as the executer of His will.
- **HIS SON.** "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in **the gospel of His Son**, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers" (Rom 1:9). The Gospel announces that Jesus' primary relationship is to God, not to

not God, and that obey not **the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ**" (2 Thess 1:8). The completeness of the Savior is affirmed in the Gospel. Regarding authority, or "all power in heaven and earth," He is LORD. Regarding His relevance to man, He is "Jesus," the ultimate Man who works in behalf of mankind, and is the federal head of a new race of men – the born again ones. Regarding Divine approval, He is "Christ," the One who has been "anointed" by God with the Holy Spirit, and that without measure. The "fulness of the Godhead" dwells in Him "bodily," and it pleases God that it is so (Col 1:19; 2:9).

- **GRACE OF GOD.** "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify **the gospel of the grace of God**" (Acts 20:24). The

Gospel announces that God's grace, because of Jesus Christ, is now lavished upon men through their faith. This grace is sufficient (2 Cor 12:9), makes strong (2 Tim 2:1), and effectively teaches (Tit 2:11-12).

- **GOD.** "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated

with God" (Rom 5:1). The hostility created by sin no longer exists in those who are in Christ Jesus.

- **SALVATION.** "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, **the gospel of your salvation:** in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of

into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (Gal 1:6). One of the sure marks of a false gospel is the absence or minimization of "the grace of Christ."

Perhaps it will be profitable to identify a few of these false gospels. None of them emphasize the Kingdom of God, God, Jesus, or the grace of God.

If we are dealing with people who have long remained in an ignorant situation, they are not regularly being subjected to the real Gospel. The Gospel will elicit some aggressive response from those who hear it. Either they will oppose it or embrace it. There is no passive response to it.

- **The Health and Wealth Gospel.** This gospel announces that you do not have to be poor or sick. The claim is made that Jesus has delivered us from both poverty and sickness – even though He was poor (Matt 8:20), and one of his chief apostles had a chronic infirmity (2 Cor 11:30).

- **The Gospel of the Holy Spirit.** This gospel emphasizes the Holy Spirit, which is received by a routine. The receiving of the Holy Spirit is said to be separate from salvation. In this gospel, Christ Jesus is not the point, but the Holy Spirit.

unto **the gospel of God**" (Rom 1:1; 15:16; 2 Cor 11:7; 1 Thess 2:2,8,9; 1 Pet 4:17). The Gospel focuses upon God the Father. The purpose being fulfilled in Christ is His own purpose (Eph 3:11; Rom 8:28; 9:11; 2 Tim 1:9). Jesus is His Son (John 20:31; Acts 8:37; Rom 1:4). The Spirit is sent forth by Him (Gal 4:6; 1 Cor 2:12; 2 Cor 5:5; 1 Thess 4:8). We have been reconciled to Him (Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:20). Jesus is bringing us to Him (1 Pet 3:18).

- **BLESSED GOD.** "According to **the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust**" (1 Tim 1:11). The Gospel announces a "blessed God" – One that is happy and jubilant because of the accomplishments of His Son. He has seen the travail of His soul, and "is satisfied" (Isa 53:11). Because of the, believers are now "made accepted in the Beloved" (Eph 1:6).

promise" (Eph 1:13). The Gospel brings home to the believer the reality of personal salvation. It encourages unfettered trust in the Lord, and brings assurance to the heart of the believer.

A "gospel" that does not deliver an aware of these things is not the gospel – it is miserable word fabricated by the devil and declared by men who have been blinded by him. Wherever professing Christians are found who are fundamentally ignorant of these realities, the gospel has not been believed. Either it has not been preached at all, or it has been preached and rejected, or "another gospel" has been declared among them. If we are dealing with people who have long remained in an ignorant situation, they are not regularly being subjected to the real Gospel. The Gospel will elicit some aggressive response from those who hear it. Either they will oppose it or embrace it. There is no passive response to it.

- **The Problem Resolution Gospel.** This gospel boldly announces that Jesus is the answer to all of our problems. He is said to have an earnest desire to become involved in every facet of one's life. Instead of urging men to cast their care upon the Lord, this gospel announces there really is no need for care at all. Jesus will solve the problem. That is what He really wants to do.

- **PEACE.** "And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, **How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!**" (Rom 10:15; Eph 6:15). The Gospel announces that peace with God has been "made" (Col 1:20). Those who are justified by faith now have "peace

SPURIOUS GOSPELS

Spurious gospels abound in our land. Each of them can appropriately be called "another gospel . . . which is not another" (Gal 1:6-7). What is more, in order to embrace these gospels, one must "remove" himself from the real Jesus. Thus Paul wrote, "I marvel that ye are so soon **removed from Him that called you**

- **The Happy Marriage Gospel.** This gospel ignores the presence of single people, widows, and orphans, and boldly announces the family to be the primary unit of humanity. Jesus is represented as wanting every home to be happy, and to be energetically working to that end – even though He said He would divide some homes (Matt 10:34-36).

- **The Gospel of the Church.** This gospel focuses on the church. The aim of it is to enable the individual to identify the one true church. There is no need of transformation or personal conformity to the image of Christ. The main thing is to be part of the right church, which has the right name, and does all of the right things.

The rise of carnality in any person or church also gives rise for concern about being thoroughly deceived– by Given O. Blakely

- **The God and Country Gospel.** This gospel presents “another Jesus” whose aim is to produce godly nations. The pinnacle of achievement is when the government and the church are brought together.
- **The Youth Gospel.** The gospel announces the youth are the church of tomorrow, conveniently ignoring the church of today. There is little need for Jesus in this gospel. The main thing is to make the youth feel at home, and to recognize their seeming potential.
- **The Positive Thought Gospel.** This is a gospel that accents the making of noble resolutions. It teaches men that if they will just think about noble things, they will eventually come to pass. In this gospel, the ability of man is overstated.
- **The Gospel of Worship.** This gospel announces that what God really wants from man is worship. By “worship,” they mean singing – particularly choruses. “Man was made,” they say, “to worship God” – even though God said man was made to “have dominion” (Gen 1:26-27). In this gospel, “worship” has nothing whatsoever to do with “holiness” (Psa 29:2) or “truth” (John 4:23-24).
- **The God Loves Everyone Gospel.** This gospel boldly announces that God loves everyone – even though God has affirmed there are people that He hates (Psa 11:5; Prov 6:16-19). This gospel declares that God is really not offended with man’s foolish ways, but can handle their anger, even when it is directed toward Him. No matter what a person does, this gospel says God still loves them. It also affirms that God’s love is unconditional – even though Divine

love is associated with conditions (John 14:23; John 16:27).

God Does Not Work Through False Gospels

It should not be necessary to say this: God does not work through false gospels. The fact that the Gospel “*is the power of God unto salvation*” applies only to the real Gospel. It does not apply to “another gospel.” What is said to be accomplished through the Gospel NEVER takes place through “another gospel.”

• **SERVING GOD.** “For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the

• **RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR MAN REVEALED.**

“... the gospel of Christ . . . For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (Rom 1:16-17).

No person is serving God who delivers “another gospel.” No person is born again by means of “another gospel.” It is not possible to participate in the promises of Christ by means of “another gospel.” Life and immortality cannot be clarified by “another gospel.” It is impossible to become aware of the righteousness of God and its imputation

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gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers” (Rom 1:9).

• **PEOPLE BEGOTTEN.** “For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have **begotten you through the gospel**” (1 Cor 4:15).

• **PARTAKING OF THE PROMISE.** “That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and **partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel**” (Eph 3:6).

• **LIFE AND IMMORTALITY MADE KNOWN.** “But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath **brought life and immortality to light through the gospel**” (2 Tim 1:10).

to men by means of “another gospel.”

If the primary message of the church ever becomes anything other than the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, it at once becomes impotent. All of its programs are rendered void of Divine power, and thus cannot accomplish the will and purpose of God. Faith, which “comes” through the heralding of the real gospel (Rom 10:14-17) is thus rendered impossible, and men are closed off from it (Gal 3:23).

There is no additional or auxiliary message that shares in the power of the Gospel. There is no higher message that brings an equal or greater degree of Divine enablement to men. Let no man dare to listen to, be tolerant of, or to embrace “another gospel.” The fact that it is “another” makes it wrong.

UNGODLY TOLERATION

“^{4d} . . . ye might well bear with him.” Other versions read, “you may well put up with it,” ^{NKJV} “you bear this

beautifully.” ^{NASB} “you put up with it easily enough.” ^{NIV} “you submit to it readily enough.” ^{NRSV} “how well you put

up with these things.” ^{BBE} “you put up with that too willingly.” ^{NJB} “you seem to believe whatever anyone tells you,” ^{NLT}

The rise of carnality in any person or church also gives rise for concern about being thoroughly deceived— by Given O. Blakely

“you would have well suffered him,”^{PNT}
“ye right well have been content,”^{TNT}
“well were ye bearing it,”^{YLT} *“You swallow it all,”*^{LIVING} *“How you can put up so easily with,”* *IE* *“your toleration is admirable,”*^{WEYMOUTH} *“you are all too willing to listen,”*^{ISV} *“you listen to it all right,”*^{WILLIAMS} and *“you tolerate [all that] well enough.”*^{AMPLIFIED}

Throughout history the church has struggled with the propensity to theological novelty. Owing to Satan’s cunning work, as Paul feared he would do in Corinth, differing core messages have been adopted by the professed church. These messages have been used to determine who is, or is not, acceptable.

The success of these erroneous gospels, that present *“another Jesus”* and *“another Spirit,”* is largely owing to the lack of edification, or building up in the

in wait to deceive” (Eph 4:11-14).

In this condition, the people never *“grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ”* (Eph 4:15).

However, the people do not become static, remaining at a juvenile level. Instead, they become vulnerable to *“another Jesus,” “another Spirit,”* and *“another Gospel.”*

This is precisely what had happened in Corinth – except that it was even worse than the case stated to the Ephesians. The Corinthians had *“come behind in no gift”* (1 Cor 1:7). All of the resources were in place for them to grow up into Christ in everything. They had been exposed to the uninterrupted ministry of the most prodigious apostle of them all, for eighteen months (Acts 18:11). Yet, upon Paul’s departure, their

that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep” (1 Cor 11:20,26-30).

We know from this that a significant number of the Corinthians had placed Christ into the background of their thinking. That is why they could not discern the Lord’s body at His table. In so doing, they had actually desecrated the table of the Lord, *“profaning the body and blood of the Lord.”*^{RSV}

This condition had given power and influence to the merchants of false gospels. The Corinthians easily received their erroneous gospels, accepted their false Christs, and gulped down *“another Spirit.”* It caused everything to go downhill from there. It is not difficult to see how immorality could break out among them. Their contempt for one another easily arose, even to hauling one another before godless judges. They could easily disdain weaker brethren, be utterly confused about marriage, deny the resurrection, reject Paul as an apostle, and forget about the poor saints in Jerusalem.

Such things cannot take place when you embrace the real Jesus, possess the real Spirit, and believe the real Gospel. Such reactions are rather the result of receiving *“another Jesus,” “another Spirit,”* and *“another Gospel.”* What is true can never be the fountain of unrighteousness, and what is false can never be the fountain of righteousness.

There is no sense in which the real Jesus can promote or condone sin. By that I mean one cannot look to Jesus and walk in sin. There is also no way that a person can walk in the Spirit and fulfill the lusts of the flesh. It is not that this should not be done. Rather, it is that it cannot be done. Equally true, it is not possible to embrace the Gospel that is God’s *“power unto salvation,”* and indulge in iniquity. You have to let go of the Gospel to do that!

Wherever there is willing involvement in sin, the individual has ceased to trust in the real Jesus. They are no longer being led by the real Spirit.

A defection from the faith cannot take place while one believes on the true Jesus, walks in the true Spirit, and believes the true Gospel! It is not possible for sin to make major inroads in an individual or a church unless a distorted view of Jesus, the Spirit, and the Gospel is entertained.

most holy faith, within the church itself. Because of this the *“unity of the faith”* and a unanimity in *“the knowledge of the Son of God”* has not taken place. The result is that the *“body”* never matures, and is therefore vulnerable to the corrupt doctrines of men. Here is how the Spirit states the case. *“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie*

attention was diverted by those who brought *“another gospel,”* preaching *“another Jesus”* and *“another Spirit.”*

We know from Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians that they had conducted themselves unacceptably at the Lord’s table. The situation was so bad that God has to strike some of them with sickness, and even took the lives of others. As it is written, *“When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper . . . For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he*

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They also are not believing the real Gospel. If they insist on maintaining their religious identity, even though their life is a living contradiction of the truth, they can only maintain that identity by embracing “another Jesus,” “another Spirit,” and “another Gospel.” None of these “anothers” are invested with Divine power. None of them foster faith or strengthen hope. None of them are used by God to bless, save, deliver, or build up. All of them are tools in the hand of the devil. They are all administered by the powers of darkness, promote Satan’s cause, and lead to sure condemnation.

A defection from the faith cannot take place while one believes on the true Jesus, walks in the true Spirit, and believes the true Gospel! It is not possible for sin to make major inroads in an individual, or a church, unless a distorted view of Jesus, the Spirit, and the Gospel is entertained. Unless a person begins to think that Jesus really tolerates sin, he will **not** be disposed to commit it. Unless the Spirit is **not** perceived as leading us forth in the mortification of the deeds of the body, sin will, in some form, become inviting to us. If, at any point, the Gospel is **not** seen as the exclusive power of God unto salvation, men will become loose in their thinking about it, and will eventually be duped by the imaginary gospels of carnally-minded men who seek their own, and not the things that be of Christ

If it is true that knowing the truth makes us free (John 8:32), then the loss of that freedom and the consequent enslavement to sin is the result of **not** knowing the truth. Spiritual freedom cannot be lost in the context of truth, and it cannot be gained in the context of the

lie. Let me be clear about this, “another Jesus” is a false Jesus. “Another Spirit” is an erroneous spirit. “Another Gospel” is a spurious gospel. Each of these frauds is “another” only by existence in the minds of men. None of them are recognized as

language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent” (Zeph 3:9). How is it that the early church enjoyed the experience of “singleness of heart” (Acts 2:46)? Why is it said of them, “the multitude of them

I suggest to you that they believed on the real Jesus, and many I our time have believed on “another Jesus.” They had all received the real Spirit, and many of our time have received “another Spirit.” They had believed and embraced the real Gospel, and many of our day have believed and embraced “another gospel.”

valid in heaven, and none of them are to be so considered on earth.

It is quite possible, if not absolutely sure, that all divisions within the church are actually traceable to the acceptance of “another Jesus,” “another Spirit,” and “another Gospel.” If this is not the case, then the true Jesus, the true Spirit, and the true Gospel, can promote division. If it is acknowledged that they cannot promote division, yet its presence is found among professed believers, then the division has been caused by something else.

Some might feel that it is caused because people do not have the same views – they do not understand the Bible alike. However, is that really a proper assessment of the case? Why is it that they do not see things alike? Did not the prophets declare, “for **they shall all see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion**” (Isa 52:8). And again, “**For then will I turn to the people a pure**

that believed were of one heart and of one soul” (Acts 4:32)? What was different about them?

I suggest to you that they believed on the real Jesus, and many I our time have believed on “another Jesus.” They had all received the real Spirit, and many of our time have received “another Spirit.” They had believed and embraced the real Gospel, and many of our day have believed and embraced “another gospel.” To me, there is no other acceptable way to account for the condition of the modern church.

The only possible way to resolve the situation is for men to believe on the **real Jesus**, receive the **real Spirit**, and embrace **the real Gospel**. If that is not sufficient, there is no answer to the situation. I freely acknowledge that these are provocative thoughts, indeed! They will, however, stand the test of meticulous scrutiny. Jesus, the Spirit, and the Gospel ARE sufficient!

CONCLUSION

The tragedy of what can happen to a diverted church was lived out in the church of the Corinthians. What happened among them was inexcusable. That is why Paul affirmed he would employ Divine weaponry against those who continued to speak against him, as though he was one of their peers.

I find it more than passingly interesting that there are those within the professed Christian community who hinge some of their major teachings on the book of First Corinthians – as though it was a sort of model church. Legion is the name of those who buttress their particular view of speaking in tongues

with this book. Others declare it to be kind of model of the “nine spiritual gifts” which, according to their teaching, are to be found in every church. Stooping even lower in the pit of religious mire, some affirm that the church in Corinth shows how wrong a people can be and still be “saints,” and fully accepted by the Lord.

With pretentious boldness they point to the opening of Paul's letter (1 Cor 1:2), his statement about what they formerly were and what they are in Christ (1 Cor 6:11), and inform us how wrong we can really be, yet still be right in the sight of God. Others take their custom of eating a meal associated with the Lord's table, and boldly announce to us that this is what the Lord wants us to do.

What all of these sophists

overlook is that Paul severely upbraided Corinth for their conduct, reminding them that those indulging in such things will **not** "inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor 6:9). Some one might say that sin is really wrong, and indulgence in it will cause us to lose some rewards, but nothing can really change our status before God. Such folly removes the reason for Paul, writing this epistle. It neutralizes the significance of spiritual weaponry, as though it was nothing more

than playing with paper swords.

If we will take this epistle seriously, it will confirm the gravity of any professed believer becoming involved in sin. There is provision for the remission of sin, to be sure. **However there is no provision for continuance in sin.** Woe to the person who imagines that such provision exists, and that sin can continue to be committed with impunity.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 1/6/2006. In this session, we continue our current series of lessons on the Epistle of Second Corinthians. The forty-fourth lesson will cover verses five through eleven of the eleventh chapter: **"INTRUSIVE MINISTERS."** When any church makes itself available to false teachers and deceivers, a fundamental spiritual deficiency exists. Paul again pleads his case, showing how unreasonable it was for some of the Corinthians to reject him and his apostleship, yet open themselves to others, whether apostles or false teachers. This is a very timely passage, tailored for our day. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

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