



Behold the Lamb
Publications

Simply Christ
Gospel Insight

Volume 15

*Twelve Gospel Messages from our
Weekly SIMPLY CHRIST Newsletter!*

Simply Christ

The Apostle Paul spoke of a time when Christian people would *“heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”* II Timothy 4:3-4. A fable is something which is “made up.” Fables find a home in the church because they tell people what they already want to hear. Sadly, we live in an hour where the hearts of many would rather believe a fable than the record of God’s word.

You can prove almost anything by using only the scriptures which support your belief. If you really want to know if your belief is the truth, go to God’s word to see if it can be disproved by the scripture. The truth is not afraid of the truth!

“But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”
Matthew 15:9

The purpose of Simply Christ and other Behold the Lamb Publications is to share the gospel of Christ according to what the scriptures actually say. We are not defenders of

denomination, dogma, religious tradition, or the newest religious fad. We have set our heart to simply say what the word of God actually says.



Leroy Surface



Keith Surface

As a young man I was told by an elder minister that I should just accept what the leaders of “our movement” told us was true rather than believe

what I saw the scriptures to be saying. I chose to believe that the word of God is true. Anyone that will do the same will find the gospel of Christ to be a simple message with the power to make everyone who believes it ...free indeed!

Simply Christ

Gospel Insight

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

Volume 15

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LOOKING TO MEN

A few years ago, I was visited by two Mormon missionaries. Instead of following their course of discussion, I took the opportunity to share with them the power of the blood of Jesus Christ to deliver us from sin. After a short time, they said they needed to leave. One of them then held out a Mormon bible and asked if I would read it prayerfully and ask God if it was true. When I told them, "I cannot do that," they asked, "Why not?" The following was my reply.

In his letter to the church, Jude wrote that we "*...should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*" Jude 1:3. We are not instructed to look for a new revelation of the gospel, but to contend for (seek, stand upon, and defend) the gospel which had already been given to the church in days of the early apostles.

The Apostle Paul adds to this truth when he wrote of the revelation of the gospel he received. He said, "*But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*" Galatians 1:11-12. So certain was Paul of the gospel he received by revelation of Jesus Christ," that he said, "*But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*" Galatians 1:8. This is an astounding statement. If the Apostle Paul himself showed up at your door with another gospel than what he had already preached to the church, Paul said, "Let me be accursed." Even if an angel from heaven were to bring a different revelation, we are to let the angel be accursed also. The gospel the apostles preached and wrote is the only gospel of Christ.

Paul again strengthens this when he wrote. "*According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, ...For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*" I Corinthians 3:10-11. Paul was adamant. He had laid the foundation of the church through preaching the gospel he received by revelation of Jesus Christ. There was not, and never would be, any other foundation which could be laid. If it is not that which was "*once delivered to the saints,*" it is not the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As I concluded, I said to the two Mormons, the issue is not whether Joseph Smith received his revelation and writings from an angel, (or on golden plates), as he claimed. The issue is “Is it the faith which was already received, preached, and written by the apostles of the early church?” One of the men sought to disagree with me, but the other spoke up and said, “He’s right. That is the real issue.”

As these men prepared to leave, I told them, “If you want to know the gospel of Christ, you must give up the men you look to as the source of truth, and search to know and understand what the early apostles preached and wrote. As long as you hold the word of men over the word of God you will never know the truth.”

After the Mormon missionaries left, I began to consider how many of us look to our own “man” as the basis of truth rather than the word of God. None of us are exempt. Catholics look to their church fathers and councils to determine what is truth. Protestants look to Calvin, Luther, Arminius, or Wesley. Denominations look to their general or founding councils to determine what is truth. Some, such as I, who are not a part of any organized denomination or movement, look to what is generally believed by our “fathers and peers.” And, of course, there are always those who are looking to their “prophet.” Almost universally, professing “Bible believers” rise to defend what they have been taught and given by men over what the word of God actually says.

When I was very young in the ministry I was sharing passages in God’s word about being made free from sin through Jesus Christ with an elder pastor whom I very much loved and respected. Having no answer for the scriptures I showed him, he said to me, “You just need to accept what the godly men in our councils (He was with the Assemblies of God) have said about these things.” I was shocked at his words and held my tongue, but in my mind, I thought “That is what the Catholic hierarchy told the people when they forbade them to have the Bible in their own language.”

I am not advocating that people lightly disregard the things they have received from those who have ministered to them. But every one of us must be ready to say with the Apostle Paul, “*Let God be true and every man a liar.*” Romans 3:4. To do that we must be willing to turn loose of our “men” and hold to God’s word. Pick up your

Bible and believe it for what it says, and not for what someone has told you it means. Read the words of Jesus, Paul, John, and Peter. Do what Jude instructed us to do and “*earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*” Jude 1:3. It is only then you will know the truth which Jesus said, “*shall make you free!*” John 8:32

A GOSPEL PLEA FOR THE KJV

I have always used a Kings James Bible (KJV) even though I am not a “Kings James Only” believer. I find words like “thee,” “thou,” “ye,” “hast,” “thinkest,” and “wouldest” to be tiresome and at times a distraction from the true message of the verses being read. As with everything man is involved with, there are flaws in the KJV. Yet, the more I see and understand of other Bible versions, the more I see the importance of persuading people to take the KJV as the benchmark for the truth of God’s word. As a minister of the gospel of Christ, I can clearly see how the truth of the gospel is literally being written out of the modern Bible versions. I will share a few important gospel passages where the more modern “easier to read” translations have stripped the gospel message of its God given power.

For decades, we had the following verse in raised letters on the wall of our Church: “*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*” 1 Corinthians 1:18. I was actually shocked when I discovered that every Bible version I could find which was translated in the last 120 years changes this passage to say, “*...us which are being saved.*” This is not a small change. It exchanges the finished work of Christ on the cross for a progressive salvation. It says, “You are not in fact saved, but you are in the process of being saved.” It also says, “The cross of Christ is not an absolute work. It is the philosophies and programs of the church which contain the power to save your soul.”

Another seemingly small change by modern translators in the Book of Hebrews redefines the entire message of the blood of Christ. The central theme of Hebrews is our completion through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The KJV uses the words “*perfect,*” “*perfected,*” and

“*perfection,*” but in every case speaks of “*completion.*” This completion is described as having both the outward flesh and the inward conscience washed from sin. If either is left undone, the worshiper is incomplete. The Bible says, “*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 completes us when it washes dead works from our inner parts. We again see this completion when we are told to draw near “*...having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*” Hebrews 10:22. Christ has completed us by sanctifying us with his own body and blood. Hebrews 10:10, 13:12.

Jesus Christ now sits at the right hand of God, having finished our redemption. The Scripture says, “*For by one offering he hath perfected (completed) forever them that are sanctified.*” Hebrews 10:14. It is in this passage that the truth has once again been written out of the scripture. A majority of the modern translations change this passage to say Christ has completed those who “**are being sanctified.**” This one additional word changes the message of the sanctifying power of the blood of Christ from a finished work to being a lifelong cleansing process which will never be complete.

The great absurdity of this new translation is the evident contradiction that something which has already been completed is said to be in the process of being completed. Those who are “*being sanctified*” are not sanctified, and to say, “*They are sanctified but also still in the process of being sanctified*” is mere doubletalk. If Christ has washed you by his blood, you are sanctified and sin has lost its place and power in you. However, if you are “*being sanctified*” you will never be clean until you believe the truth of finished work of the blood of Christ.

Another great violence modern translations have done to the gospel message in God’s word is found in John’s first epistle. John wrote, “*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*” 1 John 3:9. The phrase “*remaineth (abide) in him*” is used over ten times

in this epistle. When you understand that we are the “seed” who “abide” in Christ, this verse becomes very clear. **“Those who are born of God do not commit sin because they cannot sin while they abide in Christ.”**

Most modern translations have changed “doth not commit sin” to “they do not practice sin,” or, “they do not continue to sin.” Both these revisions carry the message that those who abide in Christ commit sin, but just not habitually. Consider the following questions about a person who is born of God and abides in Christ. Do they not commit adultery, or, do they just not practice adultery? Do they not commit rape, or, do they just not practice rape? Do they not commit murder, or, do they just not practice murder? Do they not lie, or, do they just not practice lying? Do they not steal, or, do they just not practice stealing? John is clear. They do not do these things because they cannot do these things. Yes, someone who has left their abiding place in Christ may be capable of all these things, but not those who “abide in Him!”

The Greek word translated as “commit” in this verse is “poieō G4160” and, according to Strong’s Dictionary Concordance, it means “to make or do.” Strong’s sheds more light on this word in the definition of another Greek word “prassō” G4238, which means to “practise,” that is, *perform repeatedly or habitually* (thus differing from **G4160 {“poieō”}, which properly refers to a single act**.) The word translated “commit” means “to make or do” and refers to “a single act.” It is used 576 times in the Bible, and in a vast number of those usages absolutely cannot be construed as anything but a singular act.

These seemingly small changes strike at the very heart of the gospel of Christ. It destroys its absolute power and changes everything into a philosophical process. No one is really saved. No one is really holy. No one is really free. It also only takes a few snips to castrate the greatest of beasts. It only takes a few changes to make the gospel preached from our pulpits impotent, without the power to deliver a single soul.

THE FULNESS OF CHRIST

God has used many people in amazing and astounding ways in the centuries since the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Some have been great soul-winners; others have been used in gifts of healings and great miracles. Some, like the Apostle Paul, received great revelation of the gospel of Christ. Yet, no single person has ever possessed or manifested the fulness of Christ. If they had, it would have been as though Jesus Christ himself was walking and ministering in our midst. Those whom we deem to be the greatest ministers of Christ only possessed a limited portion of his fulness.

The Apostle Paul confirms this, saying, *“But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”* Ephesians 4:7. The word *“measure”* speaks of a *“limited portion.”* Paul had the portion of an apostle and a teacher. His portion was great, but still *“limited.”* John was an apostle and a prophet. Philip was an evangelist and his daughters had the gift of prophecy. Agabus was a prophet. Ananias was simply a disciple, but he received visions from the Lord and was used of God through the laying on of hands to restore Saul of Tarsus’ sight. Each of these had a different *“measure”* of Christ.

Paul reminded the Ephesians of their conversion and their subsequent baptism with the Holy Ghost, saying, *“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise ...”* Ephesians 1:13. He then prays for them that *“the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know ...what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places...”* Ephesians 1:19-20. This was a prayer that the believers would understand what the power of the Holy Ghost would do in them if they would allow Him to.

As Paul continues his letter to the Ephesians, he explains how the *“measure of Christ”* is imparted to a believer. He says, *“I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.”* Ephesians 3:7. This is a reference to the power of the Holy Ghost working in a person who

has been baptized with the Spirit of God. The “*effectual working*” of the Holy Ghost in a person is what gives them the grace for their measure of the gift of Christ. The grace given by “*the effectual working of his power*” made Paul a mighty apostle of Jesus Christ. Still, this was only a “*limited portion*” of the fulness of Christ.

In the next chapter of Ephesians, Paul finally tells us what it is that brings the full manifestation of Christ upon earth. He describes various ministries Christ placed in the church by the effectual working of the Holy Ghost in individuals. He says, “*And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers...*” Ephesians 4:11. The purpose of these ministries was to establish each believer in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God so the working of the Holy Ghost could cause the entire body of believers to stand up as “*a perfect (complete) man, unto **the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:***” Ephesians 4:14. The church itself is the only entity that God ever ordained to manifest the fulness of Christ in this world.

Such a church has rarely existed since the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was seen and manifested in the days of the “early church” but disappeared with the entrance of the false teachers as the apostles were taken off the scene. Perhaps there have been occasions that Christ was fully manifested in the church during times of great revival and the outpouring of God’s Spirit, but these have been few and far between. When the fulness of Christ is manifested in the church, these words are true for the church just as these were true for Jesus: “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.*” Luke 4:18-19.

Many foolish and unbiblical teachings have been offered as excuses why the church does not fully manifest Christ today. Some claim certain “dispensations” have changed the way God works in his people. If this were true then God’s word could not be true which says, “*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.*” Hebrews 13:8. Others claim the wicked condition of the world limits

God. How foolish is that? Does the wickedness of mankind mean God is not God?

There is one reason for the lack of the manifestation of the fulness of Christ in the church and therefore in the world. Paul tells us that this “*perfect (complete) man*” which is “*the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*” is only manifested when “*the whole body (is) fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part...*” Ephesians 4:16. This statement brings us back to the “*effectual working*” of the Holy Ghost in each individual. When the Holy Ghost worked effectually in Paul it made him a mighty Apostle. When it worked effectually in Phillip it made him an Evangelist, cast out demons, and manifested great miracles. When it worked in Agabus it made him a Prophet. Each member has a limited measure, but when the Holy Ghost is able to work effectually “*in the measure of every part,*” the “*measures*” of each of these stand up together and manifest the fulness of Christ to the world.

The Apostle Paul said Christ is “*...the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*” Ephesians 1:22-23. I have seen great ministers and great Saints of God, but I have never seen a church which is the fulness of Christ. Such a church will only be seen again when each one of those who gather together is filled with the Holy Ghost and the Spirit of God is able to “*work effectually in the measure of every part.*” It is only then that we will see a church that will once again shake the world and turn it upside down through the full manifestation of Jesus Christ!

THE GREATER WORKS OF CHRIST

Lazarus had been dead four days when Jesus commanded that the stone which sealed his tomb be taken away. Martha, aware of what condition Lazarus’ body would be in, said, “*Lord, by this time he stinketh.*” John 11:39. She was correct. In fact, his organs would have been decomposing, his body bloated, and bloody foam leaking from his mouth and nose due to internal pressure caused by bacteria

breaking down cells and tissues. Yet, in spite of all this, Jesus stood at Lazarus' tomb and spoke three words which ushered in one of the greatest miracles ever seen upon earth. A body which had been decaying and decomposing for four days, instantly was reconstituted, and Lazarus was raised from the dead.

The evening before his crucifixion, Jesus gave an astounding promise. He said, "*He that believeth on me, **the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.***" John 14:12. In fact, the early believers did do the works that Jesus had done. Great miracles and healings were manifested, not only by the apostles, but by many of those who believed upon Jesus Christ. Demons were cast out, blind eyes were opened, the lame walked, and all manner of diseases were healed. Even the dead were raised.

These miracles were not exclusive to the early church. In the early twentieth century, many astounding miracles were seen during the half century which followed the outpouring of God's Spirit in that period. Yet, in all the history of the church, there has never been a physical miracle recorded which exceeded the magnitude of the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead. Some men have made great claims, but Jesus did not need to make any claims at all. The man who had been decomposing in a tomb for the past four days was now standing perfectly whole.

Jesus' promise was not only "*He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also,*" but he also said, "*...and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.*" I have heard many muse about the greater miracles we are going to perform above what Jesus did. They say, "We are not just going to heal the lame, we are going to cause arms and legs to grow where there are none." Such things are at best mere supposition, but usually just foolish boasting. Can God do it? Absolutely! But even then, would it be a greater physical miracle than calling a decomposing body back to life?

Lazarus' resurrection was a temporal miracle. Perhaps it was decades later, but Lazarus' body died again. Jesus gave us a basis for comparing temporal, or physical miracles, with eternal things. He said, "*And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from*

thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.” Matthew 18:9. Can you see his message that the salvation of a person’s soul is greater than the loss or restoration of their natural sight?

Every great work Jesus did upon earth was a witness of the greater work he came to accomplish. He came as *“the Lamb of God”* to *“take away our sin.”* I John 3:5. It is actually this *“greater work”* that almost all the church staggers at in unbelief. To tell someone the blood of Christ will take sin out of your heart, mind, and nature is considered to be beyond the realm of possibility, even for God. We believe Jesus can raise the dead, heal the lame, open blind eyes, but we recoil at the truth that he actually takes sin out of our heart.

Jesus’ promise to those who believe him is, *“greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.”* He explains this when he later says, *“But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.”* John 16:5-6. Jesus’ path to go to the Father was through the cross. It was there he would destroy sin and Satan, and thereby bring deliverance and salvation for all who would come to Him. This was His *“greater work!”*

God gave a promise to Christ through Isaiah, saying, *“I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.”* Isaiah 42:6-7. The true mission of Christ was to open the eyes of the spiritually blind and bring them out of the prison of sin. He accomplished this for all upon the cross and committed the ministry of this *“greater work”* to the church.

As *“ambassadors for Christ”* we are sent into the world *“in Christ’s stead.”* II Corinthians 5:20. The *“greater works”* we are given to do is to preach the gospel and minister its saving power to *“everyone who believes it.”* Romans 1:16. When you see a person delivered from the power and presence of sin, you are seeing the *“greater works”* of Christ manifest.

Some may be offended when I call signs and miracles the “lesser works” of Christ, but it is true. Yet, these “lesser works” are still beyond the ability of any man. These are only done by the working of the Holy Ghost through the people of God. The situation I see in the church today is that, as a whole, we deny the “*greater works*” (deliverance and freedom from sin), and we lack the “lesser works” (the manifestation of true miracles). We end up with a so-called salvation which makes no one free and miracles that often are only wishful thinking. Without the outpouring of God’s Spirit, you will not see the miraculous “lesser works,” and without the preaching of “*the truth*” which “*shall make you free*” John 8:32, you will never see the “*greater works.*” O how we need both to be manifested in the earth today!

IMPATIENCE AND ADULTERY

We received a letter recently from a lady who said we thought ourselves to be perfect and just like God because we teach freedom from sin through the blood of Christ. The article below is my reply I sent to this lady. I am sharing this in hopes it might be helpful to others.

Dear _____,

I usually do not respond to letters if I feel the writer is just attacking or wants to argue. Since I did not sense this was your purpose in writing to us, I will seek to address some of the things you said.

You claimed that a person sinned if they were impatient, if they overeat ice cream, if they argue a point with their spouse concerning finances, if they injure themselves and say “O darn,” or if they defend themselves from a person who is beating on them. I do not believe it is your intent, but in making these claims you sound like those God rebuked because they “*make a man an offender for a word...*” Isaiah 29:21. Do you really believe, as you stated in your letter, that everyone has sin in their thoughts every day?

The Bible does not say those who do the things you mentioned will not inherit the kingdom of God. However, when the Bible speaks of “*Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like*” it says, “**....they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**” Galatians 5:19-21. The Apostle Paul is so adamant about this that he repeats it in I Corinthians 6:9-10 and in Ephesians 5:5-6. Those who seek to make impatience to be the same as adultery, hatred, and drunkenness, are in effect telling the adulterer, the hate-filled, and the drunkard that God will receive them when his word clearly says he will not.

Those who ignore Paul’s repeated warnings about what and who will not inherit the kingdom of God can conjure up beautiful philosophical doctrines about how God will sweep sinful people into his eternal presence, but if you have to ignore the word of God to say it then it is just not true.

We preach the blood of Christ that makes the believer free from sin, first because it is the word of God, and secondly, because it is the only answer that takes the adultery out of the adulterer and hatred out of the hater, because it takes sin out of the sinner. Since all were unrighteous, and the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, then salvation must deliver the unrighteous from their unrighteousness and make them righteous. This is exactly what Jesus Christ did upon the cross. The Bible says, “*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.

We are not saying that a child of God might not sometimes be impatient or even grumpy. This does not mean that sin is in their heart, but rather they may be lacking in the fulness of the fruit of the Spirit which increases as we draw close to Christ. An apple tree that is lacking apples still cannot bear oranges. A child of God may be lacking the fullness of love, but they will not possess the sin of “hate” unless something has gone very wrong in their walk with God. Remember, the Apostle John told us, “*Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.*” I John 3:15. If the Apostle John says no one who

hates a brother has eternal life in them, why do you dispute with us for saying the same thing?

You accused us of giving a list for salvation. In no way have we ever done such a thing. No good work earns or proves salvation, but true salvation always produces good works. God's list, however, is written in the heart of his people. He said, "*I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.*" Hebrews 10:16. Do you believe that God keeps his word and writes his law in the hearts and minds of his people? That is why a child of God does not do the things which the Bible says shall not inherit the kingdom of God. God changes their heart. That is what true salvation by grace is! Yes, as you said, a person can receive salvation ten seconds before they die, but if they did not die, everything in their life would be different because their heart was washed by the blood of Christ.

Finally, you asked if we knew the compassion of Jesus Christ. Does compassion assure someone God will receive them into heaven when they are doing things which the Bible clearly says shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Is not a lie filled with love and tenderness still a lie? I believe true compassion would tell them the truth, whether they love to hear it or not. In that same spirit, I have not written to offend, but to share the truth of Christ.

WEEP FOR THE CHILDREN

In the first chapter of Romans, the Apostle Paul reminds us of Israel's course after their deliverance from Egypt to their destruction in the days of Nebuchadnezzar. They were a people who "*when they knew God, they glorified him not as God.*" Romans 1:21. They rejected His voice at Mt Sinai and instead made and worshipped a golden calf. In doing so they "*...changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.*" Romans 1:23. They "*changed the truth of God into a lie*" Romans 1:25, and sought to erase God from their mind and thoughts. Romans 1:28. Because of these offences, God turned them over to three distinct judgments which prepared them for destruction by the armies of Babylon.

The first judgment was “...**God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves.**” Romans 1:24. The second judgment was “...**God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another...**” Romans 1:26-27. The third judgment was “...**God gave them over to a reprobate mind.**” Romans 1:28. These preparatory judgments of God so degraded Israel that they had no strength to stand when the armies of their enemies gathered to destroy them.

For decades I have been preaching that America was being given over by God to these same abominations because we have offended Him in every way Old Testament Israel had done. When the Supreme Court mandated that gay marriage be legal in every state, I recognized that we had already been given over by God to “*vile affections.*” I understood that since this was the case, these “*vile affections*” would take possession of the children of America without discrimination. It would consume the child of the politician along with the child of the preacher. It would take hold of the daughter of the banker and the son of the plumber. The doctor also, along with the garbage collector would lose their children to these “*vile affections*” which would fill the land.

Last week I came across a small news article concerning a study made by the Federal CDC (Center for Disease Control). The study surveyed over 17,000 students in 152 High Schools across America. The following is a direct quote from the Newmax article dated May 1, 2023.

“Nearly 25 percent of high school students identify as something other than straight, more than double than previous years, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's biennial Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

Just 15 percent in 2017 answered that they were "gay," "lesbian," "bisexual," "or questioning" their sexual preference, though the CDC notes that changes to how it states the questions could be responsible for the rise.”

I went to bed after reading this article and woke the next morning with the following words going over and over in my heart and mind. **“And I saw unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon...”** I recognized this as being what the Apostle John saw when he wrote, *“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. Just as the second step which God took in preparing Israel for judgment was to give them over to vile affections, unclean spirits have been given free reign across our land to prepare this great nation for the *“great day of Almighty God.”*

According to this study by the CDC, one in four American High School students have already been seduced and opened themselves to these unclean spirits of perversion. This is not just a flood. This is a demonic tsunami! And yet, it could not be if God had not allowed it. And God would never have allowed it if we as a nation had not offended him in every way possible, just as Israel did.

There is no election which can turn back this horrific flood. The only answer would be a true repentance which would grip moms, dads, politicians, plumbers, preachers, and parishioners across this land. Yet, such a revival will never come through a church which revels in its own sinfulness. Judgment must begin at the house of God. 1 Peter 4:7.

One final thing I want to share. When John saw the demonic *“locusts”* swarm over the earth, they were commanded to hurt *“...only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.”* Revelation 9:4. I say to the parents of America: Find a place to worship where the presence of God abides. Throw away the fallacy filled doctrines of men which leave you a captive to sin, and lay hold of the truth of Christ from His word which is able to make both you and your children free from sin, Satan, and every power of darkness. Gather into the presence of God until you have the assurance that both you and your household are sealed by the Spirit and presence of God Almighty, the Father of Jesus Christ our Lord! Be one of those who John saw *“which follow the Lamb*

whithersoever he goeth” Revelation 14:4, and you will know the victory of the Lamb! Revelation 17:14.

AWAKEN THE PARENTS

A few weeks ago, I wrote a Simply Christ article in which I referenced the findings of a recent CDC study concerning the sexual identity of American High School students. This study found that almost 25% of High School students did not identify themselves as “straight.” This was double the percentage of just a few years before.

In another study, a 2021 Gallop Poll surveyed the percentage of Americans self-identifying as LGBTQ. Again, it revealed some astounding statistics. The “traditionalist generation” (those born before 1946) has less than 1% who are LGBTQ. The rest of the results are shown below.

Traditionalists (born before 1946)	0.8% LGBTQ
Baby boomers (born 1946-1964)	2.6% LGBTQ
Generation X (born 1965-1980)	4.2% LGBTQ
Millennials (born 1981-1996)	10.5% LGBTQ
Generation Z (born 1997-2003)	20.8% LGBTQ

According to this study, a person born in 2003 is 26 times more likely to be LGBTQ than a person born in 1946. These staggering figures do not even include those born after 2003. For decades “knowledgeable people” have assured us that those who are LGBTQ are a product of a natural genetic selection in a very small percentage of people and has little or nothing to do with environment or spiritual influence. The rapid increase in percentages of people caught up in the LGBTQ lifestyle reveals the absolute fallacy of such an argument.

The truth of the matter is that God has given America up to “*vile affections*” just as he did with ancient Israel. Romans 1:26-27. Our children are being consumed by unclean spirits as parents, pastors, and teachers drift along in a slumber of spiritual death. **“Your**

words are filled with hate” some say, but I say **“No! My words are calling for moms and dads to wake up before their children also are dragged into this pit of darkness.”** My heart breaks for what America’s parents along with their children are facing. The words of Jesus so fit this hour, when he said, *“...weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.”* Luke 23:28.

Parents must wake up. They must wake up to what is surrounding their children, entertaining their children, teaching their children, and has access to their children through cell phones and social media. But most importantly, parents must awake from their own spiritual slumber of death.

The prophet Joel foretold the great army of God’s judgment which would devastate the land of Israel. He said, *“A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, **and nothing shall escape them.**”* Joel 2:3. In this same manner, the unclean spirits of perversion which are marching though our land are claiming the children of the preacher, the teacher, and the plumber along with the children of the politician, the movie star, and the billionaire. Neither Democrat nor Republican is immune.

God gave only one answer which would turn back his army of judgment. He said, *“Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.”* Joel 2:12-13. We can stand by while our children and grandchildren are consumed by this scourge upon our land, or we can humble ourselves before God in true repentance and true faith in Christ Jesus.

If our moms and dads, grandfathers and grandmothers, politicians and preachers will indeed humble themselves with broken hearts towards God, His promise is *“I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done great things. Fear not, O land; be glad*

and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things.” Joel 2:20-21. It is not the ensnared children of America which must be removed from the land, but the vile spirit which has ensnared them. Some may think this impossible, but remember **“the Lord will do great things!”**

EVERYONE GOES TO HEAVEN

Recently, I was speaking with a woman from Nigeria who has lived in the United States for over a decade. While mentioning a funeral service I conducted the day before, I said, “In all my 61 years I have never been to the funeral of a lost person.” She looked at me (perhaps not understanding I was pointing out an absurdity) and said, “Yes, I’ve noticed that everyone in America goes to Heaven.” “Is it not that way in Nigeria?” I asked. “No,” she said, “In Nigeria many people do not go to Heaven.”

Of course, neither of us believed these statements represented the actual truth. It’s just that this is what is presented as being true for every departed soul. I heard a minister at the service of a lady who, though baptized as a child, had nothing to do with God her entire life and died due to continual drug and alcohol abuse. “The way she lived lets us know she was not trusting in works for salvation, but in Christ alone,” the minister said as he assured those present of her acceptance into God’s eternal glory.

A few years ago, my dad, Leroy Surface, preached the funeral of a man who openly rejected any acknowledgement of Jesus Christ. He was a hardworking man but would get drunk every evening and eventually died of issues brought on by his alcoholism. Before my dad spoke, a woman got up and told the congregation God had spoken to her that this man was now in Heaven. When my dad stood to speak, he told the congregation. “This woman has the hope that this man is in Heaven, but I cannot offer you that hope. I will not tell you that you can live like this man lived and still be accepted by God. If you do, you will be lost.” The woman was very angry with my dad, but his main concern was the souls of those who heard his words that day. The woman’s brother was at the service and had just the day before been diagnosed with terminal brain cancer. He also

had lived his life ignoring Jesus Christ but that day he turned to the Lord and was saved. A few months later he died. This man would have been eternally damned if someone had not stood against the fallacy of those who assure the people they could live in sin and still go to Heaven.

The problem is far worse in the church house. It seems anyone who attends, watches, supports, or even likes a Christian church or ministry is automatically guaranteed Heaven. One worldwide ministry proclaims that a person can be in the act of adultery when the Lord returns, but “if their faith is in the cross” (which is that particular ministry’s motto and message), they will be received by God. They simply ignore the Apostle Paul’s words which say, “**Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.**” 1 Corinthians 6:9.

Every person, pastor and minister needs to understand this one thing. A person can attend your or my church for decades, but if the nature of sin has not been washed from their heart by the blood of Christ, all our preaching, teaching, compassion, love, encouragement, patience, and counseling has profited them nothing. They are dying in their sins John 8:24 and will be lost! And if we mislead them concerning this issue, we are partners in damning their soul! Just because they like us does not mean they know God.

Compassion that costs a person their soul is not compassion at all.

NEVER AGAIN

The first chapter in the Bible begin with the words “*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*” Genesis 1:1. After giving a brief account of the creation, the scripture then records “*Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.*” Genesis 2:1. At this point there is no mention of evil, iniquity, depravity, or spiritual darkness. We only know that “*God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.*” Genesis 1:31.

It is not until the Serpent deceived Eve that we discover “evil” in God’s creation. This evil began in an angel God called “...*the anointed cherub that covereth.*” Ezekiel 28:14. The Hebrew word translated “*covereth*” in this passage speaks of “protecting.” This angel was made to be a “*protector*” and God set this angel “... *in Eden the garden of God...*” Ezekiel 28:13. I believe he was set there to watch over the man and woman God had made. God completely trusted this angel until the evil of his heart was discovered. God spoke to this angel, saying, “*Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.*” Ezekiel 28:15.

The iniquity in this angel was that he “...*said in thine 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. This iniquity was manifested when he deceived Eve, and through Adam’s transgression, brought the whole of humanity under Satan’s dominion.

This first act of iniquity set in motion events that would devastate “*the Heavens and the Earth*” for thousands of years. The Bible says, “*And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels...*” Revelation 12:7. This rebellion not only brought war to the Heavens, but it brought about the damnation of many billions of souls contaminated with the disease of sin. With this it also brought untold cruelty, violence, murder, and every horrid and perverted thing imaginable. Man, who had been created in God’s image, was now a defiled creation which bore the nature of the Serpent.

This war in Heaven continued for thousands of years without victory for either side. Only when Jesus Christ shed his blood upon the cross was the victory won. Then, finally, “...*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.*” Revelation 12:9. We know this was accomplished at the cross because the next words spoken were “***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.

Now let’s move forward many thousands of years from the creation of the first heavens and earth to a second such event. The Apostle John wrote, “*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.*” Revelation 21:2. As John saw the “*New Heavens and New Earth,*” he also saw “*...the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven...*” Revelation 21:2. Then he heard God say, “*Behold, I make all things new.*” Revelation 21:5.

As John continues describing the “*New Jerusalem*”, he comes to these final words. “*And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. **And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.***” Revelation 21:25-27.

The words, “*there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth,*” are more than a warning. They are a promise! Iniquity in the heart of a single angel in the first creation, defiled and devastated both “*the heavens and the Earth.*” This will not be allowed to happen in the new. The defiled will never enter in, and those who enter will never become defiled.

Jesus was clear that the content of a person’s heart is what “*defiles*” them. He said, “*For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: **All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.***” Mark 7:21-23. This is the reason Jesus Christ shed his blood for you. The Bible says, “*For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean (the defiled), 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 “*conscience*” speaks of your inner most thoughts and feelings. Jesus

Christ shed his blood to wash the defilement of sin from your heart and nature.

Today, there is a fountain open for sin and uncleanness. In God's great love and mercy, he made a way for sinful humanity to be purged from sin so they might be with him in the "*New Heavens and Earth*." Yet even his love will not change his promise: "***there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth.***" Those who reject the cleansing power of the blood of Christ today banish themselves from the "Heaven" of tomorrow. It was defiled once, but never again! Sin will never enter there!

A PLACE TO LIVE

I often write and preach about the freedom Christ's death on the cross accomplished in the children of God. The Apostle Paul summarizes this work, saying, "*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*" Romans 6:6. So real and powerful is this work that though the simple act of believing the truth we are "*made free from sin.*" Romans 6:18. Yet, for many, this glorious liberty of the children of God is quickly stolen away by the fallacies they are fed from pulpit.

Consider the difference between the "profession" of the modern church and what the word of God actually says. Paul instructs the believer to "*...reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" Romans 6:11. Yet, in spite of this clear instruction from God's word, Christians are daily told to confess "We are all sinners and we sin every day." These are opposite and opposing statements. One recognizes the reality of what Christ did on the cross that makes us free from sin. The other denies Christ's work of deliverance and clings to the false hope that sinful creatures will inherit eternal glory.

The Apostle Paul understood that we stand by faith, that is, we believe the truth and trust in Christ to fulfill his word in us. **When the truth is replaced with a fallacy, faith is changed into**

delusion. This is why the apostles stood so strong in defense of the truth. In the gospel, seeing and believing the truth of the glory of Christ causes us to be “*changed into the same image.*” II Corinthians 3:18.

Because Paul understood the importance of seeing the truth of what was accomplished in Christ for the child of God, he prayed that “*The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know ... what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.*” Ephesians 1:18-21. It is here that Paul begins to show us more concerning what was accomplished for the believer through Christ’s resurrection and ascension into glory. Both of these events speak of something “*wrought in Christ*” which brings a glorious reality to the child of God.

The Apostle Peter tells us God has “*...begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*” I Peter 1:3. The power for us to be “*born again*” as new creatures in Christ was accomplished when the Spirit of God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Paul says God has “*...quickened us together with Christ.*” Ephesians 2:5. Just as Christ’s death on the cross delivered us from sin, His resurrection gave us the same life that was in Christ Jesus. John 1:4. We are not just “*children of God by faith.*” Galatians 3:26. Paul says, “*And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*” Galatians 4:6. What began with faith on our part, culminated with the very Spirit of Christ coming into us in its full life-giving power. As the Apostle John wrote, “*Beloved, now are we the sons of God...!*” I John 3:2.

Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are given life. But there is still more! Paul says God not only “*quickened us together with Christ,*” but he also “*raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*” Ephesians 2:6. God not only gave us the life of Christ within, He also gave us a glorious place to live! He calls this “*...heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*” It is a kingdom of “*righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*” Romans 14:17.

God gave us wonderful insight into this “*heavenly place*” through the prophet Isaiah. He spoke of a time when “...*God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you.*” Isaiah 35:4. This God did when Jesus Christ offered himself upon the cross. The prophet continued, saying, “*Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing...*” Isaiah 35:5-6. These great miracles were seen in the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, but they are also seen every time a sinner turns to Christ and is “...*delivered from the power of darkness, and hath translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son:*” Colossians 1:13. In this “*heavenly place,*” those who were once deaf, blind, dumb, and lame, now hear, see, leap for joy, and sing praise to the King of glory.” As the song “Amazing Grace” proclaims, “I was blind but now I see!”

This “*heavenly place*” is filled with “*springs of water,*” and Isaiah said, “***No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there:***” Isaiah 35:9. Satan, as a roaring lion, may walk through this world seeking and finding those he can devour, but be assured Christ has given you a land to live in where there is no roaring lion. There is not a single devil or any other unclean spirit in Christ. God has lifted his children up in Christ to a place far above all such things. You may hear the roar of the lion from beneath, but he cannot devour you.

There is no unclean thing or person in this kingdom God has made for his children to walk in. The prophecy says, “***And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it...***” Isaiah 35:8. God was again speaking of this kingdom when he said, “***Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.***” Isaiah 60:21.

This is not a land for after we die. Paul says these “*heavenly places*” are “*in Christ.*” All that is “*in Christ*” is prepared for you today. In eternity we will not only be “*in Christ,*” we will be “*with Christ.*” Consider this and let it be established in your faith and in your heart. **In the death of Christ, we are delivered from sin; in the**

resurrection of Christ, we are given life; and in the ascension of Christ, we are given a place to live! Jesus spoke of this the day before his crucifixion, saying, *“I go to prepare a place for you.”* John 14:2.

ISRAEL AND GOD’S PRESENCE

In 70 A.D., after a seven-month siege, the Roman army broke through the defenses of Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple, burned the city, and demolished its walls. Almost all the Jewish inhabitants were either slaughtered or enslaved. Over the next 70 years, the Romans brutally put down two other great Jewish uprisings, culminating in near genocide of the Jewish people who lived in the regions we now call Israel and Palestine. Those who survived were scattered to nations throughout the Roman Empire and beyond.

Jesus foretold of Jerusalem’s destruction, the scattering of the Jewish people, and the nineteen centuries Jerusalem would be controlled by the *“Gentiles,”* saying, *“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”* Luke 21:24. It was not until the “seven day war” in June of 1967 that the *“times of the Gentiles”* to occupy and control Jerusalem came to an end.

Since the 70 A.D. destruction of Jerusalem, no people on earth have suffered so much and still remained a distinct people as have the Jewish people. As Christianity rose to political power, the Jews, who once persecuted the Christians, became the persecuted. They were subject to forced baptisms and conversions. They faced mass expulsions and banishments from many European nations. They were forbidden most occupations and were used as scapegoats for disease, famine, and economic failure. On many occasions there were great massacres of Jews by those who claimed the name of Christ. It is evident that those who authorized and committed such things did not know Christ, but still they did it in the name of Jesus Christ.

With the rise of Islam, the Jews found a new persecutor. While at times they were protected, they were regulated to be second-class citizens and soon became the scapegoat for defeats or tragedies in the Muslim world. Under Islam they also suffered similar expulsions and massacres as they did under Christendom.

All these persecutions came to a climax with the Holocaust, when the Nazis slaughtered 6 million Jews during World War II. Reformed as a nation in 1948, Israel has suffered continuous attacks from nations and groups opposed to its existence. Even today, antisemitism rages in nations around the globe. Just this month we saw the great massacre of Israeli men, women, and children at the hands of the evil group called Hamas. The only reason evil men have not been able to completely destroy the Jewish people is revealed by the Prophet Isaiah. He wrote, “*Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.*” Isaiah 1:9. God himself has stayed the hands of the destroyers so that one day he can fulfill the promise he made to Abraham concerning his natural “seed.” Although they rejected His Son, God had not forsaken His promise.

In the final week before going to the cross, Jesus wept over Jerusalem, saying, “*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate:*” Luke 13:34-35. The Greek word translated “*desolate*” means “*lonesome*” or “*empty*.” This was a warning that Israel would be left “alone” without God’s presence because of their rejection of God’s Son, Jesus Christ. Without God’s presence, they would no longer have God’s protection.

For 3½ years, God reached out to Israel through Jesus Christ. He healed their sick, opened the blind eyes, cast out devils, raised the dead, and declared the word of God unto them. Still, they rejected him as their Messiah and demanded his crucifixion. With a broken heart, Jesus said, “*Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*” Luke 13:35. He had continually called unto them, but they would not

hear him. Now, he would not come to them again until they first embraced him as their promised “Messiah.”

Since that time, the Jewish people have diligently sought for Messiah to come unto them, but he has not. Jesus’ words were steadfast: **“Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me.”** John 7:34. While they seek Messiah, they reject Jesus who is Messiah. For this reason, even though they seek him, they do not find him. Regardless of the false assurances many evangelical leaders give to the Jewish people, their Messiah will never come to them until they first turn to Jesus Christ. Yet, how could it be that a people who have suffered so many cruelties at the hands of those who claimed to know Jesus would ever call upon Jesus Christ? I know such a thing seems impossible, but it is already recorded in God’s word.

Contrary to my sincere prayers and desire, the sufferings of the Jewish people will continue and increase. If they defeat Hamas, still another adversary will arise. It will increase until it seems as though Israel will cease to exist. All their military power and alliances will fail them. Yet in that hour, God has promised a great turning to Jesus. He said, **“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon (toward) me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.”** Zechariah 12:10. In an hour when it seems all hope is lost, their hearts will begin to turn towards Jesus Christ who is their promised Messiah. It is only then the presence of God will return to the Jewish people, and when that happens ...they will no longer be alone!

“Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.” Zechariah 14:3-4.

THE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY

One day Jesus entered a synagogue and, the scripture records, “...*there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.*” Mark 1:23-24. This demon was afraid because it recognized Jesus as “*the Holy One of God.*” The demon’s words, “*Are you come to destroy us?*” were a reference to the promises God made of Satan’s destruction. When God spoke of the “seed of the woman,” He said to the Serpent, “...*it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*” Genesis 3:15. This was a prophecy of the destruction of Satan and his works by Jesus Christ upon the cross. God also spoke through Ezekiel concerning Satan’s destruction, saying, “...*I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.*” Ezekiel 28:16. The demons knew these prophecies of the scriptures and trembled when they realized the “*Holy One*” was standing in their midst.

The revelation of Jesus Christ is always based on prophecies of the scriptures. When a blind beggar named Bartimaeus heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, “...*he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.*” Mark 10:47. This cry of Bartimaeus was a twofold recognition. First, in calling Jesus “*the Son of David,*” he was no doubt referring to the prophecy which identified Christ as the offspring of David, saying, “*And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him...*” Isaiah 11:1-2. Secondly, Bartimaeus, like all the Jews, knew the prophecy of Christ which said, “...*fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing....*” Isaiah 35:4-6. Because Bartimaeus believed that Jesus was the promised “*Son of David,*” he then also knew because of this prophecy that Christ would open the eyes of the blind. He simply called upon Jesus and was made whole!

As they journeyed to the place where God instructed Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering, Isaac asked Abraham, “Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” Genesis 22:7. Abraham answered, “My son, **God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering...**” Genesis 22:8. Then after God stayed Abraham’s hand from offering Isaac as a sacrifice, “Abraham called the name of that place *Jehovahjireh*: as it is said to this day, **In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.**” Genesis 22:14. This was a declaration that all Israel would see God provide His own “lamb” for a sacrifice! The Prophet Isaiah described the Messiah as a sacrificial lamb offered for the whole world, saying, “... *his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: So shall he sprinkle many nations...*” Isaiah 52:13-15. When John the Baptist heard God identify Jesus of Nazareth as His “Beloved Son,” he knew by the prophecies that he was seeing God’s “lamb.” This is why he began to tell others to “**Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!**” John 1:29.

When Martha, the sister of Lazarus, told Jesus “*I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world*” John 11:27, she was acknowledging two undeniable truths of the gospel. One is established in the 2nd Psalm. God spoke through David, saying, “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, **Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.**” Psalms 2:6-7. The promised Messiah whom God would set as “king upon the holy hill of Zion” would also be the “only begotten Son of God.” God continues, saying, “**Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.**” Psalms 2:12. When it was revealed in Martha that Jesus is the Christ whom God promised, she then knew by the prophecies of the scriptures that he was not just a natural man but was in fact the Son of God! He only needed to speak the word, and her brother Lazarus would be raised from the dead!

Peter expressed the revelation of Jesus Christ in similar words as Martha. He said to Jesus, “*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*” Matthew 16:16. The most definitive prophecy of Christ in the Bible was delivered to the prophet Daniel by the angel Gabriel. He spoke of “*the Messiah the Prince*” who would come “*to finish the*

transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness...” Daniel 9:24-25. Although they did not understand how, the Jews knew that when Messiah came he would “*make and end of sins.*” The Apostle John confirms this, saying, “*And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.*” I John 3:5. In saying to Jesus, “*Thou art the Christ,*” Peter was saying, “**You are the one who will make an end of sins! You are the one who will make reconciliation for iniquity! You are the one who will bring in everlasting righteousness!**” Peter would later understand that Jesus accomplished this work through his death on the cross, in and for everyone who believes the truth and trusts in Him!

The revelation of Jesus Christ is not based on the word of Pope’s, theologians, seminaries or denominations. This revelation always comes by the Spirit of God and is based on the prophecies of the scriptures. When reminding us that the apostles “*were eyewitnesses of his majesty,*” Peter asserts, “*We have also a more sure word of prophecy; ...Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*” II Peter 1:19-21. The simple prophecies found in the scriptures which tell of what Christ would do when he came are “**more sure**” than even the supernatural things the apostles experienced as they walked with Jesus Christ.

The last nineteen centuries are littered with the fallacies of men who forsook the testimony God gave in His word concerning Jesus Christ for something they claimed was a new revelation or supernatural experience. If their revelation or “supernatural experience” was of God, it would have pointed to the simple prophecies of Christ which have been in God’s word all along. None of our experiences, whether “supernatural” or not, establish what is God’s truth. As Paul wrote, “*...let God be true, but every man a liar...*” Romans 3:4. “*The record that God gave of his Son*” I John 5:10 is clearly recorded in the prophecies of the scriptures for those who will simply believe it.

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