

THE STONE



WHO WE ARE



WE ARE DISCIPLES of Yahshua the Messiah. We are so very thankful that we have found forgiveness for our sins through His precious blood. We have come from every conceivable place in Christianity, and we write this paper as an appeal to you, our brothers and sisters, who are still looking for a place to belong.

Before we became disciples, most of us had a hard time making sense out of Christianity. The more we read the Bible, the more we saw the contradictions between what our Master promised and what we were experiencing. We saw clear commands in the New Testament that were ignored or explained away. This made us realize that we were not content, that deep down in our souls we had doubt about many things. But most of all, our consciences troubled us over the lack of love and unity in our local churches.



We were sincere. Deep in our hearts we wanted to serve God. Our Father in heaven knew our hearts and through many different circumstances led us to cross the path of a people who had a common life together. We fell in love with the Spirit they had, for He caused them to love one another with a sincerity and honesty that we had never seen. The life of the New Covenant that is promised in the Bible was being lived out in their midst, even though they were just ordinary people like us. They loved without pretense, and their whole motivation in life was to love like our Master loved, to obey Him in everything He commanded. Through them we began to receive faith that it was possible to live a life of love in unity with our brothers and sisters.

RESPONDING TO HIS LOVE

It all started to make sense when we saw a demonstration of it. We began to desire this life with all our heart. We began to understand for the first time why in all our Christian experience we had never been able to give everything to Him. When we saw faith like the first disciples had being restored to God's people, we realized that this was what we had always wanted. Although we knew we would have to forsake everything to follow Messiah, we were willing to pay the price. It was like the price our Master Yahshua paid to ransom us. In response to His love for us, all we wanted to do was give our whole life to Him, unhindered by jobs, possessions, friends or family ties.





Because He made a place for us to belong, a home for us to dwell in, we are able to do this. Every day, all day, we live for Him and for each other. We have given up all our own possessions. We share with each other what we once owned as individuals — everything from our cars, furniture, and homes to our problems and sorrows. Families live together in households and several households make up a clan. Each clan dwells in a neighborhood where those who live around them can observe their lives. This is where many people see the hope that is within us, ask about it, and receive the good news. Our lives and our homes are always open for anyone who wants to visit.

In every place we live, our lives are totally consumed with enthusiasm and zeal to see this life grow and spread throughout all the earth. We are beginning to find restoration in every aspect of our lives — especially in our marriages and with our children. We realize now more than ever just how trapped we were, going on week after week, from one church to another, from one book to the next, never satisfied with our shallow experience. We had no confidence that we had eternal life because we could not love our brothers and sisters the way He commanded us. We had no way to lay down our lives for one another the way He laid down His life for us.

COME AND STAY WITH US

We are so thankful He led us to where His life was being lived out. There we found an environment where we could love as He loved and devote our whole life to seeing this love reach full maturity in His people. What a high calling it is to be made ready to be a Bride for Him! We are thankful for His precious Holy Spirit who has made us one with Him and with one another. We have come to see it is only in unity that His love can be perfected in us.

This is who we are — a people in love with our Master Yahshua. He is our life and our hope. We have no other ambition or goal but Him. He is our everything, and by His faith and the grace that He gives to us every day, this love grows. It can't be contained; we are being consumed by it more and more. We welcome you, our brothers and sisters scattered throughout the confusing land of denominational Christianity, to come and stay with us for as long as you like. Our homes are open and our addresses are on the back of this paper. We believe you will see what we see, and if you do, you'll never go back. You'll never be content with anything else because His love will compel you to no longer live for yourself, but for Him who died for you and rose again on your behalf. ✠



THE DREAM

Many people today are returning to their religious roots, trying to find the source, the ancient path that can lead the human race into an age of peace.



HOW WILL PEACE COME TO EARTH? This question haunts all mankind. From diplomats trying to settle strife in third-world countries to the common man with marital problems, all experience the lack of peace, even if they don't know how to talk about it. The problems of modern society are increasingly more complex, and each apparently good solution seems only to breed worse problems. And so the vast majority adopt a hopeless attitude about society and focus instead on striving after comfort and security, wanting merely to survive the days ahead.

Yet there are still some who hope for peace on earth — between individuals, within families, and even among nations. We all know that for this to happen, people from every nation must come together in unity. The difficult question is: "How do we do it?"

Many, many people today are returning to their religious roots, trying to find the source, the ancient path that can lead the human race into an age of peace. Small groups gather for prayer or meditation, large masses go on pilgrimages, but most have overlooked the answer which lies hidden in a 2500-year-old prophecy — a dream that revealed how the entire course of world history would unfold.

Long ago, men understood the value of dreams and visions much more than today, especially the dreams of great men and kings. Certainly in these times you would not hear of a chancellor or president of some nation having a dream which he spoke of as having any significance.

Perhaps this is because the leaders of today do not compare in quality of character with the mighty rulers of the great empires of the past.

But long, long ago, the king of the vast Babylonian Empire had an amazing dream which was so phenomenal that it was recorded by the ancients and preserved until this day. The awesome significance of this dream is just now, some 2500 years later, being realized.

Consider this dream, and perhaps you will be one who can grasp its deep meaning and its life-changing consequences:



In the darkness of the night, in his huge, elaborately decorated bed chamber, the mighty king tossed restlessly to and fro in his lavish bed. He was dreaming a terrifying dream. In his mind's eye, King Nebuchadnezzar stood gazing at a great and tall statue with extraordinary splendor which was standing before him. He was filled with awe, for never had he seen such a sight. Somehow he realized that this statue had monumental significance. The head was made of gold, the chest of silver, the belly and thighs of bronze, the legs of iron, and the feet and toes were partly of iron and partly of clay.

The king kept staring at this statue with wonder. Then suddenly a great stone, which had been cut out of a mountain, hewn out without human hands, came plummeting toward the statue with great momentum. The stone struck the statue on the feet of iron and clay, crushing them,



and causing the entire statue to come crashing to the earth. It fell with such force that all the precious metals were smashed to powder at once, leaving this awesome statue like chaff on the threshing floor. A strong wind came and blew away the last remains of its dust so that not a trace of the statue could be found.

But then, before his eyes the king saw this stone, which had just destroyed the statue, grow to be a gigantic mountain which filled the whole earth.

With terror, the great king awoke from his dream. Sitting up in the darkness, he was greatly perplexed. He knew he had dreamed a troubling and awesome dream. Yet, though he thought and thought, he could not remember his dream. The whole night he could not sleep. He **MUST** know this dream.

But alas! What was this dream and what did it mean?

In the morning the king sought for someone in his vast empire to help him — to tell him his dream and what it meant. But all the great sorcerers and wise men gave him the same reply. "If you cannot tell us the dream, we cannot interpret it for you ... and only the gods could tell you your dream!"

This response enraged this almighty king. In his wrath he ordered the immediate execution of all the wise men in his entire empire, for all their wisdom had proven to be worthless to him in his time of greatest need.

Now, among the great wise men of this empire there was a very special young man.

His name was Daniel, and he was young, having lived in Babylon for only a short time. He had come there as a captive from his home city of Jerusalem in the land of Israel. The Babylonians had invaded his land and had taken all the very strong, intelligent, nice-looking boys as captives to serve their great king. Daniel was one of those boys. Born of the tribe of Judah, Daniel was part of the royal family in Israel. This was the land where the God of Heaven and earth had chosen a people for Himself. This was the promised Holy Land, but these people had long before become unfaithful to their God.

This enemy invasion by the powerful forces of the Babylonian empire was their just discipline for their unfaithfulness. And Daniel, just a young man, was receiving the discipline which the sins of his father and grandfather had brought upon them all. Now Daniel had to suffer as a captive in a strange land.

But actually Daniel had a different heart than his rebellious forefathers. For Daniel loved the God of Israel with all of his heart. He did not want to do anything wrong. Even in this land of wickedness, he remained pure and undefiled. And though he had only been in Babylon for such a short time, his good behavior had already earned Daniel the reputation of being a very good and wise young man.

So when the order came to execute all the wise men, Daniel himself was included in that order. The king's guard came to get Daniel to imprison him with all the others. He told Daniel what had happened

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about the king's dream, and about the other wise men's inability to help the king.

Daniel knew that only his God, the God of visions and dreams, could reveal this mystery, so Daniel went to the king and requested that he give him time so that he might declare the interpretation to the king. Then he and his loyal friends from Israel began to pray. They prayed to the only One who could deliver them.

In the night Daniel received a vision from his God. He awoke from his sleep and knew beyond all doubt what the dream of the king of Babylon had been. Full of thanksgiving he made his way quickly to the palace of the great king. When he was brought before the king, Daniel wasted no time in letting him know that he deserved none of the credit for discovering the answer to the king's problem. For the God of heaven, Daniel's God, deserved all the praise. Then Daniel went on to clearly and exactly describe the awesome statue, just as the great king had dreamed: a head of gold, a chest of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, and feet and toes of iron mixed with clay. He also described the STONE which brought down the statue and then became a great mountain that filled the whole earth.

As Daniel spoke, the king's memory testified to the truth of what he was saying. Very respectfully, Daniel then gave the king the interpretation of his dream. It was a very strange interpretation, indeed. For this statue represented world history which was yet to happen. In fact, it would take 2500 years for all the aspects of this dream to be fulfilled.

He said that the head of gold stood for the first mighty empire which would rule the earth. It was most certainly the empire of this king before whom he stood. "You,

O king," said Daniel, "are the head of gold." Then he went on to tell of three more successive empires which would follow — one of silver, one of bronze, and one of iron which is eventually mixed with clay.

But what about the STONE? What did the stone which became a mighty mountain represent? Now came the part of the dream which Daniel himself liked the best. For throughout the train of history of which this dream spoke it seemed that the God of heaven and earth had little part, but now there came another kingdom. This kingdom was a STONE hewn from a mountain, without human hands. And this very STONE KINGDOM would be one which his God would Himself raise up, which would never be destroyed. After putting to an end all other kingdoms, it would endure forever. This would be the kingdom of his God. Even though Daniel knew that all this would be in the far distant future, he was overjoyed to know that in the end the STONE KINGDOM of his God would have dominion.

With his face beaming with joy, Daniel announced in conclusion, "The great God has made known to the king what will take place IN THE FUTURE; the dream is true, and its interpretation is TRUSTWORTHY!"



History bears out Daniel's interpretation. Three empires followed Babylon in world domination: Media-Persia, Greece, and then Rome. Each one was inferior to the one before it in terms of the authority of its ruler. Each ruler had greater checks and balances on his power. But each one was tougher and more enduring. This much was clear. But the great question that remains is: Who is the STONE? ❖





THE STONE

WHAT DOES DANIEL'S interpretation of the king's dream mean and how does it fit into history? The Scriptures are no less true today than they were when they were written and spoken. The purpose of this paper is to speak to you about these things: about the Fourth Kingdom and the Stone Kingdom, and about who belongs to these two kingdoms. If you care about following the one true God and being part of the people Daniel describes, who are protected, have insight, and are rescued,¹ what we have to say in this paper will matter to you.

The first four kingdoms represented in the statue were natural kingdoms, established by force of arms, controlling the world in this age. But the fifth kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, hewn from a mountain without human hands. Hewing is a deliberate cutting out with the preconceived intent to create. The final kingdom is deliberately hewn from the world by God with the preconceived intent of creating a people of His own, who will express His very nature and character. This stone, this fifth kingdom, is a kingdom of love, overpowering all the forces of evil that have ripped the world apart for centuries. It shatters the world empires which ruled before it and brings an end to world history.

The forming of this people is not the work of men, but of God, through His Holy Spirit and His angels. It is His holy angels who create circumstances in our lives to cut us away from the world's self-satisfied

life of contentment.² They prepare us to hear the good news and help us keep our hearts and minds open so that we can receive faith to believe the gospel of salvation. Then His Spirit forms those who receive that message into a nation, a twelve-tribed spiritual Israel, according to the words of the prophet Isaiah:

It is too small a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make you a light to the nations so that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth. (Isaiah 49:6)

The Holy Spirit will move within the hearts of this gathered people and cause them to be a light, burning intensely, deep into the heart and soul of every person who lives. The demonstration of love and unity which shines forth from the life of this stone kingdom will expose the wickedness and perversion of the last generation of human history. It is this people whom God has always wanted to raise up to be a light to the nations, to the governments of the world. This is what the Son of God meant when he said:

This gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the earth as a witness to all nations; and then the end will come. (Matthew 24:14)

A *witness* is a testimony to the existence of something real, which in this case is the *demonstration* of the kingdom.

¹Daniel 12:1-3 ²Hebrews 1:14



☞ *When Will The Stone Be Cut Out Of The Mountain?*

Daniel 2:44-45 records that this stone is hewn from the mountain *in the days of those kings*. So we know that the stone cannot possibly appear before *those kings*. It is only during the lifetime of those kings that *"the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed."*

To understand who those kings are we must look at what Daniel says about the fourth kingdom in Daniel 2:33-35 and 40-43. Briefly, it is this: the fourth kingdom is like two legs of iron with feet and toes made of iron mixed with clay. As iron breaks everything into pieces, so it will crush all other kingdoms. As the feet and toes are a mixture of iron and clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. As clay does not adhere to iron when mixed, so this fourth kingdom will lack integrity. Although it has the strength of iron, it will in essence be divided.



It is in the lifetime of those kings that the STONE will be hewn out of the mountain of this world.

The Roman Empire began as a civil government, but became a religious empire when the Emperor Constantine embraced Christianity in 312 A.D. and made it the state religion. History clearly records the split of this "Holy Roman Empire" into two parts: the eastern part whose capital was Constantinople, and the western part whose capital remained at Rome. This split is graphically represented by the two legs of iron. It came about because of religious disunity. As a result, the empire lost its national life as a world power. Yet it has never lost its religious existence. The religious influence continues today in the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches. The influence also of Roman law and culture is spread all over Europe as a seed to be revived at the right moment in history, during the final years of this age.

Thus we see the feet and toes — different from the legs in substance, but containing much of their essence. So far, there

have been no more world empires since Rome fell. Repeated attempts have been made by various rulers in the ensuing 1500 years to revive the Roman Empire by uniting Europe under their domination. Thus far, all attempts have failed. History does not record anything corresponding to the feet and toes, to which Daniel calls much attention, but the prophecy is clear that they are in some sense part of the fourth kingdom.

However, a parallel passage in Daniel 7 gives greater clarity. In another night vision the prophet sees a number of beasts, the fourth of which is terrible and dreadful, having great iron teeth and tremendous strength, and crushing and devouring its victims and trampling everything underfoot. This beast has ten horns.

... the fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the kingdoms, and it will devour the whole earth, and trample it down, and break it to pieces. As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom, ten kings will arise ... (Daniel 7:23-24)

These ten kings rising out of the fourth kingdom are a clear parallel to the ten toes in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Daniel, in his interpretation, makes repeated reference to the toes of the statue,³ drawing attention to them, and then says, *"In the days of those kings ..."*⁴ meaning the kings of the iron mixed with clay. From all this it is clear that there will be ten rulers who arise from the domain of that fourth kingdom and constitute a revived and modified expression of that fourth world empire, probably on the very soil where Roman influence and culture is most extensive — Europe. *And it is in the lifetime of those kings that the STONE will be hewn.*

³Daniel 2:41-42 ⁴Daniel 2:44

The Seeds of Rome

HISTORY PLACES THE FALL of the Roman Empire at 476 A.D. with the downfall of Rome. This would seem to be the end of the fourth kingdom in Daniel's prophecy. But it is amazing to note that no empire has risen since that time to take its place. That means there have been over 1500 years of political struggle without any one nation rising to dominance. The reason is that the dream was true and its interpretation trustworthy. There were only four kingdoms in the statue, and the stone kingdom crushed and removed all trace of them. But the fourth kingdom has not yet been crushed.

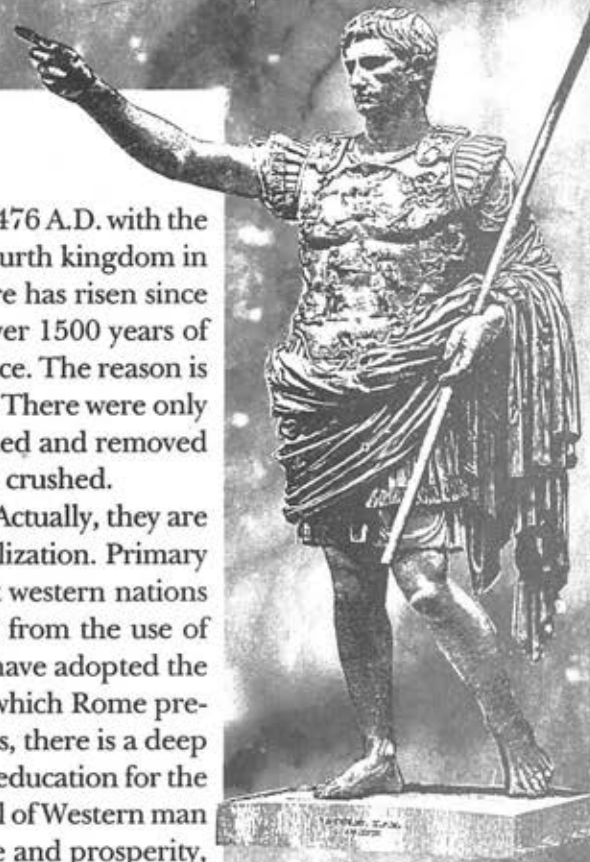
All around us in the present day we see traces of Rome. Actually, they are more than traces — they are the very fabric of western civilization. Primary among these is the system of law. The legal codes of most western nations are based on Roman law. This heritage is easily detected from the use of Latin in legal terminology. Also, amazingly, most nations have adopted the republican form of government to some extent, the form which Rome preserved even under its most powerful emperors. Beyond this, there is a deep admiration, even an awe, implanted in Westerners by their education for the Roman Empire and its achievements. Something in the soul of Western man wants to see the glory of that civilization, the Roman peace and prosperity, reproduced today.

That desire has been carried and nurtured through the centuries by Christianity. Ever since she became one flesh with the Roman Empire in the time of Constantine, the Church has had a vital interest in the unification of Europe under central rule. It was she who civilized and Christianized the Germanic tribes who conquered Rome and then crowned Charlemagne emperor of Rome in 800, looking for a revival of the security she had known under Constantine.

This political connection with the Germanic tribes endured for a thousand years, inspiring such German princes as Otto I and Charles V to extend their rule over Europe and be crowned as Roman emperors. So deeply ingrained in the tradition of the German people was this tie with Rome, both spiritually and politically, that an entire succession of monarchs for six and a half centuries referred to their domain as the "Holy Roman Empire."

Their claims ended in 1806 when Napoleon, with his own dreams of empire, sought to dominate Europe. Crowned Emperor of France, with the blessing of the Pope, Napoleon soon showed that he was not content with France, but wanted a Roman empire of his own.

Rome, then, lives on in the religion, history, politics, law, government, traditions, and languages of Europe. But most importantly it lives in the hearts and imaginations of Europeans, ready to spring forth into reality in the last days. ❖



*The ultimate fruit
that God is looking for
is the final destruction
of the kingdoms of
this world*



We have not yet seen those ten kings rising to power, so what could that Stone — that fifth and final kingdom — possibly be? Anything which had its origin before the days of those kings would be completely disqualified. The Stone and the toes are both formed at the same time. Even if those kings were alive today and had not yet come to power, no spiritual movement which had its origin earlier than the mid-twentieth century could possibly be the Stone. This includes all expressions of Christianity.

The Stone is central and supreme in God's purpose on earth: unlike Christianity, it brings an end to the kingdoms of the world, replacing them with an eternal kingdom, the kingdom of God. This is what the Son of God was referring to when He told the religious leaders of His day:

The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it. And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust. (Matthew 21:43-44)

The similarity of our Master's words to Daniel's description of the stone shattering the world empires is not coincidental. He was thinking about that fifth and final kingdom when he spoke those words. He was speaking of a nation hewn from the mountain of the world in the last days of this age. The privilege of being that Stone, that kingdom, would be given to a people who would produce the fruit of that kingdom.

The ultimate fruit that God is looking for is the final destruction of the kingdoms of this world,⁵ so that no other nation would dominate Israel again. This is what He is focused on today: abolishing all rule and

all authority and power other than His own.⁶ This will not be done through might or craft. It is not a military coup or a subversive plot to undermine government. The nation that produces the fruit of the kingdom will, by their lives of obedience to their Creator, raise up a standard of righteousness by which He can judge the whole world. When this demonstration of the kingdom has confronted the world with the choice of obeying God or rejecting Him, then the end will come. He will send His Son to judge the earth, removing every trace of the kingdoms of the world, establishing the kingdom of God, and bringing everlasting peace.⁷

WHAT IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE STONE KINGDOM?

The Son of God, whom we call Yahshua, is the Rock,⁸ the true and only foundation. He is the capstone, the chief cornerstone of God's building.⁹

Peter was the rock among the disciples because of his revelation of who his Master Yahshua was.¹⁰ The other disciples took on Peter's revelation deep in their hearts so that, as apostles and prophets, they could become the foundation on which the church was built.¹¹ Years later, Peter spoke of how his Master was a living stone, precious in the sight of His Father, even though He had been rejected by men. The same is true of His disciples, that they are living stones to be built into a spiritual house, acceptable and pleasing to God.¹² They come together and make the Stone, for it is one and the same with Him, for He is the Rock. Peter wrote, "*Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious cornerstone; and he who believes in Him shall not be disappointed.*"¹³ Those who believe that the Rock is precious will adhere to Him, cling to him,

⁵Rev 11:15 ⁶1 Cor 15:24 ⁷Rev 19:11-16 ⁸Psalms 19:14 ⁹Psalms 118:22 ¹⁰Matt 28:18

¹¹Eph 2:20; Rev 21:14 ¹²1 Pet 2:1-5 ¹³1 Pet 2:6-8

Israel

Throughout most of recorded history, God's people have been a small, twelve-tribed nation dwelling in the Middle East, known as Israel. Yet in the final years of this age, a new type of Israel is coming to birth. It is still the people of God and consists of twelve tribes, but this new Israel is forming *outside* the borders of the land of Israel (Malachi 1:5). It is a spiritual nation whose citizens will live in twelve different geographical locations. And, like Israel of old, these people will live as a light to the nations in which they sojourn.

To old Israel was granted the unique privilege of receiving God's laws and time-honored covenants. They were entrusted with the Temple and its ritual worship, even the divine glory that filled its sanctuary. They were adopted as sons of the God who tenderly loved them. This rich heritage was the common property of those who made up the commonwealth of Israel. Not only were they participants in an abundant social life, overflowing with new moon feasts, religious holidays, and national celebrations, but they also had fellowship with their God and came to love Him supremely. To live in Israel was to be connected to its stem, to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to its kings and prophets, and to other well-known men who walked with their God. It is little wonder that from this nation came the ancestors of Messiah Yahshua who was sent to save His people and re-establish their nation.

All that applied to the once-vibrant commonwealth of old Israel applies to the new Israel that Messiah established by His death and resurrection. Over the centuries, very few people have ever understood who Israel is and what its purpose is. Some know that ten of its tribes were lost and most of the remaining two were scattered all over the earth, but who understands the significance of Israel's restoration? The Holy Spirit has wisely allowed this secret to remain hidden until a time when the conditions were ripe to raise up a twelve-tribed Israel again on the earth. The clues to this mystery unfolding are plentifully supplied in the Scriptures: Isaiah 49:5-6, Jeremiah 23:8, John 10:16, John 11:52, Acts 26:7, Ephesians 2:12, James 1:1, Revelation 7:4-8.

Israel will once again be gathered into twelve tribes, into clans and communities like the first church in Jerusalem. Springing up from the dust like a root out of dry ground, or like a tender shoot from the stump of an ancient tree, the new Israel will appear in twelve different locations on earth. Their warmth, joy, and hospitality that will invite men from all nations, tribes, and languages to take part in their social life. The life of Israel is a life like that of Messiah and His disciples, a life of holiness and devotion, a life of love and care. People from all nations will be grafted into this twelve-tribed Israel so that it can become a light to all the other nations on earth and bring about the end of this present evil age (Galatians 1:4). ❖

and have absolute trust and confidence in Him. For those who only believe in their mind, or who don't see Him as precious, the Rock will make them fall and stumble one day.

Whoever falls on Him will be broken in that their hardened exterior will be penetrated so that they can receive faith as they hear the Word and be saved. Our Master spoke this when He said, "And he who falls on the stone will be broken to pieces; but on whom-ever it falls, it will scatter him like dust,"¹⁴ confirming what Daniel had prophesied 500 years earlier.¹⁵ This means that the stone will crush all the kingdoms of this world. But those in the last days who refuse to fall on the Stone and be broken will find themselves as part of the world kingdom that will be scattered like dust.

ECUMENISM

We have already clearly established that the Stone Kingdom is a kingdom of love. We know that the unity that the Stone Kingdom expresses will be the answer to our Master's prayer,

...that they may be one just as We are One... that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me." (John 17:21-23)

This unity is a unity *without* diversity, a unity that cannot come about by mere toleration or compromise or seeking to ignore differences. It is only possible through love. It is the same unity that the Father has with the Son (and you know that they don't have differences of opinion or doctrine).

However, as the life of the Spirit died out in the early church, it irreversibly divided into the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. This division

meant that they were no longer one church: they were no longer united under one head. This division has never been healed; they have never regained the unity and pure devotion that was evidenced in the early church.

The statue's two legs of iron, separate and distinct, portray this division. The broken pieces of the first church have never been reunited in Christianity, even to this day, because there continue to be too many different opinions. There is no true oneness, no true unity in Christianity.

Just as the scribes and Pharisees did not receive our Master's authority or His message in His day, the same is true today. Many who claim Him as their God are not true believers because they do not live as He commanded.¹⁶ Our Master knew people would reject Him. Israel of old did not develop into that Stone, but instead rejected our Master, killing Him. This is why He spoke,

Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it." (Matthew 21:43)

So how can this divided religion of Christianity possibly be the Stone Kingdom? The Stone Kingdom and Christianity are two separate and distinct things. This is the stunning truth that every one of us must face directly. Many, many sincere and zealous men and women are working themselves to the bone within Christianity, trying to establish a life of love and unity that will bring about Messiah's rule on earth. Individuals have been doing this for centuries. But they have not been able to produce this life. Instead, God's name continues to be dishonored among the nations of the world, and our Master's name is continually being held up

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¹¹Eph 2:20; ¹²Rev 21:14 ¹³1 Pet 2:1-5 ¹⁴1 Pet 2:6-8 ¹⁵Mat 21:44 ¹⁶Dan 2:44 ¹⁶1 John 2:4-5



to public shame and ridicule because of the hypocrisy, divisions, factions, and denominations that are promoted by those who profess to know the Son of God.

It is against common reasoning for the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches to think that they are still under the Spirit of the true God, in whom there is no division, when they have been divided for centuries. The same is true for all denominations, even though they may be masked by a so-called "spiritual unity" where everyone agrees to disagree. This is not the unity Paul preached¹⁷ and our Master prayed for,¹⁸ though it will appear so to everyone but God's elect.

Another very striking reason that Christianity — Catholicism, Protestantism, Ecumenism — cannot be the Stone is that it has been in existence for so long; for centuries, in fact. The Stone will not have come down through the ages for there has never been a demonstration of it throughout history. And Daniel 2:44 makes it very clear that the Stone Kingdom cannot even begin to be cut out from the mountain until

the ten toes, or ten kings, begin to come forth on the earth.

It is in the lifetime of those ten kings that the Stone is raised up as something new on the earth — a new wineskin to contain the new wine of the Spirit that will make them one. So anything that had its origin before the days of those ten kings cannot possibly be the Stone.

WHERE ARE THE TEN KINGS?

It would be easy to mistake the feet and the toes of partly iron and partly clay for a fifth kingdom. However, they are only an extension of the fourth kingdom, the legs of iron, since they, too, are made partly of iron. It is also clear in the book of Daniel that the ten kings will arise out of the fourth kingdom.¹⁹ The fact that the feet and toes are mixed with clay shows that in the final days of that fourth kingdom, it will be a confederation of ten kings, having difficulty holding together. Part of it will be strong and part of it will be brittle and weak.²⁰

¹⁷1 Cor 1:10; Phil 1:27 ¹⁸John 17:22-23 ¹⁹Dan 7:7,23,24 ²⁰Dan 2:41-42



The emerging political and economic unification in Europe could be the early stages of the formation of that confederation of ten kings (the feet and toes). If this is so, they will eventually be molded into ten nations. That is not so hard to imagine, given the dramatic rejoining of East and West Germany into a single nation.

As the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox split signaled the fall of the fourth world empire, so will the coming together of these sects of Christianity through the Ecumenical movement signal the coming together of the ten kings (ten toes) into a unity that will revive the fourth kingdom to the stature of a world empire. The heart of the Ecumenical movement is to achieve a worldwide Christian unity that

will unite the nations of this earth and thus bring about peace on earth. So we can see that the purpose of Ecumenism is to be the Christian catalyst that will unite the ten kings of Europe.

Even as we see the Ecumenical movement becoming the catalyst for the revival of the fourth world empire, we are also beginning to see a people being hewn out of the mountain of the world. Those who have been hewn out are being drawn together into communities of love that will grow to be the Stone Kingdom. They will be the restored, fully-developed Body of Messiah, the twelve-tribed Israel which will roll down that mountain and crush the toes, destroying the kingdoms of the world forever. Of this fifth kingdom there will never be an end, nor will it ever be left to another people. This kingdom will continue into the coming new age, governing the whole world and expanding throughout the universe into eternity.²¹

THY KINGDOM COME

Our Master knew that a New Israel would come forth and that it would be a holy nation, a people for God's own possession. He knew they would all be priests, proclaiming the excellencies of the living God, for each would know personally how he was brought from the darkness into the light by His mercy. This Stone will be His people, individuals brought together who were once not a people.²² They will produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit²³ and the fruit of the kingdom as a light to the world and to a fallen Christianity. This will bring salvation, and eventually judgment, to the ends of the earth.²⁴

During the lifetime of the ten rulers depicted by the toes, the God of heaven will raise up this kingdom and His name will be great among the nations.

²¹Daniel 2:44 ²²1 Peter 2:9-10 ²³Galatians 5:22-23 ²⁴Isaiah 49:6

Denominations

It did not take long for seeds of division to begin taking root in the early church. You can clearly see Paul warning the church in Rome, exhorting them to continue to abide in God's lovingkindness and tender mercies (Romans 11:22). He told them if they did not continue to obey the Master's commands, then they would be cut off (Acts 3:22-23).

Likewise, Paul was very concerned that the Corinthians would go astray in their minds. Although he wanted to present them to our Savior as a pure virgin, he could discern that Satan was deceiving them by his craftiness, giving them another gospel, another spirit. They were being led astray from their simple devotion to the Son of God which kept them abiding in His love and bound them together in the unity of the Spirit. There was no diversity of opinion among them until they began thinking they were missing something, and that they could receive something apart from Paul (2 Corinthians 11:2-4).

Thus, the diversity that people in the early church allowed in their hearts opened the door for the evil one to begin driving wedges between them. As jealousy and strife filled their hearts, they began to divide into sects with some following Paul, some Apollos, and some Peter.

This diversity of opinion grew to the point where, in the fourth century, the descendents of the church in Rome and the descendents of the church in Corinth divided from each other in the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church. This was the beginning of denominationalism. The seeds of division continued to grow in these two sects, even though they both claimed to be ruled by the God who is One (1 John 1:6; John 8:12; 16:2-3).

In the 1500s further division arose concerning what the gospel meant, and Protestantism began. Now the Protestants have divided into hundreds of sects, all claiming to be led by the Spirit of the God who is One.

So denominationalism, which had its roots in the decline of the early church, is the full-blown outcome of the diversity that individual people tolerated in their hearts while claiming to be in unity. This divided condition among Christians is an embarrassment even to the leaders of these sects today (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). ❖

And your eyes will see this and you will say, 'The Sovereign be magnified beyond the border of Israel! ... for from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name will be great among the nations.'
(Malachi 1:5,11)

His authority will be extended over the whole earth in the next age and that kingdom will extend its authority to the whole universe, forever and ever. The increase of His government will have no end, filling all the universe.²⁵ This means that war, strife, greed, and injustice will not permeate the universe because God's people will overcome the world and its ruler, the evil one.

THE BINDING POWER OF LOVE

This final Stone Kingdom will be Yahshua's kingdom which will be held together by love. It will be His Body, His Bride, perfected in love.

That Stone Kingdom will bring about the end of the age; it will be delivered to God as His kingdom, once He has abolished all rule and authority and power.²⁶ It is the Stone that will cause the giant, the great statue, the world government, to topple, so that the government of God will be able to reign on the earth. This will happen thoroughly and quickly.²⁷ But in the end the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of our God who shall reign forever and ever.²⁸ It will happen because the Messiah will split the sky and return once there is a people of faith gathered to receive Him. They will be Daniel's people.²⁹ This is the fifth kingdom, the Stone Kingdom. This stone brings an end to world history in this age. It will endure forever and never be destroyed.³⁰

This good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in the whole world as a witness, a demonstration to all the nations, and then the end will come.³¹ ❖

²⁵Eph 3:21; 4:10 ²⁶1 Cor 15:24 ²⁷Rom 9:28 ²⁸Rev 11:15 ²⁹Dan 12:1 ³⁰Dan 2:44
³¹Mat 24:14



Before and After

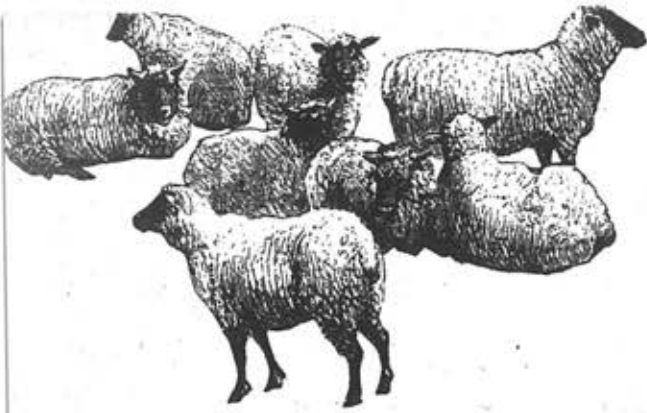
Immediately ^{before} after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, and they will see the Son of Man coming up in the clouds of the sky with power and great glory, and He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (Matthew 24:29-31)

THAT'S THE RAPTURE, RIGHT? — the event most Bible believing Christians are to be ready for at any moment. It has been called “The Blessed Hope” by some, and the question always follows, “Is it yours?”

Is it *your* hope that you would be removed from the earth *before* the great troubles break out that herald the end of this age? It would be a wonderful hope if it were true. But read in your own Bible the verse quoted above. We deliberately altered it to make a point. It should read, “*Immediately after the tribulation of those days ...*” It is a vain hope to think that because you believe, you will escape the great tribulation. It is *after* the tribulation that the Son of God will return to gather His people from the four corners of the earth.

Also read carefully 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10. Verses 6 through 8 make it plain that the Lord will give relief to His saints *at the same time* He repays with affliction those who have persecuted them. These are simultaneous events, not separated by three and a half years. It should be clear that those who believe should expect to endure the greatest time of testing in all of human history.

You may ask, “What difference does it make?” *Everything*, is our answer. The faith that saves you should also prepare you for this terrible ordeal. If you have received the true salvation of the Son of God you will be led to live a life with His people that will prepare you to stand in that evil day. Those who do so will be His radiant Bride. All others who have a “faith” that never leads them to obey the gospel, may very well find themselves living lives comfortably conformed to the world, trusting in a hope that will disappoint them. ❖



THE SACRIFICE

"Behold, the Man!" The Roman ruler of the Jewish people cried these words out to the Jews assembled before him. Pilate saw a value in this man that His own people did not see. Here was a man worthy of respect. It was obvious that His own priests had delivered Him up out of envy. What was it that was so compelling about Him? There, beaten and bloody as He was, stood a man, THE MAN, as Pilate intuitively knew.

*There He hung,
the innocent where
the guilty should
have been.*

If only His people could have understood what those stripes on His back meant. The prophet Isaiah could have told them. He could have given meaning to the appalling sight of Yahshua's beardless and bloody face if words could have come from his grief-stricken heart.¹ But for the generation that crucified the Son of God, Isaiah's words were safely entombed along with his body. They saw Him as a beaten man, but not as the Lamb of God.

No one would ever forget what He looked like that day, least of all those who were closest to Him. His death agony burned itself into their memory, and all the more keenly as they remembered the admirable life He had led, the acts of compassion and love that had filled His days. He was innocent, yet there He hung — where the guilty should have been. They were touched by the pain that was written on every aspect of His being — the tortured breathing, the blood dripping from his wounds. One of His friends, Yohannan, stood there next to Miriam, the crucified man's mother. There were only a few like them, unafraid of the consequences. Being there with Him was more important to them than life.

They endured the agony of watching the life being torn from Him. How they longed to satisfy His thirst when He asked, but they could not go to Him. When He finally bowed His head after speaking His last words, they knew it was finished. The life of the man who had meant so much to them had ended. What thoughts Miriam must have had! Her child, who had come from her womb and nursed at her breasts, for whom she had sewn and cooked and cared, was limp and lifeless. Down that lonely hill she walked with Yohannan to whatever life awaited them after such a death.

What pain they felt! What misery they knew! Where was the resurrection He had spoken of? Where was He now? It seemed as though the power of

evil had triumphed over the most noble and kind life that had ever existed. Was death then the victor?

O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?

What thanksgiving welled out of them when their grief was ended and they beheld the risen Messiah, radiant with life! Uncontrollable joy burst forth from them, and worship filled their souls. He was alive! They could touch Him. He even ate with them. He was altogether real. In Him the power of death had been broken. There was hope for all men now. Surely one day all grief would come to an end. God's people would at last be set free from all their enemies and all the sins that had led them astray.²

They devoted their lives to sharing the hope they had. They possessed something precious in their hearts which no one could take away, and oh, how they longed to share it with others. They wanted everyone to experience the same deliverance from the finality of death that they had, to know of the resurrection and all that it meant for them. It was such GOOD NEWS!

In His blood, shed so freely that day, was the most marvelous and complete forgiveness. At Calvary the innocent had taken the place of the guilty. The pure and spotless Lamb God required for sin had been offered and accepted. But never had it happened before that the lamb slain for the sins of the people had come back to life! God had made the sacrifice, just as Abraham had prophesied of Messiah when he went to offer up *his* son, Isaac, "God will Himself provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son."³

TO GAIN SOMETHING OF GREATER VALUE

The disciples knew about sacrifice. Blood sacrifices had dominated their lives from childhood. A sacrifice was the destruction or surrender of something valuable to gain something of even greater value. They slaughtered a lamb as the sin offering in order to be restored to the right relationship with God that their sin had destroyed. The sincere knew *they* deserved to die for their sins, not the innocent lamb. They cried out to God to accept the substitute of the lamb's life instead of theirs. Unless the sacrifice was costly — a pure, unblemished lamb — its blood meant nothing to the God of Israel.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" — the true meaning of these words filled the disciples with inexpressible joy.⁴ God gave His only Son for what He wanted more — *us*. Our Master willingly sacrificed His own life (something a lamb could never do) to redeem our lives from death, for

A sacrifice is the destruction or surrender of something valuable to gain something of even greater value.

that was of greater value to Him than His own life.⁵ Because of His Son's sacrifice, God could make the great summons, "*Gather my godly ones to me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.*"⁷

HE DISPENSES NO CHEAP GRACE

*It was His life
or their life.
They couldn't
have both.*

The purpose of His sacrifice was to set us free so that we could make a willing sacrifice like He did. Nothing else is worthy of Him; nothing else reaches the blood of the Master's atoning sacrifice. This is the faith that saves and compels you to wholly consecrate and devote your life to the merciful God who saved you. "*For the love of Messiah controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.*"⁸

This is what the New Testament records about those who received the message of truth, the gospel of their salvation.⁹ The disciples wanted nothing more than to be just like their Master. Possessions, family, jobs, and a respected place in society were all cast aside for His sake and the sake of His gospel.¹⁰ This was the reality of their baptism and of the sacrifice of their lives, without which they could not have received His life.¹¹ They had to give up what was lesser (their life) for what was greater (His life). It was *His* life or *their* life — they couldn't have both. Just as He had given up everything for them, coming down out of heaven and being the sacrifice their sins required, they sacrificed everything they had for Him.¹² It was the only response a grateful heart could give, the only one that saving faith called forth.¹³ Because of this obedient response, He came to dwell in their hearts, granting them His Holy Spirit.¹⁴ Anything less would have belittled His sacrifice on the cross. They loved Him too much to not give Him everything.

*They loved Him
too much to not give
Him everything.*

The spiritual sacrifice of our lives must be as real and true as was His physical sacrifice on the cross to Miriam, Yohannan, and the other disciples. If we don't die to sin and the world, we can never have the witness in our hearts that we are forgiven. He dispenses no cheap grace. It is life for life, a sacrifice. "*If anyone wishes to come after Me, let Him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.*"¹⁵ ❖

¹Isaiah 50:5-7 ²Matthew 1:21; Luke 1:68-75; Acts 2:47 ³Genesis 22:8 ⁴John 3:16
⁵Hebrews 2:14,15 ⁶Isaiah 53:7 ⁷Psalms 50:5 ⁸2 Corinthians 5:14,15
⁹Ephesians 1:13 ¹⁰Mark 10:29,30 ¹¹Romans 6:3-5 ¹²Philippians 2:5-9;
Matthew 10:37-39 ¹³Luke 7:40-50 ¹⁴John 14:15,21,23; Acts 5:32 ¹⁵Luke 9:23,24

Born Again?

WE ARE BORN OF GOD when, because of our response to the Gospel, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in us. This only can happen when we hear the word of Messiah and faith comes to us,¹ so that we obey the word we hear. Such obedience shows that we love Him, and so He shows His love for us by coming to us and making His abode with us.² Thus it is that through obeying Him we are sprinkled by His blood and born again to a living hope.³

The word of Messiah reveals His glory, His worth, to us who believe, causing us to fall in love with Him.⁴ To those who truly see His worth, nothing else matters but Him — not father or mother or wife or children or brothers or sisters or even our own life.⁵ So we are willingly baptized into His death,⁶ immersing ourselves in the same loss of all things which He suffered for our sakes.⁷ Such a response of faith is the only response worthy of Him.⁸

It is only by baptism into His death, the place where His blood was shed, that we are covered by His blood. Only there are we forgiven of all our sins. Only there can the guilt be taken away. And only when we have died is it necessary to be given a new life.

The legitimacy of a “born-again” experience cannot be judged by the power of the emotional release that may accompany it, but rather by the life of obedience to the word of Messiah that results from it.⁹

A true born-again experience means truly experiencing a new life, with new brothers, sisters, mothers, children, houses, farms — a hundred times what we lost when we left our old life.¹⁰ It means beginning all over again like a little baby, born into a new family and a new home. It means having a new heart that desires only to please our Master, giving our bodies to Him as a living sacrifice, having our minds renewed, and becoming like Him in our personalities.¹¹

This new life is eternal life. ❖

¹Romans 10:17 ²John 14:15, 23 ³1 Peter 1:2-3, 22-23 ⁴2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 4:10 ⁵Matthew 37-38; Mark 3:33-35; Luke 14:26-27 ⁶Romans 6:3 ⁷Philippians 2:5-8; 3:8-10; Mark 10:28; Luke 14:33 ⁸Matthew 10:37-38 ⁹1 John 2:3; 3:14 ¹⁰Mark 10:29-30 ¹¹Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:22-24

CULTIVATING THE CURSED GROUND

EVERYONE LIKES DRAMA. It's evident from all of the entertainment in the world today that something in human nature is drawn to experience heightened emotions of pleasure or pain, although vicariously. The first people created, Adam and Eve, experienced the two greatest extremes possible — first paradise, and later an agonizing separation from all that had been life and peace. They departed from the place where the loving care and warming comfort of God could reach them. This did not just happen when they left Eden, but before that time, when they both did deeds independent from their Creator.



*Oh Adam,
don't do it!
Cry out for
your Creator
to help you!*

Eve had hearkened to the voice of the serpent, a voice that questioned the motives and kind intentions of her God. When she took in those thoughts to become her very own, her hand followed her heart to pluck fruit from the forbidden tree. Then she knew good, she knew evil, and worse, she was aware that evil was now a part of her character. She was tasting the juice of the forbidden fruit, something she had never before known in her childlike innocence in the Garden. She was tasting the bitterness of fear and guilt. Too late, she desperately sought help from Adam.

Created to be his helper, she was now a tool in the hands of the serpent to be Adam's destroyer. She found him, the look on her face betraying what she had done. She didn't want to hurt him, but supporting and building him up was the last thing on her mind. She was on her way to death, out of the Garden, having to make it on her own, and she was unprepared for it. How did she approach Adam? Did she come pitifully pleading, reasoning, demanding? Perhaps all of this and more,

whatever it took to not be alone. She wasn't consciously trying to hurt Adam; there just wasn't any room to consider what was best for him, only what was best for her. She was headed to the frightening prospect of death, and her only hope was for Adam to go with her. They were one flesh.

DON'T DO IT!

Poor Adam was faced with the worst possible situation, aside from his own death. But for her sake, he even chose that. This was his rib, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, and his soul felt ripped open like a gutted fish. What could he do? He really loved her like his own self. He already felt in death, just because she really was. If only she had sought him out! How different life would now be on planet earth!

Adam had surely passed on to her what God had told him about that awful tree, but it looked so good! So because she did not trust the words of Adam over her own thinking, the Evil One grabbed hold and injected her with a lethal dose of his venom, his independence from the God of all living. Eve, "the mother of all living," was now independent from the God of all living; she had taken her fate upon herself, and it was too late. She had been deceived. Now what could the man do for his injured wife who was stabbing him in his heart with an unwilling hand?

Oh Adam, don't do it! Don't be guilty of the same thing! Cry out for your Creator to help you! Seek His wisdom, not your own! But instead the fruit found its way to Adam's mouth, set in its tortured frown, and dripped its bitter juice upon the tongue of man, as it has ever since.

Then the worst possible thing hap-

pened — God came. Man has been running ever since. They frantically dashed into the bushes, the branches tearing at their hastily constructed “clothing” of fig leaves. Somehow they had hope that they could escape His notice, perhaps until they had time to stretch their imagination, try out their skills at reasoning, until they could construct something more sophisticated, more rugged, more acceptable, so that they wouldn't have this *fear*. But no time for that now. It couldn't be avoided, as the inquiring voice outside the bushes reached their sweating ears. Now they knew that *He* knew where they were — as if He hadn't known all along.

How painful it must have been to face the One who had thought and thought before fashioning them. Now He had lost His special treasure to the thief, and how could He get it back? Why, they didn't even know that He still loved them! So damaged was their relationship with Him now, but He had to find a way. Before their eyes He slaughtered an animal to prepare clothes suitable for their long hard trek through death.

They had to leave; there was no place for them in paradise with a guilty heart. It was no easy matter to cleanse them; it would require much suffering before they could come back. The fascinating horror of the animal's blood dripping onto the ground forever burned into their minds the message — the wages of sin is death. It was so hard for them to have hope, for they could only dimly hear their Creator's voice.

Yes, there was hope; but because they had both committed deeds that sprang forth from mistrust, independence, and lawlessness, He could not get that hope through to their now-hardened hearts. So they wondered if He loved them, even though He constantly was displaying His care in so many, many ways. But it was so

hard to understand His ways! For now they had to leave ... home.

PARADISE LOST

They were not readily received outside the garden. It was strange, lonely, fearful. But if they had stayed in the Garden there would have been no way for them to change, to suffer and find forgiveness. They would have become an eternal defilement to Paradise, just the way the Evil One desired.

Yet they found some comfort. From the woman was brought forth Adam's seed, a little baby born through pain. Eve forgot the pain as she nursed the firstborn human-being, a joyful gift to help remind her of His kind intentions. They named him “Gotten One,” because Eve had exclaimed, “I have gotten a manchild with the help of the Lord!” We know his name as Cain.

Later, she gave birth to Abel, and so began the struggle of raising children. Cain began to work the soil, sweating to grow crops, while his brother Abel labored with the flocks. They were all too familiar with what had happened to their parents in that far-off paradise, and so it was clear to them both that they owed something to God. They set out to pay Him a sacrifice.

TWO SACRIFICES

Because Adam's sin did cause the ground to be cursed, the ground offered up its fruit only through much effort. By plowing, harrowing, planting seed, watering, weeding, harvesting, threshing, grinding, and roasting, Cain now had a sacrifice of grain which he offered up to God. Everything was done just right, and he was sure that God would be pleased.

Abel took an animal from the herd, and slaughtered it upon a simple altar. It is difficult for modern man to comprehend why ancient man felt moved to offer such a blood sacrifice, but to Abel it was clear. The

*The blood dripping
onto the ground forever
burned into their
minds the message —
the wages of sin is
death.*

*Cain destroyed
the closest thing to
God in all the earth:
he murdered his
brother Abel.*

life that was in the blood of that animal had to be poured out to express something deep in his heart, to express that Abel knew he was under the bondage of sin, the curse of rebellion, and his spiritual plight would not easily be corrected. It would require blood — a life for a life. The blood of the sacrifice was a cry from Abel's heart to give himself totally to God, because Abel knew he owed everything to his Creator, from the air he breathed to the body that breathed it — all was His, and Abel desired to acknowledge and honor His Creator.

With Cain, something was missing. He set out to give God the very best of his labors, fulfilling the requirement of sacrifice not from the sense of a deep personal need for fellowship with God, but because he knew that it was the right thing to do — what was expected. Abel's sacrifice was to please God. Cain's sacrifice was to satisfy the right principle. Their true motives soon came to the light.

TWO RESPONSES

Abel walked away from his sacrifice with peace, because his heart was found to be humble and needy, but Cain sensed disappointment. He walked away from all the hard labor of his sacrifice feeling angry, and very jealous. Yet he was not without help with his wounded feelings, his sense of God's unfairness and undeserved alienation. God loved him deeply, and spoke words of encouragement and also a warning to help him overcome the sin that was crouching at his door. But the firstborn son of the whole earth would not humble himself and pay heed. To Cain's resisting heart, it was all God's fault for not receiving the sacrifice, a senseless and undeserved prejudice. Proud and self-sufficient, Cain was angry enough to strike out at God Himself. At the first opportunity, Cain destroyed the closest thing to God in all the earth: he murdered his brother Abel.

This simple tragedy is taught in every Sunday School throughout the world, because of its seemingly obvious moral: don't be jealous, don't be mad, don't do this, don't do that. Yet the truth of this story remains couched in a mystery. It is shrouded from understanding, as the world and its religions go on offering up independent, uncalled-for sacrifices, seemingly righteous, until a nerve is touched and unbelievable hatred springs up. Anyone with a grasp of Christian history can explain some of these happenings, perhaps.

GOOD WORKS

Cain was a man of good works. He looked to sincerely improve their lot in life. By coaxing the uttermost from the reluctant soil, he sought to improve their status as fallen refugees cast out of the Garden. He tried to better himself and improve the fallen flesh of mankind. The fruit of his work appeared very good, but it was not accepted. Why were his good works not accepted? Is there no room for the improvement of man? Are not good fruits acceptable?

Well sure, if they are truly good works prompted by Him. But there are certain requirements which must first be fulfilled. God accepts the works of our hands only when the blood of a sin offering has first been shed. A life must be offered first, then the fruits of our labor may follow and be accepted. Cain's offer of a grain sacrifice *first* did not confess that his fallenness had any consequential effect upon his own ability to please God. He did not take into consideration that his own motives might be impure, that he needed salvation from his sin, his independence. Cain did not sense the darkness and loneliness of sin as Abel did. So his sacrifice was a proud confession, made in the pride of the Evil One himself. He was met with rejection, for God



could not meet him there at the altar, though it had cost Cain much wear and tear on his flesh. His fallen condition stood in his way, and God could not ignore it.

As far as Cain was concerned, the grain offering was his own personal property, a gift to God. But Abel knew that he had done nothing to put the blood in that animal which he sacrificed. He knew that salvation was an act of mercy on the part of the Creator. Abel trusted God, knowing that only He could lift the curse upon the ground. Cain was determined to erase the curse by his own efforts. Isn't that just like modern man?

BUILDING UTOPIA

Cain went out from the presence of God with a religion of making the ruined world a better place to live: building cities, inventing harps, constructing great structures of brass and iron, celebrating man's triumph over creation with art and music — in short, cultivating the cursed ground. The fallen societies of man strive relentlessly to achieve nirvana, but they are a sinking ship increasingly riddled with impure motives. Utopia seems to be within reach only to those who cast off the "excess baggage" of restraint imposed by the Word of God. Man is not evolving into a higher form of excellence; he is *de*-volving into being his own god. He makes a very poor one indeed.

This, then, is the religion of Cain: a seemingly honest attempt to please God, but harboring bitter envy and strife underneath its polished exterior. It's just as the Master Yahshua expressed when He exposed the Pharisees as being the ones whose ancestors murdered the prophets, and then built pretty tombs for them. These outwardly pious Jews disowned the deeds of their ancestors while honoring their memory and faith. They worshipped Him with word and tongue, but not in

deeds and truth. When their true motives were brought to light, they showed themselves to be sons of Cain. They murdered God in the flesh.

CAIN'S RELIGION

It is sad to read the story of world religions, with all of their many injustices. Yet ironically, none of them stands out more than Christianity. It is shocking to discover how the blood of innocent people has been shed to "preserve the faith." Or even if certain protesters were not so innocent, just to proclaim that the deeds of Christianity were not accepted before God brought the swift sword. Christians work diligently to make the world a better place, and probably many do so because they are only doing the best that they know how. But the Gospel condemns any labor on the part of those who profess to follow Messiah, if they seek to build up anything but His *Kingdom*. Whether or not Christians do so in ignorance, they are being led to patch up a sinking boat whose captain is the enemy of God, the serpent that started the rebellion, the great dragon of old.

God spoke to Cain, saying "*What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground*" (Genesis 4:10). What about the voice of all of the blood that has been shed throughout all of Christianity's bloody history? Does that voice still cry out? Start talking about it effectively enough, and *you* will be the next martyr for speaking your conscience.

"Well, that was all a long time ago; times have changed; you can't hold me responsible for what those people did; I'm different," they say. And this is the point. Just as the Pharisees refused to acknowledge any connection with the sin of *their* ancestors who murdered the prophets, no one in Christianity will take responsibility for their forefathers' murderous deeds. There is no blood sacrifice in God's law for murder,

*What soil does
your plow bite into
daily, the cursed or
the blessed?*

and that is why "her sins have piled up as high as heaven" (Revelation 18:5).

Will you acknowledge that Christianity's guilt is upon her? We sincerely hope so, for your sake. If you do, there is only one thing you can do to be washed from your involvement in her sins, even though you have not done the actual deeds: "Come out of her, my people, that you may not participate in her sins and that you may not receive of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4).

"Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord, "and do not touch what is unclean, and I will welcome you. And I will be a Father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me," says the Lord Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6:17-18).

What soil does your plow bite into daily, the cursed or the blessed? Cain's offering was a bribe to get out from the penalty of

sin, which is death. Is it possible for us to try and persuade God to forgive and accept us on the basis of our hard work to please Him? Yes, we all suffer from Adam's fall. But no matter how we toil, it's just not good enough. We still miss the mark.

So where is the *blessed* soil? Where, like righteous Abel, can we offer up our lives daily as a continual sacrifice? Where can the works of our hands be accepted because we are forgiven from our wretched involvement in a lost world? Where can we have no connection with the slaughter of the innocent? Where can we go to find the good land, where our talents, abilities, possessions, and very substance can be offered to our fellow man as brothers sharing and rejoicing in a common salvation with a good, unstained conscience?

Do not stop until you find it. ❖



A Life to Give Up

How satisfying it is to work hard and see the results at the end! Men and women everywhere work hard to establish a life for themselves, one of comfort and security, so they can raise their families in peace. Truly, *a life* is the most important thing we have. Men instinctively know they can create the best possible life for their families by working hard. Have you ever driven around, looking for that dream house you wanted to own? Remember the good feelings you got when you saw a really nice place that someone had cared for? You could tell by its appearance and upkeep that the owner had put all he had into making it that way. These things are good and man's Creator has put it into us to desire such *a life*.

Our Master Yahshua knew what it meant to have *a life*. He knew the security that comes from having worked to achieve it. He said, "*You must hate your life in this world*"¹ if you want to inherit eternal life. Having your life in this world can be really nice, but at best, it is still *your life*. Living for yourself, no matter how good it may seem, is the fruit of the Fall. Living for yourself is the curse of living in bondage to sin. Even people who live good lives by obeying their consciences must do so for themselves. There is no way out of it. They are still locked up as prisoners of sin.²

Our Master Yahshua gave up His life³ in order to save us from living in bondage to sin. He broke the curse through His death on the cross so that we would never have to live for ourselves ever again. Instead we could live for Him, in love with Him. We were created for a life of love, but we couldn't live it because we were fallen. Our desire for comfort and security forced us to live for ourselves. But when faith came to us, we saw there was another way to live. That ended our *own* life — we could no longer live for ourselves. Rather we saw our need to live for Him who died and rose again on our behalf.⁴ Therefore, whoever would live for Him cannot love anything more than Him. If you love anything or anybody more than Him you are not worthy of Him.⁵ ❖

¹John 12:25; Matthew 16:25; Luke 14:26; Mark 8:34,35 ²Galatians 3:22,23

³Philippians 2:6-8 ⁴2 Corinthians 5:15 ⁵Matthew 10:37-39

HASTENING THE DAY OF HIS COMING

1994

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*Harold Camping's
book proves that
Jesus will return in
October 1994!*

AS THE YEAR 2000 APPROACHES, the Christian media is becoming increasingly obsessed with anticipating the second coming of the One they call Jesus Christ. Harold Camping, who for years has answered listeners' Bible questions on his well-known radio program, speaks with confidence of Jesus' return in October 1994, and has published a book that proves his prediction by careful calculations based on Bible facts. (Doubtless, when that day comes and goes, he will publish another book explaining why his calculations were off and announcing the new date.) Many will profit from the opportunity that this moment in history presents, but who really believes that Jesus will return? And if they do believe, how are they living their lives in anticipation of His return?

Will Durant, in his history of world civilization, writes, "... few were the Christians who took seriously the notion that the world would end in the year 1000. At the beginning of the tenth century a Church council had announced that the final century of history had begun; at its close a small minority of men so believed, and prepared themselves for the Last Judgment. The great majority went on their wonted ways, working, playing, sinning, praying ..." And so it is today. To most people, the possibility of the Son of God actually returning as the Scriptures say He will seems unreal, too fantastic to give serious thought to, let alone act upon.

There is good reason for people to feel that way. It is because they are totally unconnected to the vital events that will bring about His return. Oh, some believe that

He will return when Christian missionaries succeed in getting the Bible translated into every language and delivered into the hands of people of every nation and tribe and tongue. Others believe that He will return at a fixed date in history that one can calculate if he gathers all the right numbers from the Bible and human history. Still others see human society crumbling and crashing down all around them and fear that the world can't last much longer, so He *must* be coming back soon. Very few people on the earth today realize that He is waiting for something to happen that *cannot happen* within the framework of Christianity.

WHAT IS HE WAITING FOR?

He is waiting for the restoration of all things:

Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Messiah appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time ... And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days.

(Acts 3:19-24)

He is waiting for His enemies to be made a footstool for His feet:

But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time



onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. (Hebrews 10:12-13)

He is waiting for His Bride:

That He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. (Ephesians 5:27)

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

Revelation chapter 12 describes the Bride as she will be in the final years of her preparation, near the very end of this age, just before her King, Yahshua the Messiah, comes for her:

And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the

moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. (Revelation 12:1)

Her garment is spotless¹ and dazzlingly bright, for she has become a light to the nations² because she has put all of His enemies under her feet,³ demonstrating that she is able to rule with Him,⁴ and her light emanates from her twelve tribes which have been fully restored as the holy nation and royal priesthood that God has always desired Israel to be.⁵

These twelve tribes⁶ have made His name great all over the earth⁷ by living a life of love⁸ and unity,⁹ daily lifting their hands in prayer without even a hint of wrath or dissension,¹⁰ pouring out their lives together as a living sacrifice that is acceptable to God.¹¹ As a people they proclaimed the excellencies of Him who had called them out of darkness into His marvelous light,¹² into a new social order in

¹Eph 5:27 ²Isa 42:6; 49:6; John 1:4; 1 John 2:8; 1 Pet 2:9; Eph 5:8 ³Heb 10:13; The effects of the moon on people's emotional and mental stability have been commonly observed since early times. ⁴Rev 2:26; 3:5,21; Rom 6:12; 2 Tim 2:12; Eph 6:12 ⁵Isa 49:6; Acts 26:7; James 1:1; 1 Pet 2:9-10; Ex 19:5-6 ⁶Webster's dictionary defines a tribe as, "A social group comprising a series of families, clans, or generations, having a common character or occupation, acting under a more or less central authority." ⁷Mal 1:5,11 ⁸John 13:34,35; 1 John 3:13-18 ⁹John 17:21-23; Acts 2:46; 1 Cor 1:10; Phil 1:27 ¹⁰1 Tim 2:8; Matt 5:23-24 ¹¹Rom 12:1,2 ¹²1 Pet 2:9

which they held all things as common property so that there were no needy among them.¹³ For each of them, their response to Messiah's death on their behalf was to give themselves unreservedly to Him,¹⁴ surrendering all of their possessions, plans, careers, opinions, relationships,¹⁵ and becoming like little children,¹⁶ completely trusting Him and His authority in their brothers.¹⁷

RESTORATION

Their common life of devotion to Messiah endured and increased from generation to generation because the spirit of Elijah was upon them to restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers.¹⁸ That was part of the restoration of all things that had to come about before Messiah could return.¹⁹ Because they were the seed

of Abraham,²⁰ they did the deeds of Abraham,²¹ commanding their children and their households to keep the way of the Sovereign and to love His laws.²² Each generation of children was more pure and less hindered in their devotion to the work of the kingdom than the generation before.²³ Because of the demonstration of their lives and the word of God abiding deeply in them,²⁴ the gospel that was always ready on their lips became more indisputable and irrefutable with each passing year.²⁵

Every Friday evening at sunset brought each clan together for a celebration of the Sabbath,²⁶ with music and dancing and a wonderful banquet to which guests from the outside world were always welcomed. On the Sabbath they would do no laborious work, but instead enjoyed a quiet day of reading the Scriptures, writing letters, enjoying children, taking walks, talking to

¹³Acts 4:32-35 ¹⁴2 Cor 5:14-15 ¹⁵Luke 14:26-33; Mark 8:34-35; 10:29-30; Matt 10:37-39; Phil 3:8 ¹⁶Matt 18:3; Luke 18:17 ¹⁷Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 1:14; Rom 6:17; 16:19; 2 Cor 7:15; Phlm 1:21; Eph 5:21 ¹⁸Mal 4:5-6 ¹⁹Acts 3:19-24 ²⁰Rom 4:16; Gal 3:7 ²¹John 8:39
²²Gen 18:19; Deut 6:6-7; 1 Tim 3:4; Pro 22:6,15 ²³Ps 128:6; Pr 13:22; Ex 34:7
²⁴1 John 2:14 ²⁵Luke 21:15 ²⁶Ex 31:16; Lev 23:3; Heb 4:9; Matt 24:20



gether, and finally coming together again at sunset to begin the new week with worship and prophecy and the breaking of bread.²⁷ Every month brought with it at least one festival²⁸ for which thousands would gather from all the clans to camp at their tribal festival grounds²⁹ to sing, dance, and enthrone their God on the praises of Israel.³⁰ Every seventh year was a Sabbath year when all work for a livelihood would cease³¹ and daily life would be filled with teachings, nurturing relationships within families and among friends, and especially preaching the gospel and celebrating the salvation of each new disciple.

JUBILEE

The warmth and intensity of this life increased through seven Sabbath years, even into the darkest days of the final set of seven years — the great tribulation. Half way through that period the people of God, all twelve tribes, were forced to flee to the wilderness to escape the tyranny of a world government gone mad.³² For the final three and a half years, they were protected and nourished by the angels of God while they awaited that great day of Jubilee when the final yobel³³ would signal the return of all things to their rightful owner.³⁴ Then the King of kings, Yahshua the Messiah, would return to bring justice to the earth³⁵ and to establish His throne in Jerusalem, and all the land promised to Abraham would be given back to him and to his descendants.³⁶ Messiah and His called, chosen, and faithful ones would reign on the earth for a thousand years.³⁷

Where is this Bride today, this glorious holy nation of people who will fulfill the

prophetic word and usher in the millennial age of Messiah's rule? Certainly not within the realm of Christianity in all its various forms, divided and corrupt as it is. Even the most optimistic and fanciful projection from the current condition of Christianity cannot envision anything remotely approaching the way the Scriptures describe the Bride.

You can be sure that Yahshua, the Messiah, the Son of God, *will not return* until His Bride is made ready. There would be no reason for Him to return, for His death would not have accomplished the purpose for which the Father sent Him:

He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession. (Titus 2:14)

He wants a *people* for His own possession — not isolated individuals, each with his “personal savior” (a term not used *one time* in Scripture), who meet together once or twice a week, but rather a *kingdom*, an entirely new social order of people who *individually and collectively* represent God on the earth. This people is called the Commonwealth of Israel³⁸, God's household³⁹, the Body of Messiah⁴⁰, the Church⁴¹ (better translated *Community* or *Edah* in Hebrew), and, in her final form, the Bride.

There is such a people being formed on the earth today. They are just embryonic at this stage, only a little sprout springing up from the dry, withered stump of the original good tree⁴² — the first-century church which fell away.⁴³ The fallen religious system that continued on when the life was gone from the early church has

Where is the Bride today, this glorious holy nation of people who will fulfill the prophetic word and usher in the millennial age of Messiah's rule?

²⁷Acts 20:7-8 ²⁸Lev 23; John 13:29; Acts 20:6; 1 Cor 5:8 ²⁹Hos 12:9 ³⁰Isa 30:29

³¹Lev 25:4,20-22 ³²Rev 12:6 ³³Lev 25:8-9; Matt 24:31; 1 Cor 15:22; 1 Thes 4:16

³⁴Lev 25:10,13; Rev 11:15 ³⁵Rev 19:11-21 ³⁶Gen 13:14-15; Ex 6:8; 32:13

³⁷Rev 17:14; 20:4 ³⁸Eph 2:12 ³⁹Eph 2:19 ⁴⁰Eph 4:12, Col 1:24 ⁴¹Acts 5:11; 8:1

⁴²Job 14:7-9 ⁴³Rom 11:21,22; Rev 2:5

become just like the corrupt and divided Judaism that our Master Yahshua denounced, so that His words to them have their ultimate fulfillment today:

Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it. (Matthew 21:43)

He is gathering together those who will forsake everything to follow Him, who will no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.⁴⁴ Like King David's rag-tag band of men,⁴⁵

we were those who were in distress, in debt, and bitter of soul, but we found a King who took all our burdens upon Himself, gave us life and peace, and is equipping us to attain with Him the kingdom that is rightfully His. He is making us into His people, the holy nation that will become His Bride, just as we have described her. Together, we will hasten the day of His coming.⁴⁶ Are you one of His people, His sheep, trapped in the thorns and thickets of Christianity? If our vision kindles a fire in your heart, we would be delighted to meet you. ❖

The day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God?

2 Peter 3:10-12

⁴⁴2 Cor 5:14-15 ⁴⁵1 Sam 22:2 ⁴⁶2 Pet 3:10-12



WHAT WE BELIEVE

Our life is based on obedience to the words of the Messiah, Yahshua, as recorded in the Bible, the word of God.¹ He is the Son of God, who has always existed as God and through whom all things were created.²

Out of love for mankind He left His high position with God His Father and became a human being, miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of a Hebrew virgin named Miriam (Mary in English).³ Since He was born of a human mother but not a human father, He was free from the bondage of sin, just like the first man Adam was when he was created.⁴

Like Adam, He could have fallen, but (unlike Adam) He chose not to sin, for the sake of His Father's purpose, so that He could have a perfect, sinless life to offer as payment for the sins of us all.⁵ For this reason He willingly surrendered His life to die like a criminal, being tortured, mocked, and crucified.⁶ During three days and nights in the heart of the earth His soul experienced all the agonies of death that we deserved for our sins, and then He was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit.⁷

He has ascended into heaven and has sent the person of His Holy Spirit to earth to dwell in the hearts of men, giving His disciples the power to obey His teachings and live a life of love that will be a light to all the nations.⁸ Those who live by His Spirit are the Body of Messiah, a holy nation. We believe that Messiah's Body must be as the Bible teaches,⁹ or it is not His Body, for He cannot be divided into denominations.¹⁰ We also believe that the Biblical record of this life — as a community — is the only way that His Spirit can live on the earth.¹¹

He now sits enthroned at the right hand of His Father in heaven, waiting for the time when all things are restored and His enemies are made a footstool for His feet.¹² Then He will come to rescue His people and inflict vengeance on those who refuse to know God and refuse to obey the good news.¹³ He will judge all men, living and dead, according to the word He has spoken.¹⁴

By His grace, we have passed out of death and into life, through the faith He gave us when we heard and believed His word.¹⁵ We can know this has happened if we love as He has commanded us.¹⁶ It is out of love for Him who first loved us that we live as we do, no longer for ourselves, but for Him who died and rose again for us.¹⁷ 🕊

¹Romans 1:5; ²Timothy 3:16 ³John 1:1-3 ⁴Philippians 2:6-7; Matthew 1:18 ⁵Romans 5:12; ⁶2 Corinthians 5:21 ⁷Hebrews 4:15; ⁸1 Corinthians 15:3 ⁹John 10:17-18 ¹⁰Matthew 12:40; Hebrews 2:9; ¹¹1 Corinthians 15:4 ¹²Acts 2:33; ¹³John 13:34-35 ¹⁴1 Corinthians 1:10

¹⁵1 Corinthians 1:13; 3:16-17; Galatians 5:20-21 ¹⁶Acts 4:32-37; ¹⁷1 John 4:16; 3:17

¹⁸Acts 3:21; Hebrews 10:12-13 ¹⁹2 Thessalonians 1:8 ²⁰Acts 10:42; ²¹John 12:48 ²²Romans 10:17; ²³John 5:24 ²⁴John 3:14,16,23; ²⁵John 13:34 ²⁶2 Corinthians 5:14-15

THE STORY OF ROGER WILLIAMS

ROGER WILLIAMS WAS BORN in England around the year 1603. He grew up at a time when religious issues and strong religious feelings rocked the country. In those days, it was costly and generally very dangerous to hold opinions that were contrary to the creed of the established church. It didn't matter how clearly those opinions could be supported by the word of God — if they were contrary to the creed, they were dangerous heresies. In fact, the more evidence found in the Word of God to prove them, the more dangerous they were.

Those were the days of the Anabaptists, the Mennonites, the Separatists, the Pilgrims, and the Puritans — groups which would not conform to the church in England. The most radical of these dissenting groups were the Anabaptists and the Mennonites. They stood for the complete separation of church and state. Next came the Separatists who believed it was necessary to leave the state church in order to hold their own worship services and prayer meetings. The Pilgrims who came to America in 1620 were part of this group. The least extreme of all the groups were the Puritans. They were still members of the established church, but desired a simpler and purer form of worship within that church.

All these groups were persecuted by the established church in England. Thus, Roger Williams had an excellent opportunity to observe how the church and state system worked firsthand. He believed that men should have the freedom to follow their conscience in religious matters, an opinion which soon made him an undesirable citizen in the eyes of the establishment. He was soon forced to flee England

in order to escape the wrath of the officials of the established church. At that time, another man named Leighton was punished for publishing a book written against the church. For that act he was committed to prison for life, fined ten thousand pounds, degraded from his ministry, whipped, pilloried, his ears cut off, his nose slit and his face branded with a hot iron.

IN THE NEW WORLD

In 1631 Roger Williams landed in Boston. He had come to America to find freedom of belief and worship; instead, he found the church here still connected to the church in England and just as oppressive. He refused to join the church in Boston because it still held communion with the Church of England, from which he had just fled. He thought it his duty to renounce all connection with any church that would stain its hands in the blood of the Lord's people. Obviously it greatly troubled Roger Williams to find in the New World the same oppressive conditions that had caused him to flee from the Old. Without delay or concern for his own life, he began to speak out boldly against the established church's persecution of those who dissented for the sake of conscience.

Williams was elected pastor of the congregation in Salem, but later left it in order to live in the Plymouth Colony where a greater degree of toleration existed, and there he continued to preach and teach in the church. A few years later he was again invited to become the pastor of the Salem church and accepted the invitation, although the magistrates and ministers strongly objected. At once his opponents began to denounce his teachings and he

He thought it his duty to renounce all connection with any church that would stain its hands in the blood of the Lord's people.

was summoned to appear before the Court to answer charges brought against his "heretical" opinions.

One of the teachings for which Roger Williams was called to answer was his belief that no civil magistrate had the right to enforce religion or religious practices. Such a teaching, of course, was diametrically opposed to the principles on which the Massachusetts Bay Colony was founded. There Sabbath breakers were severely punished and everyone was forced to attend church and pay taxes to support it. Williams' views were regarded by the officials as a very serious matter.

Roger Williams was sentenced to banishment from the Massachusetts Bay Colony on October 9, 1635. But because no ships could sail for England at that season, his time was extended. During those months, Roger Williams did not attempt to preach or teach in public. Many people, however, who sympathized with him would gather at his house each Sunday to listen to him share his views in private. This, of course, meant they were not in their ac-

customed places of worship on that day, which didn't please the officials of the established church. It was also against the law.

For some time, Roger Williams had envisioned the founding of a state in which its inhabitants should enjoy the fullest liberty in matters of conscience. In founding such a state, he also wanted to recognize the rights of the Indians, the original inhabitants of the land. Roger Williams' intention to establish a new state based upon the principles of freedom of conscience and the rights of the Indians greatly alarmed the Puritan leaders. Without further delay they made plans to banish him from their colony. A ship at anchor in Boston harbor was about to set sail, and they decided to send Williams to England on board. A warrant issued by the court at Boston summoned Williams to appear. He replied that he believed his life to be in danger and did not obey the summons. An officer was sent to bring him, but when the officer arrived at Williams' house, he discovered that he had been gone three days, and no one knew where he had fled.





FLIGHT TO RHODE ISLAND

Leaving his wife and three children, the youngest less than three months old, and having mortgaged his property at Salem to provide his needs, Roger Williams escaped into the wilderness to find refuge among the Indians. There he found the freedom which he could not find in Massachusetts. In later writings, Williams recalls how he was "denied the common air to breathe in ... and almost without mercy and human compassion, exposed to winter miseries in a howling wilderness." For fourteen weeks he endured these miseries of the wilderness "not knowing what bread or bed did mean." During this time, whatever shelter he found was in the dingy, smoky lodges of the Indians. Their hospitality to him in his time of need was something he sought to repay with kindness all the rest of his life.

At Seekonk, on the east bank of the Pawtucket River, Williams broke ground for a habitation and began to plant and build; but before his crop had time to mature, the Plymouth officials learned of his whereabouts and warned him that he was a trespasser on their lands and must move

on. With five companions he obeyed their order to leave, embarked in a frail canoe, and traveled further down the river. At the mouth of the Moshassuck River they landed near a spring and thus founded a settlement which they called Providence. Williams intended it as a refuge for those distressed of conscience.

As soon as it was known that Roger Williams had started a settlement, men of various beliefs who had also been oppressed by the hierarchy of New England began to gather around him. Williams purchased land from the Indians and other settlements were founded by his followers. These were finally brought into one colony under the title of the Providence Plantations. But before these settlements had time to unify under a common government, news reached them that the Indians of New England were beginning to join together to exterminate all the English in New England. The powerful Pequots proposed to unite with the Mohegans and the Narragansetts to accomplish this purpose. It was a critical time for the small colonies of Massachusetts, Plymouth and Connecticut. Rhode Island was in no immediate danger since the Rhode Islanders had paid

for their lands and were on good terms with the neighboring Indians.

MAKING PEACE

At that time, the governor and council of Massachusetts wrote an urgent plea to Roger Williams. They recognized him as the only man in New England who could prevent the Indian conspiracy. With the memory of his persecution by Massachusetts still fresh in his mind, he did not hesitate to throw himself between "his own persecutors and their relentless foes," even though he knew that in doing so he was risking his own life.

Concerning this dangerous expedition Williams himself says: "The Lord helped me immediately to put my life into my hand, and scarce acquainting my wife, to ship myself alone, in a poor canoe, and to cut through a stormy wind, with great seas, every minute in hazard of life, to the sachem's house. Three days and nights my business forced me to lodge and mix with the bloody Pequot ambassadors, whose hands and arms, methought, reeked with the blood of my countrymen, murdered and massacred by them on the Connecticut River, and from whom I could not but look for their bloody knives at my own throat also. God wondrously preserved me and helped me to break to pieces the Pequot's negotiations and design; and to make and finish, by many travels and charges, the English league with the Narragansetts and Mohegans against the Pequots." Thus New England was saved from probable extinction by the very one whom she would not permit to come within her borders.

Six years after Roger Williams' great service against the Pequot conspiracy, the Massachusetts government tried to annex the small colony of Rhode Island by sending emissaries to England to obtain a patent covering the very same territory.

Roger Williams arrived in England just in time to prevent them and was granted the patent in 1643. This patent protected Rhode Island from being swallowed up by Massachusetts' and insured a republican form of government, but strangely enough, made no mention of anything to do with matters of faith and religion. Many have wondered at this omission and why it happened. But Roger Williams, who was instrumental in obtaining that patent, recognized that the faith and religion of Rhode Island's inhabitants was something entirely outside the jurisdiction of the state. Therefore, he concluded, it was unnecessary to make any reference to it.

FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE

Upon the basis of that patent, the code of laws for the Providence Plantations was framed (1647). The last sentence reads:

These are the laws that concern all men, and these are the penalties for the transgression thereof, which, by common consent, are ratified and established throughout the whole colony; and, otherwise than what is thus therein forbidden, all men may walk as their consciences persuade them, every one in the name of his God. And let the saints of the Most High walk in this colony without molestation, in the name of Jehovah their God, forever and ever.

After the overthrow of the Oliver Cromwell regime in England, the Rhode Islanders began to fear that their patent might not be honored by King Charles, or that the enemies of their colony might in some way rob them of the rights which they had obtained through so much toil and opposition. They had good reason to fear for their liberties. At that time Connecticut was applying for a charter which included all of Rhode Island in its territory. Through the help of friends in England, Roger Williams was successful and received

The faith and religion of Rhode Island's inhabitants was something entirely outside the jurisdiction of the state.

a second charter in 1663. In his application for that charter, he wrote:

Your petitioners have it much on their hearts (if they may be permitted) to hold forth a livelie experiment, [so] that a flourishing civil state may stand ... with a full liberty in religious concernments.

His language seems to have made a favorable impression upon the king, for the very wording of the above quotation is woven into the charter granted two years later.

As it is written in the charter of 1663:

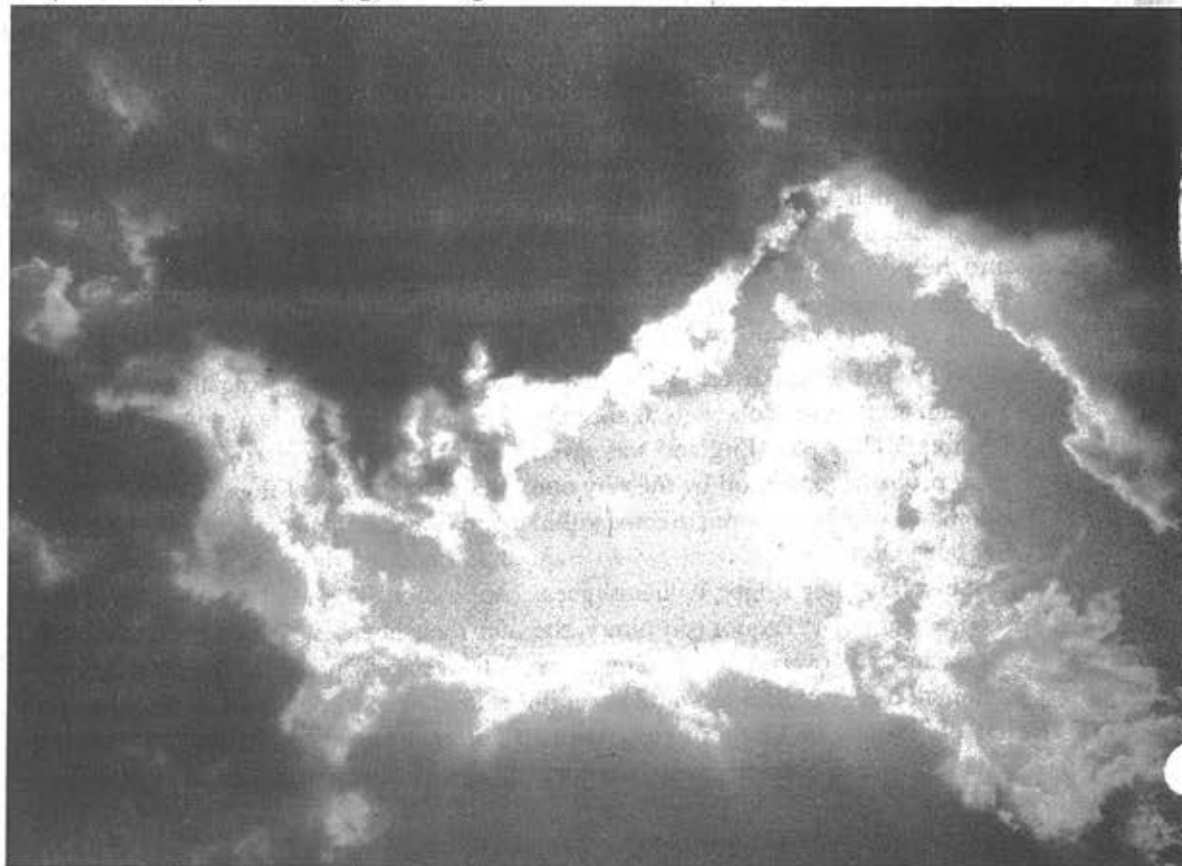
No person within the said colony, at any time hereafter, shall be anywise molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question for any differences in opinion in matters of religion ... but that all persons may ... enjoy their own judgments and consciences in matters of religious concernments.

That "livelie experiment" in the separation of church and state has come down to us as the most precious gift from these early colonial days. Like every good thing

that has come to this world, it came into being through great labor and pain.

FOUNDATION OF LIBERTY

What is most significant about the royal charter is that it acknowledges at the foundation of Rhode Island's government two important principles — republicanism (democratic governments made up of representatives elected by its citizens) and religious liberty. These principles characterize our American government and are later expressed in both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. Neither republicanism or religious liberty can be found in any of the charters of the other colonies where church and state were united. It is easy to determine, then, the original source of those principles which have protected our religious freedom and made America a refuge for the oppressed of every land. The nation's debt to Roger Williams is a debt that can never be canceled. ❖



“THE LIGHT AND THE GLORY”

“If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not.”¹ That declaration spoken by our Master 2000 years ago established for all time how those who believe in Him should treat those who don't believe. He made it clear that the judgment for unbelievers who rejected Him and His words would come “at the last day.”² He also established a limit to the church's authority by confirming that belief in and obedience to the gospel were confined to individual choice and were never to be imposed upon someone else by any means of force or coercion whatsoever.

When our Master taught and put into practice beliefs that were contrary to the traditions of the elders in Israel, He was brought before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Israel. The chief priests and scribes charged Him with proclaiming allegiance to a king other than Caesar. When Pilate found no fault with Him, they demanded His crucifixion with venomous rage. This pattern of violence and bloodshed has been the result every time a religious establishment has sought the power of the state to enforce adherence to its beliefs and practices.

When Constantine came to the throne in 312 A.D., he issued the famous Edict of Milan. According to that edict, all men were granted the utmost freedom of worship:

Let the followers of error enjoy the same peace and security with those who believe ... Whatever truth a man has received and been persuaded of, let him

not smite his neighbor with it ... For it is one thing to voluntarily undertake to wrestle for immortality; it is another to constrain others to it by fear.³

These freedoms, however, were short lived. After Constantine's death, his sons used against all who would not embrace the Christian religion the same instruments of oppression that Nero employed against Christianity. Their reaction against other religions elevated and established Christianity as the state religion of the empire, and set in motion an unholy alliance between the church and the state. The adulterous relationship begun at this point has continued on down through history and marches prophetically toward the consummation of the age.⁴ Once Rome declared Christianity to be its state religion, the Roman church was instantly clothed with civil power and began to wage war against all those who disagreed in matters of conscience and belief.

THE ERROR OF REFORM

The atrocities and corruption of the Roman Catholic church continued uninterrupted for many centuries before Martin Luther and others like him rose up in protest. Their reforms of the church, however, were severely limited. Martin Luther, for example, never severed his ties with the Catholic church or the state; his example led many other Reformers to also be legally established with the civil government. Thus they all blindly committed the same error as the Catholics had before them. As

The establishment of Christianity as the religion of the empire set in motion an unholy alliance between the church and the state.

¹John 12:47 ²John 12:48 ³A. T. Innes, *Church and State*, p. 30. ⁴Revelation 17 & 18

history so tragically reveals, the leaders of the Reformation quickly joined blood-stained hands with their Catholic opponents in persecuting anyone who differed with their doctrines.

INNOCENT BLOOD

The Reformation may have begun as a struggle of men's souls for the freedom to worship God as each saw fit (guided, in Martin Luther's words, by "the Bible, and the Bible only"), but the Reformers soon proved that they desired freedom for their way of thinking *only*, which is no freedom at all. In fact, they added new bonds and chains to mankind, instead of breaking asunder the ones that already existed.

They did these things seemingly unaware of their grotesque imitation of the atrocities for which the Roman Church was justly infamous. John Calvin wrote, "*Godly princes may lawfully issue edicts for compelling obstinate and rebellious persons to worship the true God and to maintain the unity of the faith.*" But if maintaining *unity* was what mattered, then there would have been no reason for carrying out the Reformation, for the Catholics had been relentlessly and bloodily working to achieve complete agreement to her views for centuries. John Calvin, too, showed that his roots were sunk deep in Roman Catholic soil by employing the same means as they had to persuade the reluctant: *torture and death*. By having Michael Servetus burned at the stake for his beliefs, Calvin indelibly etched on history his contempt for the conscience of others.

Martin Luther, in his younger days, urged that the Christian law of love be applied to the Jews in an effort to win them (see *The Legacy of Martin Luther*, page 50). He also scorned the use of force to change anyone's beliefs. His own words stated

clearly why persecution should be repugnant to any man of good conscience, no matter how sure he was of the rightness of his beliefs,

The mass is a bad thing; God is opposed to it; it ought to be abolished; ... But let no one be torn from it by force. We must leave the matter in God's hands ... And why so? Because I do not hold men's hearts in my hand as the potter holds the clay. We have the right to speak; but have not the right to act ... Were I to employ force, what should I gain? — Grimace, formality, aping, human ordinances, and hypocrisy ... But there would be no sincerity of heart, nor faith, nor charity. Where these three are wanting, all is wanting, and I would not give a straw for such a result.⁵

Turning radically from this gracious soul liberty he once championed, Luther wrote of the Anabaptists in 1530, just as He would later write of the Jews, "*Since they are not only blasphemous, but also seditious men, let the sword exercise its rights over them, for this is the will of God.*"⁶ Other great Reformers like Zwingli in Switzerland and Melancthon in Germany supported in word and writing the death sentence for all Anabaptists. The Reformation was drenched in blood, a fact well attested to in history, but curiously unacknowledged today.

In England in the days of the Pilgrims and Puritans, such persecution was so commonplace that men who desired freedom were compelled to risk everything, even life itself, to come to America in the hopes of finding liberty. (See *The Story of Roger Williams*, page 34) Although they fled from persecution, they did not renounce their ties with the churches of Europe, and so they fastened the same chains on men's

The Reformation was drenched in blood, a fact well attested to in history, but curiously unacknowledged today.

⁵D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*, bk. 9, p. 334 ⁶Henry M. King, *Religious Liberty*, p. 26.

souls as they had escaped from. According to their belief, they were God's government on earth, thus claiming the right to tell men how, and even when, to seek God. Fines, whippings, banishment, and even death awaited those who would not bow to such an unrighteous system.

ROGER WILLIAMS

But the God of Heaven did have men and women of conscience on the earth, and foremost among them in the early days of the colonies was Roger Williams, a man to whom the whole world is indebted. His uncompromising stand against the oppression of the Puritans and others in Massachusetts laid the foundation for the kind of government we have in America that protects the freedoms necessary for God to establish what He desires in these last days. Williams saw that there must be a restoration of the apostolic authority and life of the early church, outside the realm of state control, in order for God to have a people for whom His Son could return.⁷ He knew he was not the man to bring it about, and that it would be left to another generation in the future.⁸ Still, he devoted his life to establishing in Rhode Island a form of government the spirit of which would become a model for the Declaration of Independence and the First Amendment to the Constitution.

Williams saw that the religious persecution in Massachusetts differed little from what he had witnessed growing up in England, and he spoke out against it.⁹ The pattern was clear. In many colonies one denomination would gain recognition, obtaining a charter through the civil gov-

ernment, and begin to persecute other denominations that were not the recognized religion of the day. Thomas Jefferson gleaned from the writings of Williams the term "wall of separation,"¹⁰ which he used to make his very famous declaration in 1802, acknowledging that through the First Amendment:

... the whole American people ... declared that their legislature should "make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," thus building a wall of separation between Church and State.¹¹

This same conflict concerning the relationship between the church and the state continued in some fashion or another throughout the colonies — except in Rhode Island. It was to just such a conflict that James Madison returned after graduation from college. His observations about it are summed up in a letter written to his college friend, Bradford in January of 1774:

... There are at this time in the adjacent country not less than five or six well-meaning men in close jail for publishing their religious sentiments, which, in the main, are very orthodox. I have neither patience to hear, talk, or think of anything relative to this matter, for I have squabbled and scolded, abused and ridiculed, so long about it, to little purpose, that I am without common patience. So I must beg you to pity me, and pray for liberty of conscience to all.¹²

This conflict revealed to Madison that the real issue was greater than mere "tol-

Williams saw that there must be a restoration of the apostolic authority and life of the early church, outside the realm of state control...

⁷Baptists, *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1979), vol. 2, p. 714. ⁸Sidney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, Vol. 1, p. 222. ⁹See "The Story of Roger Williams", p. 34.

¹⁰John Eidsmoe, *Christianity and the Constitution* (MI: Baker Book House, 1987), p. 243; David Barton, *The Myth of Separation* (Wall Builder Press, 1992), p. 42. ¹¹Thomas Jefferson, *Jefferson Writings*, Merrill D. Patterson, ed., p.510, January 1, 1802. ¹²Rives, *Life and Times of Madison*, vol. 1, p.43.

Separation of Church and State

Many Scriptures support the separation of church and state,¹ and men of conscience like Roger Williams have seen the evil that results when they are not separate.

There are profound spiritual reasons why the state must not tell the church how to conduct her affairs in any way.² For the church to allow the state to rule over her in spiritual matters is nothing less than changing gods.³ It would be an irreparable breach of loyalty between the church and her Savior. Williams articulated the limits of civil authority as follows:

"Magistrates [officials of the civil government] have no power of setting up the form of Church Government, electing Church officers, punishing with Church censures, but to see that the Church does her duty herein."⁴

Nor was the Church to get involved in the civil government, or even meddle with the hearts of the people to turn them away from their rulers:

"And on the other side, the Churches as Churches, (though as members of the Commonwealth they may have power⁵) have no power of erecting or altering forms of civil government, electing of civil officers, inflicting Civil punishments (no not [even] on persons excommunicated) as by deposing Magistrates from their Civil Authority, or withdrawing the hearts of the people against them, to their laws, no more than to discharge wives, or children, or servants, from due obedience to their husbands, parents, or masters; or by taking up arms against their Magistrates, though he persecute them for conscience."⁶

The whole concept of wedding the church and the state, or even of the church functioning as the conscience of the state, was utterly repugnant to Williams. Doing so has invariably led to the church imposing its dogma on others, in the righteous certainty that it could force "the truth" on the unenlightened.

The church was intended to be the light of the world, in which men could walk if they chose to.⁷ History bears out this wisdom — a history written in the blood shed by those who were convinced their doctrines were right, but who undermined and compromised the God-given functioning of civil government.⁸ This history is still being written today in the same ink. It was with the fervent desire to close this awful chapter of human history that the framers of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States sought to erect the wall of separation of church and state. ♦

¹Acts 18:12-17 is the prime text, and Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 is another. Acts 12:1-4 is a negative example, as is the Jews before Pilate, John 18,19. ²See *Roger Williams and the Stone Kingdom*, page 44. ³2 Corinthians 6:14-18 ⁴Roger Williams, *Bloudy Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience* (1644), page 248. ⁵That is, as private citizens like any other citizen. ⁶*Bloudy Tenent*, pages 248,249 ⁷Isaiah 49:6; John 3:19-21 — Righteous men's good deeds come from their obedience to the knowledge of good God gave them, and for which they will be rewarded, John 5:28,29. ⁸Acts 17:26,27

eration of religion" espoused by John Locke. He saw the issue as "free exercise" of religion, or "full and equal rights of conscience" for the individual.¹³ He understood that government should protect every man's freedom of conscience, and that this was the limit of the government's role in religious matters. What James Madison, one of the principle authors of the Constitution, saw from the perspective of civil government, Roger Williams understood spiritually, 100 years before him.¹⁴

ANGELIC INTERVENTION

One of the most profound things Roger Williams saw was that the newly-formed colonies needed a form of government which would secure and protect the rights of the people of God, whenever they might be raised up, so that they would be able to exist and grow and mature completely, free from the civil government's control and free from the imposition of any denomination as a state church. Those who talk about "the light and the glory" and angelic intervention in the establishment of this country must understand one thing: Roger Williams had the true angelic light. He alone in his day understood that God's holy people would be raised up in another generation and that their future security needed to be ensured.

Angelic intervention is clearly evident in the way the First Amendment of the Federal Constitution came to be written. This amendment protects forever the right to worship God according to the dictates of one's own conscience, unhindered by the state or any religious group. The writing of the Constitution took place in the midst of great struggle and turmoil. One of the main questions of the day concerned

the degree of control the state should exercise over the practice of religion and the degree to which any particular denomination could be established as a state religion. These conflicts were fierce. Miraculously, the spirit of religious liberty established in Rhode Island's charter, drafted and engineered by Roger Williams, was incorporated into the Declaration of Independence and the Federal Constitution.¹⁵

THE STONE KINGDOM

The tension that exists to constantly maintain a proper separation of the state's sphere of authority and that of the church is the necessary climate for events to take place that will bring about the end of this age. The evil prince of this world¹⁶ would like nothing better than to destroy the protections of religious freedom, especially in this country, in order to eliminate the possibility of the Stone Kingdom being raised up in these days — the beginning of "the days of the ten kings."¹⁷ Before the end of this age can come, and before the harlot can have the political ties she needs to ride in on the beast,¹⁸ the God of heaven must have civil governments on the earth that will allow the Stone Kingdom to develop. That kingdom must be a twelve-tribed spiritual nation, Israel, the church, a light and a demonstration to all the nations of the earth.¹⁹

In light of this understanding, what spirit is at work in Christians who say that it is a myth²⁰ that the framers of the Constitution wanted a complete separation of church and state? They want to deny that the First Amendment was meant to prevent any religious group, Christian or otherwise, from becoming a controlling political force in the government. Certain

The God of heaven must have civil governments on the earth that will allow the Stone Kingdom to develop

¹³Hunt, *James Madison and Religious Liberty*, 1 Ann. Rep. Am. Hist. A., p. 163, 166.

¹⁴Michael McConnell, "Origins of Free Exercise," *Harv. Law Rev.* (May 1990), Vol. 103, p. 1426. ¹⁵"Origins of Free Exercise," p. 1449. ¹⁶John 5:19 ¹⁷Daniel 2:44; (See "The Stone," p. 13-14) ¹⁸Revelation 17:1-6 ¹⁹Matthew 24:14 ²⁰*The Myth of Separation*, p. 41-46.

Roger Williams and the Stone Kingdom

The Christian Church or Kingdom of the Saints, that Stone cut out of the mountain without human hands, (Daniel 2) now made all one with the mountain or Civil State, the Roman Empire, from whence it is cut or taken: Christ's lilies, garden and love, all one with the thorns, the daughters and wilderness of the World.¹

Roger Williams, *Bloudy Tenent* (1644)

ROGER WILLIAMS' VIEW of the Stone Kingdom was remarkably accurate.² He understood from reading church history that Christianity could not be the Stone kingdom of Daniel 2 because it had fallen away long ago. In his *Bloudy Tenent*, he wrote, "Christianity fell asleep in the bosom of Constantine, and [in] the laps and bosoms of those Emperors who professed the name of Christ."³

Continuing on in the same passage Roger Williams describes the effect that pagan and Christian rulers had upon the Church.

The unknowing zeal of Constantine and other Emperors, did more hurt to Christ Jesus, His Crown and Kingdom, then the raging fury of the most bloody Neros. In the persecutions of the later, Christians were sweet and fragrant, like spice pounded and beaten in mortars: But those good Emperors ... maintaining their religion by the material sword, I say by this means Christianity was eclipsed, and the professors of it fell asleep. Babel or confusion was ushered in, and by degrees the Gardens of the Churches of the Saints were turned into the Wilderness of whole nations, until the whole world became Christian or Christendom, Revelations 12 and 13.⁴

Roger Williams saw that Christianity fell asleep (died spiritually) when it had grown comfortable and compromised with the state. "Good" Christian emperors had seduced the church and she

could never regain her lost purity.

This Stone, according to Williams, had been cut of the mountain of the world in the time of the early church. Something radical had happened when it merged with the Roman civil power, however. The change was so radical it ceased to have the nature of the Stone that would judge the whole world. Instead it became one with the world from which it had been cut, *undoing* the work of Messiah and *doing* the work of the evil one.⁵

Williams' imagery is from the Song of Songs. He speaks of Christ's beloved, His Bride, the Church⁶ as being one with the thorns and the wilderness. This refers to a tasteless and saltless church that is good for nothing anymore, and which will one day be trampled under foot by men.⁷ Equally so, he knew the day would come when the Stone would be cut out of the mountain of the world, and all the holy prophets had said would be fulfilled.⁸

Until that time, Roger Williams would only call himself a "waiter," or a "seeker." His was a costly honesty, for his greatest desire was to serve the God he loved so much, and to do so in sweet communion with all other sincere believers. Yet he knew that until true restoration came through the re-establishment of apostolic authority, Christianity was merely an outward form in which, he could not in good conscience take part. ❖

¹Roger Williams, *Bloudy Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience* (1644), page 174.

²"The Stone," page 7 ³*Bloudy Tenent*, page 184. ⁴ *ibid*, page 184. ⁵1 John 3:8 ⁶Ephesians 5:25-30

⁷Matthew 5:13 (The true Church is described in Matthew 5:10-16, the one which has not lost its salt. It is offensive enough to the world to be ill-spoken of.) ⁸Acts 3:21

Christian groups are seeking to tear down the wall of separation in order to ensure that the right moral principles of Christianity will affect the decisions of civil government. This mistake has been made repeatedly during the last 2000 years whenever men tried to establish the foundation of a government on the Ten Commandments, or the New Testament, or the Bible, or any religious dogma, instead of by the natural law.²¹

NATURAL LAW

Rulers and men in government must be guided by the natural law²² that is in their conscience. In addition to this natural law, they ought to be guided *not* by legislated Christian principles, but by the "light to the nations."²³ This light is a life of love and unity that demonstrates the kingdom of God, a foretaste of life in the age to come.²⁴ This life is to be *separate* from the nations, but at the same time a light to them. It is clear that there can be no light demonstrated to the nations apart from a life of love that is being perfected in unity. This life *must* be raised up free of any compromise or connection with the government if it is going to be the Stone Kingdom.²⁵

In sharp contrast to this life of love, Christianity today has nothing to offer the rulers of the nations but Biblical principles, since their life is integrally tied up in the world system, in all its political, social and economic aspects. Christians want to make the world a better place to live, for they are not *a people set apart* and cannot be a demonstration to the world which they are

one with. That's why they resort to the same worldly tactics as any other interest group. Since they have no authority from God, they try to gain power in the same way political parties gain power. They actively campaign to elect Christians to political office, lobby for certain legislation, and make deals in order to gain power for their own survival.

This is precisely why governments are skeptical of religion. They have maintained the wall of separation to prevent any group from imposing its religious principles on the nation.

Christianity poses a certain kind of threat to government. That's why there is tension between the two. Many Christians believe that this "tension" comes from the conflict of two spiritual kingdoms at war with one another — Christianity (light) vs. the world (darkness). In reality, the tension comes from Christianity trying to usurp the authority of the state. When the beast eventually destroys the harlot, it will be because she has gained too much power and influence in the government.²⁶

ON THE BACK OF THE BEAST

The current movement to "Reclaim America for Christ" is the latest, most sophisticated attempt to rewrite American history in order to unite Christianity with the government of this nation. Religious leaders Dr. James Kennedy and Dr. James Dobson, Christian activists Gary Bauer and Beverley LaHaye, and politicians Dan Quayle and Pat Robertson are but a few of a growing number on the bandwagon, using all the glitter of slick advertising and media attention to launch a broad-based

Christians want to make the world a better place to live, for they are not a people set apart.

²¹Romans 1:18 - 2:14 ²²Natural law is a moral standard in the human conscience which all men know instinctively, independent of church or Scripture. If men are to live at peace with one another, there are certain rules which must be observed: the keeping of promises, the recognition of human equality, the principles of equity and justice, of parental responsibility, and of marital fidelity. ²³Isaiah 49:6; Matthew 5:14-16 ²⁴John 1:4 ²⁵Daniel 2:44; also see Roger Williams, *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience* (1644), p.174,175. ²⁶Revelation 17:16-18

Apostolic Authority, Baptism and the Indians

ROGER WILLIAMS AND ELEVEN FRIENDS formed the first Baptist Church in America in Providence, Rhode Island. Ezekiel Holliman was one of them. He baptized Williams by immersion in March of 1639. He had followed Williams from the Salem, Massachusetts church where Williams had briefly taught several years before. Williams then proceeded to baptize Holliman and ten friends. Shortly after this, however, he came to a most remarkable conclusion. Let's hear an eyewitness account of what happened:

I (Richard Scott) walked with him in the Baptists' way about three or four months, in which time he brake from the society, and declared at large the ground and reasons of it; that their baptism could not be right because it was not administered by an apostle. After that he set upon a way of seeking (with two or three other men that had dissented with him) by way of preaching and praying; and there he continued a year or two, till two of the three had left him.¹

Roger Williams' actions declared what his later words would make abundantly clear: all Christian baptisms were and are invalid, unless apostles, like those of the Jerusalem Church, administered them. Roger Williams understood this in his radical statement regarding the conversion of the Indians of New England:

How readily I could have brought the whole Country to have observed one day in seven; ... to have received a Baptism ... to have come to a stated Church meeting, maintained priests and forms of prayer, and a whole form of Antichristian worship in life and death ... Why have I not brought them to such a conversion as I speak

of?² I answer, woe be to me, if I call light darkness, and darkness light ... woe be to me if I call that conversion unto God, which is indeed subversion of the souls of millions in Christendom, from one false worship to another, and the profanation of the holy name of God.³

What then would be the hallmarks of the apostolic authority Roger Williams waited for? Paul put it this way, "through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles, for His name's sake." (Romans 1:5)⁴ Apostles communicate saving faith which enables a man to obey the Son of God. Such preaching reveals the worth of the Savior to the heart of those who are willing to do the will of God.⁵ It comes from those who have no deceit or hidden sin⁶, and even pierces the heart of the most religious people who still have a heart for God.⁷

Not many in Roger Williams' day, or since, have had the courage to face what history's testimony plainly tells, that Christianity is totally condemned by the words of the Scriptures. The Christian Church has lost its authority because of the blood she has shed, the corruptions she has allowed in her own midst, and the fornication she has committed with the kings of this earth in exchange for worldly favor and power. Nothing that comes from or acknowledges the legitimacy of the historic Christian Church, begun in compromise with the Roman Empire,⁸ can be free from the guilt of the blood she has shed, or escape the corruptions that have so often ensnared her. This is the unambiguous essence of Roger Williams' thinking about Christianity, and it is valid. ❖

¹Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, volume 1, page 222. ²The trust the Indians accorded him because of his friendship, fair dealing, and the effort he put in to learn their language, made him uniquely qualified to do this. ³"Christenings Make Not Christians," *The Complete Writings of Roger Williams*, volume 7, pages 36-37. ⁴Paul reiterates this thought three more times in Romans: 10:16; 15:18; and 16:26. ⁵John 7:17 ⁶2 Corinthians 4:4 ⁷Acts 2:36-40 ⁸From this compromise have sprung the three main divisions of Christianity: Roman, Eastern, and the Protestant branch, with its multitude of denominations.

campaign to firmly place themselves on the back of the beast that will one day enslave the whole world.²⁷

THE "MYTH" OF SEPARATION

The spokesmen of this movement claim that America was established as a Christian nation and therefore the "separation of church and state" is a myth. They intend to make America the theocracy²⁸ which, they claim, the early colonists were seeking. These Christians go to great lengths to prove the "myth of separation," by saying:

That "wall" was originally introduced [by Jefferson] as, and understood to be, a one-directional wall protecting the church from the government. This was also Jefferson's understanding ...²⁹

At the same time they credit Roger Williams as the source from which Jefferson got this concept that the intention of separation was to keep the state out of the affairs of the church but not to keep the church out of the affairs of the state. Williams, however, made it clear that the wall of separation must go both ways:

On the other side, the Churches as Churches, have no power (though as members of the Commonwealth they may have power) of erecting or altering formes of Civill Government, electing of Civill officers, inflicting Civill punishments ... as by deposing Magistrates from their Civill Authoritie ...³⁰

By calling for a return to no separation, these Christian activists cite numerous examples of leaders in the colonial era "never separating the struggle for freedom from Biblical principles ... For Samuel

Adams there was no separation between political service and spiritual activities."³¹ But political service and spiritual activities to not be separate, they must be exercised in the realm of the "dictates of [each individual's] conscience" and not as legislated dictum that forces the beliefs and practices of a particular religion upon all citizens.

The Declaration of Independence establishes "the laws of nature and of nature's God" as the standard by which civil government should function. Natural law is instinctive in every man's conscience regardless of his religious beliefs. It is from natural law that the Founding Fathers agreed upon the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The language of the First Amendment is clearly written from the perspective of natural law and *not from any particular religious belief.*

To illustrate this, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison were worlds apart in their religious beliefs, but in terms of understanding the principles of American government, they were of the same general mind. This is because they had a somewhat accurate perspective of the difference between religious belief and natural law. Civil government must function from natural law, the law of conscience. The Christian church functions from Biblical principles.

The conflict occurs when the church tries to get the government to cross the line and begin to legislate Christian doctrine to all the people. This principle is embodied in John Locke's view that religious strife stems from the tendency of both religious and governmental leaders to overstep their bounds and intermeddle in the others' affairs:

Conflict occurs when religious and state leaders intermeddle in each other's affairs.

²⁷Revelation 17:3; 18:1-24 ²⁸theocracy — a type of government which recognizes God as the supreme ruler and which gives temporal authority to the church to interpret and enforce His laws. ²⁹*The Myth of Separation*, p.42. ³⁰*Bloudy Tenent*, p.248. ³¹*The Myth of Separation*, p.94.

*I esteem it above all things necessary to distinguish exactly the business of civil government from that of religion, and to settle the just bounds that lie between the one and the other.*³²

GRAPPLING WITH THE WALL

Although the tension will continue until the end of the age, the wall is established in the foundation of the Constitution

The last 200 years of American history illustrates this tension as those on both sides of the wall grapple with where to draw the line between the legitimate sphere of authority of the state and the legitimate sphere of authority of the church. Where would we be as a nation without the foundation of the First Amendment that gives civil government the freedom to rule according to conscience for the good of all its citizens and gives individuals the freedom to believe and practice whatever their conscience dictates to them? Although the tension will continue until the end of the age, the wall is established in the foundation of the Constitution, as a standard for all nations, so that what the Bible predicts concerning the end times can come about.

In terms of the prophecy of Scripture concerning the last days, we can conclude these things: Roger Williams was right. He had the "angelic light and glory" to see the need for civil government patterned after the Rhode Island charter of 1663. Although virtually forgotten for over 100 years, this pattern emerged again when Isaac Backus, a Massachusetts Baptist apologist and historian, rediscovered Williams' writings in 1773.³³

The movement for religious freedom in the 1780s was part of a broad reaction against the dominant but uninspired religious cultures represented by the Congregationalists of New England and the An-

glicans of the South. The call for religious freedom came mostly from members, like Isaac Backus, of the most fervent and evangelical denominations in the nation.³⁴ These newer, more enthusiastic sects had the most to gain from Roger Williams' view of civil government enabling them to break the monopoly of the old established churches in the colonies.

James Madison, with his generous vision of religious liberty, faithfully reflected the popular understanding that emerged in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and in state constitutions as well.³⁵ That Madison's views prevailed further establishes the depth of understanding presented by Roger Williams and gets us to the real reason this country was established on the broad foundation of religious freedom, not just mere toleration by the state. That reason was for the sake of the Stone Kingdom, which Williams realized would emerge outside the structure of the Christian religion. This Stone Kingdom would need the protection of the civil government in order to be cut out of the mountain of the world in these last days.

WHEN THE WALL COMES TUMBLING DOWN

Since the days of Constantine, the state and the Christian religion have been together, thereby disqualifying Christianity as the people who would represent the kingdom of God in the last days. To this day it continues to assert itself in the affairs of government, even into this latest venture — "Reclaiming America for Christ". Christians are involved in every level of American life, in the guise of combating the liberal tendencies in society that

³²J. Locke, "A Letter Concerning Toleration", in *6 Works of Locke*, (London 1823 and 1963 photo reprint), p.9. ³³T. Curry, *The First Freedoms: Church and State in America to the Passage of the First Amendment*, (1986), p. 91; W. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent: 1630-1833*, (1971), p.8. ³⁴M. Howe, *The Garden and the Wilderness*, (1965). ³⁵Michael McConnell, "Origins of Free Exercise," *Harvard Law Review* (May 1990), Vol. 103, p.1455

try to remove any moral standards from government whatsoever. But by doing so, these Christians are seeking not merely to bring this country's rulers back to a standard of conscience, but to establish a broad-based and intimate merger of the interests of the state and the doctrines of Christianity in general.

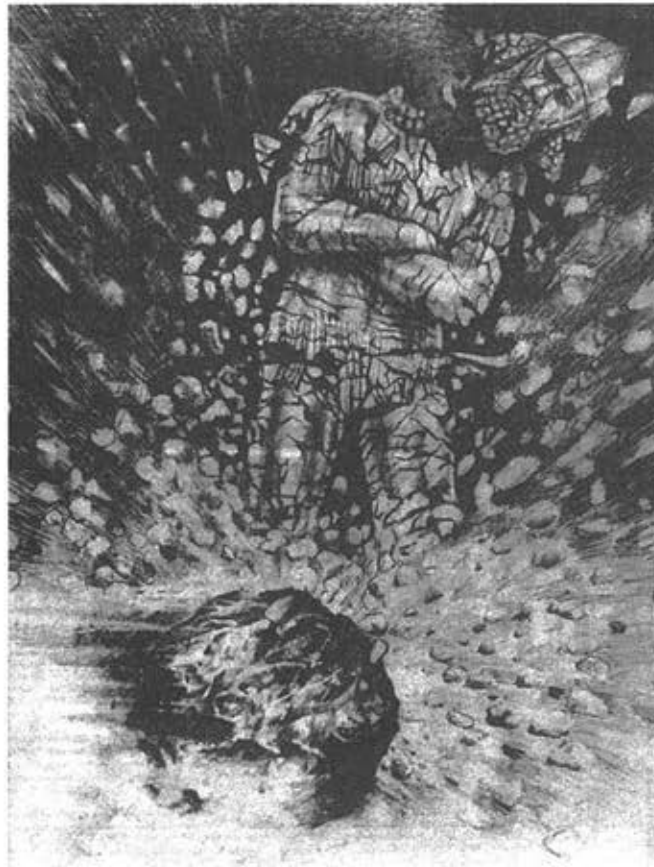
This is not the "light of the world" influencing the nations with the salt of the earth, because it has no life — only principles from the Bible. It is deadly. It will eventually require all groups to conform to its dogma or be classified as a "cult." This phenomena poses the greatest threat to religious liberty since the days of Roger Williams.



The stage is now set for the final drama of human history. As civil governments slip further from the restraints of conscience

and natural law, and begin to evidence a beastly nature, the fragmented segments of Christian religion are evolving into a kind of superficial unity. This unity will be just strong enough to allow Christianity to mount the state once more and ride into temporal power.


True to her nature, she will once again seek to suppress or exterminate all threats to her supposedly eternal security. But in these last days the age-old story of religious oppression will have a new twist. For in the ranks of the ostracized and persecuted will be a people, a kingdom which the God of heaven will set up. Despite all obstacles, it will never be destroyed. It will instead maintain a righteous standard which will allow God to execute judgment, bringing to an end both the political and ecclesiastical powers of wickedness, and ushering in a new age of freedom. ❖



The Legacy
of
Martin Luther






To the Jews,
the cross has been
as much a symbol of
persecution and terror
as the swastika.



ONE OF THE CENTRAL FACTS of historic Christianity is her persecution of the Jews. This has dominated the history of the Jews in the western world since the beginning of the Christian Roman Empire under the Emperor Constantine in the early fourth century A.D. To the Jews, the cross has been as much a symbol of persecution and terror as the *swastika*, only provoking dread. The reality of this is seen *even in America* when the little Jewish children in the synagogues cry in fear at the vandalism and curse words spray painted on their buildings. They know the history of Christianity.

What scares those children is knowing that this same hatred is only cultured over in Christianity today. It has not been repented of—either by the Catholic Church, or by any of the many divisions among the Protestants. Today, everyone blames the Nazis for the Holocaust and not Christianity, yet it is willful, historic blindness to not see that the roots of all the Nazis did come from the Christianity which shaped the German nation. Even though later generations may not have seen the connection with Christianity, you can be sure the Germans saw it, *and that the Jews still do.*

The persecution of the Jews by the Roman Catholic Church is well known. The Spanish Inquisition from 1481 to 1808 was merely the most notorious example of it. Yet what the Jews suffered at the hands of the Protestants is largely forgotten. Under the banner of the cross and in the name of Christ, the Jews have been cast out of nations, confined to ghettos, lost their possessions and frequently their lives. They have been forced to convert to a Christianity which compelled them to break the Sabbath, to not circumcise their children, and to eat unclean meat. They had to disobey the Bible to become Christians.

It has to be remembered that the Nazi Holocaust was nurtured in the land of the

Protestant Reformation. In fact the seed of all that Adolf Hitler would do was carefully transplanted from Catholicism into Protestantism by none other than Martin Luther, the greatest spokesman of the Reformation and indisputably one of the most influential men in all of history.

This is a shocking revelation! What could such a hero of the faith have to do with the nightmare of the Third Reich and the demonic figure of Adolf Hitler? Surely, the man who liberated the Gospel from the grasp of meaningless tradition and restored the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith alone would not be guilty of such things, would he? Yet Martin Luther's violent, venomous views and bitter treatment of the Jews was not something he sought to hide. Far from it. By every means at his disposal—the pen, the pulpit, and persuasion—he sought to gain not merely acceptance of his views but concrete, violent action against the Jews.

THE THREE TREATISES OF MARTIN LUTHER

Martin Luther was certainly not ashamed of his words. He wanted them to be both remembered and obeyed. It is only his followers who would like to have his words forgotten, since they seemingly invalidate all that he stood for. And so the chances are almost certain that you have never heard of the three treatises Martin Luther wrote against the Jews in 1543: *Against the Jews and Their Lies*, *On the Ineffable Name*, and *On the Last Words of David*.

These treatises represented a lifetime of thought on his part concerning the Jews. His first attempt to win them was by persuasion. He wrote these words when he was a younger man,

If we wish to help them, we must practice on them not the papal law but rather the Christian law of love, and accept them in friendly fashion, allowing them to

*work and make a living, so that they gain the reason and opportunity to be with and among us and to see and to hear our Christian teaching and life.*¹

It was only when such preaching and persuasion failed ("soft mercy" in Luther's theology) that more forceful measures were taken. For over the course of Luther's life it became apparent to him that the prejudices against the Jews he had sought to combat in his earlier writing were in fact true. In his mind they were accursed blasphemers whose Lord was the devil. He now saw it was nearly impossible to convert them, and any suffering inflicted upon them would remind them that they were God's rejected people. Only the keen awareness of that would soften a few of their hearts.

LUTHER'S LEGACY

These forceful measures are in a sense Martin Luther's last will and testament. As you will see they constitute his legacy to the world. The legacy of a man is what his descendants derive from him, a living memorial, long after he is dead, to who he was. In one of these formal, systematic presentations of his mature convictions he put forward the following seven proposals:

- ♦ Set fire to their synagogues and schools, burying and covering with dirt what won't burn, so no man will see a stone or cinder of them. This is to be done in honor of our Lord and Christendom.
- ♦ I advise that their houses be seized and destroyed.
- ♦ I advise that all their prayer books and Talmudic writings be taken from them.
- ♦ I advise that the rabbis be forbidden to teach henceforth on pain of life and limb.

- ♦ I advise that safe conduct on the highways be abolished completely for the Jews, for they have no business in the countryside, since they are not lords, officials, or tradesmen. Let them stay at home.

- ♦ I advise that usury be prohibited to them, and all cash and treasures be taken and kept for safekeeping.

- ♦ Put a flail, wheat thresher, axe, hoe, distaff, or spade into the hands of young, strong Jews, letting them earn their bread by the sweat of their brow.

To him, this was the "sharp mercy" they needed to bring them to repentance, since they were not being converted by the pure gospel he was preaching. This was not a passing fancy on his part; once he came to these conclusions he never wavered from them. Martin Luther's last sermon, preached just days before his death, was brimming over with biting condemnation and harsh words for the Jews. He planted the seed of hate in fertile soil, and it grew over the centuries.

YOU SHALL KNOW THEM BY THEIR FRUITS²

Those with even a modest knowledge of the brutal history of the Third Reich know that the Nazis put into practice *all seven of Martin Luther's recommendations against the Jews*, and more. They burned their synagogues in honor of the "positive Christianity" Adolf Hitler claimed to stand for; they seized and burned their houses; they took public delight in destroying the sacred and precious Torahs and Talmuds of the Jews; they separated life and limb from the rabbis; they certainly abolished safe travel for the Jews — the only travel they had was a one way trip on cattle cars; they took every bit of their wealth away from them — even the fillings in their teeth

¹That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew, published 1523.

and the hair on their head; and the ones the Nazis didn't kill immediately they put to demeaning and destroying slave labor.

Although many generations of Christians (who have lionized Martin Luther as a man of God) have failed to see the direct connection between Martin Luther's words and Protestant anti-Semitism, the Nazis certainly did. They understood what Martin Luther meant. Julius Striecher, one of the most notorious anti-Semites, even in the perverse world of the Third Reich, used Martin Luther's seven recommendations in his defense at the Nuremberg Trials. He even took as the motto for his newspaper, *Der Stürmer* (the Nazi hate paper) a direct quote of Martin Luther, "The Jews, Our Problem."



"Good" hard-working German Christians filled up Hitler's armies, police forces, death squads, and pulpits.

IN THE WORLD BUT NOT OF IT?²

Make no mistake about it: in spite of being a devoutly Christian nation, the Germans were under no illusions as to what Adolf Hitler's intentions towards the Jews were. He had told them a thousand times. Many people remember individuals such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer for their moral resistance to the evil of the Third Reich. Another such man was Martin Niemöller, who spoke the prophetic words, "God is giving Satan a free hand so that it may be seen what manner of men we are."

What most don't know is how alone they were. Practically to a man, all the other thousands of Protestant and Catholic clergy supported Hitler openly. They righteously stood by, praising their Jesus, closing their eyes and saying they didn't know what was going on. It is much easier to think about the heroic few than the legions of "good" hard-working German Christians who filled up Hitler's armies, police forces, death squads, and pulpits. They did not prove able to be *in* the world but not *of* it.

How far is the example of Christianity from the heart of Paul, who saw his entire ministry among the Gentiles as a means to, "*somehow move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them.*"⁴

The radical difference between Martin Luther's "sharp mercy" and Paul's compassion,

For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsman according to the flesh, who are Israelites ...

(Romans 9:3)

would cause any reasonable man to question whether they had the *same spirit* empowering them.

CHURCH AND STATE

Martin Luther's thinking has borne much fruit since he wrote his fateful three books. Religious persecution resulting from the merging of church and state has been its most common expression since then, the Holocaust its most specific and awful statement. But it is the unholy merger of church and state that gives such persecution both its earthly power and political motive. In such states a threat to the state religion (unbelief or a contrary belief) becomes a threat to the state. Whether Roman Catholic or Protestant in origin, religious persecution, strengthened by the power of the state, is an expression of beastly insensitivity to the human spirit. When such an atmosphere prevails in a nation, the most unthinkable cruel acts become utterly reasonable, and even receive the enthusiastic support of the large mass of people.

Martin Luther's three treatises sowed an enormous evil of the Roman Catholic system in the soil of the Protestant faith. This evil waits still, unrepented of, for the day when it can again be unleashed on the

²Matthew 7:15-20 ³John 17:15,16 ⁴Romans 11:14

world. Martin Luther was a false prophet who spoke a tainted word and Adolf Hitler was a beast who waged war against God's chosen people. These things are types of the end times prophesied in the Scriptures.

LIKE MOTHER, LIKE DAUGHTER

The development of Martin Luther's thinking was a gradual process, evolving over his entire adult life. He grew up in Roman Catholicism, for that is all there was. It was the binding force in society and government by which everyone knew their place, and heaven was the reward for the generally short and harsh lives people lived. Anything besides strict adherence to Catholicism was perceived as a threat, not only to this life, but to the next. For if the Catholic Church was not the only truth, then heaven might not await them, and they may have lived their lives in vain. So ingrained was this view of reality that often the Church had to restrain the common people from taking the lives of Jews and other non-Catholics into their hands.

This mindset has always regarded with active hostility every attempt to raise up something new on the earth, especially anything that challenged by its *sincerity* the *insincerity* and *compromise with the world* of the established church, whether Catholic or Protestant. There has been a consistent pattern down through the centuries in dealing with these attempts: lies and intimidation, followed by the seizure of the heretic's property, followed by cruel physical punishments; and if all this failed to bring the unbeliever back into the fold, execution by the most merciless means.

Martin Luther, like other Catholic theologians before him, thought the same way — earthly *punishment* inflicted by the Church, and where necessary the state, is actually the working of God's grace to save some from the flames of hell. In other

words, it's always done *for their own good*. And not only for their good, but the good of society as a whole — for unbelievers in a "Christian nation" represent faction and division, and must be dealt with, or else the society cannot be blessed by God.

This has been the story of practically every nation and society where Christianity has been the predominant influence — it is part of the essential nature of Christianity. For when Christians take the reins of power, the denial of rights to nonbelievers is ultimately seen as inconsequential, because they are all going to hell anyway.

"Heretics" like the Anabaptists suffered a similar fate at the hands of Martin Luther. Their desire for restoration of the true faith was a threat to the established Church. Martin Luther only sought *reformation* of the Church that already was, and not *restoration* of the Apostolic Church that had fallen away at the end of the first century. His decision to persecute those who did seek true restoration, like the Anabaptists, made inevitable the likeness of Catholicism and Protestantism, like a mother and her daughter.

RESPONSIBILITY

It is entirely fair to give Martin Luther the credit (he would not see it as the blame or the shame) for all future Christian rulers who treated the Jews and other "heretics" according to the wisdom of his policies. In the light of God's word, how shall we judge this wisdom? Is it the pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable wisdom from above, full of mercy and good fruits? Or is it an earthly, natural, demonic wisdom that comes from below? What then was the source for Martin Luther's words that with them he could bless Jesus Christ his Savior and with them lay the most bitter curses on men made in God's image?²⁵

There are other guidelines in the Word regarding righteous judgment as well. It is a remarkable thing, but the Son of God never said you shall know a false prophet by their *doctrine*. He said you shall know them by their *fruit*. He also said that a good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. If Martin Luther and the Reformation were a good tree, then it cannot have produced bad fruit. If it has produced bad fruit, it cannot have been a good tree. These are the words of the Son of God of which we are not to be ashamed.⁶

He also said, "A pupil is not above his teacher, but everyone, after he is fully trained, will be like his teacher."⁷ It is pathetic to see the Messianic Jewish congregations springing up around the country who owe their standard Protestant theology to Martin Luther and the Reformation. For they shall be like their teacher, as will all who stay under the fallen, compromised, disobedient gospel of the Reformation.

The Son of God said:

But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is within you is darkness, how great is the darkness! (Matthew 6:23)

Is not Martin Luther the eye through which Protestantism saw her clearest doctrines? How did the clarity of his doctrine carry through to the purity of his deeds? Is the whole body of the Protestant church then full of darkness? How great is that darkness!

The writer to the Hebrews wrote, *Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. (Hebrews 13:7)*

We will all receive the reward we merit for the faith we imitate. For each person's faith is known by his conduct, or as James put it, his works.⁸

Yet in spite of everything the evil one has done to malign the fair name of the Savior, the word of God will prove true. Those who were once not His people will be called the sons of the living God.⁹ They will be those who receive the same Holy Spirit Paul did, and like him, they will forsake everything for the sake of gaining Messiah.¹⁰ They are the people who will make the Jews jealous, and they will do it through having God's law written on their hearts, fulfilling all the prophets have spoken about the New Covenant. ❖



Such practices commonly proceed from that great whore the Church of Rome, whose Daughters are like their Mother, and all of a bloody nature, as most commonly all Whores be.

Roger Williams, 1644

³James 3:9-18 ⁶Matt 7:15-20 ⁷Luke 6:40 ⁸James 2:17-20 ⁹Rom 10:26 ¹⁰Phil 3:8

PASSING FROM DEATH TO LIFE

How can someone *know* that he has passed out of death and into life? John 5:24 says "*Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.*" Many people today use such Scriptures as evidence of their salvation, because they know them to be true and put their trust in them. They know that eternal life can only be found in the Son of God, and they are not looking elsewhere. Yet even though they believe in the Scriptures, is their faith valid? Can they be deceived? After all, the Pharisees earnestly held to the Scriptures, but it didn't do them any good. Their belief was empty.

Fortunately, we can hear the gospels echoed in the epistles, which can help us to judge our true condition with greater clarity. What John heard the Master say, the words which he faithfully recorded, he also *explained* in his letters, the epistles. Thus we read in 1 John 3:14 "*We know that we have passed out of death and into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.*" So from these two Scriptures just quoted, the Gospel of John and the epistle of 1 John, it becomes very clear — he who *believes* has passed out of death and into life, and he who *loves* has passed out of death into life. So *believe* and *love* are synonymous, two words representing the same reality.

Unless, of course, you have a doctrine that makes you think that you can pass out of death and into life through a belief that does not produce a life of loving your brothers. In that case, you have a different opinion from the apostle John. He could see the time coming when there would be such a great falling away from true

faith, the faith that he was so familiar with. This great falling away is called *apostasy*, when men would say that they loved the Master but would not love His words or love the brethren. So he defined love in case there was any doubt: "*We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to [must] lay down our lives for the brethren.*"¹

After all, it was this man John who heard right from the mouth of the only begotten Son of God, "*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.*"² But just to make sure, in his epistle John spelled out in no uncertain terms what it meant to love in the same way as Messiah loved:

*But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. We shall know by this that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before Him.*³

So how do we assure our heart before Him? By loving Him? "*The one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.*"⁴ Only *disciples* love as He loved, because they have forsaken everything in order to become like Him. "*The one who says 'I have come to know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*"⁵ If we think we are loving God when we are not living to benefit our brother, we are not loving with the love that John knew was proof we had passed out of death and into life. John knew that a mystical love, the kind without practical expression, was the work of a deluding spirit. ❧

¹1 John 3:16 ²John 13:34 ³1 John 3:17-19 ⁴1 John 4:20 ⁵1 John 2:4

LIVING UNDER THE STATUE'S SHADOW

ACCORDING TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S dream everyone on earth will one day be ruled by the government represented by the legs and feet of the statue. This fourth kingdom represents classical Rome and the end-time revival of its influence over Europe and the Western world. At one time Rome was a government of unrivaled military power, yet of such low moral fiber that the tribes and nations they conquered had a higher standard than they. (Their own historians recorded this.) Today's decline in moral fiber is one indication that western society is being affected by the spiritual influence of that fourth kingdom.

SPORTS

Let's take a closer look at what life is like under the shadow of the statue. One aspect of its influence can be seen in the realm of sports. Human beings have always had games, but the Greeks first and then the Romans later set them up as goals in themselves worthy of devoting one's entire life to. By competing for prizes and the recognition of other men, they were in effect devoting themselves to what others thought of them, instead of living for what God thought of them. The highest purpose a man could live for was the brief exhilaration of one moment of triumph. For centuries men strove for those quickly-fading moments of glory. How little dignity people like that have! How strange that God's people would let themselves get caught up in things of this nature!

Today many good Christians think of sports as a healthy outlet for their teenagers. They train them to devote their hearts and bodies and to strive for the glory that comes only from man.¹ Do you think the Master or the Apostle Paul would have taken time from their lives of faith to watch the games staged in the stadium in Jerusalem? While it stood only a hundred yards from the temple itself, it is never even mentioned in the New Testament.

EDUCATION

Another legacy of the Greeks which the Romans adopted was education for its own sake. Both viewed cultivating the mind as important a discipline as the development of a healthy body. The *gymnasium*, a place of exercise and athletic events, was also a place for lectures to stimulate the mind. The Greeks set standards for intellectual achievement that are still honored in every field of study. The Word of God exposes such pursuit of knowledge apart from the fear of God as folly.² Yet this is the standard upheld in the public schools and universities today. How many teachers in public school say in their hearts, "There is no God"?³

WEALTH

Perhaps the most valued legacy of Rome, though, was its tradition that government exists to uphold law and order so that citizens can freely buy and sell. Their society glorified wealth and the independence it seemed to offer. Yet, this life of

¹John 5:44 ²Proverbs 1:7 ³Psalm 53:1

individual striving after wealth had profound moral consequences. It fostered an atmosphere of moral permissiveness that has remained unrivaled until our own day. You can see this in the Apostle Paul's description of the Roman world recorded in Romans 1:18-32. It is uncanny how vividly his description fits our own day. That's because we live in the midst of a similar society.

IMMORALITY

The toleration, if not outright promotion, of immoral or perverted sex is everywhere. Popular music, television, plays and literature are so loaded with it that what would have been considered pornography a generation ago is called "popular culture" today. The side effects of this moral decline can be seen in all the human tragedies, broken relationships, guilt, unwanted children, continual abortions, STD's and AIDS itself. Even for Christians there is a constant pressure to give up or compromise, even in small ways, the high standard of the Word of God. After all, Paul charged the believers in Ephesus to not allow these things to even be mentioned among them.⁴ He goes on to say, "No fornicator ... has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."⁵ What does this mean for all the Christian churches that regularly report the same rate of sexual immorality among their teenagers as that of their non-Christian peers? And what about the acceptance of sodomy and the

continued spread of AIDS in Christianity? Claiming to worship Jesus Christ, there are now many large, active groups of sodomites clamoring loudly for full acceptance by their "brothers in the Lord." Denominations that at one time viewed such things as sin are now changing their teachings. Some of them are even ordaining sodomites as ministers. This atmosphere of moral permissiveness continues to spread despite the clear warning in the word of God that approving such deeds makes one worthy of death in the eyes of a righteous God.⁶

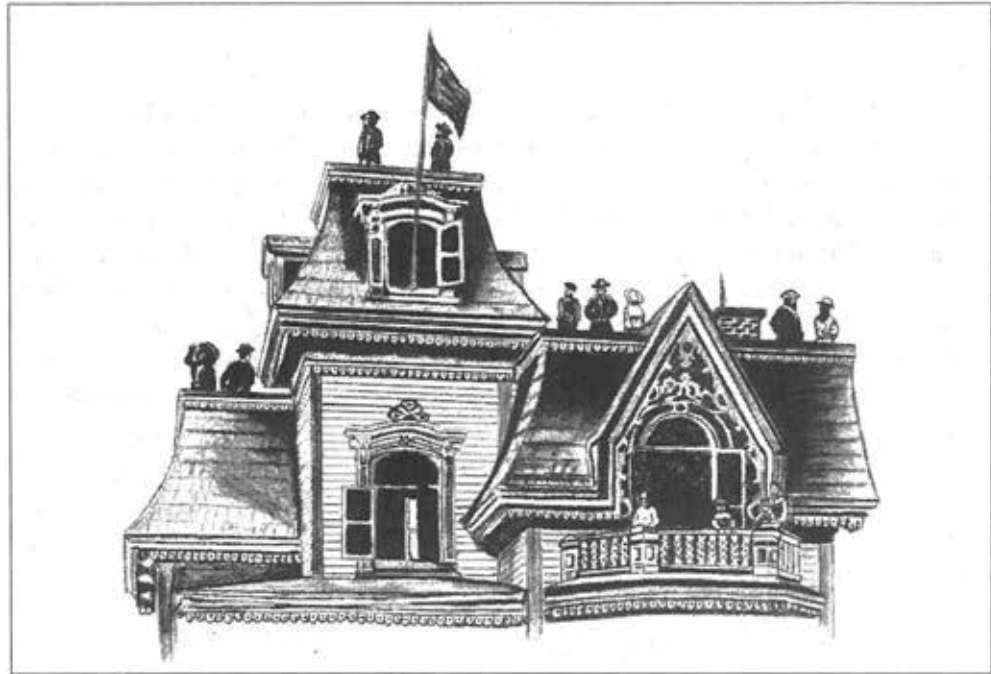
THE BEAST

Our Master also warned His disciples about the pressures of making a living in this world, saying that they could not serve God and riches.⁷ This same economic pressure will be used by the beast of Revelation to cause all mankind to come under his rule. He "causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell who does not have the mark."⁸ That pressure is at work on all mankind right now to begin to prepare them and their children for that evil rule.

There will be some who long for deliverance from all of this. They will be formed into the Stone Kingdom and will uphold the righteous standard of the Word of God. Even now the influence of the statue's rule in their lives is coming to an end. ❖

⁴Ephesians 5:3 ⁵Ephesians 5:5 ⁶Romans 1:32 ⁷Matthew 6:24 ⁸Revelation 13:16-17

SIGNS OF THE END



WE STAND UNDER THE LIGHT of the same sun that shone on our Master, Moses, and Adam. Around us the same biological systems that sustained their lives still function. It is as God said to Noah,

While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease. (Genesis 8:22)

All things seem to continue on to the end, when the Son of God will return for His pure and spotless bride.¹ Yet among the many signs of the end, some are neither well known or well understood. And what some people thought were sure signs have only produced disappointment. Anyone familiar with the history of American Christianity knows of the many groups who have made serious preparation for the imminent return of the Son of God.

There they stood on their rooftops, breathlessly scanning the skies, waiting for His triumphant return. Some of them in their earnestness had even sold all their possessions because earthly things no longer mattered to them. They wanted Him to be their only possession. And if their neighbors had some passing anxiety that maybe they were right, such fears were laid to rest as the date each new prophet proposed passed uneventfully. The skies didn't split and the angels didn't gather His elect from the earth.² The deceived tried to put their lives back in order and to make sense out of the things they had done. They had to live with the shame they felt at having given themselves to something that was not of God.³

Even in the evangelical and fundamentalist camps, many were certain the end would be within a Biblical generation of

the founding of the modern state of Israel in 1948. It is not hard to find their predictions in books such as the *Late, Great Planet Earth*. 1988 has come and gone, exposing their lack of understanding of the Scriptures. Yet new books continue to be sold, which makes one wonder what Paul would think of selling such good news for a price.⁴

There are clear signs that these are the last days, however, if anyone cares to notice. Indeed, the evil one is even now altering the laws by which men have lived for six thousand years, as the prophet Daniel said the wicked King would do in the last days,

And he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.” (Daniel 7:25)

These are the days the prophet Isaiah warned of when the ancient restraint of the human conscience would be cast off by much of mankind. One of the signs of this inward pollution of the human soul would be the outward pollution of the earth,

*The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant. Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned and few men are left.
(Isaiah 24:5,6)*

These things are extremely significant for all believers because true religion, as James said, is keeping oneself undefiled by the world.⁵ We know that those who stain

their garments will have their names removed from the book of life,⁶ and that those who are ashamed of the Son and the words He spoke, He will be ashamed of them when He comes in His glory.⁷

If the evil one is changing the standards of what is called good and evil, all sincere believers should be aware of his schemes, lest they be deceived like the many.⁸ Whatever men may say, God does not change. As Paul urged the Corinthians, test yourselves to see if you are in the faith, for if you fail the test, that day will come upon you like a trap.⁹

THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH

Consider, for instance, a word — homosexual. Before this century it didn't exist in the English language. In Noah Webster's dictionary of 1828, rightly beloved by many Christians for its clear definitions and apt Scriptural references, the word cannot be found. A brief consideration of the Scriptures would cause you to look up the word *sodomite*, or what they practice, *sodomy*. Noah Webster would not even describe the act, since it was so evil and profane, for fear innocent people would read the definition.

He would only define sodomy as a crime against nature. This made sense to the people he wrote to, because of the instinctive revulsion even the thought of such behavior aroused in them. It was consistent with the condemnation both the Old and New Testaments heaped on sodomites. Of course, these things have not changed, since nature has not changed, nor have the Scriptures, for they cannot change.

These are the days the prophet Isaiah warned of when the ancient boundaries of the human conscience would be cast off by much of mankind.

¹Eph 5:25-27; Rev 19:7,8 ²Matt 24:29-31 ³Duet 13:1-5 ⁴2 Cor 2:17 (The word *corrupt* in the KJV is literally *huckster*, meaning to retail, and by implication, to adulterate, and figuratively, to corrupt. ⁵James 1:27 ⁶Rev 3:3-5 ⁷Luke 9:26 ⁸Matt 24:24 ⁹1 Cor 13:5; Luke 21:34-35

Those who are attempting to change what cannot change are the ones who are bringing Isaiah 24:5,6 upon the earth. They are doing this by changing the laws and by redefining what is right and wrong in the very conscience of men. This is why they place such great emphasis on only using the proper words; which is to say, words which make no value judgment about the selfish, aggressive, and vile practices of sodomites. This is clearly seen in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19, where all the men of the city wanted to gang rape Lot's guests.¹⁰ This is typical of their craving for strange new flesh that Jude warned of,

Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire. (Jude 7)

They are fighting in the courts, the legislatures, the entertainment industry, and even the churches, to become the moral conscience of America. They, and all those who cooperate with them, are the ones who are about the evil one's business of altering the times and the laws. They are fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah made long ago,

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Therefore, as a tongue of fire consumes stubble, and dry grass collapses into the flame, so their root will become like rot and their blossom blow away as dust; for they have rejected the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. (Isaiah 5:20,24)

Indeed, the Scriptures never use the word *homosexual*, not once. It is only the modern translations that do (with some exceptions); you will not find it in the King James or even the American Revised Version of 1901, since it is not in the original languages. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible skips from the word *homers*, Numbers 11:32, to the word, *honest*, Luke 8:15. Homosexual is not there. What then, is in the Hebrew and Greek? Do you really want to know? They are *very* politically incorrect words that God the Father and the holy apostles spoke, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

First consider the word again, *homosexual*. The 1980 edition of Webster's dictionary defines it as, "of or characterized by sexual desire for those of the same sex as oneself." Not surprisingly, *heterosexual* is defined as, "of or characterized by sexual desire for those of the opposite sex." They have become mirror images of each other. A homosexual then, is just like a heterosexual, except they do it with someone of the same sex. This is what you have been told a thousand different ways — that perversion and normality are just preferences — just like abortion and birth. At some point, you are supposed to say to yourself, "I understand now, they are just like me." Or maybe you might say, "I am just like them."

Therefore these words are used to equate what the Bible condemns — the disgusting behavior of the Sodomites — with normal human sexual relations, as being merely different preferences. This perverts what men know in their consciences to be true, and undermines the absolute standard of the word of God.

What words are used in the Scriptures then? Sodomite, of course, but there are others which describe either their nature

¹⁰Genesis 19:1-29, especially verses 4-9. These men were actually angels.



or their deeds. One which describes their nature is "dog." It is used in Deuteronomy 23:17,18. In the Hebrew it means a male devotee by prostitution to licentious idolatry, hence a sodomite, unclean. This is the only name that the righteousness of God can call such people, for they have degraded themselves to the lowest of all creatures, dogs, who were made to scavenge the streets. They shall forever be outside the Holy City,

But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices lying. (Revelations 22:15)

Another word which actually describes their acts is *effeminate* (1 Corinthians 6:9), which is literally *catamite*. The dictionary says a *catamite* is a boy used in pedastry. Now *pedastry* is sodomy between males, especially as practiced between a man and a boy. There is a lot in a word, isn't there? Especially this one, considering that in 1979 the Gay Report, a study by two "gay" researchers in which more than 4,000 sodomites were interviewed, *half* of them admitted to having sex with minors. This is what all who are in favor of civil rights for homosexuals are standing up for, their unhindered freedom to continue to seduce the children of America. Their condemnation is just.¹¹

Another word that is not in the Bible, a new one to the English language as well, is truly remarkable — *pedophile*. The dictionary defines it as a adult having abnormal sexual desire for children. This raises the question, is there normal sexual desire in adults for children? It also raises the question, what was wrong with the old-fashioned phrase, *child molester*. Whenever you see pedophile in the newspaper, remember the times, they are a-changing. Re-

member that the prophecy of Daniel is coming upon the world.

The Scriptures use the word *sodomite* to remind us of both *the origin and the end* of such perversion,

Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven, and He overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew upon the ground.

(Genesis 19:24,25)¹²

So you can see that it is more than a matter of mere words. It is the discrimination between good and evil the words emphasize, or destroy. Paul the apostle said "*Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.*"¹³

THE EVERLASTING COVENANT

What else is changing these days? What are other signs of the breakdown of the everlasting covenant God made with Adam and Eve? In Isaiah's words, what will the men and women of the earth be found guilty of? Consider another word, *choice*. What a multitude of evil such a pleasant word encompasses. Men and women are being led beyond the limits of decency and morality in its name, thinking they can be other than how God made them. Such choices make them less than what a man or woman is, not more.

Men and women know for certain that God made them different on purpose. Yet how great an inroad the so-called woman's liberation movement has made in society! Now there are women functioning in professions that are only for men, like policemen and firemen, and even the military. All of this is aggressively pursued in the name of equality of roles, blindly ignoring the physical characteristics, and nature the

"Dog" is the only name that the righteousness of God can call homosexuals, for they have degraded themselves to the lowest of all creatures, dogs, who were made to scavenge the streets.

¹¹Romans 1:32 ¹²Also, 2 Peter 2:6 as well as Jude 7 ¹³Ephesians 2:1-3

God of heaven has given women. This is like the evil one, who went beyond the boundaries God set for him at his creation. He sought to rise above God and take His place. Women filled with the spirit of this age are trying to rise up and take men's place, beginning with their husband's.¹⁴

God made man in His own image, male and female He created them.¹⁵ In God's creation woman has her place; she is that part of Man with the womb. She bears the children that come forth from the union of man and wife. This is how men and women are; there is nothing in between; there is no third sex.

Woman was created to fill the loneliness in man, every way that he is alone — socially, mentally, spiritually, and physically. Bearing children, therefore, is an essential part of how woman completes man — doing what only she can do to continue the human race. This awesome responsibility is to be carried out within the protecting bounds of marriage.

BREAKING THE COVENANT

The women's movement is proud of its disorder; proud of how it has broken down the distinctions between men and women. It has even invaded the churches, subtly but surely overturning the New Testament guidelines about the roles of men and women.¹⁶ However, the woman's liberation movement reveals its basic hostility towards all of God's order in what is called a woman's most basic right, her "right to chose."

This choice is exercised in determining whether the fetus (Latin for unborn baby) inside their wombs will be allowed to live or caused to die. Unlike all the evil and abusive treatment women have endured down through history, abortion is

an assault from within. It defiles her conscience and leaves a deeper scar than anything inflicted upon her. Such evil which a woman willingly gives herself to makes her morally filthy.¹⁷

Every man and woman alive knows they came from the womb of a woman, whose right to kill the life within her many now hypocritically uphold. They would not be here if their parents had decided to abort them, yet they gloss over this fact in their stony-hearted reasoning. This a significant factor in the fundamental devaluation of human life that is degrading the whole world today, taking mankind further and further away from the image of God they were created in. It is for this the wrath of God will come upon the world. Since abortion has come into Christianity, clearly she has lost all her light and salt, and is indeed being trampled underfoot by men.¹⁸

THE MARRIAGE COVENANT

Instead, the Church is supposed to be the light of the world, and its husbands and wives should be the clearest example of God's standard for men and women. For it is this relationship that will be the decisive factor in their children's emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being. The echoes of divorce ring down through the generations, often irreparably harming the children's ability to form lasting relationships when they grow up. The evidence is this: breaking God's law about marriage wreaks havoc in all the human lives it touches. God's law commands that a woman not ascend to the role of the man, but respect him as her conscience demands, and that the in-laws be kept out of the marriage.¹⁹ These two things cause most of the divorce in the world. He, of course, is to be respectable.



¹⁴Rom 14:22 ¹⁵Gen 1:26-28; 5:1,2 ¹⁶1 Cor 11:3-16, 14:34-38; 1 Tim 2:12; Titus 2:3-5
¹⁷Mark 7:20-23 ¹⁸Matt 5:13 (the church should be Matt 5:10-12) ¹⁹Matt 19:4-6; Gen 3:16

Ephesians 5:22,23 is the unalterable word of God,

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the Body.

This is how a married woman serves Messiah. Anything she says or does is not heard in heaven if she does not willingly submit to this order. As Paul said, "God is not a God confusion but of peace."²⁰ And on his part a man serves Him by loving his wife as Messiah loves the Church.²¹ It is only as we conform to the word that we conform to Messiah, and His word is unalterable. Those who do not become like Him will have a great deal to fear in the judgment.²² Nor is this simply a command to women in the Body of Messiah, it is essentially the role assigned to all wives since the fall, as Genesis 3:16 makes clear:

To the woman He said, 'I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you shall bring forth children; yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.'

Therefore the real nature of marriage is that a wife submits to her husband. They cannot both be the head in marriage. So when a controversy arises, her submission ends it. This is the only kind of relationship between them of which God approves, because if a woman desires a man she will submit to him. This is the nature of love; in fact this is how our Savior knows we love Him.²³ If you are subject to someone, it means that you come under their power and authority, and there you find rest. You can always tell how a church submits to

Messiah by how the women submit to their husbands.

THE DEATH PENALTY

How precious are men and women! They bear the image of the invisible God, and though they are fallen, they are still beloved by the God who made them. The ultimate violation of a man's rights, murder, receives as its just reward the eternal Sea of Fire. Premeditated murder is an attack on God Himself. This is evil, in fact it is the heart of evil, for it displays the image of the evil one himself, *who, just like a murderer, would take God's life if he could.* A person who has done this once has passed beyond the restraints of conscience in a way that cannot be repaired. If allowed to live, he will do it again when the right situation comes along. The blood of both his past and future victims is as much on those who oppose the death penalty as on the murderer. Neither will have any part in God's kingdom.²⁴

So serious is this, that even were a murderer saved by the blood of the Lamb and sealed for the Holy City, he would, if sincere, turn himself in to the authorities, plead guilty, and ask to be executed. This would bring honor to the Creator who placed in all men the instinctive prohibition against murder. As Paul said, faith upholds the law.²⁵ There is no violating God's command to men to take the life of a murderer:

Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man. (Genesis 9:6)

Those who are violating it are polluting the land, as the Bible makes abundantly clear:

Murder

is to attack

God Himself.

A murderer displays

the image of the evil

one himself, who

would take God's

life if he could.

²⁰1 Cor 14:33 ²¹Eph 5:25-33 ²²1 John 4:17,18; 3:2,3 ²³John 14:15,21,23
²⁴Matt 25:31-40 ²⁵Rom 3:31

So you shall not pollute the land in which you are; for blood pollutes the land and no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it.

(Numbers 35:33)

This moral pollution is the cause for the environmental pollution that alarms so many. All pollution stems from the same lack of respect for the image of God in men and women. If people really wanted to do something about ecology, they would uphold mankind's consciousness of good, not undermine it. Life is cheap in the estimation of murderers. That is why abortion is accepted and the death sentence is opposed by so many people today.

The wisdom of this world says that *only the innocent must die* — the murder victims and the unborn babies. The reason for this is not hard to see. It is the same reason the Nazis burned books. They wanted to make it as if the words were never said. They wanted to change the world, and sever the past from the present. Those who are changing the times and the laws by which men have lived want to change something else too. The death of the guilty in this life points to their eternal judgment in the next life. This is a fact that they do not wish to face. This is the deterrent factor in the death penalty, not merely the extinguishing of a worthless man's life. It is the knowledge of God's justice and judgment that those who oppose the death penalty are trying to erase. So all things are being made ready for the coming of the generation of God's wrath.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING

The final outcome of this process will be the mark of the beast, of which the Bible

so ominously warns. The mark is the outward seal of the complete inner destruction of the image of God in men. Who will the evil one so deceive that they will take the mark?²⁶ He will certainly deceive the sodomites and those who champion their cause. He will deceive those women who don't submit to their husbands, and those men who don't rule over their wives. He will fool the children who are disobedient to their parents,²⁷ and the abortionists and the murderers and those who protect murderers from the justice due them. All of these people will take the mark of the beast. The evil one will deceive all those who don't love the truth, that is, God's truth. In fact, God Himself will cooperate with this by sending a deluding influence on all who *took pleasure in wickedness.*²⁸

The evil one will easily deceive believers who want the world's acceptance and who seek, *or even receive*, glory from men.²⁹ If Billy Graham were to be alive then, he would take the mark of the beast. He has certainly received glory from men, from William Randolph Hearst to the White House to the sidewalks of Hollywood. His name shines there along with all the other greats of the entertainment industry. His gospel has no more united those who have heard it (as the preaching of Messiah's word always will)³⁰ than Hollywood could unite America in anything other than utter moral defilement. Whoever preaches to men but fails to communicate the glory of Messiah that brings about unity, proves he is seeking his own glory and speaking his own word.³¹

The Messiah prophesied that His disciples will be hated by all men for His sake, and at the dreadful time of the end, many will fall away from Him.³² They will fall away for the same reason the faithful will



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²⁶John 8:44 ²⁷Rom 1:28-32; 2 Tim 3:1-5 ²⁸2 Thess 2:9-12 ²⁹John 5:41-44
³⁰John 17:20-23 ³¹John 7:18; 17:20-23; Eph 4:1-6 ³²Matt 24:9,10,12



be hated — because of how *vile and ugly the word of God will be made to seem to the world*. Many who profess belief in Him are even now ashamed of His word. In fact, their beliefs are following right along with the world, and they do not see it. They are so used to ignoring the claims of the Scriptures on their lives as His supposed disciples who have given up everything,³³ that it is easy to justify many things the Bible condemns. But one day He will return.

It is in this wicked and perverse generation that the Gospel of the Kingdom must be preached as a demonstration, or witness, so that forgiveness of sins can be

found by those who desperately need it. And who needs it? All those who have suppressed the knowledge of God in their conscience, and all those who do not obey the Gospel.³⁴ Everyone who perishes in the day He returns will be in one category or the other. And all those who will love His appearing will have loved Him, that is to say, obeyed Him, all the way to the end.³⁵ For all the rest, there will be the anti-Christ, who, as the Scripture says, will be a sodomite.³⁶ The difference between those who serve Christ, and those who will not give up everything for Him, will be all too clear in those days. ❖

*But my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back,
my soul has no pleasure in him. (Hebrew 10:38)*

³³Luke 14:31-33 ³⁴2 Thess 1:8; Rom 1:18-32 ³⁵2 Tim 4:8; John 14:15,21,23; Matt 24:13

³⁶Daniel 11:37

WITNESS OF THE KINGDOM

"And this good news of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come." (Matthew 24:14)

witness (wit'nis) *n.* an attesting of a fact; evidence; testimony as to the existence of something tangible or real by firsthand observation.

THE GOOD NEWS shall be proclaimed in the whole earth as a *testimony* to the nations of the *existence* of the *kingdom* by those who have *observed* it or *experienced* it through their *senses*. Or, as the Apostle John put it, "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled ... we proclaim to you."¹ This is what it means to bear *witness* — to speak of what you have seen and heard and touched.

The Apostle John wrote his letters to the early church to address a vicious heresy that was creeping in: Gnosticism — salvation through knowledge. The Gnostics divorced the spiritual from the physical, the mental from the material. To them the body was a base thing, just the temporary habitation of the spirit. They said that it didn't matter what one did with his body — only the workings of the mind really mattered. They even denied that Yahshua, the Son of God, actually came in the flesh. To them He always was and always would be a *spiritual* being only, never having had a physical body. In saying these things, the Gnostics denied the only sacrifice that could atone for their sins — the Lamb of God whose lifeblood was shed for them.

How could the early church have been so easily deceived, when those who had actually seen the Master were still among them? John himself had spent more than

three years with Him, hanging onto His every word, eating with Him, hearing Him laugh, seeing Him weep, watching as His blood flowed down His battered body and soaked into the ground beneath the cross. Surely it shook John to his very soul to learn that his Master's incarnation was being reasoned away by false apostles who had infiltrated the church. So he warned them:

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not ... is the spirit of antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.²

To his grief, John observed that love and obedience were falling by the way as the poisonous teaching of the Gnostics began to permeate the church. If beliefs were more important than deeds (as if they could really be separated), then who would suffer to deny himself and love his brother? It was happening just as the Master had said:

And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many. And because lawlessness is increased, the love of many will grow cold.³

That is why John's first letter is filled with admonitions to obey His commandments and to love one another.⁴ The church was

¹1 John 1:1-2 ²1 John 4:1-3 ³Matthew 24:11-12

already in decline, and he wrote to restore them to an assurance based on the objective standard of love expressed in obedience,⁵ not a self-confidence based on the knowledge of spiritual truths such as the Gnostics proclaimed. He wanted with all his heart for Matthew 24:14 to be fulfilled. But the good news could not be a *witness* of the kingdom apart from the *demonstration* of love as a visible, physical reality. That demonstration is the life of a people who live the common life of Acts 2:44-47 and 4:32-35, loving one another as Messiah loved them, laying down their lives for each other *every day*.⁶ That common life of love is the evidence of the kingdom that gives credibility and confidence to those who are sent out to proclaim the good news. It is the life of the Body of Messiah, the physical representation on earth of our Messiah who is in heaven.⁷

GNOSTICISM TODAY

Because the Gnostics belittled the physical realm and emphasized the "spiritual" or, more accurately, the mental realm, they discounted the importance of the incarnation, denying that our Master came in the flesh. Of course, no one would call himself a Christian today who denies with his lips that Jesus came in the flesh. Church history books speak of Gnosticism as an historical heresy, one that was dealt with once and for all centuries ago, eradicated by the great creeds of the early church councils. But what was booted out the front door slithered in by the basement window.

Christianity has rejected the *doctrine* of Gnosticism, but received its *spirit*. She boldly proclaims the truth that Jesus was born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, died a physical death on the cross, was raised from the dead by the power of the

Holy Spirit, and ascended physically into heaven where He sits at the right hand of the Father. But after that things start to break down. We are asked to believe that He sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in individual believers who are collectively referred to as the "Body of Christ." But this body is a *mystical* body, not a *physical* body. Its members live independently from one another, sharing nothing in common except a religious vocabulary and a few basic doctrines.

PERCHING TOGETHER

Those who call themselves Christians, even "born again" Christians, are divided from one another in every conceivable way: physically, socially, economically, doctrinally, denominationally, politically, philosophically, emotionally, and racially. How then are they a *body* in any reasonable sense of the word? They are more like birds perching together on a wire than vitally-connected members of a body. When one bird flies off, it is of no great consequence to the rest. But if an ear, hand or foot is severed from a real body, the loss is keenly felt.

The Apostle Paul had this to say about the Body of Messiah in his first letter to the church in Corinth, which was in danger of dividing:

Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment⁸ ... For even as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, ... and we were all made to drink of one Spirit⁹ ...

Christianity has rejected the doctrine of Gnosticism, but received its spirit.

⁴1 John 3:10-24; 4:7-21 ⁵1 John 2:3-6 ⁶Luke 9:23; John 15:13-14; 13:34-35

⁷1 John 4:16-17; 1 Cor 12:27; Eph 5:30 ⁸1 Cor 1:10



The homogenizing effect of our Sunday apparel made it impossible to identify the few needy people in the church.

God has so composed the body ... that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it.¹⁰

We have been told that it is wrong to expect all of Christianity to measure up to the ideal of the Body of Christ, since all are not sincere. Rather, the *true* Body of Christ consists of all of the *true* believers in all of the various denominations and congregations, taken collectively. But then, who can judge which are the *true* believers? The Bible says they are those who are one like the Father and the Son, those whose unity convinces the world that the Father sent the Son.¹¹ But who has actually witnessed such unity? Can we identify these true believers by the way they lay down their lives for one another every day, and share all they have with one another so that there are no needy among them?¹²

There was a time when I lived in a poor neighborhood in the inner city and drove about five miles to church every Sunday to be part of a congregation that was suitable to my lifestyle. It was a well-known conservative Evangelical church that prided itself in giving more than fifty percent of its budget (a figure in the millions) to foreign missions every year. I drove my nice car down into the underground garage and parked among the other nice cars and an occasional unsightly rattle-trap.

When I arrived in the church sanctuary, I was surrounded by a sea of well-dressed, smiling people whispering softly to each other. After an hour of orderly, inspirational music and a stirring sermon, we all filed out to the "fellowship hall" to chat over our cups of coffee before going our separate ways. I returned to my car, sometimes wondering who were the owners of the few junky cars in the parking lot — the homogenizing effect of our Sunday

⁹1 Cor 12:12-13 ¹⁰1 Cor 12:24-26 ¹¹John 17:21-23 ¹²1 John 3:16-18; Acts 4:32-35

apparel made it impossible to identify the few needy people in the church.

When I arrived home again, I could hear the sounds of singing or the shouts of preaching coming from a small congregation that met in a nearby building. It was full of welfare mothers and their children, singing their hearts out, plus a few faithful men whose deep "Amens" punctuated the waves of the sermon. They were dirt poor, with few exceptions. But they all seemed sincere, clinging to all the basic doctrines of Evangelical Christianity. They would have found lots of common theological ground with most of the members of my own church.

So were we all members of the same Body of Christ? And if so, why did the surplus of one not supply the needs of the other, even within the same congregation, if not between the congregations?¹³ What is a body without connecting tissue? Why were the members not vitally connected to the head, which could coordinate the flow of love and care to every member?¹⁴

WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS

It is a myth that the Holy Spirit can dwell in a divided body, just as the human spirit cannot dwell in a human body that is hacked into pieces. The Christian "Body of Christ" is a mystical, invisible body — a concept that would have appealed to the Gnostics of the first century. Indeed, the spirit of Gnosticism is very much alive in Christianity today. Like the Gnostics, Christians today find their security in what they *know* or believe in their minds, not in the fleshing out of the Master's commands. They might as well deny the incarnation, for they deny the very purpose for which the Father sent His Son to earth:

[He] gave Himself for us, that He might

redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.¹⁵

This *people* is the demonstration that the Holy Spirit was sent to produce, as He did on the day of Pentecost.¹⁶ Without that demonstration, the good news cannot be proclaimed as a *witness*, because there is no *evidence* of the kingdom. You cannot make your case in court unless you have evidence that demands a verdict, for your opponent will produce a writ of *habeas corpus*, a Latin term posing the question, "Where is the body?"

The fact that a few hundred, or even a few thousand people gather together in a building each Sunday and can be friendly to one another for a few hours is not surprising. It is not hard to put your best side forward for a little while, even to tolerate and smile pleasantly at people who rub you the wrong way. Before long you can return to the comfortable privacy of your own home.

It is another thing entirely to see a people gathered together from every walk of life to live a common life, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, laying down their lives for each other in a covenant of love, bearing with each other's faults, forgiving each other's sins, building each other up, meeting each other's needs, laughing together, crying together, full of hope and purpose and thankfulness toward their Creator year after year, generation after generation. That is the evidence that demands a verdict. When the good news of the kingdom is preached throughout all the earth as a witness of that reality, the end of this age will come, and our Master's glorious reign of peace and restoration on the earth can begin with those who have made themselves ready.¹⁷ ❖

It is a myth that the Holy Spirit can dwell in a divided body, just as the human spirit cannot dwell in a human body that is hacked into pieces.

¹³2 Cor 8:13-15 ¹⁴Eph 4:15-16; 1 John 3:17; 4:7-8 ¹⁵Titus 2:14 ¹⁶Acts 2:41-47; Acts 4:32-35 ¹⁷Rev 19:7; 3:4-5

THE NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES

יהושע
Hebrew

Jesus
English

What is the Name above all names? Is it a Greek or a Jewish name? Doesn't a disciple of His have the right to know the very name and pronunciation given by the angel Gabriel,¹ when he brought such good news to the virgin Miriam (Mary)? Or when the Master spoke His name from heaven to Paul on the road to Damascus, what name did He use, since Paul said that he heard an utterance from His mouth? "And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' And I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.'"² Surely the apostle Paul was not puzzled over language when told "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name."³

What then was the utterance of His mouth that proclaimed His name, since He spoke in Hebrew? Many names are promoted these days: *Y'Shua*, *Yeshua*, *Yahshua*, *Joshua*, *Yehoshua*. Shouldn't we be able to know His name? "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men, by which we must be saved."⁴ Should not a man be called by the same name all over the world?

WHO IS *IESOUS*?

Jésus
French

Jesus
German

Hundreds of times in the New Testament the Greek name *Iesous* is translated as Jesus. But if you have ever read an older King James Bible you might have noticed something odd in Acts 7:45. In his speech to the Jewish council, Stephen refers to the man who led Israel into the Promised Land as *Jesus*, not *Joshua*! Is this an error?

Well, yes and no, since the Greek name in verse 45 is *Iesous*, the same word translated as *Jesus* everywhere else. But Stephen could not possibly have been referring to anyone else but the leader Joshua who took over after Moses. For immediately afterwards, in verse 59, Stephen cried out when being stoned, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" Again the name is *Iesous* in the

¹ Luke 1:31 ² Acts 22:14; 26:14-15 ³ Acts 22:16 ⁴ Acts 4:12

3000s

Greek. Was Stephen crying out to the historical figure Joshua, long dead, to save him, or was he calling upon the Son of God, since both names in the Greek are *Iesous*? So what does *Iesous* mean, *Jesus* or *Joshua*? Was Stephen, a man so righteous that heaven opened up at his martyrdom, was he so overcome by the stress of the moment that he couldn't tell a long-dead forefather from the Messiah seated upon His throne?

Jesús
Spanish

JESUS OR JOSHUA?

Modern translations of the Scriptures, and even recent revisions of the King James version, have noticed this contradiction and changed the name in Acts 7:45 to *Joshua* so that it makes sense. (The same problem is found in Hebrews 4:8 also.) But where did these translators get their authority to change the Scriptures? Is it through integrity and honesty that *Iesous* is translated *Jesus*, except when it obviously has to mean *Joshua*? Or are the traditions of men so strong that translators can take liberties with the Word of God? At least the translators of the original King James Version were consistent enough to translate *Iesous* as *Jesus* in Acts 7 even when it made no sense.

Jesus
Portuguese

So if the new translations change *Jesus* to *Joshua* in Acts 7:45 and Hebrews 4:8, why didn't they also change *Jesus* to *Joshua* in all the other Scriptures where they found the name *Iesous*? In Acts 7:45 the name *Iesous* is obviously *Joshua*, and could not possibly refer to anyone else. Isn't the name *Iesous* really *Joshua* everywhere it is found? Isn't His name really *Joshua* instead of *Jesus*? If it would be tampering with the Scriptures to change Jesus the Savior's name back to *Joshua*, would it not also be tampering with the Scriptures to change *Jesus* back to *Joshua* in Acts 7 and Hebrews 4? It's all the same word — *Iesous*! We want to know God's mind about these things, because it doesn't make sense that the translators would change the Holy Scriptures in one place and not the other. Not wishing to disturb tradition, do they hang onto the name *Jesus* for the sake of selling Bibles? For certain, one thing is true. Miriam and Yoseph (*Mary* and *Joseph* in English) named the child just as the angel commanded them. Would the angel speak to them in Hebrew or did he speak Greek? Everything would be more understandable if he spoke Greek to them. Then *Jesus* was exactly what came out of his mouth and we today pronounce His name exactly as the angel did. Except that there is no "J" sound in Greek ... or Hebrew ... or even English until the 1500's.

Gesú
Italian

Jezus
Dutch

What a pickle! Why is there so much confusion surrounding the name by which all men must be saved? Should not God reveal to His followers the name above all names to whom every knee shall bow and every tongue con-

YAHSHU

fess? Will all His people gather around His throne someday and mumble all these distorted sounds as if we were gathered around the tower of Babel? Are we not speaking of the God who longs to speak to the human heart, to save all men who call upon ... what name?

WHAT HIS NAME MEANS

Does the name of the Son of God have any meaning other than as a label? It certainly did to Yoseph: "And you will name Him *Jesus*, because he will save his people from their sins."⁵ If His name is *Jesus*, this Scripture makes no sense, since obviously the Name of the Messiah means that He will save His people from their sins. But do you know what the name *Jesus* literally means? No you don't, and neither does anyone else, because it has no meaning as a word in any language. It is, at best, a mere tag.

Jesu
Danish

We might take a mere tag somewhat lightly, but not the Jews. When Yoseph and Miriam brought the child to the Temple in Jerusalem to dedicate Him, they dared not even utter such a name as *Iesous*. The Jewish priests jealously guarded the holiness of the Temple, and considered Greek to be a loathsome language. If Yoseph and Miriam had dedicated their Child in a Greek name it would have been viewed as an abomination, and they would have been roughly ejected from the Temple! Obviously, this did not happen, and they performed everything according to the Law.⁶

Jesus
Swedish

But if the Greek *Iesous* really is Joshua in Hebrew, the language that Yoseph, Miriam, and every other Jew spoke including the Savior Himself, then the angel's proclamation makes total sense. Hebrew names in the Bible are always meaningful, and the name *Joshua* is even more than that. It is prophetic.

Jesu
Norwegian

In John 17:11 our Master prayed "Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one, even as we are." Since according to the words of the Savior, the Father's name is in His name, it will help to know the Father's name. Fortunately this is pretty easy, because the Old Testament was only written in Hebrew and a number of verses are very clear in proclaiming the Father's name, such as "Sing to God ... whose name is *Yah*."⁷ Also the Scriptures are full of the expression *Hallelujah*, a phrase very familiar to Christians, but do you know what it means in Hebrew? It is actually *Hallelu Yah*, a command meaning "Give praise to *Yah*." None of this is secret stuff, for it is found in the margin readings of many

Iesus
Latin

⁵ Matthew 1:21, New Century Version ⁶ Luke 2:21-39 ⁷ Psalms 68:4

Bibles today; for example, look at Psalms 116:19 in the New American Standard Bible.

So how do you say the Savior's name in His language? Well, it would be *Joshua*, except that the letter "J" in English was originally a "Y" sound. So His name, which has His Father's name in it, is YAHSHUA. And it has such a wonderful meaning that both Yoseph and Miriam marveled over it, because they knew full well their native language. It means "YAH" (translated "I Am"⁸) "SHUA" ("mighty and powerful to save"). So when the angel told this name to them, they were astounded, for His name was a declaration from the God of heaven to mankind that there had come a man who would be mighty and powerful to save; "And you shall call His name YAHSHUA, for it is He who will save His people from their sins."⁹ Now this scripture makes total sense.

Иисус
Russian

THE WEIGHT OF TRADITION

But does it really matter to God what name we call Him?

It certainly was important enough for the Savior to cry out during the last hours before He was betrayed, "Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me."¹⁰

And as stated before, it was clear to the Jews what that name was and how to pronounce it. *Hallelujah* is a universal expression, and *Yah* is the universal name of God. Yet so great is the weight of tradition that men have been blindly clinging to a name that has no meaning and makes the Scriptures mentioned have no meaning, either. Can anyone possibly maintain that the name of the Father is somehow incorporated into the name *Jesus*, or that the name *Jesus* means that He will save His people from their sins?

Jesuo
Esperanto

Iesu
Hawaiian

So we can see that His true name is in need of restoration based on honest scholarship and historical evidence. Acts 3:21 states that all things must be restored and made ready for His second coming, so this must surely include His name, too. And if something so essential and so fundamental as His name needs to be restored, what else might need to be restored, too? 🙏

Ἰησοῦς
Greek

*What does it mean to be in His name, the Name above all names?
His name has to do with the glory and radiance of His nature
and character. His name reveals all that He is,
and is what we must call upon to be saved.*

⁸ Exodus 3:14 ⁹ Matthew 1:21 ¹⁰ John 17:11

Yahshua

How To Reach Us

WE USED TO BE DESPERATELY LONELY, EVEN THOUGH MOST OF US HAD A LOT OF FRIENDS. Some of us were successful in what we did, and some of us were failures beyond hope. We came from everywhere and we have done everything trying to make sense out of our lives. But no matter what we did, we were left feeling dirty inside. We were scarred deeply from the effects of mistrust and hurtful relationships. We strove for acceptance, money, and whatever else could give us comfort. Some of us had dreams of a better life, but most of us had given up the struggle, settling instead for compromise and consent to "the way things are." We were lost, scattered, without direction, doing our own thing.

THEN WE HEARD A VOICE THAT SPOKE TO US RIGHT WHERE WE WERE, exposing the emptiness of our lives. This voice matched up fully to the longing of our hearts. Somehow a lifetime of being unable to trust was shattered by this voice of hope. It came from a people who had their dirty conscience washed clean. They had a clean slate and an absolutely new life. This new life they eagerly offered to all who wanted it.

SO NOW WE HAVE A LIFE TOGETHER. We no longer have to be separated by race, education, appearance, position,

status, or where we came from. Instead our days are filled with seeking first the needs of our brothers and sisters. In so doing, we find our own needs are met. This new life has given us the power to care.

WE HATE THE DEATH, WAR, STRIFE, HATRED, STARVATION, MURDER, INJUSTICE, GREED, AND SELFISHNESS that is leading the whole world to destruction. We want to see all of this come to an end. We want many, many more people to hear the voice of hope we've heard, to come and see the life. We are thrilled to be able to invite you to come and see that it's a reality.

WE ARE A MESSIANIC COMMUNITY, AND BY "COMMUNITY" WE DO NOT MEAN A TOWN OR LOCALITY. Nor do we mean a loose association of individuals living near one another. And we surely do not mean a religious organization centered around meeting in a building, otherwise called a church. "Community" as we use the term means those who love one another so greatly that they are of one heart and mind, holding all things as common property, living together, taking their meals together, devoted to one another because they're devoted to the One who saved them from death and misery. You can find us at any of the addresses below. ☛

The Community in Island Pond
P. O. Box 443
Island Pond, Vermont 05846
(802) 723-9708 (V/TDD)

The Basin Farm
P. O. Box 108
Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
(802) 463-1342

The Community in Burlington
81 South Williams Street
Burlington, Vermont 05401
(802) 864-6996

The Community in Rutland
115 Lincoln Avenue
Rutland, Vermont 05701
(802) 747-7217

The Community in Lancaster
P. O. Box 245
Lancaster, New Hampshire 03584
(603) 788-2871

The Community in Boston
92 Melville Avenue
Dorchester, Massachusetts 02124
(617) 265-6265

The Community in Hyannis
19 Camp Street
Hyannis, Massachusetts 02601
(508) 790-3172

The Community in Providence
167 Cole Avenue
Providence, Rhode Island 02906
(401) 861-5691

The Community in Buffalo
70 Church Street
East Aurora, New York 14052
(716) 655-3698

The Community in St. Joseph
1923 Clay Street
St. Joseph, Missouri 64501
(816) 232-0095

The Community in Winnipeg
P. O. Box 2122
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3C 3R4
(204) 475-3362

Communauté de Sus
Tabitha's Place
64190 Sus/Navarrenx
France
011-33-59-66-1428

Comunidade de Londrina
Raposo Tavares 711
86010-490 Londrina
Parana, Brazil
011-55-43-321-5714

The Community in New Zealand
38 Hamilton Road, Herne Bay
Auckland, New Zealand
011-64-9-360-1393