



Behold the Lamb
Publications

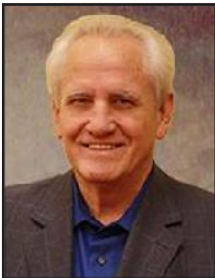
Rocks in a Pond

Volume VII

by Leroy Surface

At this present time, “Behold the Lamb” books are freely sent into every state in the USA, and into over 150 nations of the world. This is the fulfilment of a promise God gave to me almost thirty years ago, in 1992. Only weeks before, God had revealed to me something I had sought diligently for several years to understand. “What is the truth Jesus said will ‘make you free’ and you will be ‘free indeed’?” I found the answer in Hebrews 9:13-14 as the glorious truth about the blood of Jesus Christ shined into my heart. After many years of seeking sanctification through fasting and praying etc. my heart and nature was instantly cleansed from all sin and unrighteousness.

Some weeks later, while I was praying, I told God, “I am willing to go anywhere to do anything you say, but you will have to finance it.” I had struggled for years to raise the money to remain on several radio stations across the nation, but now, I “refused to become a beggar” even preach the gospel. God’s response amazed me. He said, “If you will say what I say, I will put your ministry on television, and it will cost you nothing.” In less than a month, Eldred Thomas, owner of channel 22 in Houston TX contacted me. He had heard of the message



Leroy Surface

of the blood and the cross I was preaching, and wanted it on his station, where we continued for eight years free of charge.

Later that same year, 1992, God spoke to me in a dream. He said, “If you will say what I say, one day you will throw a rock into a pond, and its ripples will wash up on the shores of every nation.” From that day, I have



Keith Surface

never had to ask for money, because God has abundantly supplied through His people who love the truth and want to be a part in sending it into the nations of the world.

There is something I want to make abundantly clear. These messages are not sent for their entertainment value. Instead, they contain the truth, which revealed into the heart of man, will make them absolutely free from sin, Satan, and the law of religion to serve God in righteousness, peace, and joy. I can put this in your hand, but only God can put it in your heart. Ask God for understanding of what you read, because it is life to those to whom His light shines.

Rocks in a Pond VII

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When God Cleanses His Church

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The message which the angel Gabriel brought from God to Daniel foretold of the coming of one called “The Messiah the Prince” Daniel 9:24-27. Among the six things the Messiah would accomplish was “to make **an end of sins**, to make reconciliation for iniquity,” and to “bring in everlasting righteousness” verse 24. The “rock” which the true church is built upon is the revelation Peter received that Jesus of Nazareth is “The Messiah the Prince,” or “The Christ.” Peter said to Jesus, “**Thou art the Christ** (the Messiah), *the Son (the Prince) of the living God*” Matthew 16:16. The Apostle John confirmed this as the cornerstone of our salvation, saying, “*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God*” 1 John 5:1. The understanding that “**Jesus is the Christ**” is absolutely necessary to salvation. If Jesus is “*the Christ* (the Messiah the Prince)” it is certain that He must accomplish exactly what He was sent into the world to do; He must “*make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity*” and “*bring in everlasting righteousness.*” That is exactly what Christ died on the cross to accomplish, and when He said from the cross, “*It is finished*” John 19:30, everything His Father sent Him to do was accomplished. The Apostle John said “**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 3:5-6. According to John’s words, this was common knowledge in the first century church. Sadly, it has become a mystery to the modern church, an understanding that has been hidden for nineteen centuries. It has been hidden because Satan has so blinded the eyes of the people that they cannot see the truth which is so clearly written in the scriptures (kjv) of both the prophets of God and the Apostles of Jesus Christ.

Cleansed by the Blood of Christ

The blood of Jesus Christ was shed to “*cleanse us from all sin*” ¹John 1:7. Jesus is “*The lamb of God which **taketh away** the sin of the world*” John 1:29. John dedicated his “Book of Revelation” with these words: “*Unto him that loved us, and **washed us from our sins in his own blood**...*” Revelation 1:5. The prophet Isaiah prophesied of the new Jerusalem when he said, “*Thy people also shall be **all righteous***” Isaiah 60:21, and “*They shall call them, **The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD***” Isaiah 62:12.

Sanctified by the Will of God

We know by the scriptures, **the will of God** when He sent Christ into the world was that He would “*make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity,*” and “*bring in everlasting righteousness.*” The Apostle Paul wrote to the Hebrews, “***By the which will** we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ*” Hebrews 10:10. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, “***For this is the will of God, even your sanctification...***” ¹Thessalonians 4:3. Those who know and believe the truth are sanctified by the offering of Christ’s body on the cross.

God’s greatest Vengeance

*“He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath **trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?**”* Hebrews 10:28-29

Moses commanded that those who despised his law would be stoned to death. What should be the punishment for those who “*despise the Spirit of Grace?*” Many in the modern church do not understand the “Spirit of Grace.” They think “*God so loved the world...*” that He takes sinners to heaven “by grace.” O what a deception. The Spirit of grace is Christ offering His body Hebrews 10:10 and shedding His blood Hebrews 13:12 for our sanctification. Full salvation, which is freely given “*through faith...not of works*” Ephesians 2:8-9 is the Spirit of grace. Those who “*despise (unconcerned, indifferent) the Spirit of grace*” have “*trodden underfoot the Son of God.*” They count the

blood of Jesus to be no better than the animal blood which was offered under the Law of Moses to “cover sin.” They have insulted the Spirit of grace, and according to the scriptures, the greatest of God’s judgment awaits them. For these, *“there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of **judgment and fiery indignation**, which shall devour the adversaries”* Hebrews 10:26-27. Those who have refused the Spirit of grace will certainly receive the spirit of judgment and burning.

The spirit of Judgment and Burning

*“In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that **he that is left in Zion**, and he that **remaineth in Jerusalem**, shall be **called holy**, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: When the Lord shall have **washed away the filth** of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof **by the spirit of judgment**, and **by the spirit of burning**.”* Isaiah 4:2-4

This is without question a prophecy of the New Jerusalem, which the Apostle Paul called *“Jerusalem which is above...”* Galatians 4:26, and refers to the church of Jesus Christ. Paul said Christ will present it unto Himself a *“glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing”* Ephesians 5:27. John saw the glorious church as *“a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues”* Revelation 7:9, who have *“washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”* Revelation 7:14. Sadly, they can hardly be seen on this earth because of so many “tares” which have been sown in their midst. Jesus explains the end of this in His parable of the tares and wheat.

*“As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall **gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity**; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. **Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun** in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”* Matthew 13:40-42

The spirit of judgment and burning will soon come to those who have refused the sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus Christ which was offered for their entire sanctification. Christ, the same one who “*loved us, and gave Himself for us*” Galatians 2:20, will also “*gather out of His kingdom (the church) all things (people) that offend and do iniquity, and cast them into a furnace of fire.*” This is the spirit of judgment and burning which awaits those who refuse the Spirit of grace. Isaiah spoke of this time, saying, “*The sinners in Zion (the church) are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?*” Isaiah 33:14.

“*For the time is come that **judgment must begin at the house of God**: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.*” I Peter 4:17:19

When God sent the destroying angels to destroy Jerusalem, He commanded them, “*Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; **and begin at my sanctuary***” Ezekiel 9:6. The first ones to be slaughtered were the seventy elders of Israel. Their destruction was not because they were holy men of God, but because they worshiped other gods “*in the chambers of their imagery*” Ezekiel 8:12, which according to the Hebrew text refers to their “*imagination.*” They worshiped a wrong image of God which they held in their hearts.

My heart is heavy as I write this message. Hatred has divided our nation. Hatred has set fire to numerous cities, destroyed and looted many businesses, and murdered our policemen. With all that is happening in our nation, some are prophesying God’s judgment against America. The truth of this matter is, these things are God’s judgment against America, which has come upon us because of the American church. It is in the church that the glory of the incorruptible God has been changed into a corruptible image Romans 1:23-24. It is in the church that the truth of God has been changed for

a lie Romans 1:25-26. When God's judgment comes to America, it must begin at the house of God.

In January, 1986 I received a vision of three years of God's judgment against the church in America, which was fulfilled in the years 1987-89. According to the vision, judgment would begin with television ministries. In April 1987, the largest television ministry in the world fell due to a sex and money scandal. Ten months later, in February 1988 the remaining largest TV ministry fell to a sex scandal. In that same year, and in the same denomination as both these ministers, 285 pastors of large churches also fell through scandals. What a horrible time it was for the church, but what an opportunity at the same time for the church to repent and turn. Sadly, it did not. Instead, when several famous preachers of the day which were chosen to represent the church were interviewed by Ted Koppel on his Nightline broadcast, their only defense was "*We are all sinners; we sin every day.*" Only D. James Kennedy, the pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Florida, gave a righteous response to Ted Koppel's questioning. All the others on the panel also denied the right of the world to judge the church. Thus was a seed planted which has contributed to the degeneration of the modern church.

"Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the LORD, and because of the words of his holiness." Jeremiah 23:9

A generation ago the judgment of the church began with the evangelists and pastors. God is even now beginning to judge the church again; this time His judgment will begin with the many "prophets" who have "learned how" to prophesy during this generation. The veil of secrecy which has covered them will be pulled back, and many, perhaps millions who have been under their spell will go free. Even their most staunch supporters will find it necessary to either separate from them or perish with them. It will seem like a hard time for the church to endure, but when it is finished, the righteous "*shall shine forth as the sun,*" and the last day harvest will begin.

A Conspiracy of Darkness

Written for March 2021 Charisma Magazine

*“Thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation. **There is a conspiracy of her prophets** in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. **Her priests have violated my law**, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. **Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey**, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain. And **her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar**, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken. **The people of the land have used oppression**, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully.”* Ezekiel 22:24-29

I was awakened from sleep on January 9, 2021, hearing one of the strangest messages I have heard from God in my fifty-six years of ministry. In fact, the message did not make sense to me at first as I heard the words “**...hounds from hell...like wolves ravening the prey.**” I recognized the second part of this as words from the scripture when God gave His indictment of the land of Israel just before the destruction of Jerusalem, saying, “*Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain*” Ezekiel 22:27. The prophet Jeremiah had also warned of a horrible end for Israel when he defined the problem decades before:

“A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?” Jeremiah 5:30-31

The problem with Israel was in her “church.” The prophets were prophesying of peace and prosperity, and the priests were making themselves rich through their deceptions against the people. It was a strange phenomenon (which is equally true in the twenty-first-century church) that caused God to say, *“and my people love to have it so.”* They loved what these prophets spoke, but did not understand what the “end” of these things would be. They came to that “end” in the utter destruction of both Jerusalem and the Temple of God.

I have understood for many years that when the nation is in trouble, the problem always begins in the church. Consider the parallel between the condition of Israel which led to their destruction by the armies of Babylon and the condition of the American church and nation. Israel changed their image of God into a corruptible image, and God gave the nation up to sexual uncleanness. Romans 1:23-24. This happened in America fifty years ago. Again, Israel changed the truth of God into a lie, and God gave the nation up to *“vile affections”* Romans 1:25-26, which speaks of the homosexual, lesbian, the LGBT community, and gay marriage. This is America today! Well-meaning preachers tell us God will judge America for these things, not understanding that these things are the judgment of God against America. The end, however, will be complete destruction. So, what is it that brought our nation to this low estate in 2021?

The Prophets: For years we have been told God was raising up *“a company of prophets.”* Israel also had *“a company of prophets.”* God called it *“a conspiracy of prophets.”* Jeremiah said, *“the prophets prophesy falsely:”* Ezekiel said *“they have devoured souls.”* For the past fifty years, much of the church has believed lies, taught by false teachers, that a believer could learn how to *“speak in tongues,”* to *“prophesy,”* to *“heal the sick,”* to *“do signs and wonders,”* and the *“many wonderful works”* which Jesus said *“workers of iniquity”* would claim at the day of judgement Matthew 7:22-23. If Jesus, *“the only begotten Son of God,”* said, ***“The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what***

things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" John 5:19, why would anyone believe they could learn how to do things which Jesus could not do, without first seeing it of His Father? Some of these may be sincere, but they are grossly mistaken and do not know the ways of God.

Many among the "company of prophets" prophesied repeatedly during the past year and a half that God said Donald Trump would be re-elected and serve another four years as president. I wanted to believe it would happen, but I know that God spoke nothing to me of his re-election. The morning after President Trump's first election, I was awakened by the voice of the Spirit saying, "*I will restore thy judges as at the beginning.*" I published those words in Charisma Magazine as an open letter to the president-elect telling Him of the will of God for his administration. That work was completed when Amy Coney Barrett was confirmed to the Supreme Court shortly before Election Day. **If God speaks, it always comes to pass.**

In the months following the 2020 election, numerous "prophets" continued to assure us that God said Donald Trump would yet serve for the next four years. The fact that Joe Biden is now president proves to every honest observer that these "prophets" had not heard from God. "*They speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD*" Jeremiah 23:16. God said, "*I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied*" Jeremiah 23:21.

The Priests: Jeremiah said, "*The priests bear rule by their means.*" God's indictment against the priests was, "*They have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean*" Ezekiel 22:26. It is a sad estate when many pastors begin their services with "*We are all sinners; we sin every day.*" Recently I was praying for our nation, saying, "*God, you promised to reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement*" John 16:8. The Spirit of God interrupted my prayer, saying to me, "*I cannot convict the world of sin because the church is not 'convicted of sin' or even 'convinced of righteousness'.*" If those pastors and congregations who continually confess "*We are all sinners*" were "*convicted of sin*"

we would immediately see national revival as “*godly sorrow for sin*” would grip the membership of the churches. The altar would be restored and filled with tears of repentance from those whom Isaiah called “*the sinners in Zion*” Isaiah 33:14.

The Princes: It is concerning “the princes” that I heard from God the words, “*like wolves ravening the prey.*” This speaks of the governing power. Even before the new administration was sworn in we saw the viciousness of those in power who hated the sitting president. They impeached him a week before his term expired. Their desire is to absolutely destroy him. “*Like wolves ravening the prey*” describes to perfection their repeated attacks. The Sanhedrin Court, when hearing the testimony of Stephen, “*gnashed on him with their teeth*” Acts 7:54 just before they “*cast him out of the city, and stoned him*” verse 58. The “*Trump haters*” are the wolves, and Donald Trump is their prey. They plan to totally destroy him in every way, politically, financially, and socially. They should be very careful, however. Donald Trump came into power as a Nebuchadnezzar to destroy the existing order in government. Now, the “existing order” is driving Trump out as they drove out Nebuchadnezzar Daniel 4:32-33. After a period of time, however, Nebuchadnezzar humbled himself before God, and his “*reason*” and “*honor and brightness*” returned to him verse 36. He said, “*...and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me*” Daniel 4:36. It may be that if Donald Trump humbles himself before God, he will once again be sought out.

The People: The people of our nation are pretty evenly divided between those who hate Donald Trump and those who love him. At this time the “haters” are in ascendency. God’s indictment against the people is not along political lines, however. He said, “*The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy...*” Ezekiel 22:29. This “conspiracy of darkness” actually began over fifty years ago when prayer was taken out of the schools. There was an ultimate end when that decree was given, and we have arrived at that end. We are reaping the harvest of the seed that was planted.

*“And I sought for a man **among them**, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.”* Ezekiel 22:30

There are many people who think they would gladly be the one to “stand in the gap for the land.” Some have sincerely tried and failed, only to become the victims of the “wolves” who “raven the prey.” The secret to this verse is found in the words “among them.” God had Jeremiah and Ezekiel, both great prophets of God, but he sought among the prophets of Israel who were “*prophesying falsely*,” and among the priests who were “*bearing rule by their own means*.” If they would repent and turn to God, the land would be spared, but if not, the land must be judged. God’s judgment against America has begun, but as is always the case when judgment begins, it must begin “*at the house of God*” I Peter 4:17. I do not fear for the righteous, because “*The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished*” II Peter 2:9. It is “*the sinners in Zion*” Isaiah 33:14 who should be afraid. Will those prophets who have spoken the vision of their own hearts repent in godly sorrow? Will they begin to preach “*the testimony of Jesus*,” which God said is “*the spirit of prophecy*?” Revelation 19:10. Will the “prosperity preachers” abandon their private jets and palatial mansions to repent in godly sorrow? Will they also preach “*Jesus Christ, and Him crucified*?” Will the pastors turn from comforting sinners to preach “*the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*?” If so, there is hope for America. If not, sadly, God will say again, “*But I found none*.”

“Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD.” Ezekiel 22:31

This Generation

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“And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.” Luke 21:29-33

Is this the generation which will see the return of Jesus Christ? Consider for yourself the amazing prophecies of Jesus as He tells his disciples about the coming destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem. They ask him when these things would be, and Jesus gave them many signs that would be fulfilled before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A.D. The first 23 verses of this chapter are signs Jesus gave concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. Then in verse 24 Jesus said, *“And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”* Only forty years later, Jerusalem and the Temple were completely destroyed by the Roman armies. Every sign Jesus gave was fulfilled to perfection, and Jerusalem fell under control of the Gentiles for 1897 years, until June 6, 1967.

On June 6, 1967, during what is now called “the six-day war,” the nation of Israel took control of Jerusalem for the first time since 70 A.D. This is the event which is commonly called *“the budding of the fig tree.”* According to the words of Jesus, this marked the end of the times of the Gentiles, and the beginning of the generation which He said *“... shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.”*

The first sign Jesus gave of this generation was... *“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars...”* Luke 21:25. This generation was only two years old when a man walked on the moon for the first time. Unmanned space exploration in the years since that time has reached the planets, and even beyond our own solar system.

“ . . . and upon earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken ” Luke 21:25-26.

I’m sure that you can easily fill in the blanks concerning these signs which we have repeatedly seen during this generation: the incredible instability of the nations, the strange weather patterns, and the fears of so many things to come, from a nuclear holocaust, to bacterial warfare, financial disaster, and more recently the incredible fear of the Covid 19 virus, which has infected millions of people. Over 500,000 Americans have lost their lives in the first year of this plague. Politically, it feels like the spirit of antichrist has seized control of our nation. As I write this, the entire nation has been paralyzed by an ice storm.

Many years ago I dedicated most of my ministry to warning of these things on our *“Awake to Righteousness”* radio broadcast. We continually cried out against the sins of this generation, and warned of the soon coming of Jesus. As time passed, however, I began to wonder if 1967 really did mark the beginning of the last generation. Had I misunderstood the prophecy? Were the times of the Gentiles really fulfilled, and was the clock really ticking the countdown to the return of Jesus? Time was moving so fast, and the implications of these things were overwhelming to me. Then I discovered something in the Bible that I need to tell you about.

I was preaching a message I called *“Are We Better than They,”* taken from Romans 3:9. Paul was talking about the advantage the Jews had over the Gentiles. The main advantage was that God had revealed Himself to the nation of Israel as to no other. God had chosen the Jew in Abraham, set His great love upon them, spoke to them audibly from Mount Horeb, and manifest Himself to them through great signs and wonders. Now, in Paul’s day, almost 1500 years after Moses, with all the advantages of the Law and the Prophets, the question is asked *“Are we better than they”* Romans 3:9. Sadly, the answer was *“No, in no wise.”* God’s chosen people were just as sinful as the heathen nations around them. It was proven that both Jew and Gentile were under sin, which is the reason Christ came and died to *“take away our sin”* John 1:29. As I was researching the advantage of the Jew, my mind went all the way back to

Abraham, and I wondered how many years had passed from Abraham until Calvary. I found that Abraham was circumcised in the year 1900 B.C. (plus or minus 2 years). Circumcision was the “token” of the covenant with God, and every Jew entered the covenant when he was eight days old through circumcision. When Abraham was circumcised, the covenant was confirmed, and the Jew was chosen in Abraham. The times of the Jew had begun. From that time until Calvary was 1930 years. I noticed that Abraham’s life was almost as many years before Calvary as we are after Calvary. Then, I recalled a most incredibly accurate prophecy which the angel Gabriel brought to the prophet Daniel.

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy” Daniel 9:24

For the sake of simplicity, we will change the seventy-weeks, which are actually seventy weeks of years, into 490 years. Gabriel was telling Daniel there were 490 years remaining for the Jewish people, and before those years were finished there would be made an end of sins, reconciliation for iniquity, and everlasting righteousness would be brought in. Each of these were fulfilled at Calvary in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ just 3½ years before the end of the 490 years, or in the middle of the seventieth week of the prophecy. Gabriel told Daniel the exact time the 490 years would begin. A decree would be given to restore and build Jerusalem, which was given by King Artaxerxes in the year 457 B.C. According to the promise, one called *“The Messiah, the Prince”* would appear exactly 483 years later, which would mark the beginning of the 70th week of the prophecy. This *“seventieth week (seven years)”* began when Jesus of Nazareth was baptized by John the Baptist, and confirmed as *“The Messiah (the Christ)”* when the Holy Ghost came upon Him as a dove, and the Father spoke audibly from heaven, *“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”* Matthew 3:16-17. Three and one half years later, in the middle of the 70th week of prophecy, Jesus *“the Christ”* was crucified, thus fulfilling every promise of redemption. The 70th week continued another 3½ years as God *“poured out His Spirit”* Joel 2:28 in Jerusalem and the regions

of Judea. This marked the end of the 490 years determined upon the Jew, and the gospel began to go to the Gentiles. The year was 33½ A.D.: The prophetic time of the Jew was fulfilled, and the times of the Gentiles were just beginning.

Understand the significance of what I say now. From the time circumcision was instituted by God with Abraham until the end of the seventy weeks prophecy to the Jews was 1933½ years. From that time until June 1967, the end of the times of the Gentiles, was exactly 1933½ years. **God gave equal time to both the Jew and the Gentile.** A coincidence? It could hardly be so. Sadly, both Jew and Gentile rejected Jesus Christ, and the “*times of the Gentiles*” ended on June 6, 1967.

Since that time the nations have been in moral decline, as evidenced by institution of “legal” abortion, pornography, drugs, gay marriage, and the fact that in this generation America has become an idolatrous nation. This generation has brought the greatest “falling away” and “apostasy” since the dark ages. “*Another gospel*” II Corinthians 11:4 has been preached, and “*another spirit*” has been received. Professing “believers” have been taught “how to speak in tongues” and “prophecy.” At the same time, sexual impurity has become rampant in many churches, with 68% of the men regularly watching pornography, according to one survey. Most “believers” today believe sin is the norm for a child of God. What is most amazing to me is the fact that “Christian ministers” are preaching to the largest crowds in the history of the world, while at the same time we are “losing ground” in the nations. There is much evidence that the “spirit of antichrist” is presently taking control of our national government. Sadly, it had to find a place in the church before it could come to our nation.

“And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” Luke 21:28

“So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.”

Luke 21:31-33

“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this

life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.”

Luke 21:34-35

Jesus said ***“Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not”*** Luke 12:40. I can remember when Israel became a nation in 1948, and there was a great revival. People were “*getting ready*” for Jesus to come. Again, in June 1967 during the six day war in Israel the churches filled up with people who were “*getting ready.*” Across the nation people gathered in all night prayer meetings, crowds filled the churches, believing that at any moment Jesus would come. Perhaps some can remember the phenomenon of 1988. A man wrote a book titled “*Eighty Eight Reasons Why Jesus Must Come In 1988.*” Multitudes around the world were convinced. Again the churches filled to capacity with people seeking to “*get ready*” for Jesus to come. In each of these cases the multitudes soon cooled off, and people went back to their self-centered living, seeking the things of this present world rather than the things of Heaven. The next alert came in the year 2000, and vast multitudes were again “*getting ready.*” Vigils were held, while others made a pilgrimage to Rome. Still others made the trip to Jerusalem to meet Jesus when He came. Everyone with any Christian belief at all was “*getting ready.*”

Sounds good, right? Except for one thing. Jesus did not say, “*get ready,*” but rather He said, “***be ready.***” He did not say He would come when the multitudes expect Him and prepare themselves, instead He said He would come “***...at an hour when ye think not.***”

Even though very little has been said about the return of Jesus in recent years, He is still coming. This is still the generation which Jesus said “*...shall not pass away until all be fulfilled.*” Jesus is coming! One thing is certain, those who wait to “*get ready*” will not “*be ready*” when He comes. The unfaithful servant who said in his heart “*My lord delayeth his coming*” Luke 12:45 WAS not ready when his lord came. The foolish virgins slumbered and slept without oil in their lamps Matthew 25:3. They had prepared for an earlier time, but he came in an hour that they thought not. Today is the day of salvation. Now is the acceptable hour. Tomorrow will be too late for many. Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus.

Religious, but Lost!

Published May 2021 Charisma Magazine ...Excerpt from "The Foundation" by Leroy Surface

Romans 7:14-25

14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. With this verse we must make some distinctions between "*the Law of God*" and "*the Law of Moses.*" The Law of God is spiritual, and is written in the hearts of those who are "*born again*" of the Spirit of God *Hebrews 8:8-13*. The Law of Moses, which was "*added because of transgressions*" *Galatians 3:19*, is a carnal law *Hebrews 7:16, 9:10*, which was given to a carnal people. When God spoke from the mountain to give His Law to the congregation of Israel in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, they could not receive it because their hearts were "*carnal.*" God defined the problem to Moses, saying, "*O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always...*" *Deuteronomy 5:29*. They could not, because they were "*carnal, sold under sin.*"

The Greek word "*sarkikos,*" which was translated "*carnal*" in this verse, means "*similar to flesh*" and was translated as both "*carnal*" and "*fleshly.*" This was the state of Saul of Tarsus; He was "*...fleshly, and sold under sin.*" The Greek word for "*flesh*" is "*sarx,*" and speaks of "*human nature*" which was "*sold under sin*" by the first man, Adam. In the verses that follow, Paul lays out the proof that he was sold under sin. It is important to remember when reading this passage that the children of God are not "*sold under sin*" but are "*redeemed from all iniquity*" *Titus 2:14*. Saul of Tarsus had been one who was "*sold under sin,*" but when he met Jesus he became one who was "*bought with a price.*"

15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. The apostle Paul continues speaking as Saul of Tarsus before his conversion to Jesus for the remainder of this chapter. He offers proof of Saul's carnality until the day of his surrender to Jesus Christ; "*...what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*" It is with these words he describes

“the motions of sin which were by the law” which he spoke of in the fifth verse.

16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Saul recognizes that if righteousness is not in his heart, he must have a law to control his actions, therefore he consents that the law is good.

17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. Saul recognizes that if he is doing things he doesn't want to do, then something else is in control. It is not him, but sin that is in his heart and nature. The word *“dwelleth”* comes from the Greek word *“oikeō”* meaning *“to occupy a house.”* An unwanted guest was occupying Saul's *“house”* and had taken dominion over Saul. He is a slave to sin. This is how he came to understand he was *“sold under sin”* as he said in verse fourteen.

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. The word *“flesh”* as used in this verse does not refer to the physical *“body,”* but rather to the *“human nature”* which controls the body. *“For I know that in me (that is, in my human nature,) dwelleth no good thing...”* Sin, through Adam's transgression, had made human nature its dwelling place. It is Saul of Tarsus who comes to this realization, and the proof of it is, *“...for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.”* It was *“in his mind”* to serve God, but it was *“in his nature”* to serve sin. He had *“the will”* to perform, but he did not have *“the way.”* What a sad predicament for people to find themselves in, but there are far too many *“Christians”* who are in the same predicament.

19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. This nineteenth verse proves the seventh chapter of Romans does not describe, as many say, *“the normal Christian experience.”* The key to understanding this is found in the word *“do,”* which is used one time in each phrase of this verse. These were translated from two different Greek words as *“do,”* which serves to conceal the powerful statement Paul made about himself before he believed upon Jesus. Follow closely as we examine these words.

“...the good that I would I do not...” The word “do” in this phrase was translated from the Greek word “*poieo*,” which is defined very simply by “Strong’s Greek Dictionary” as “*to make or do*.” This phrase is translated exactly as the Greek text says. I will show in the definition of the Greek word which was used in the next phrase that “*poieo*” refers to “*a single act*,” which strengthens this phrase dramatically. Understand this phrase to say, “*the good that I would I do not a single act*,” or, “*I do not a single act of the good I want to do*.” This certainly speaks of a man who is a slave to sin, and cannot do good, even though he wants to.

“...the evil which I would not, that I do.” The word “do” in this phrase was translated from the Greek word “*prasso*,” which is defined by “Strong’s Greek Dictionary” as “*to practise, that is, perform repeatedly or habitually (thus differing from G4160 (poieo), which properly refers to a single act)*.” This definition proves Saul of Tarsus could not do a single act of the good he wanted to do, but “*the evil*” which he did not want to do was his “*habitual practice*.”

We are told by modern theologians that the children of God are still sinners, but they “*do not practice sin*.” According to the Apostle Paul, before the day he believed in Jesus, that He is the Christ, Saul of Tarsus “*practiced sin*” (habitually sinned), even though he did not want to. Strangely, he was also “*blameless...as touching the righteousness that is in the Law of Moses*” *Philippians 3:6*, while at the same time he was “*persecuting the church*.”

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. Saul of Tarsus discovered even if he had never committed an outward act of sin, yet sin dwelt in him. This was proven to Saul because he began doing things he did not want to do, and they were his “practice.” Human nature was not created sinful in the beginning. It was the entrance of sin through Adam’s transgression that polluted human nature. Sin is described as an entity that is separate from human nature, but it abides in human nature and takes dominion over it. As Paul said, “*...it is not I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me*.” Only the blood of Christ can wash the sin pollutant out of our nature. It is a shame in many churches today, the proof of salvation is “*you do not want to do the evil things you do*.” This same religious struggle, which is called

“*concupiscence*,” is what finally proved to Saul of Tarsus he was a slave to sin ...and lost.

21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. It is the nature of sin to resist the good and do the evil. As long as sin remains in the heart, he may struggle to do the good, and may even succeed in the working of good deeds, but sin is always present with its evil desires in the heart of the unregenerate man.

22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: The “*inward man*” of Saul of Tarsus was his mind and intellect. Intellectually, he loved the Law of God, “*but...*”

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. “*Human nature*,” when contaminated with sin and left to itself, is no better or higher than the beasts of the field. It is the intellect that makes man to be above the beasts. The Law of God, being “*spiritual*,” was given to “*define*” the divine nature, but Israel could not receive it. The Law of Moses was given to “*control*” sinful human nature. Notice the level of some of the commandments: “*If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. And if a man take a wife and her mother, it is wickedness: they shall be burnt with fire, both he and they; that there be no wickedness among you. And if a man lie with a beast, he shall surely be put to death: and ye shall slay the beast. And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down thereto, thou shalt kill the woman, and the beast: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them*” Leviticus 20:13-16. Sinful human nature, without the restraints of law, will descend to the level of the beast of the field. It is only the “*the restraints of law*,” whether religious or secular, that hinders the bestial activity of sinful human nature.

Saul of Tarsus was well disciplined by the Law of Moses. Such behavior as described above was out of the question, yet he, as does every unregenerate person, had sin dwelling in his human nature, seeking control of his members. The “*law in his members*” that warred against “*the law of his mind*” was simply sin dwelling in his

“*human nature*” warring against his mind and intellectual desire to please God.

“...warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin...” This phrase brings to mind the methods of ancient warfare. A city with strong walls would come under attack by a powerful enemy. For a time, the walls would hold against the siege, but the city would be cut off from all supplies from without. Daily, the battering rams and the catapults would batter the walls, while inside the city the food supplies would be rationed. The battering of the walls would continue night and day until the walls were breached, at which time the malnourished inhabitants would be taken captive and led away as slaves. This is the description of the warfare within Saul of Tarsus after “*the sin*” in his heart was discovered by “*the commandment*” (thou shalt not covet). His “*walls of defense*” which were built up by the Law of Moses were battered to the ground, and Saul could no longer keep himself. He was “*brought into captivity*” to that “*law of sin*” (sinful human nature) which was in his members.

24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? It must have been during the time Saul of Tarsus was “*breathing out threatenings and slaughter*” Acts 9:1, and “*making havock of the churches*” Acts 8:3, that he became “*a wretched man*” in his own sight. It is very likely that his words “*the evil which I would not, that I do*” was speaking of his rage against the church. He who had thought himself to be perfectly righteous under the Law discovered in himself an uncontrollable hatred that dominated his every thought both night and day. From within, though never publicly, there came the cry, “*Who shall deliver me from the body of this death.*” The term “*body of this death*” is used in the same way as “*the body of sin*” was used in Romans 6:6, and speaks of the “*entire body (or source) of sin and death.*” It was his “*cry for deliverance*” that brought Saul of Tarsus into a direct confrontation with Jesus Christ Acts 9:3-5. There, he found the answer, given in the next verse, which is the basis for the gospel of Jesus Christ as the apostle Paul preached it.

25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Why Christ Died

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Many articles have written about the crucifixion of Christ and the agony He suffered for us. It would be difficult to exaggerate on this subject. The prophet Isaiah, when foreseeing the sufferings of Christ, said “*His visage (face) was so marred more than any man, and his form (body) more than the sons of men: So shall he sprinkle (cleanse from sin) many nations...*” Isaiah 52:14-15. We have heard perhaps for generations that He was beaten with 39 stripes, which was the limit set by the Jewish law. Jesus, however, was beaten under the Roman law, which had no such limitations. It was this beating at the hands of Roman soldiers that marred His face and body beyond recognition. The crown of thorns which they beat into His brow blackened both His eyes, and further marred His visage. Jesus knew by the scriptures what torture awaited Him. It was for fear of these things He “*offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death...*” Hebrews 5:7.

“O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” Matthew 26:39

“And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”
Luke 22:14

“O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.” Matthew 26:42

We can read the entire record of Jesus in Gethsemane in about sixty seconds, yet these same appeals were made to His Father for a full three hours. The agony of Gethsemane may have killed most of us, but Jesus’s sufferings for our salvation only truly began after He cried “*Thy will be done*” a final time. Jesus assured us that no one

was taking his life. He said, *“I lay it down of myself”* John 10:18. Jesus told Peter, *“Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?”* Matthew 26:53-54. When Pilate said, *“knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?”* John 19:10, Jesus answered, *“Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above”* verse 11.

If we believe these sayings of Jesus, we understand there was absolutely no power on earth that could put Jesus on the cross. No one is to be blamed; not the Romans, not the Jews, and not Pilate. Nothing less than the will of His Father in Heaven could put Jesus on the cross. That being the case, why would our almighty God not only allow, but “will” the horrible sufferings and death of His only begotten Son on the cross. Perhaps the prophet Isaiah pointed the way for those who can see. When describing His face and body as *“marred more than any man”* Isaiah 52:14, he said, *“So shall He sprinkle many nations”* verse 15. With these six words he revealed the purpose for which Jesus died.

The “sprinkling” of animal blood was symbolic cleansing under the Law of Moses, as confirmed by Paul to the Hebrews; *“Moreover he (Moses) sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission”* Hebrews 9:22. Paul gave a comparison between animal blood and the blood of Christ in the same chapter; *“For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”* Hebrews 9:13-14. The blood of Christ did much more than just ceremonially wash the outer body. It was shed to wash sin from our hearts.

Many people search Moses’ Law, seeking to discover in the Law what Christ came into the world to do. To do this is a tragic error, leading many to believe the blood of Jesus to be nothing more than a “once forever covering for sins.” The Apostle Paul clearly denies

this thinking. ***“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh”*** Romans 8:3. If you truly want to understand the incarnation and why Christ became a man, search the scriptures to discover *“what the law could not do.”*

“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.” Hebrews 10:4-7

The Apostle John began his gospel, *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made”* John 1:1-3. This same relationship continued between God and *“the Word”* from the beginning of creation until about four thousand years after the earth was cursed by sin through Adam’s disobedience. After so long a time, *“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us”* John 1:14, and John added, *“we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.”*

“Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me...”

Jesus said *“you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”* John 8:32. A clear understanding of Hebrews 10:1-10 will free the sincere seeker from centuries of erroneous teaching and fables which have held multitudes of people in bondage to sin. As Jesus said of the scribes and Pharisees in His day, many teachers continue to *“make the word of God of none effect”* Mark 7:13 through the traditions of men which they teach as Biblical doctrine. Notice it was Christ in the moment of His incarnation (*“when He cometh into the world”*) who said, *“Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not.”* If the children of Israel had not refused to hear the voice of God at Mount Sinai Exodus 20:19, they would have never offered animal sacrifices. God said through Jeremiah, ***“I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: But this***

thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice...” Jeremiah 7:22-23. God said **“I hate your feast days ...”** Amos 5:21. David, in godly sorrow for sin, said, **“Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it”** Psalms 51:16. God said in the first chapter of Isaiah’s prophecy, **“I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats”** Isaiah 1:11, and He said in the last, **“He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog’s neck”** Isaiah 66:3. Why did God so despise the offerings of animal blood? **“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”** The Apostle Paul reminds us that the Law of Moses served only as a *“yoke of bondage”* to all who trusted in it Galatians 5:1.

“I come to do thy will O God...”

The “will of God” was that the holy body and blood of Christ which God prepared in the womb of Mary would one day be offered as *“the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world”* John 1:29. The same day sin entered the through the serpent’s deception and Adam’s disobedience, God promised a *“seed of the Woman”* who would *“bruise the head of the serpent”* Genesis 3:15. Daniel said *“the Messiah the Prince”* would come to *“make an end of sins”* Daniel 9:24-25. The Apostle Paul said it was *“through death”* that Christ *“destroyed the devil”* Hebrews 2:14. If the blood of animals could not *“take away sin,”* the precious holy blood of the Son of God would. The infant Jesus, lying in the manger, had but one purpose to fulfill, and it would require His death on the cross. He was *“the seed of the woman”* who came *“to bruise the head of the serpent”* Genesis 3:15. He was *“The Messiah, the Prince,”* who was come *“to make an end of sin, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness”* Daniel 9:24-25.

“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” Hebrews 10:10

The will of God in the death of His Son on the cross was the *“sanctification”* of the people, that is, to *“take away their sin,”* and *“make them holy.”* This could not be through a lifetime process of sanctification, but only *“through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”* When Jesus said on the cross, *“It is finished,”* it was finished for all who would believe upon Jesus Christ.

“Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.” Hebrews 13:12

The Apostle John said, *“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not...”* I John 3:5-6. When John wrote to believers in His generation, saying *“And ye know...,”* it is obvious that what he said was common knowledge among the children of God. In our generation, it seems many believers have traded the testimony of the scripture for religious promises which God’s word never gave. They want to believe their sins are covered from God’s sight and they can never be judged because their penalty or debt has been paid. Yet for anyone who will simply believe the word of God, the record is clear. Jesus Christ came into the world and gave his life to take away your sin so that you might truly be free!

“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Hebrews 12:2

Why Grace is given

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“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Ephesians 3:8-11

In the passage above, the Apostle Paul list three things the grace of God was given to accomplish in him.

Paul describes **the first reason** he received grace, saying, *“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is **this grace given, that I should preach** among the Gentiles the **unsearchable riches of Christ...**”* Ephesians 3:8

Peter described the *“unsearchable riches of Christ”* as *“the salvation”* that Christ brought to us through His sufferings and death on the cross. He said the prophets of the Old Testament saw this salvation afar off, and called it *“the grace that should come unto you”* I Peter 1:10. They had heard from *“the Spirit of Christ which was in them”* verse 11 of *“the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow”* I Peter 1:11.

Notice first of all, the prophets of old spoke of our great salvation as *“the grace”* that would come to us through *“the sufferings of Christ.”* If Christ had only *“taken our punishment,”* perhaps grace would be what the majority believe today, only *“a covering for sins.”* Consider, however, that *“the grace”* which was seen by the prophets was also *“the glory”* that would come after Christ died and rose again. It is would be easy for us to believe *“the glory which should follow”* was that which was manifested on the Day of Pentecost, but it is so much more. It is the *“glory”* of a *“New Creation”* II Corinthians 5:17, *“created in Christ Jesus”* Ephesians 2:10. It is a people such as has never been seen since the day Adam disobeyed

God and brought sin into the world. They are “*freed from sin*” Romans 6:7, 18, 22, and they “*abide in Christ*” and “*do not sin*” 1 John 3:5-6, 9.

For over nineteen hundred years since Jude warned that “*the grace of God*” had been “*turned into lasciviousness*” Jude 1:4, the vast majority of the church has been confused concerning what “*grace*” is. Most have been taught that grace is given to cover sins so God could take sinners to heaven. What a horrible thought to those who have received “*the love of the truth*” II Thessalonians 2:10-11. Paul said the grace of God was given to him to “*preach among the Gentiles* (every nation) *the unsearchable riches of Christ.*”

Many false teachers have arisen in this last generation to teach that the “*unsearchable riches of Christ*” are manifested as great prosperity in “*the things of this world.*” The Apostle John said, “*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*” 1 John 2:15.

The second reason Paul received grace was “**“...to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ...”** Ephesians 3:9

The gospel of Jesus Christ must not only be “preached” in all the world, but it must also be “seen” in those who preach it, as well as in those who believe it. Notice in this verse Paul was given “**grace ...to make all men see**” something that had been “*hid in God*” since “*the beginning of the world.*” The “*beginning of the world*” does not speak of the creation of the heavens and earth, but rather it speaks of the beginning of “*this present evil world*” Galatians 1:4, which began with the disobedience of Adam and the entrance of sin. God created man in His own image and likeness, but man “*in the image and likeness of God*” was never seen from the time Adam fell until Christ came into the world. There was a four thousand year period from the fall of Adam until the birth of Jesus Christ in which the “eternal purpose” Ephesians 8:11 was “*hidden in God*” until Christ came. The Apostle Paul spoke to Timothy of the “eternal purpose” when he tells us God “*...hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the*

world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ...” II Timothy 1:9-10.

Notice that Paul again speaks of “*before the world began,*” which “began” with the entrance of sin. He told us God’s “*purpose and grace ...was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.*” God’s “*purpose and grace*” is what God created man to be, “*in His own image and likeness.*” If there is any question about what God’s “*purpose and grace*” is for the children of God, Paul said it was “*made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ.*” If you have any question about what God’s “eternal purpose” for man is, look to Jesus.

It is one thing for the preacher to point the people to Jesus, which we must all do. Far more effective, however, is for the preacher who preaches Christ to be a manifestation of Christ. Paul said, “*Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God*” Corinthians 4:1-2. Notice he was willing to “*commend himself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.*”

Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews, “*Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?*” John 8:46. The Jews were forever trying to prove Jesus was a sinner. Why do so many modern “theologians” seek to prove the Apostle Paul was a sinner? If he was a sinner, he must have been incredibly self-righteous, and totally unworthy to be believed in anything he said. He said of himself, “*Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe*” I Thessalonians 2:10. The Apostle Paul was in fact a manifestation of the truth he preached and the Christ he served.

The third reason Paul received grace was “*To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God...*” Ephesians 3:10

The “*intention*” of God when giving “*this grace*” Ephesians 3:8 reached into heaven itself. The wording of this verse is somewhat vague and

obscure, but in plain language, God intended that the angels in heaven would understand the incarnation of Christ and His death on the cross. Angels are not “omniscient,” meaning they do not know all things. Their “purpose” from the beginning was to serve those who were “created in the image and likeness of God.” With the fall of Adam and the entrance of sin, 1/3rd of the angels joined Lucifer in the rebellion. If Christ died for sin, and those who believe in Him continue in sin, the angels can only believe His death was in vain, that it did absolutely nothing of eternal value. When, however, the angels see the “*glorious church*” Ephesians 5:27, filled with believers who are “*created in the image and likeness of the Son of God,*” they understand the “*manifold wisdom*” of “*Christ crucified.*”

Paul described the church which Christ is the head of, as “*...his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*” Ephesians 1:22-23. I have never seen such a church, but the angels in heaven have. When the world around us sees a weak and sinful church as in the world today, they can only conclude there is nothing to it, and that Jesus’ death accomplished nothing. When Paul described the church as “*His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all,*” he had seen such a church. The “*hundred and twenty*” on the Day of Pentecost were such a church. It was made up of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, with every member of the body full of the Holy Ghost, and given “*the manifestation of the Spirit*” I Corinthians 12:7. These were from the first day, a people such as had not existed since the day Adam disobeyed God and sin entered into the heart of the man. In fact, the world had never seen such as these hundred and twenty. Adam’s and Eve’s fall took place before their first child was born. Their firstborn son Cain, who murdered his brother Abel, had never seen his mom and dad “*in the image and likeness of God.*” Adam and Eve were bound in chains of total depravity because of the entrance of sin.

This brings us to the “eternal purpose of God.” On several occasions Paul referenced God’s “*...eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” Ephesians 3:11. The word “purpose,” which is used two times in this one verse, was translated from two different Greek words. The first, used in “*eternal purpose*” speaks of God’s “*original intent;*” It is what God “set forth” when He said, “*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness*” Genesis 1:26. The second

usage is translated from the Greek word “*poieo*,” and speaks of what He “*made*” in Christ Jesus our Lord. What Adam was before entrance of sin, and what Jesus Christ was in His thirty three years before the cross were both equal to God’s “*eternal purpose*.” The “*new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness*” will be populated with a “*new creation*” of people who are “*in the image of the Son of God*.” We who are “*born of God*” are that “*new creation*” right now II Corinthians 5:17. The original creation of man in the image and likeness of God was before the entrance of sin. The “*new creation*” in the image and likeness of God could not exist until after “*the sin*” that entered through Adam’s disobedience, was “*taken away*” by the obedience of Jesus Christ to the death of the cross. When John the Baptist introduced Jesus as “*the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world*” John 1:29, he understood that Christ was sent into the world “*to make an end of sins*” Daniel 9:24-25, which he would do through His death on the cross. Both the “*sin nature*” and the “*Law of Moses*” were nailed to the cross with Christ, and we who believe this and trust in Jesus Christ are “*made free*” John 8:32 from both sin and the Law to serve God in holiness and righteousness Luke 1:68-75.

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