

Behold  the Lamb
Publications

The Mystery
of
Iniquity

by Leroy Surface

Jesus was telling his disciples of the destruction of Jerusalem which would come in the year 70 A.D. when He said to them, “*Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*” Luke 21:24. On June 6, 1967, the nation of Israel regained control of Jerusalem for the first time in 1897 years, thus marking the beginning of the last generation to live on earth before the return of Jesus Christ. Sadly, this generation has proven to be one of spiritual “falling away” and “apostasy.” Few can see the apostasy, because this is also the generation of which Jesus said, “*There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect*” Matthew 24:24. When these are working in the church, it is what the Apostle Paul called “*The Mystery of Iniquity*.”

The 13th chapter of Revelation revealed two different beasts which would arise after the first generation ministers of Christ had passed from the scene. The Apostle Paul had passed away over twenty years before John received the Revelation, but he understood in different terms exactly what John saw when he penned the words, “*the mystery of iniquity doth already work*” II Thessalonians 2:7. We will show clearly from Paul’s epistle to the Thessalonians that this “mystery” has two manifestations; the first in the “dark ages” of history, and the second in this generation in which we live, the last

generation before the return of Jesus Christ.



Leroy Surface

A “mystery” is only a mystery until it is revealed, at which time it is no longer a mystery. The “*mystery of iniquity*” began while the apostles of Christ were still living and ministering. It had its beginning in the “false teachers” which entered the churches in their day. By the time the mystery of



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iniquity was “revealed,” however, the spirit of antichrist had gained full control of the visible church, and ruled with a reign of terror over the nations for a thousand years, until it received a “deadly wound” Revelation 13:3 in the reformation of the 16th century.

Perhaps you are one who has believed something is spiritually wrong in the church of this generation. It is “*The Mystery of Iniquity*” at work once again. False apostles, false prophets, and false teachers have had their way in this generation, but even now are being “revealed” for what they are. They came in with the appearance of a lamb Revelation 13:11, but they “*spake as a dragon*,” bringing with them “*doctrines of devils*” I Timothy 4:1. Presently (March 2021) the spirit of antichrist has gained ascendancy in our nation, and is bidding for the church. Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus.

The Mystery of Iniquity

Message by: Leroy Surface

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

Genesis 1:1

After each day of creation, the scripture says *“God saw that it was good”* Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, but after God created man *“in His own image and likeness”* on the sixth day, He saw that it was *“very good.”* There was nothing to hurt or harm in all God’s creation. The earth itself was a paradise with a special *“Garden of Eden”* prepared for man, where every tree was *“pleasant to look upon and good for food”* Genesis 2:9. There was no sickness, pain, or death, because there was no sin or iniquity. So, where did sin and iniquity come from?

“Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.” Ezekiel 28:15

One of God’s most powerful and trusted angels, called in this verse *“the anointed cherub that covereth,”* became the source of sin and rebellion when *“iniquity”* was found in him. His name was *“Lucifer,”* which means *“the shining one.”* The *“iniquity”* that was found in him was the desire to exalt himself to the throne of God. He said in his heart, *“I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend*

above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High” Isaiah 14:13-14. Thus the conflict of the ages began, with warfare in heaven for control of the throne. If Lucifer were to be a god, however, he must become the god of the man whom God had created in His own image and likeness. Thus the conflict moved to the paradise of God in the Garden of Eden, to the wife of the first man Adam.

The iniquity which was found in Lucifer was to *“exalt himself.”* This was the original sin, which Lucifer sought to impart to Adam and Eve when he came to them as *“the serpent”* in the garden. His promise to them was *“Thou shalt be as gods, knowing both good and evil”* Genesis 3:5. To obtain this exalted position, however, they must disregard the word of God to them, and disobey His voice. Eve was deceived by the cunning craftiness of the serpent. She ate of the forbidden fruit and gave it to Adam. In a moment, their eyes were opened and they knew they were naked, and were ashamed. They hid themselves from God in great fear and shame. Lucifer was successful in his first assault against God. He had succeeded in separating man from God. Adam, whom God had created in His own image and likeness, fell from God’s likeness and received the nature of God’s adversary, the serpent. Lucifer had succeeded in becoming *“the god of this world”* II Corinthians 4:4.

Satan’s Ambition

“I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God...I will be like the most high.” Isaiah 14:13-14

Lucifer’s first aim was to take the place of God in heaven. The warfare in heaven Revelation 12:7 lasted for four thousand years, beginning with the fall of Adam and continuing unabated until Christ died on the cross. In the first day sin entered into the world through Adam Romans 5:12, God promised a *“seed of the woman”* Genesis 3:15 who would *“bruise the head of the serpent.”* That *“seed of the woman”* was Jesus of Nazareth, who was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of a virgin. The angel Gabriel spoke to the prophet Daniel of one called *“The Messiah, the Prince”* Daniel 9:25 who would come into the world *“to make an end of sins”* and *“bring in everlasting righteousness”* Daniel 9:24. Peter, knowing the

promise of the Messiah, said to Jesus, *“Thou art the Christ (the Messiah), the Son of the living God”* Matthew 16:16. This *“Son of the living God”* was also *“the seed of the woman,”* and He was come to *“destroy the devil”* Hebrews 2:14. The apostle John wrote, *“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil”* 1 John 3:8.

*“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. **And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb...**”* Revelation 12:7-11

Michael and his angels fought against the serpent, now called *“the Devil and Satan,”* and could not cast him out of heaven for over four thousand years until the blood of Christ was shed on the cross at Calvary. This identifies the exact day Satan was cast out of heaven. Only days before going to the cross, Jesus, speaking of His death said, *“Now is the judgment of this world: **now shall the prince of this world (the Devil) be cast out**”* John 12:31. The moment the precious blood of Christ was shed, there was a voice heard in heaven saying *“**Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down...**”* Revelation 12:10. Lucifer had failed in his plan to take the place of God in heaven. Now he would go to his “plan B.”

Satan’s “Plan B”

“I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north...I will be like the most high.” Isaiah 14:13-14

The words “*I will sit also*” indicate a secondary position Lucifer would seek. If he could not be god in heaven, he would be god in the church. “*The mount of the congregation in the sides of the north*” was actually the location of the Temple of God in Jerusalem. David sang a song of praise to Jerusalem in which he identified the focus of Satan’s ambition on earth; “*...beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is **mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King***” Psalms 48:2.

These words define the location of Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem, which was still standing in the days of Isaiah. Satan succeeded in establishing his throne in that temple. The proof of this was seen by the prophet Ezekiel when God took him in a vision to the temple in Jerusalem to show him why His presence was departed from the temple, and why Jerusalem and the temple must be destroyed. The first abomination was an idol, which God called an “*image of jealousy*” Ezekiel 8:5, which stood in the entry gate to the altar. The second abomination was the discovery of a “*secret chamber*” in which the seventy elders of Israel offered incense to images of creeping creatures and abominable beasts which were portrayed on the walls Ezekiel 8:12. Next, he found the women of Jerusalem, sitting in the northern door of the temple, worshiping Tammuz, the god of flocks Ezekiel 8:14. Last, but not least, he found twenty-five young men between the porch and the altar, facing the east and worshiping the rising sun Ezekiel 8:16. God’s Spirit had long since departed, and Satan had succeeded in his ambition to establish his throne in the temple which King Solomon had built for God. God Himself, after much long suffering, brought the army of Babylon against Jerusalem to destroy both the city and the temple.

When Christ died on the cross, Satan was destroyed in heaven and cast down to the earth. For fifteen hundred years, the nation of Israel had been the kingdom of God on earth, and the focal point of Satan’s activity on earth. When Jesus stood before Pilate, however, he said “*My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence*”

John 18:36. From the moment Christ died on the cross, the worldly kingdom ceased, and Christ established His kingdom in the hearts of those who would believe and trust in Him. The focus of Satan's attack became the church of Jesus Christ. During the first generation, Satan tried to destroy the church, but failing in this effort, he decided to "join the church." From there, he would pursue his ambition to be god in the church.

The Birth of the Church

Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men...And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers ...” Ephesians 4:8, 11

When Jesus arose from the dead and ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of His Father, one of the first things He did was to set His church in order. This was accomplished when He sent the Holy Ghost to the hundred and twenty on the Day of Pentecost. The scripture says He gave “*some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.*” These were given “*For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ*” Ephesians 4:12, and they would continue in the church “*Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*” Ephesians 4:13. With the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost, the greatest revival in the history of the world began. Three thousand souls were added to the church on the first day, and within days another five thousand were saved in one day. The nature of this great revival is detailed in the following verses:

“And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the

least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.” Acts 5:12-16

The Mystery of Godliness

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” II Timothy 3:16

While these words of Paul to Timothy speak specifically about Christ incarnate, *“the mystery of godliness”* is also the secret of the true church of Jesus Christ. The church is not an organization of man, but rather a *“many membered body”* in which both the Father and His Son are manifest in each member in particular. The *“mystery of Godliness (God manifest in the flesh)”* came into the world as an “invasion from heaven” to establish a beachhead in Satan’s kingdom and ultimately to “destroy the devil” Hebrews 2:14. The Apostle Paul spoke of Jesus, *“Who gave himself for our sins, that he might **deliver us from this present evil world**, according to the will of God and our Father”* Galatians 1:4. The word *“deliver”* in this verse was translated from a word which means *“to tear out,”* which means Christ died for us to *“tear us out of this present evil world.”* His was a “rescue mission,” to “rescue” souls out of the kingdom of darkness which we were born into.

*“Giving thanks unto the Father...**who hath delivered us from the power of darkness**, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.”* Colossians 1:12-13

Had Christ and His church continued uncontested, the entire world would have been rescued from Satan’s kingdom, but such was not to be so. Within twenty years of Christ’s death on the cross, Satan had sent his *“apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers”* into the church of Jesus Christ. These are *“the tares among the wheat”* Matthew 13:24-30, and which Jesus foretold in

His parable ^{Matthew 13:37-43}. They have grown among the wheat throughout the centuries, and are coming to their maturity in our generation. It is a “false church” in the midst of the true. This is “*the mystery of iniquity*.”

The Mystery of Iniquity

In the first twelve verses of II Thessalonians chapter 2, Paul gives us a very simple guide to understand that which he called “*the mystery of iniquity*.” In the remainder of this book, we will seek to “*rightly divide*” ^{II Timothy 2:15} this word of truth; not according to the traditions and fables of men, but according to that which is plainly written in the scriptures (KJV).

1. “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him...”

^{II Thessalonians 2:1}

In this verse, Paul brings our attention to the second coming of Christ and “*our gathering together unto Him*,” which are two aspects of the same event as he explained in his first epistle to the Thessalonians:

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” ^{I Thessalonians 4:16-17}

These verses speak of the second of Christ and what is commonly called “*the rapture of the church*.” This takes place at the same time and is the same event as the second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the righteous dead.

2. “That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.” ^{Thessalonians 2:2}

The “*day of Christ*” is His second coming, which Paul has already described in detail in the first chapter. He tells these saints

at Thessalonica not to be shaken or troubled by those who would tell them the coming of Christ was imminent. There were certain things that must take place before the return of Christ.

3. “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition...” II Thessalonians 2:3

The apostle reveals two events that must take place before the coming of Christ to gather His people.

“...a falling away first...” The Greek word that was translated “*falling away*” is “*apostasia*,” which means exactly what it sounds like, an “*apostasy*.” Numerically, there are more “*false teachers*” and “*false prophets*” in the church of this generation than at any time in history. The “*apostasy*,” however, is not just in our future, as many believe, because Paul said “...*the mystery of iniquity doth already work*” verse 7 in his day. The “*falling away*” was already in its beginning stages when Paul wrote this epistle.

“...and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition...” In the book of Revelation, Jesus promised to show John things that “*must shortly come to pass*” Revelation 1:1. In the day John received his revelation these things were future events, but, for us, many of them have been fulfilled in the distant past, as the record of history will show. An example of this is “...*a falling away first....*” Within two hundred years after the death of the apostle John, the church was entering a period of time which we now call “*the dark ages*.” Gross spiritual darkness ruled over the entire earth for over twelve hundred years. This was the time spoken of in Revelation 13:1-10, which was fulfilled in the “*holy Roman Empire*,” which is known today as the “*Roman Catholic Church*” of the dark ages.

4. “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” Thessalonians 2:4

Who could fulfill these words more perfectly than the pope of the Roman Catholic Church during the dark ages? And what could

better fit the description given of the “*harlot*” in the seventeenth chapter of Revelation than the apostate church?

*“So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus (tens of thousands who were tortured and murdered during the dark ages and by the inquisition): and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. And here is the mind which hath wisdom. **The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth** (the seven hills the city of Rome was built upon).”* Revelation 17:3-9

5. “Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?” Thessalonians 2:5

The apostle had already warned the saints in the churches of the coming apostasy, and the arising of diabolical men who would deceive the people and rule over them as lords. He gave this warning to the elders at Ephesus when he bid them farewell at the end of his second missionary journey:

*“I know this, that **after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own***

*selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, **and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.***” Act 20:29-31

6. “And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.” Thessalonians 2:6

The only thing that kept the first century church from immediately sliding into apostasy was the ministry of Paul and the other apostles of Jesus who continually preached the gospel of Christ. The only guard against apostasy today is those few men and women of God who continue to boldly declare the truth. The prophet Isaiah described the gross darkness that covered Israel in his day:

*“The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace. Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: **we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, BUT WE WALK IN DARKNESS. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men**”* Isaiah 59:8-10.

Isaiah continues to reveal the cause of the darkness over the land:

*“...judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: **for truth is fallen in the street**, and equity cannot enter. **Yea, truth faileth**; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey.*” Isaiah 59:14-15

Religious tradition and manmade doctrines will prevail from generation to generation, but “*truth*” will cease to exist if those men and women who truly “*know the Lord*” do not lift it up from where it has fallen and boldly proclaim it in every generation. The church of this twenty first century has again “*fallen away*,” and there are few remaining who even know the truth of the gospel. We who “*know*” and “*love*” the truth must boldly preach it, and be willing to suffer for it.

7. “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.”

Thessalonians 2:7

The “*mystery of iniquity*” can best be understood when we first understand what Paul called “*the mystery of Godliness.*”

“Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” I Timothy 3:16

Jesus Christ in the days of His flesh was the exact image of His Father, insomuch that He could tell His disciples, “*He that has seen me has seen the Father*” John 14:9. He was not the Father, but He was “*The express image of His person*” Hebrews 1:3. The Apostle Paul speaks of “*The glorious church*” Ephesians 5:27 of Jesus Christ as “*...His body, the fullness of Him who filleth all in all*” Ephesians 1:22-23. This also is “*the mystery of Godliness.*” The “*mystery*” of personal godliness is also expressed in the words of Paul; “*I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but **Christ liveth in me**...*” Galatians 2:20. If Christ is not “*our life*” Colossians 3:4, we cannot be “*godly*,” regardless of how much we try. The mystery of personal godliness is “*Christ in you, the hope of glory*” Colossians 1:27.

In verses nine and ten of this same chapter, Paul will define the mystery of iniquity as “***the working of Satan** with all power and signs and lying wonders...**in them that perish.***” The “*mystery of iniquity*” is the opposite image of the “*mystery of Godliness.*” Many people have been deceived in this generation by the “*false apostles, false prophets, and false teachers*” which have received power from “*another spirit*” II Corinthians 11:4 to imitate almost every miraculous manifestation of the Spirit of God.

“**...only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.**” The Greek word for “*letteth*” and “*let*” actually means “*to hold down.*” Again, the apostle is speaking of himself and the other apostles of Christ. They would hinder the working of Satan in the churches as long as they lived. After they were

gone, however, the apostles knew the false apostles and false teachers, which were already creeping into the churches, would have fertile ground in which their apostate doctrines would flourish. The apostles were eventually “*taken out of the way*” by the hands of those who hated the truth of the gospel of Christ.

8. “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:” Thessalonians 2:8

The words “*and then*” refer to the time immediately after Paul and the other apostles were literally “*taken out of the way*,” by means of the martyr’s death. The Apostle John was the only one of the eye-witness apostles who died a natural death at the beginning of the second century A.D. With no one remaining to hinder the false apostles, prophets and teachers, the church plunged into apostasy, which brought the entire known world into twelve-hundred years which are today called “the dark ages. The one Paul called “*that wicked*” was revealed, which refers to “*that man of sin...the son of perdition*” in verse 3. A man with the spirit of anti-christ was exalted by Satan to sit as the head of the church on earth, thus usurping the place of Jesus Christ as the only true head of His church. The many succeeding popes of Rome, from the fourth century A.D. until the sixteenth century, fulfilled the prophecies of one who “*opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God*” II Thessalonians 2:4.

Understanding the Times

A great error in prophetic interpretation has controlled the thinking of a large portion of the church for the past two centuries. It is commonly taught that everything from Revelation 4:1 to the end of the book remains to be fulfilled in our future, after “the rapture of the church.” A simple examination of what was said to John will expose the error, however. The Revelation begins with these words; “*The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly*

come to pass...” Revelation 1:1. Notice; “...*things which must shortly come to pass.*”

It was our Lord Jesus Himself who said to John, “*Write the things which **thou hast seen**, and the **things which are**, and the **things which shall be hereafter***” Revelation 1:19. By this, we know the Revelation contains things from John’s “*past, present, and future.*”

Later in the vision, John heard a voice saying to him, “*Come up hither, and I will shew thee **things which must be hereafter***” Revelation 4:1. It is obvious that the “*hereafter*” referred to speaks of the day John received the vision. Many things written in the Revelation have fulfilled in our past, and certain things were actually in John’s past. For example, Revelation 12:1-5 refers to the birth of Jesus, and Revelation 12:7-11 refers to the great victory over Satan which was wrought at Calvary, when Jesus died on the cross. Even Michael and his angels could not overcome Satan until the blood of Christ was shed on the cross. Notice these words, which prove the setting of these verses; “***Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb...***” Revelation 12:10-11.

The First Beast

*“And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. **And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed:** and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto*

*him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And **all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.***” Revelation 13:1-8

The twelfth chapter of Revelation reveals the circumstances of the birth of the Son of God and His victory over both the serpent, sin, and death in His death and resurrection. The thirteenth chapter describes two “beasts” which have arisen during the almost twenty centuries since. The “first beast” Revelation 13:1-8 is described as having “*seven heads and ten horns*”, which is an exact “image” of the great red dragon in chapter twelve. This “beast” was the apostate church of the dark ages, which received a “*deadly wound*” to one of its heads in the reformation. The second beast Revelation 13:11-18, which would arise in the last generation of the church just before the return of Christ, would have a more “friendly” and deceptive appearance. He would have the two horns of a lamb, but he would “*speak as a dragon.*”

The driving factor of the reformation in the sixteenth century was the gospel preaching of Martin Luther. His understanding of “*the just shall live by faith*” Romans 1:17, delivered millions of souls who had been held in bondage to the antichrist system during the dark ages. This was the “*deadly wound*” which was dealt to the first beast Revelation 13:3, and fulfilled the words in this verse, “*...whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth....*” Sadly, the “*deadly wound*” was healed, and “*the beast*” survived to rise in a different and more friendly form in this, the last generation before the return of Jesus Christ to earth.

Exactly as the first “beast” began to arise at the end of the first generation of the church and was “*consumed by the spirit of His*

(the Lord's) *mouth*" fifteen centuries later in the reformation, the second "beast" would arise in the last generation of the church, and will be "*destroyed by the brightness of His coming.*" Both of these beasts are manifestations of the one whom Paul called "*that wicked.*"

"Then shall that Wicked be revealed..." The Greek word which was translated "*revealed*" in this verse, means "*to take the cover off.*" The "*mystery of iniquity*" is only a mystery as long as "*that wicked*" is concealed, but when "the cover is taken off," it is no longer a mystery. By the time the papal system of the Roman church was in place, it was no longer a "*mystery*" who was working behind the scenes, but it was too late to prevent the thousand-year reign of the beast. It was very obviously an antichrist system, with the power to destroy every voice raised against it. When the gospel preaching of the reformation preachers dealt a deadly wound to the first beast, we entered into over four hundred years of protestant revival with men like John Wesley, Charles Spurgeon, Charles Finney, and most notably the Moravian revival which lasted over two hundred years, and finally the Pentecostal revival of the early twentieth century. The "church," while sometimes divided in doctrinal opinion, enjoyed four hundred years of freedom from the antichrist beast. It was in this generation, which began June 6, 1967 when Jerusalem went back to Jewish control, that the beast could revive with the appearance of a "*lamb,*" and the voice of a "*dragon*" Revelation 13:11. Jesus said "*This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled*" Luke 21:32 .

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils..." 1 Timothy 4:1

Sound doctrine is the lifeblood of the true church of Jesus Christ, and it must be maintained at all costs. The fact is, however, that most of the modern church has been carried away with ancient fables and new age principles, and not with the doctrine of Christ as preached by the Apostles of Jesus Christ in the first generation.

“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” II John 1:9-11

“The Antichrist” or “the spirit of antichrist”

It is an error to believe that a man called *“the antichrist”* is waiting to be revealed in the last days. It is a fable of religious tradition that says Satan is going to birth a son by a human mother who will be *“the antichrist.”* Are we to believe there is going to be another *“virgin birth,”* this time with Satan as the father? Many people believe it has already happened, and *“the antichrist”* is ready to appear at any time. Almost everyone has their candidate for antichrist. We should understand that today, just as it was in the day the apostle John first spoke of antichrist, there are *“many antichrists”* II John 2:18. The apostle John is the only one to use the word *“antichrist”* in the scriptures. He never spoke of one called *“the antichrist.”* That term is not found in the KJV Bible even one time. The apostle did speak of *“the spirit of antichrist”* saying, **“even now already is it in the world”** I John 4:3, and he spoke of *“many antichrists,”* saying **“even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time”** I John 2:18. Did the apostle understand the *“last times”* would continue for two thousand years? That is very doubtful. What he did understand, however, is that the *“spirit of antichrist”* was at work in his day, and that there were *“many antichrists.”* These were the false apostles, false prophets, and false teachers Satan could use to spread his lie.

John never spoke of a world leader or a political figure as being *“the antichrist.”* Instead, he identified those religious teachers who deny that *“Jesus is the Christ”* as being *“antichrist”* I John 2:18-22. He also identified the *“many false prophets”* as having the *“spirit of antichrist”* I John 4:1-3, and in his second epistle, John wrote *“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who*

confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. **This is a deceiver and an antichrist**" II John 1:7. These few verses in the first and second epistles of John are the sum total of everything the scripture has to say about antichrist. No other writer in the scriptures ever mentioned "*antichrist*," much less "**the antichrist**." All such teachings are what Peter called "*cunningly devised fables*" II Peter 1:16.

Satan is "*that Wicked*" which John refers to. The "*mystery of iniquity*" has a place in the church when Satan finds human vessels to work through. Many theologians deny that Satan could be in more than one place, or work through more than one vessel at a time. Such thinking is truly ridiculous, because "*the spirit of antichrist*," which is none other than the spirit of Satan, fills the world today. He sits in the seat of government in this world, but his greatest ambition is to be "god in the church," which the Apostle Paul said would happen before the second coming of Christ II Thessalonians 2:1. Paul said "*the man of sin (the mystery of iniquity)*" would "*as God, sit in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God*" II Thessalonians 2:4. Paul also made it very clear that the church of Jesus Christ is "*the temple of God*." The temple in Jerusalem was still standing and in daily use in Jerusalem when Paul gave the following exhortations to the Corinthians:

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, WHICH TEMPLE YE ARE." I Corinthians 3:16-17

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

I Corinthians 6:19-20

"What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." II Corinthians 6:16

The young man Stephen was stoned to death because of his testimony of Jesus which he gave before the Sanhedrin court. He said in his testimony, “...*the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands*” Acts 7:48. The Apostle Paul, when giving his testimony before the scholars at Mars Hill in Athens, said, “*God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things*” Acts 17:24-25.

Paul went to great lengths to show that the temple at Jerusalem, even while it was yet standing and used daily as a place of worship, was not the Temple of God after the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He established that the church is the true “*Temple of God*,” and that the bodies of the believers are “*the Temple of the Holy Ghost*.” The tradition of most prophecy teachers deny the truth Paul preached concerning who is God’s Temple. They claim, that almost two thousand years after the temple at Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus of Rome, another temple must be rebuilt in Jerusalem before “*the man of sin, the son of perdition*,” whom Paul in this verse calls “*that Wicked*,” could sit “*in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God?*” It is obvious, when we see what Paul understood the temple of God to be, that he spoke of a time after his departure when Satan, working through false teachers, would succeed in setting his throne in the house of God and be ignorantly worshiped by many in the church as the Holy Spirit of God.

The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century

“...whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth...” Immediately after the death of the apostles, false apostles and false teachers entered into the churches as “*grievous wolves...not sparing the flock*” Acts 20:29. After the death of the Apostle John near the end of the first century, the “*church*” began to “*fall away*” II Thessalonians 2:2 into the dark ages of apostasy. In the fourth century, the “*falling away*” was completed when

Constantine, the emperor of Rome, took up the banner of the cross to make war against pagan nations and force them into “*Christian baptism*” at the point of the sword. Soon after Constantine passed from the scene, the pope in Rome declared himself to be infallible, and began a reign of terror over the consciences of men that continued for over twelve hundred years until the times of the reformation of the sixteenth century. The sword of man had never succeeded against the apostate church, but “*the spirit of His mouth*” did. When men like Martin Luther began to stand boldly against the errors of the church with the truth of God on their lips, the apostate church, that first deadly “*beast*” of the thirteenth chapter of Revelation, received a deadly wound in one of its heads.

The “*truth*” Martin Luther preached was simply “*the just shall live by faith*” Romans 1:16-17. No longer could the “*fear of death*” hold the entire world in bondage to a man who declared himself to be the “*vicar of Christ*” when they discovered they could come to God through “*faith alone*” in Jesus Christ, who “*loved us and gave Himself for us*” Galatians 2:20. Were the popes of the Dark Age’s antichrist? Yes, they were, because the “*spirit of antichrist*” worked in them. Sadly, the reformation did not bring a full end to the apostate church. It gave a “*deadly wound*” to its head, but the scripture tells us the “*wound*” was healed, and the “*beast*” would survive to arise another day.

Martin Luther, John Calvin, and other reformation ministers did not seek to destroy the apostate church, but only to reform it. They should have abandoned its doctrines and sought out the original foundation of the church as laid by the apostles of Jesus Christ. The truth is, they loved the apostate church. They made the same error the children Israel made after seventy years of Babylonian captivity. Even in their captivity, the children of Israel learned to love their captors. The prophet Jeremiah records, “***We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: FORSAKE HER, and let us go every one into his own country: for her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies***” Jeremiah 51:9.

Martin Luther had no intention of destroying the Catholic Church. He sought only to correct a few of its errors. He did not forsake the church; instead, the “*church*” forsook him. It excommunicated him and condemned him to death with a decree that anyone could slay him at any time in any place with the sanction of the church. Luther and the other reformers truly dealt the “*beast*” a deadly wound to the head, but contained in their “*reform doctrines*” was the seed of the next apostasy, which would not be seen in its fullness until many years later.

Martin Luther was a great man of God, at least in the early days of the reformation. He was willing to lay his life down for the truth God had shined into his heart, and God preserved his life to fulfill the mission He had given him. Luther’s revelation of justification by faith was only the first plank of the true foundation of the church, however. Others would follow who would receive even greater light of truth. The Moravian revival brought perhaps the greatest missionary outreach the world has ever seen, which lasted two hundred years. The gospel they preached could be expressed in these few words; “*Saving faith brings both holiness and happiness.*” John Wesley was brought to true salvation by the gospel preaching of Peter Bohler, a Moravian evangelist, and went on to impact the western world with his message of “*sanctification by grace.*” Out of the sanctified revival came the Pentecostal revival of the early twentieth century. Each of these movements received more light from God than the one preceding, but sadly, as has been the case with every true move of God, the Pentecostal revival, of which I am a product, has also seen a “*falling away,*” i.e., an “*apostasy*” among its ranks. This cycle of revival and falling away has repeated itself several times since the reformation, until, at this present time there is very little evidence in the world of a true move of God.

“...and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” With these words, Paul lets it be known that the apostasy, which would come soon after the apostle’s departure, would be in its fullest manifestation at the return of Jesus Christ to this earth. While the

preaching of the truth of the gospel of Christ will hinder its flow in the world and destroy its working in those who receive the *“love of the truth”* II Thessalonians 2:10, only the soon coming of Jesus Christ will absolutely destroy the mystery of iniquity, when Satan is bound and cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years Revelation 20:2-3.

Visions of the Last Generation

I am Pentecostal in experience. With that said, I must tell you of the first prophetic words I heard from the Spirit of God. It happened on June 21, 1965 as I was attending the wedding of a friend in a Catholic church. I was looking at the images lining both walls of the church. I studied the *“stations of the cross”* that were depicted on the upper walls. I noticed that the final station of the cross depicted Jesus’ dead body being laid in the tomb. I searched for the resurrection scene, and there was none. I had a strong urge as a young indignant Pentecostal preacher to stand and shout, *“don’t you know that He is alive.”* I resisted the urge, and as I sat waiting for the wedding to begin, I was still indignant at the *“ignorance”* of these poor people, when the Holy Ghost spoke these words to me. ***“In the last days, a harlot will arise out of Pentecost that will be more vile in her affections than the Roman Catholic Church of the dark ages.”*** I was shocked beyond belief. Today I realize that I have seen, not in true Pentecost, but in that which apostatized from it, the arising of the Lamb Beast of the thirteenth chapter of Revelation, and the worst is yet to come.

Those “last days” began just two years later on June 6, 1967, when Jerusalem returned to Jewish control for the first time in 1897 years. This event marked the end of *“the times of the Gentiles”* Luke 21:24, and the beginning of the last generation before the return of Jesus Christ. This present generation will prove to be the generation of the apostate church.

I received a vision from the lord just two years later in July of the year 1969. I saw a spirit in the form of a bird come upon a woman who represented the church. My first thought was of the Holy

Ghost that descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove Matthew 3:16-17. I even heard a voice speaking to the woman, saying, *“Thou art a son of God.”* I was amazed at the things I was seeing and hearing, and, at first believed it to be a wonderful thing. It was not long, however, before the woman began to exalt herself, telling the people to *“Look to me! I am the one the spirit came upon; Look to me! I am the one the voice spoke to.”* I wondered (in the vision), *“How can she have a wrong spirit when I saw the Spirit come upon her exactly as it did Jesus?”* It was at this point that God, in the vision, told me about a false spirit that was coming to the churches, and many would receive it as the Holy Ghost. He reminded me that I did not see a *“dove,”* and I did not hear a *“voice from heaven.”* He said to me, *“As there are **many birds**, but only **one dove**, so are there **many spirits**, but only **one Holy Ghost**, and there are **many voices**, but only **one Word of God**.”* As I came out of the vision, I heard these words from the scripture: *“Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird”* Revelation 18:2.

I received the baptism of the Holy Ghost sixty-three years ago on March 9, 1958, and began to *“speak in tongues as the Spirit of God gave the utterance”* Acts 2:4. Sixty-three years later, I still speak in tongues, but only as *“the Spirit of God gives the utterance.”* That was the way of the first century revival, and it was the way of the Pentecostal revival of the first half of the twentieth century. Once again, from the greatest move of God since the first century, there came a *“falling away,”* and by the third generation of the 20th century, many began receiving *“another spirit”* which pretended to be *“the Holy Ghost.”* In the late sixties I began to hear reports of those ministers who were teaching the people **how to “speak in tongues.”** There were also those who taught the people **how to “be slain in the Spirit,”** and by the early eighties, those came who claimed they could teach any believer **how to “prophecy,”** and **how to** operate all nine of the spiritual gifts at will. To be in their services seemed to be a wonderful thing to those who were ignorant of the truth of the

scriptures and the working of the Holy Ghost, but to those of us who had received the Holy Ghost as it was given on the Day of Pentecost, we knew something was very wrong. It was all fleshly activity at best and demonic activity at worst. Then came the laughing revival of the nineties, which was followed by the Todd Bentley phenomenon of the first decade of this century. The “*charismatic renewal*” which had “*begun in the flesh*” was now coming to its fullness with demon spirits pretending to be the Holy Ghost. The “*lamb beast*” which had appeared so good in its beginning, now began to “*speak as a dragon*” Revelation 13:11.

I did not understand at the time that this great “*charismatic renewal*” was actually the beginning of the “*lamb beast*,” which looked like a lamb, but spoke as a dragon. The proof it was a false spirit from the beginning was the fact they had to “*teach the people how*” to speak in tongues and “*how to prophesy*.” The result of this error is a vast “*company of prophets*” in the church today that has recently been proven to be false prophets that have never heard from God. The “*man of sin*” has been revealed once more, and he is in the house of god, “*showing himself that he is God*” II Thessalonians 2:4.

Jesus spoke of “*great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be*” Matthew 24:21. He gave only two signs of this “*great tribulation*,” the first of which is the great slaughter which will take place at the sounding of the “*sixth trumpet*” Revelation 9:13:15, when a “*locust army*” of two hundred million will slay a third part men worldwide. Jesus said, “*...except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved*” Matthew 24:22. The second sign of “*great tribulation*” is in the modern church right now. Jesus said, “*For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect*” Matthew 24:24.

9. “Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders...” Thessalonians 2:9

The words “*even him*” speak of the lamb beast which has arisen in this last generation, and will not be stopped until it is “*destroyed by the brightness of His (Christ) coming*” ^{verse 8.} It is “*the coming*” of the lamb beast which is “*...after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.*” With these words, we understand the “*mystery of iniquity*” is “*the spirit of antichrist*” working in and through human vessels, in the exact manner that the Holy Spirit of God works in and through His ministers.

Satan is a “counterfeiter.” He has nothing that is original. He has counterfeited the church, with his own apostles, prophets, evangelist, pastors and teachers. He has counterfeited all nine of the spiritual gifts, which he will operate through those he has deceived. Notice that Satan’s working is “*with all power and signs and **lying wonders.***” It should be understood, however, that not everything he does is fakery. The “*lamb beast*” is also called “*the false prophet.*” The scripture says he “*...deceiveth them that dwell on the earth **by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast***” Revelation 13:14.

The “*false prophet*” of the last days is not a single person. Instead, it is a “many membered body” exactly as the true church is. It is made up of a vast “company of prophets.” Not everything they say is false, and not everything they do is fake, but none of it is of God. John wrote in his Revelation, “*And I saw three **unclean spirits like frogs** come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and **out of the mouth of the false prophet.** For they are the **spirits of devils, working miracles,** which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty*” Revelation 16:13-14. If we could see the spirit which comes out of the mouths of the false prophets, we would see the appearance of frogs, with power to do miracles. Please understand, while our God is a miracle worker, and healings and miracles are commonplace among the children of God, the “false prophets” can also do miracles “*in the sight of the beast.*” The “*working of a miracle*” is not the proof of the presence of God.

10. “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness IN them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” Thessalonians 2:10

Notice that the “*working of Satan*” is “*in them that perish.*” It is not just one man as would be the case of one whom tradition calls “*the antichrist.*” It is the spirit of antichrist working in those who are deceived. I have spoken at length of the false signs and lying wonders that have deceived so many, but now we must look at perhaps the greatest apostasy of them all.

“...because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” Notice the great deception came because of those who did not receive “*the love of the truth.*” To be saved, it is necessary to “*believe the truth,*” but to be “eternally secure,” we must also “*love the truth.*” Those who love the truth will never be moved away from it. They will take it up when it is fallen in the streets, they will stand with it when the entire world around them rejects it, and they will gladly lay down their lives for the truth of Christ before they will deny it. Such is the power of truth to those who love it. There are those, however, who may profess to “*believe the truth,*” but are easily moved away from it because they continue to find their pleasure in unrighteousness. Jesus spoke of those who receive the word with great joy, but quickly wither when the heat of persecution arises against them Matthew 13:20-23. It is not so with those who “*love the truth.*” They can do no other than believe the truth and stand with it. “*But,*” you may ask, “*What is truth?*” Jesus gave us one answer to that question in His prayer to His Father the night before going to the cross; “***Thy word is truth***” John 17:17. That would be “*the record which the Father gave of His Son*” I John 5:1. Many in the churches refuse to believe that record because they “*do not love the truth.*”

11. “And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:” Thessalonians 2:11

The matter of believing a lie instead of the truth did not originate with the modern church. There are several ancient “*lies*” that are in full bloom in the modern churches. One of these dates all the

way back to the Gnostics and the Nicolaitans of the latter part of the first century. Of the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, Jesus said “*I hate it.*” Certainly that is enough said for anyone who “*loves the truth;*” we will likewise “*hate*” the thing Jesus hates. The doctrine of the Gnostics and the Nicolaitans says there is a “*separation*” between the spirit and body of man. The “*spirit*” they say, is always holy and pleasing to God, while the “*body*” of the same person may be vile, sinful, and corrupt. It is on the basis of this ancient heresy that many modern teachers believe no amount of sin can keep a person from going to heaven if they have claimed Jesus as their savior. After all, according to their teaching, their spirit is born of God, holy, pure, and absolutely sinless. All their sins are simply “*sins of the flesh,*” which cannot damn the spirit. This is a horrible lie from Satan that has damned millions of souls over the centuries. It is perpetuated by those who teach that a child of God has both a “*sin nature*” and a “*divine nature,*” which are continually at war. Some express it as the “*good dog/bad dog*” theory. Psychology, which I do not advocate, is correct on this particular issue. They call it “*multiple personality disorder.*”

The truth is, we, who have been “*born of God,*” have received righteousness, which is the divine nature of God. Sin, which is the nature of the serpent, has been “*taken away*” by the sacrifice of the body and blood of the Son of God Hebrews 10:10. Our bodies are the Temple of the Holy Ghost, and have never been the source of sin, not even when we were sinners. Notice what the apostle Paul said concerning the body; “*Every sin that a man doeth is **without** (outside) **the body**; but he that committeth fornication **sinneth against HIS OWN body***” I Corinthians 6:19. James said, “*The body without the spirit is dead*” James 2:26. Understanding this, it becomes obvious the body of man can do absolutely nothing other than what the spirit of the man does in and through it. If sin (the nature of the serpent) dwells in him, he will sin, but if righteousness (the nature of God) dwells in him, he will do righteousness. Every action of the body is an expression of the one who lives in the body, whether sin or righteousness.

“...God shall send them strong delusion...” Why would God send strong delusion to one for whom Christ died? The apostle gives the answer in the previous verse, *“...because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”* God sends strong delusion to those who do not love the truth. When they refuse to *“see Him as He is”* I John 3:2, God *“gives them up to uncleanness”* Romans 1:22-24; when they *“turn the truth of God into a lie,”* God *“gives them up to vile affections”* Romans 1:25-27, and when they do not like to retain God in their knowledge, God *“gives them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient”* Romans 1:28. They receive *“another spirit,”* which fills them with *“all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, and maliciousness”* Romans 1:29. If God did all those things which are recorded in the first chapter of Romans against His chosen people Israel because they *“held the truth in unrighteousness”* Romans 1:18, how will He not also do the same against a people for whom Christ died, who may intellectually *“know the truth,”* but do not *“love the truth,”* because *“their pleasure is in unrighteousness?”* Paul said, *“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate”* Titus 1:16.

Consider the case of King Saul, who was an humble young man when God chose him to be the first king over Israel. When the prophet Samuel anointed young Saul to be king, the Holy Ghost came upon him, and he prophesied among the prophets. The Holy Ghost moved so mightily through Saul in those early days that it became a common saying among the people of Israel, *“Is Saul also among the prophets”* I Samuel 10:11-12. There came a time, however, that this humble young man became exalted in himself and thought he could disobey the direct instructions of God. God rejected him as king, and sent Samuel to anoint David to be king in the place of Saul. David was only a teenager at the time, and it was a dozen years before he actually ascended to the throne. Unknown to the people of Israel, David was already the anointed

of God to be king of Israel when he slew Goliath, and delivered Israel. The anointing of the Holy Ghost was upon him.

Notice what the scripture says happened when Samuel anointed David. *“Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and **the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward.** So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah. But **the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit FROM THE LORD troubled him**”* I Samuel 16:13-14. It is worthy to note as well, that King Saul continued prophesying after the Spirit of God departed from him. *“And it came to pass on the morrow, that **the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied** in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and there was a javelin in Saul’s hand. And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it. And David avoided out of his presence twice. And Saul was afraid of David, because **the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul**”* I Samuel 18:10-12. Is it really so amazing that God would “*send strong delusion*” to those who know the truth, but do not love it?

“...that they should believe a lie:” John Calvin was very influential in the development of reformation theology, giving us the Calvinist doctrines of predestination and unconditional eternal security, both of which are in opposition to the clear message of the apostles. Concerning predestination, Paul tells us, *“...whom he did foreknow, he also **did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren**”* Romans 8:29. Everything God “*foreknew*” about man before he made man is what He created in Adam, who was “*in the image and likeness of God.*” God never “*foreknew*” a lost man, and certainly never predestined any man to be lost. The man God “*foreknew*” in the redemption He also “*predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son*” Romans 8:29. That was true in the original creation, and it is true in the “*new creation.*”

The entrance of sin violated the purpose of God in His creation. Absolutely nothing could restore what God “*foreknew*” and “*predestined*” unless sin, which entered through the first man’s disobedience, could be “*taken away*.” There had to be a “*second man*” to undo what the “*first man*” had done. Jesus Christ was born into this world as the “*second man*” 1 Corinthians 15:47. His purpose was “*to make an end of sins*” Daniel 9:24-25, and restore “*the eternal purpose*” Ephesians 3:8-11, which God had created in Adam.

“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”
Romans 5:19

Christ, who created the “*first man*,” became the “*second man*” in order to “*put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself*” Hebrews 9:26. God’s purpose at Calvary was not to “*punish sin*,” but to “*destroy sin*” in all who would trust in Him. Jesus’ death was neither “*punishment for*,” nor “*taking the penalty of*” our sin. His death was the only sacrifice that could take away the sin nature, and “*deliver us from the power of darkness and translate us into the kingdom of his dear Son*” Colossians 1:13.

Concerning “*unconditional eternal security*,” there is no such doctrine in the bible (KJV). We do however have security in Christ as long as we “*abide in Him*.” The apostle John tells us, “*And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him*” 1 John 2:5-6. Jesus said, “*If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned*” John 15:6. The answer for eternal security is very simple; simply “*Abide in Christ!*”

12. “That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” Thessalonians 2:12

We are living in a generation in which perhaps the majority of those who profess to “*believe*” do not believe sin matters in the least. It is the theology of the day. The churches of those who espouse this liberal theology seem to “burst at the seams” with

people, because they preach a message that is very palpable to those who find their pleasure in unrighteousness. I was listening to the teaching of a well-known minister from Dallas Texas explaining to a young man that suicide is alright as long as you are a true believer, because Jesus has already forgiven every sin you could ever commit. He teaches that Christ came into the world as a “*lamb*” to “*take our sins away from the eyes of God.*” According to such teaching, sin was not the problem which was dealt with on the cross; the “*real problem*” was God, who refused to receive sinners.

The scripture says, “*The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall **not** bear the iniquity of the father, **neither** shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him*” Ezekiel 18:20. God’s message to His people through Ezekiel was that the righteous will never be punished for the sins of the unrighteous. We were all “*unrighteous,*” and Christ came into the world, not to be punished for our sins, but “*take away our sin*” John 1:29, Hebrews 10:4, I John 3:5, and thus He “*suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God*” I Peter 3:18. He bore our sin on the cross, and there it was destroyed, nailed to His cross. The apostle Peter said of Jesus, “*Who **his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls***” I Peter 2:24-25.

God has always, from the beginning of the world, forgiven the sins of those who repent and turn to Him. Jesus was not “*punished*” nor did He “*take the penalty for our sins*” in order that God could forgive us. Such thinking impugns the righteousness of God. Suppose a man had two sons. One of the sons was obedient and good, and the other was disobedient and evil. What kind of man would he be if he punished the good son and forgave the evil son on the basis of the punishment of the good son? Such a man would himself be most corrupt. God did not “*spend His wrath*” on His sinless Son in order to “*save us*

from wrath” while we continue in sin. We must forsake the erroneous idea that Jesus suffered punishment or penalty for our sin. Jesus’ death on the cross was not about “*punishment*,” it was about “*sacrifice*.” The animals which were sacrificed for fifteen hundred years under the Law of Moses were not being punished. Instead, they were “*sin bearers*.” The sins of the one who offered the sacrifice were laid upon the lamb, and the lamb died with those sins, but the one who offered the sacrifice was still a sinner, and would continue to offer sacrifices as long as he lived, because, as Paul said to the Hebrews, “...***it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins***” Hebrews 10:4. Paul continued in the same chapter to explain the futility of the law: “*Every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins*” Hebrews 10:11. Then he tells us of Jesus; “*But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*” Hebrews 10:12-14.

Can you see it? Jesus is the “*Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*.” You can be one to whom John says, “***You know that He was manifested to take away our sins***” I John 3:5. Are you still bearing your sin? Do you still labor under what you have been told is your “*sin nature*?” Christ died to make you free, but you must know and believe the truth. You must also be one who “*loves the truth*.” If your “*pleasure*” is still in unrighteousness, you **will** believe the lie that has held millions of people in bondage to sin, and sadly, in the last day, you will be lost. It does not have to be that way, however. You can be free, and in the words of Jesus, you will be “*free indeed*” John 8:32-36. If you are one who “*seeks the truth*” because you “*love the truth*,” your heart is telling you right now, “*wouldn’t it be wonderful if it were true that I could be free from sin*.” It is true! Jesus suffered and died to make you free from sin. Those who “*believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness*” II Thessalonians 2:12 will get very angry that I dare to tell you such a thing.

13. “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:” Thessalonians 2:13

Justification is by faith. Faith is to “*believe the record that God gave of His Son*” I John 5:10. The record God gave was spoken by the prophets long before Jesus was born to Mary. God promised to send Christ (The Messiah the Prince Daniel 9:25) and gave the record of what He would do. He would “*...make an end of sins, make reconciliation from iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness*” Daniel 9:24. Justification is the miracle which takes place in the heart and nature of everyone who repents and believes “*the record that God gave of His Son.*” This is “the gospel of Christ” which Paul said is “*the power of God unto salvation unto everyone that believeth*” Romans 1:16. Those who are “*saved from sin*” are no longer sinners; not because they are “strong,” but because they are “free.”

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” John 8:32

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

I Thessalonian 5:23

“And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.” I John 2:28

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