

PASTORAL STUDIES:

MIGHTILY GREW THE WORD OF GOD

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS	PAGE
<u>Chapter 1</u> Which Worketh In Me Mightily	1
<u>Chapter 2</u> I Came From the Father and I Go To the Father	17
<u>Chapter 3</u> Mightily Grew the Word of God	36
<u>Chapter 4</u> Your Fathers Tempted Me Proved Me and Saw My Works	55
<u>Chapter 5</u> That Which Is Natural	75
<u>Chapter 6</u> To The Saints	95
<u>Chapter 7</u> With Boldness They Speak Thy Word	112
<u>Chapter 8</u> The Mouth of Them That Speak Lies Shall Be Stopped	129
<u>Chapter 9</u> Let No Corrupt Communication Proceed out of Your Mouth	150
<u>Chapter 10</u> Depart Not From the Words of My Mouth	170

Which Worketh In Me Mightily

Chapter #1

The mighty works of God are made known by the mighty word of God. If God's word is revealed mightily, we expect to see mighty works of God. On the other hand, the absence of God's word produces mighty works of the soul.

In this chapter, we shall come to understand the difference between mighty works of God and mighty works of the soul. It will be helpful to keep in mind that mighty works of the Spirit are not always seen by men who oppose the work of God.

Sometimes God works in a quiet manner. When he is at work in this way, he is just as powerful as when the mountains quake. God is all powerful. As such, he does not have to convince man of this truth. Satan, on the other hand, is the pretender. The pretender has to make people believe in him.

"Show n' tell" is a work of the flesh. The devil uses this method to greatly deceive the world. When God demonstrates his mighty power, it is never toward the end of proving that he has power. God works to pull man out of hell.

Consider the opportunity God had to convince the Jews and Gentiles that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16), when he was on the cross. Did God stoop to the level of man's fleshly work to convince them that his Son was at work on the cross? The answer is no! The Lord God followed his plan of salvation for man.

It mattered not what the people did, God did that which was

good for man. "The people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God" (Lk. 23:35).

Indeed Jesus was the Christ; God's chosen One. He was not known by the Jews nor Gentiles who put him to death. Jesus was sure, however, of the Christ Spirit indwelling him. He had gone through his test in the garden of Gethsemane. But "there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him" (Lk. 22: 43). The strength of God was enough to carry the flesh through the ordeal of the crucifixion.

The ordeal was made the worse by unbelieving men who mocked the work of God. See what is being conveyed. The crucifixion of Christ is God's very work of salvation. In the face of this mighty work, religious men did make fun.

"And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyed the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou by the Son of God, come down from the cross" (Matt. 27:39-40). The men were looking at a "mass of flesh" as if the torn, battered flesh was God's Son.

They saw a man suffering like two other men, one at his left hand and another at his right. They rightly understood that the same nails used to tear into the flesh of Jesus were also used to tear into the flesh of the other two." What they did not know was the mighty work of God.

The mighty work of God was taking place on the inside of Jesus while the religious men thought that they had put to death the one

who was in opposition to their religion. While the outward man perished, the inward Christ stood in the evil day. Christ, the Spirit in Jesus, withstood the devil's death blow to the soul of Jesus by taking up the suffering in the Spirit.

"Christ died for the ungodly" men, (Rom. 5:6), who stood by mocking the flesh. The wicked men were calling on the cursed "mass of flesh" to come down from the cross. They even said that they would believe him if he had (Matt. 27:42).

Indeed if Jesus had come down from the cross in the state he was in, he would not have been of any help to man. It was not for a physical man to save man. Salvation is of the Lord (Ps. 3:8). "Now the Lord is that Spirit" (2 Cor.3:17). It was the Christ at work in Jesus that the religious priests and people were not able to see.

The work of salvation was a mighty work of God going on inside of Jesus while ignorant men were mocking a cursed man. Know ye not that when the Father departed from the Christ Spirit, separation from God took place?

When "Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, E'li, E'li, la'ma sa-bach'-tha-ni? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me" (Matt. 27:46), spiritual death took place. Spiritual death was necessary in order to bring spiritual life unto man. Man already had physical life, and he was also able to die a physical death. What he did not have was eternal life or the very nature of God.

See the commotion of the rebellious soul as the leaders of

Israel crucified Jesus. "The chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God" (vv. 41-43) o other.

What were they saying? Was it not that the proof of Jesus' claim to be the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. 26:63), was to be found in an outward demonstration of God's power? Of course, it was. They were like men today who look to the day when a physical Jesus is to return to earth.

The people who put Jesus to death understood not the mighty working of God in the Spirit. There was no "Show n' tell." Even the outward sign which God gave unto the people via the darkness of the day was not understood (v. 45).

The quiet work of God was taking place in the Spirit, but men were focusing on the outward man of the flesh. Yes, it is true that Jesus played his part perfectly. He submitted totally to the Christ Spirit within even to the point of becoming a curse in order for Christ to work the saving work of God.

The mighty work of God was not recognized by natural man. Had the outward work of Jesus (being crucified) been the work of salvation, it would have proved some value or good in the flesh. Yet, God has said "That no flesh should glory in his presence... That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (I Cor. 1:29, 31).

What did we have to say earlier in this Chapter about the Lord? We established that "the Lord" was not a physical person. The Bible tells us that "the Lord is that Spirit." Jesus was able to glory in the Spirit. He knew his work was a work of submission to the Lord or Spirit within him.

Is this not the call for every believer? Must we do other than did Jesus? We must do the same as did Jesus. He allowed God to work the quiet work of God within while wicked men persecuted his flesh.

I said above that men today are looking for the return of a physical Jesus. This is evident in their continuous idolatrous practice of worship via the senses. Everywhere one goes, one can find people who claim to be Christians, but hold to worship in the flesh. These are set up for a great fall unless they repent.

If God did not have Jesus to come down from the cross as a physical man to work salvation, we can be sure that a physical man called Jesus will not return in the end to continue the work of salvation. God is a Spirit. This truth defies all fleshly works about God's Son being physical or natural. God's Son is like unto himself. God's sons are like God also. They are not physical beings; they are spirits (John 1:13).

If you have some understanding about the mighty work of God in saving man, you should appreciate knowing that the same God who worked quietly in that work is also at work today.

As a Spirit, God comes unto man by way of the Spirit. Each child of God has received the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the

Comforter who came from the Father. The Holy Ghost is also the Spirit of God or the Spirit of Christ.

We are told in Rom. 8:9 that every person who is a child of God has the spirit of God. This Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ in the same verse. It is by the spirit of Christ that God works his mighty works.

Which Worketh In Me Mightily

The prophet Elijah was a mighty man of God. He spoke a word of prayer, "And it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (James 5:17-18).

This same prophet withstood Baal's prophets on Mount Carmel. "And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there" (I Kgs. 18:40).

Men look upon Elijah today as a mighty man of God. Sadly to say, they look at the outward man thinking that he was God's power.

In this, they miss the quiet work of the Spirit which was in Elijah.

As a young Pentecostal minister, I use to hear the older elders boasting about themselves. One would say that he was Peter, another Paul, and a third John. They did so to indicate the power of their ministries. To not be out done, one of the older elders would proclaim that he was Joshua. Finally, a more senior elder would say that he was Elijah.

These proclamations were public knowledge. The men had no shame nor understanding of what they were claiming. These were the men who were the bishops and elders over churches in their communities. They lacked knowledge about every man they claimed to have been.

Let us continue with Elijah. James tells us that Elias was "a man subject to like passions as we are" (Jam. 5:17). This made Elijah an ordinary child of God. What made Elijah to excel in the Lord was the humble heart found in him. He was in agreement with God when the nation's priests and other elders had forsaken God for Baal.

Elijah was not a great man outwardly. Had he been, he would have been like great war heroes or kings of the flesh. Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are. His greatness came about through earnest prayer. This man sought the things of the Spirit.

As for the elders mentioned above, they looked upon Elijah, Joshua, John, Paul, and Peter as if the man had something to do with his mighty works. There was absolutely nothing in any of these men that God could use to perform one work. Elijah, et.al. had to be endowed with God's likeness before God could use them.

What is God like? "God is a Spirit" (John 4:23). Thus, each of the great men of God were great, not because of their abilities, but because of God's Spirit found in them. Peter tells us that like unto himself, all of the prophets before him had the Spirit of Christ (1 Pet. 1:10-11). He calls the Spirit of Christ the Holy Ghost in 2 Pet. 1:21.

See the error of the elders mentioned above who boasted in the flesh as being one of the prophets of old or one of the apostles. They looked upon the outward man and identified with a natural man as being the mighty man of God. Yet, this could not have been true because there is no good thing in the flesh (Rom. 7:18).

The elders of today made, and I might add, are yet making, the same error as did the elders of Israel during Jesus' crucifixion. Both viewed the outward man as actor. It is not the outward man who is used by God to perform God's mighty works. I ask you this question: Why did the Holy Ghost light upon Jesus' flesh and remain thereupon?

Jesus was a physical man. He was brought forth of the flesh. The writer of Hebrews has said, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he (Jesus) also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil" (Heb. 2:14).

Jesus' flesh had to be covered by the spirit of Christ to assure the perfect work of God in him. It was through death that the devil was destroyed. The death spoken of here is death to the flesh. In order for Jesus to defeat the devil, he had to die to all that he received from his natural parents. Jesus' flesh was covered with the Christ Spirit. This is what is meant by walking in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16).

The covering of Jesus' flesh by the Christ spirit enabled God to work every work of God through Jesus. It was not Jesus doing the work anymore than it was Elijah on Mount Carmel. Jesus made

it clear on this point, saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, 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).

"The Son" refers to the Christ Spirit which was in Jesus. At the baptism of John, this Spirit came forth to the outward man to cover him, enclosing him in the Spirit (John 1:33). The Father was in the Christ Spirit directing every work. "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5:19).

The Father worked salvation via the Spirit of Christ found in Jesus. As Jesus is our perfect example in all things, we too must allow the Father to work his mighty works through the Christ Spirit which is in the believer.

Only when we yield to the workings of the Christ Spirit can we know God's works. As long as we focus on the outward man as agent in the work, we are deceived. The outward man is to do what Jesus did, namely, he is to put on Christ.

Why put on Christ? Why does the policeman put on a bullet proof vest in fighting crime? For protection. Christ is our shield. He is our whole armour of God. When we put on Christ, we allow the Spirit within us to come to the outside and cover our flesh.

Is this not the intent of Paul's words to the Romans found in Rom. 13:14? In verse 13, he shows us works of the flesh: rioting, drunkenness, chambering, wantonness, strife, and envying. Then in verse 14, he says, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make

not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof."

If every child of God automatically puts on Christ after receiving the Holy Ghost, there would be no need for the command to put on Christ. All have not put on Christ. Many of God's children today walk in the flesh as did the Galatians.

Paul said of these, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26). In this verse, he established that he is dealing with children of God. Not all of these children of God, however, were being led by the Spirit. We see how some had put on Christ, but not all.

Verse 27 reads, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." This verse helps us to understand how the child puts on Christ; he does so by baptism. The child of God must be baptized into Christ. As Christ is a Spirit, the child of God's spirit must be filled with the knowledge of God before this baptism takes place. The word for baptism spoken here is 'to imbue', which means to permeate the mind with the mind of Christ.

Get your eyes off the outward man. Look no longer for a physical Jesus who is made into pictures of the flesh. Look as does God. God looks upon the heart. If you are of God, you too must look upon the heart, for the heart is the spirit.

Did not Jesus teach, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing" (John 6:63)? Man looks at the outward appearance, but God told Samuel not to do as does man (I Sam. 16:7). The child of God must see what the Father sees, and hear what the Father hears in order to work a work for God.

This can only be done in the Spirit. God must grace the hearers to hear, and the seers to understand. As such, it is not the hearer at work, nor the seer, but God within each. We may simply say, it is Christ at work by the power of God.

Hear the words of Paul as he explained the mystery of God to the Colossians. Paul did not claim to be some great one as men make him to be today. Paul was a humble servant of God who gave the glory to God.

He wrote, "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:25-27).

Men did not understand the workings of God. Even the Jews were looking for a natural Deliverer or Saviour. God, however, sent his Son, the Christ in Jesus, as that Deliverer. Because the religious Jews understood not the things of the Spirit, they missed the Christ because they were focusing on the outward Jesus.

As for the Gentiles, Paul showed them that God had honored them to know what men of past ages knew not, namely, that Christ is not natural. Christ is a spirit as is the Father. It is Christ in the believer's spirit who is his hope of glory.

Paul goes on to tell us that it is by the Christ within the believer that the mighty works of God go forth. He said,

"Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily" (v. 29). Who was working in Paul? Christ! If Christ was working mightily in Paul, then Christ has to be a Spirit, for only a spirit can enter another.

The reason Paul was able to see the things of the Spirit is that he counted all his natural abilities, and all that he had learned as a student in religion, but dung. He did this toward the end that he might know Christ. He was willing to give up every natural ability to receive, in place, the ability of God.

If you and I do not have the same meekness of heart as did Paul, we cannot claim the things of God as did Paul and be truthful in our claim. God works through meek vessels. The spirit of Pharaoh is a proud spirit. God cannot work through men and women who claim goodness in their natural minds.

The Spirit of Pharaoh

The spirit of Pharaoh is the spirit of the world. This spirit works mightily in those who are not of God. We shall return to our earlier thought regarding the crucifixion of Christ. In doing so, I want you to see the evil work of both men and angels.

The men who agreed to put Jesus Christ to death were the outward agents of Satan. They did the will of their father in crucifying Christ even as Christ did the will of his Father in allowing them to do so.

Just as God was working out the salvation of man in the unseen spiritual sufferings of Christ, the devil was working by unseen

evil princes (angels) to bring about the crucifixion.

Let us go to Paul's words for an understanding of what took place. In I Cor. 2:4-5, Paul said, "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

The power of God is not associated with any natural man. However strong the producers of Hollywood make Samson to be, without the anointing of the Spirit, he was but a weak man. With the anointing, Samson was able to perform, not as men performs, rather as God performs.

The key to Samson's power was the agreement of Samson to maintain a covenant relationship with God. So long as Samson kept the Nazarite vow, signified by not cutting his hair (Judges 13:5), he was able to be used by God.

The key to Samson's power was not Samson, rather the moving of the Spirit. We are told as much in verses 24-25. "And the woman bore a son, and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. And the spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

The same Spirit moved Paul to speak and to preach. It was no longer Paul, rather Christ in him doing the speaking and preaching. This is the only way God works. Paul understood as much, for he informed us that Christ is God's "power and wisdom" (I Cor. 1:24).

The man who does not have the Spirit of Christ, does not have Christ's wisdom. This man's wisdom descendeth not from above, but

is earthly, sensual, devilish (Jam. 4:15). The men who agreed to put Jesus Christ to death were operating in man's wisdom. They may not have even known that their wisdom was influenced by devils.

"Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought" (I Cor. 2: 6) • The wisdom of this world is not confined to man. We have indicated above that man's wisdom is devilish. Now we see the wisdom of this world along side that of the "prince of this world."

Who are the princes of this world? Let us first establish who is the prince of this world. In determining the prince of this world, we shall be able to see clearly his princes. John 12:31, 14:30, and 16:11 speak of "the princes of the world."

In John 12:31-32, Jesus Christ said, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Clearly the prince of this world was not the Christ of God. We see as much in John 14:30 where Jesus said, "Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me."

The prince of this world is satan. He is the one who came against the Lord's Christ with evil angels and men. But when the Comforter came, he reproveth the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:8). As for the reproveth work of judgment, Jesus said, "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged" (v. 11).

The princes of this world are Satan's princes. These did not understand the wisdom of God because that wisdom is of the Spirit of Christ. The wisdom of the princes of this world is that of the spirit of Pharaoh. As Egypt is a type of the world, Pharaoh is seen as the prince of the world. There is an outward Pharaoh, and there is a hidden Pharaoh. The hidden Pharaoh is the real prince of this world. He is the devil.

When the Spirit-filled child of God speaks, Satan nor his princes (men or angels) understand. For "we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory" (I Cor. 2:7). The "hidden wisdom" is hidden from the natural mind. The mind of Christ is capable of understanding this wisdom.

But "none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (v. 8). God kept his purpose sealed from the ability of the natural mind to know what he was doing in the crucifixion.

By the spirit of deceit, Satan led his princes to perform an act which they would not have performed had they had knowledge of the act. This is typical of Satan's ways. He causes men and women to agree with him, without them knowing that he is the one behind their thoughts and deeds.

When this occurs, the person takes credit for the work. But where did the thought come from? Who gave the imagination of the heart? Evil thoughts and evil imaginations come from Satan. When Ananias and Sapphira agreed to sell their land and give the

proceeds to the church, they were victims of satan.

Peter said unto Ananias, "Why hath satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:3-4).

It was God who uncovered the devil's work in Ananias. Had God not acted, Ananias would have known about his lie, but others would not have known. Moreover, Ananias would not have known that the devil had filled his heart to lie to God.

Ananias was like unto a puppet on an invisible string. As Satan pulled the strings, he spoke, and he behaved. Satan worked the same way, behind the scenes, when Pharaoh was the prince of Egypt during Israel's bondage. He works the same way today among those who have established their own religions.

I Came From The Father And I Go To The Father

Chapter #2

When a country makes one an ambassador, that one becomes a messenger. He goes unto another country with words from his country. The ambassador's job is to carry out the deeds of the one who sent him.

John Baptist was one such man. It was written of him, "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of to the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 3:1).

John was the messenger of the Lord. He called himself as much, saying, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias" (John 1:23). Which country did John represent? He represented the country which sent him out as an ambassador.

What was the name of the country? Was it one the western nations or perhaps one of the nations from the far east? It was none of these nations. John was not sent by man; John was sent by God. If John was sent by God, then John was an ambassador from God's country.

Which country does God inhabit? God's country is a far off country. It is high above the earth. In truth, it is as different from the earth as night and day. God's country is a spiritual country while the earth is a natural country, _

To say that John was sent from God is to say that John came

forth from the Spirit. But how can that be seeing that John was flesh and blood? The outward man was flesh and blood; this one came from Zacharias and Elisabeth by the power of God. The John within, however, came from the God of heaven.

Elisabeth bore Zacharias a son, but God's son was found in Zacharias' son. The angel said, "Fear not Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. . . For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink: and shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb" (Lk. 1:13,15).

For John to be great before the Lord, he had to be great in the Spirit. That John was filled with the Holy Ghost from the womb indicates that the spirit within John was alive unto God. with John's spirit being alive, the true John was not the outward John rather the John of the Spirit. This is the one of whom it was said, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John" (John 1:6).

God did not send a natural man to do a work for him. We have indicated above that John was the man of the Spirit. Being filled with the Holy Ghost from the womb, he was kept free of sin. Thus, John was a fit servant to go before the Lord's Christ preparing the way for the latter.

When the Lord's Christ came upon the scene, he did not declare himself as being from the earth. To the contrary, he said unto the Jews, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: Ye are of this world:

I am not of this world" (John 8:23) These words clearly established a difference between Jesus Christ and the religious Jews. They also point out two worlds: one from beneath, called "this world," and the other from above, called heaven.

The world is natural. Physical people and things can be found in the world. The country above is spiritual, only spiritual people and things can be found there. This is the country spoken of in the book of Hebrews.

The writer of Hebrews said, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:13). To be a stranger is to be a foreigner.

A foreigner has to conduct himself in accordance with the laws of his country in order to represent his country well. When the laws of the country he is in conflict with his country's laws, he must obey first the higher law.

A pilgrim is a wonderer. He does not have a place that he can call home. He is like unto Abraham who "sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God" (vv. 9-10) .

When the heart is filled with God's law, there is no room to love the world neither the things that are in the world. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the

eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (I John 2:16).

Those who are of the world love the things of the world' The saints of God who died in the faith were not of the world. John Baptist was not of the world. Jesus Christ was not of the world. Each of these came from a spiritual country.

The children of God understood that they were not of the world while they were yet in the world. Knowing that they were not of the world, they "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:13). "For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country" (v. 14).

These seek a country while yet in the earth. Their hearts are given over to the things of the Spirit. "And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came, they might have had opportunity to have returned" (v. 15). Because their hearts were wholly given unto God, they had no desire to be a part of the world out of which they came.

"But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city" (v. 16). Right now the heavenly children desire a better country. They are not waiting until they die physically to act upon the things of God. God's holy children desire or long for heavenly things in their daily walk.

The holy children of God do not look upon heaven as a physical place for people who have died physically. This would make heaven a natural place. As such, it would not be of God. The natural

heaven is the home of the devil. God's holy children see heaven by faith. They live in heavenly places in Christ Jesus even as I speak (Eph. 2:6).

It takes a body to live on the face of the earth, a physical body, however, is not needed nor can dwell in heaven. Heaven is God's country. God is a Spirit. All that God allows in his place of habitation is of his Spirit. Spirit is not confined to a physical body. A spirit can travel between heaven and earth at God's will.

Jesus Christ declared that he was not of this world. He did not think as did worldly people, nor did he speak or behave as one from the earth. Indeed, once he took up the work as the Lord's Christ in the earth, he did not relate to his fleshly family as Jesus anymore.

I Came From The Father

It is important to understand this latter point because in at least two scriptures, Jesus spoke words pertaining to Mary that have been interpreted in a negative light. The first scripture is found in John 2:4.

"And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, they have no wine" (vv. 1-3). Clearly, Mary is identified as being Jesus' mother in the scriptures just cited.

Note, however, the manner of which Jesus addressed her in this public setting. He did not recognize her as mother rather he called her "Woman." "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, What have I to do with thee" (v. 4)? Is this an endearing statement or one of reproof?

Let us go to our second scripture, found in the book of Matthew. In this instance, Jesus was faced with the question of who comprised his family members. "While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him" (Matt. 12:46).

Again, it is clear that Mary, Jesus' mother, and her sons, Jesus' brothers, are the focus of attention. "Then one said unto him, Behold thy mother and thy brother stand without, desiring to speak with thee" (v. 47). Once more, take note of Jesus', response. "But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren" (vv. 48-49).

The clear implication is that those who stood without did not qualify to be called Jesus' mother and brethren. Verse 50 only adds to the accuracy of the conclusion just reached. Jesus said, "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

We are faced with a paradox. On the one hand, the Bible called Mary and her sons, Jesus' mother and brethren respectively. On the other hand, Jesus' words paint another picture. This latter

incident, coupled with the one where Jesus referred to Mary as "Woman," is paradoxical indeed.

To help us understand the spirit of Jesus' words, let us call upon John's gospel. In John 7:1, we see where Jesus avoided Jewry (Judea) because the Jews there sought to kill him. "Now the Jews feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto him, depart hence, and go into Judea that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest" (vv 2-3).

How many brothers of Jesus were involved, we do not know. What we do know from verse 5 is that they did not believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. As unbelievers, they were not of the Spirit. They were of the world. Being of this world, Jesus did not count them as being children of the heavenly Father. The same thing held true for Mary; she too did not believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Unless a person believes in the One whom the Father has sent, he shows that he does not believe in God. "Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me" (John 12:44-45).

Mary nor her sons believed in God at this time. This statement is hard for religious men and women to receive who have deified Mary. Yet, it is the truth. Of course, Mary was a religious woman and so were her sons. Their religion, however, was the source of their problem. In their unbelief, they believed a lie.

Not believing that Jesus was the Christ, Mary and her sons

could not see Jesus. To see means to understand. They could not behold the Spirit in Jesus. They were only able to see the outward man. They could not understand Jesus' words found in John 6:38 where Jesus proclaimed, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."

Mary and her sons only knew the Jesus of flesh and blood. They were like unto their neighbors in their unbelief. Their neighbors said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven" (v. 42).

The people understood that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. They realized that God was a Spirit and that heaven was a spiritual place. They also were limited in their understanding about Jesus. They, like Mary and her sons, saw Jesus in the flesh.

Peter, however, saw Jesus in the Spirit. When he did, he declared that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. 16: 16). He could make such a declaration because God revealed Jesus unto Peter.

Seeing Jesus as the Christ (Spirit of God) is to see God as a Spirit. Did Mary and her sons ever come to believe on the One the Father sent? The answer is yes. We know that James and Jude, two brothers of Jesus, believed on Him because they contributed to the writing of the New Testament.

As for Mary, she indeed became a mother of our Lord Jesus in the Spirit. At the crucifixion, "there stood by the cross of Jesus

his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother and disciples standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son" (John 19:25-26).

Though Jesus yet referred to Mary as "Woman," he now addressed her not as an unbeliever rather as one who had come to believe in "the only begotten of the Father." Verse 27 reads, "Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home" (v. 27).

Mary was at this point a mother in the spirit. The law required the children to provide for their elderly parents (Mk 7: 10-14). As the biological brethren of Jesus were yet in unbelief, they did not qualify to care for Mary. John, on the other hand, being a true "son" in the Spirit, took up the holy requirement of God's law.

It was hard for Mary and her sons to understand Jesus' words as having come down from heaven because they could not see that he was referring to the Christ Spirit that was in him. Their natural mind could not understand spiritual words of Jesus. Men and women in today's natural churches do not understand how Jesus is the bread of life which came down from heaven.

My job is to make blind eyes to see the things of the Spirit. In John 3:13, Jesus said, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." Jesus declared that the only man who can get into heaven is the "spirit man" or "inner man." He said that this spirit man

or inner man, called Christ (Matt. 1:16), was in heaven even as he was speaking.

Jesus did not say that the outward man, born of flesh and blood to Mary, came from heaven. He said, the "Son of Man" (a title meaning son of the man of the spirit [Lk. 1: 35]) "which is in heaven." Right then and there, the Son of man was in heaven. Jesus, on the other hand was in the earth speaking to the people. It was the Christ Spirit in Jesus that is called the Son of man. This Spirit is omnipresent.

In John 16: 28, Jesus said, "I came from the Father." What does it mean to come from one? It means to proceed out of. Now we know that God is a Spirit, and that God only produces spirit beings. The fall of man brought about natural beings.

For Jesus to say that he came from the Father, he had to be speaking spirit words, full of life (John 6:63). To understand his words requires revelation from God. Here is a truth worthy of acceptance by all. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is Spirit" (John 3:6). To be born means to bring forth. That which is brought forth from the flesh (man) is another flesh (man). That which is brought forth from the Spirit (God) is spirit (sons of God).

We have structured our statement as we did in order to ask the question: Who did you come from? It matters not whether you are saved or lost, you came from natural parents. The flesh brought you forth. If you are a child of God, the Lord God bypassed the work of the flesh and brought forth his son within you. He did

this by birthing your human spirit with life of God.

As for John Baptist, this life took place in his mother's womb. While John did not have the very nature of God which comes with the new birth, he did have God's life in his heart. He had to await the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Jesus also had God's life in his mother's womb. The spirit Of God filled Jesus' human spirit. This spirit is called Christ in the believer, his "hope of glory" (Col 1:27). The Christ Spirit was first in Jesus. The Father brought forth the Christ Spirit from himself.

In John 3:16, we read, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life". Christ is God's only begotten Son. God has many sons, both angels and man, but Christ is the only Son the Father brought forth from himself directly.

Every other child of God was brought forth by the Christ of God. The Christ of God is called Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Before Jesus was born, he was yet known as Christ. Paul tells us that the rock which followed the children of Israel in the wilderness was a spiritual Rock. He went on to say, "And that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:4). By Jesus Christ, God created all things (Eph. 3:9).

The Lord God gave us a natural picture of his work in Abraham (albeit the work was not natural). The Bible tells us that Isaac was Abraham's only begotten son (Heb 11:17). This made Isaac the unique son of Abraham. The uniqueness is to be understood as being

Abraham's only son in the Spirit.

As God used Christ to bring forth all sons of God but he being the only begotten of the Father, so did God use Isaac. It was from Isaac that two nations came forth: Israel and Edom. Both nations were descendants of Abraham through Isaac. Edom is the name of Esau (Gen 25: 30). Israel was the name given unto Jacob (Gen 32:28). Esau and Jacob were children of Isaac. They were both considered God's children (Num 20:14).

God used Israel to bring forth the "man-child." It took God 42 generations to bring forth his Christ into the earth. When he did come, he came down from heaven and tabernacled in the body of Jesus (Heb. 10:5). The number 40 is used in scripture as a period of trial. The children of Israel wondered in the wilderness for 40 years. Moses was in the mount of God 40 days as the children of Israel were being tried. Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness at the start of his ministry where he too was tried of the devil.

Forty two generations of God's children remained faithful unto God while the world and Israel turned their backs on God. These faithful servants of the Lord proved the power and the wisdom of God in bringing his Christ unto man. The same Christ who came at the end of the 42 generations, had been coming in each successive generation. At the end, He was manifested fully in the flesh.

I Go To The Father

To say that Christ was manifested fully in the flesh, is to say that, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among" the early

church (John 1:14). The Word and the "Seed" are the same. The "Seed" is Christ (Gal. 3:16). The seed was in Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and in all others in the spiritual line of Jesus by measure. Finally, Jesus came forth with the seed (Spirit) without measure (John 3:34).

In coming down from heaven, Christ had to one day return. It took three years of work in the earth via the vessel Jesus to finish the work on earth. At the end, we see Christ praying unto the Father, saying, I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:4-5).

Christ is called "the Word" in John 1:1. In verse 3, we are told that Christ made all things. Christ was before the angels and all other creatures, however, he was not before the Father. Christ was brought forth by the Father, and through Christ "All things were made."

At the beginning of Christ's work in the flesh, we see where he was prepared a body (Heb. 10:5). As I said, he only needed the earthly body three years to finish the work given unto him by the Father.

Having finished that work, Christ desired to return to the place of honor in heaven as was His before he took on the servant's role of a man. When I speak of the servant's role as a man, I speak of the inner man. Jesus was the outer man through whom Christ worked the perfect works of God.

The body prepared for the Lord's Christ was from the dust. Dust is given unto the serpent (Satan) to eat so long as he is alive (Gen. 3:14). The physical body of Jesus had to return to dust from which it came. It was God's wisdom to consume the physical body by the Spirit to prevent men from focusing their attention on the observable. God is a Spirit, and all must worship him in Spirit and truth (John 4:24).

We know that flesh and blood cannot inherit the God's kingdom, "neither doth corruption inherit incorruption (I Cor. 15: 50). corruption carries the meaning of death. When one dies physically, corruption sets in. I do not speak of decay, I speak of lost of life.

The soul of Jesus was made to be sin by his cursed body which hung on a tree (Gal. 3: 13). God had no more use for Jesus' physical body after he had completed the work in the flesh. Thus, the corrupt body of Jesus could not inherit incorruption any more than the believer's corrupt body.

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (vv. 51, 53). The corruptible refers to the body of the believer while the mortal refers to his soul.

The body of the believer has to be changed. The dead has to be raised incorruptible (v. 52). If it is needful for the believer's corrupt body to be changed, it is so because Jesus' corrupt body was changed also. Had Jesus been able to rise from

the dead with the body in which he died, he would have had a corrupt body. Corruption does not inherit incorruption. Corruption is of death; it must be finished, done away with. Incorruption is of life; it is eternal.

When Christ arose from the dead, the Father gave him a body suited, not for earth, rather for heaven, Heaven is a spiritual place, and only spiritual bodies are found there. The Church is the spiritual body of Christ. Christ is the head of the church, and the Church is Christ's body through whom he works in the earth.

"Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things" (Eph. 4: 9-10). While the body of Jesus lay in the cave, the Christ Spirit descended "into the lower parts of the earth" in order to set the captive free.

Peter has written, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison" (I Pet. 3:18-19).

When Christ ascended up into heaven, he gave gifts unto men (Eph. 4: 7-8). "And he gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect

man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (vv. 11-13).

The body given unto Christ, by the Father, was a spiritual body. The head of the body is identified as Christ. The members of the body are called his Church. As individual fingers and toes on a physical body can be distinguish, so can the members of the spiritual body. They are distinguished by their human spirit, which shall be consumed by the Spirit of Christ.

In John 16:28, we have Christ's ministry summed in one verse. Jesus said, "I come forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." We have dealt with Christ's coming from the Father. We showed that the Father is a Spirit and that he brought for his spiritual Son (Christ) from himself.

We next showed how God's Son needed a body to tabernacle in during his stay on earth. It was pointed out that Jesus of Nazareth was the body prepared for the Christ. The Christ came down from heaven and took up His abode in Jesus in Mary's womb. The next thing that we showed was Christ leaving the world. This came to pass as Jesus perfectly submitted to the Christ in him and became cursed by hanging on the tree. Once Jesus' corrupt physical body (I say corrupt physical body because the Holy One (Christ of God) did not see corruption) was buried, God had no more use for it. Thus, when the women came to the cave on the first day of the week looking for Jesus, "they found not the body of the Lord Jesus" (Lk. 24:3). They found it not because God hid it from man

via the consuming work of the Spirit as he did Moses' body and Elijah's before Jesus.

We are now at the point where we are discussing the last clause of John 16:28. "I ... go to the Father." The writer of Proverbs asks, "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell" (Prov. 30:4).

The questions of the writer are spiritual questions and can only be answered by revelation. God has to make known unto man every matter pertaining to the Spirit. Men error much when they seek to make the resurrected Christ out to a natural man. Things natural can be observed via the senses. There is nothing natural of God because God is a Spirit. To "observe" the things of God, one must see them through the eye of faith.

All who imagine a Jesus whom they can relate to by their senses, know not the One who ascended up into heaven. They have been deceived into imagining a Christ who is natural even physical. They call their natural Christ (a function or office) by the name of Jesus. They understand not that the true Christ has the name of the Father.

Name carries the meaning of character. A name shows forth the nature of the person. Lucifer is called Satan and the devil. These names tell us that he is corrupt. Jesus was called the Christ. The Bible tells us that Christ came in his Father's name

(John 5: 43). The Father is Holy. The Father is Spirit. The Father is life. In order for the Son to have the Father's name, he has to be holy, a Spirit, and he has to have life of himself. We know that Christ claimed these things (See John's gospel, chapter five).

The one who came down from heaven said that he was going to his Father. "To go" means to return in this case. Long before Jesus was ever born, Christ was glorified in heaven. When Christ came to the earth to complete the work of salvation, he did so as Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us that the man (new man) Christ Jesus is in heaven (I Tim. 2:5). He is not there physically: he is there in the Spirit.

The Son, who was glorified as the only begotten of the Father, was a Spirit like unto his Father. A spirit is capable of entering into another spirit. We know that God's Spirit, called Christ in the believer, is found in the human spirit. We also know that "God was in Christ" (2 Cor. 5: 19) • As the Son came forth from the Father, we also know that the Son's work has an end.

What happens once the Son's work has ended? Paul helps us to understand this question, saying, "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (I Cor. 15:28).

Just as the Son proceeded out of the Father, he shall return back to the Father. Jesus showed us the glory of this return, saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, 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).

Mightily Grew The Word Of God

Chapter #3

In Chapter one, we dealt with the working of the Spirit within the child of God. We showed how God does a quiet work from the inside while men and devils make much commotion on the outside.

Chapter two advanced our discussion by focusing on descending/ascending work of the Lord's Christ. From glory, the Lord's Christ came into the world. He remained in the world for around three years in the tabernacle of Jesus. After his work of salvation, he returned to glory.

The coming of the Lord's Christ paid great dividends unto the share holders of heaven. Each share holder received the word of God. I speak presently of the early disciples. As each received the teachings of the Christ of God, they were able to "lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word" (Jam. 1:21). The word of God saved their souls.

The quiet work of God, spoken of in Chapter one, was manifested in their hearts as they loved as did God. They also understood the wisdom and power of God found in the Lord's Christ. For them, preaching the word of God was primary.

The word of God is styled in scripture as many things. One such thing is a seed. We are familiar with natural seeds such as beans or corn. Indeed corn is a very good choice. On one occasion, Jesus spoke of the growth process of corn. He said, "For

the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear" (Mark 5:28). Several important steps are involved in bringing about the full corn in the ear." There were no short cuts that could be taken. The corn did not have a say so in the matter. If the corn had any thoughts, they were yielded to the higher power's ability to produce.

The corn had to fall into the earth and die. Without this first step, the full corn in the ear was not possible. "Verily, verily I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24).

The corn of which we speak is the corn of the Spirit. God's Son had to fall into the ground and die. If he had not done so, he would have remained alone as the holy One of God. Because he did fall into the ground and die, He brought forth many brethren unto the Father.

We have seen the quiet work of salvation as we discussed our subject in Chapter one. We focused then on the "corn's" work via the cross. Let us return to glory for a moment to bring about a higher teaching on this work.

The Christ of God is called God's Lamb in John 1:29. We are told that the Lamb's work was to take "away the sin of the world." In this work, the lamb had to be sacrificed. When was the Lamb sacrificed? The Lamb of God was "slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). All that was necessary to wrought man's

salvation was foreordained by God.

Having completed the work of God in heaven, the Lord God allowed his Christ to leave heaven (fall to the ground) and die. The dying took place before Jesus went to the cross. Once the Corn (Christ) fell to the ground (as a figure of speech), he was found in the heart of Jesus. Jesus had to die to the things of the flesh.

As Jesus died to the things of the flesh, the Christ (Corn) was able to bring life unto his spirit and his soul. The full ear of corn could be seen in the life of Jesus Christ.

The Corn or (Christ), "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:6-7). The Corn (Christ) was dead to the former glory, in other words, he did not allow His former glory to hinder the work in the earth.

When the Corn left the glory he had with the Father before the world began and came into the earth, he left the higher ground and was found below the higher ground. He had fallen into the ground of the earth, from the higher ground of heaven. As he did, he died to the former glory in order to carry out the work of salvation in the earth which God had already wrought in heaven.

The first work of the Corn was to bring forth the full ear of Corn in Jesus. How did this take place? It took place by the word of God. We stated above that the word of God is styled as a seed. The seed has to be sown before the growth process takes place.

When the seed was sown in the heart of Jesus, the seed fell on good ground and brought forth much fruit (the full ear of Corn).

The Bible tells us that the child, Jesus, "grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him" (Luke 2:40). Even the doctors of the law were astonished at his understanding of the word of God (v.v. 46-47). "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (v.52).

In due course of time, the corn had worked the perfect work of God in the heart of Jesus. At about the age 30, he was declared the Christ of God. The Corn (Spirit) had brought forth from the ground (Jesus' heart) the fruit of himself. Jesus was wholly sanctified unto God. His whole spirit, soul and body were covered by the Corn (Spirit). Again, the Corn had brought forth of himself perfectly.

It was in this state of perfection that Jesus went about doing the work of God. Peter tells us how it all happened. "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all), that word, I say ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed (Christed) Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Acts 10:36-38).

It was the word of God, preached by John, and then by Jesus, which brought about the change in the hearts of men like Peter,

James, John and the other disciples. That same word of God had been ministered to Jesus before he ministered to others. He did not need any man to teach him because he had the Corn (Christ, the very anointing of God) within him.

Let us sum up the total. We have revisited Chapters one and two, connecting those two Chapters to Chapter three by the word of God. It took the word of God to bring about the mighty works spoken of by Paul. It was the word of God that had to be fulfilled when Christ suffered for the world. It was the Word of God who came down from heaven as that Corn which fell into the ground (Jesus' heart) and died to the former glory He had with the Father.

The first work of the Corn (Spirit) was to bring forth the full ear of Corn. As Jesus humbled himself before God, Christ taught him the things of God. All of God's children are taught by the same Christ, called the anointing by John (1 John 2:27).

Once Jesus had come to full growth, he set out to do for others what Christ had done for him. He chose twelve apostles. These were with him during his ministry. He taught them by precept and by example. In due course of time, he raised them up to the level of the Spirit.

This took place by the word of God. The seed of Corn had to Fall on their ground (heart) and be buried before much fruit could come forth. Their souls had to die to the thing of the flesh in order for the corn to bring forth life from the realm of the Spirit.

When the day of Pentecost came, "they were all with one accord

in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongue like as of fire, and sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4).

The disciples received the power of God on the day of Pentecost. As the Spirit lit upon Jesus' flesh and remained (John 1:33), the Spirit also covered the flesh of the disciples. They had done as did Jesus before them, namely, they had put on Christ (Gal. 3:27). The disciples were equipped with the whole armor of God. It was their job to make disciples in all the world.

How were they to carry out their commission. Jesus gave the answer, saying, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). The word of God had to be preached. As these men obeyed God, "Mightily grew the word of God".

Mightily Grew The Word Of God

The true test of a person's ministry is found in the results. Results, however, cannot be measured in numbers. God alone must show whether the results meet his approval. Men, on the other hand, set their own criteria to judge the success of their ministry.

We are told that Noah was a preacher of righteousness. His work was an end time work for his generation. But who believed Noah? According to some accounts today, Noah's ministry would have

been considered a failure. Yet, God called Noah a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5).

The Lord God used Noah to do a natural work in building the ark. His work, however, was sanctified unto God. Peter has written how God waited long for man to turn to him "in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water" (1 Peter 3:20).

Water is a type of God's word. Noah and his family were saved because Noah believed the word of God when all others did not. It was Noah's faith in God that saved him and his family from the flood.

Was Noah's ministry a success? He was used by God to save mankind. Yes, it is true that only his family members were in the "church" with him. A total of eight persons made up the congregation in the ark. This ministry, however, was highly successful.

The same measure used to bring about the successful ministry of Noah, can be found among the apostles. They believed God's word. They refused to compromise with the world. They understood that Jesus Christ was their perfect example in all things. Knowing this truth, they allowed the Christ in them to do what was done in Jesus before them, namely, to perfect them in the Spirit.

The word of God was used to make the apostles into faithful servants of the Lord. The same Corn that worked in Jesus to bring about new ears, worked in the apostles. First the Corn (Spirit) brought forth the full ear of Corn in Jesus. Next the Corn brought

forth the full ear of Corn in the apostles.

The apostles had to allow the Corn to work death in them. The Corn must die before life can spring forth. Now it only requires the Corn to die once to bring forth abundant life: but all of the *full ears* of Corn must partake in that death. Paul tells us how, saying, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ (Corn) liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

The corn of wheat had fallen in the ground of Paul's heart. The Corn likewise fell "into good ground" of the other apostles' heart "and brought forth fruit, some an hundred fold" (Matt. 13:8)

Take note that it was only one Corn of wheat which fell into the ground and died, bringing forth the full ear of Corn, first in Jesus, and next in the apostles. The same Spirit that worked in Jesus worked in the apostles to bring them to perfection.

We see the pattern by way of Paul's testimony in Gal. 2:20. Paul was crucified with Christ (Corn of wheat); he lived by the same Christ Spirit. Paul's faith was the very faith of Christ, the Son of God. Everything that occurred in Jesus occurred in Paul's life.

Speaking of a successful ministry, how successful was Jesus' ministry in quantitative terms? By the measure of the mega church today, Jesus would not have been able to run with the super star preachers. Jesus had twelve men that he could send forth as apostles. He had about one hundred twenty (120) brethren waiting

in Jerusalem for the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:15). It is mentioned that about five hundred (500) brethren saw the resurrected Christ at once (1 Cor. 15:6). This number could have included all of the ones who made up the 120 at Jerusalem. We are not trying to set numbers in this discussion in any precise manner. My point is to show the relatively small number of persons who were identified as brethren.

What men fail to understand is the growth of the spirit. How does the spirit grow? The Spirit of God does not grow. It is the human spirit which must be enlarged. The spirit grows by receiving the word of God. Nothing of the soul aids in the growth of the spirit. To the contrary, all soulish acts work to cut off the spirit's growth.

Jesus has said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth (gives life); the flesh (soul) profiteth nothing. He went on to say, "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). The Spirit of Christ brings forth spirits. The Word of God brings forth words. These spiritual words produce life. By these spiritual words, the human spirit grows.

The human spirit must be filled with the Spirit of Christ before perfection comes to the believer. Once the heart is filled with God's love, perfection is accomplished (Matt. 5:48). With a perfect heart of God's love, the soul is covered with that same love by the spillover effect. The next work is to cover the body. This spirit, soul, and body become one with the Spirit of love. What I am conveying unto you is that the word of God brings

about the growth of the heart first. Each believer is to give his whole heart unto the Lord. "Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all they soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:29-30).

The whole man: spirit, soul and body must allow the word of God to grow within until the growth spills over to the outward body. We are to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18). As we allow the Corn within our human spirit to bring death to the spirit of everything birth of the soul, we die with Christ (Corn of wheat.) Once the spirit is free of all natural influences, the mind of Christ can be found operating completely. The outward deeds of the body will also show forth the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).

Jesus focused in on the spiritual work of a few disciples who in turn made other disciples. We see this process being played out in Acts over and over again. In Acts 19: 13 -16 , we see where certain Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth" (v. 13).

The evil spirits turned on these seven sons of the priest and "leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded" (v. 16). The word got around of this work and many did fear the Lord.

Verse 17 reads, And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus: and fear fell on them all, and the name

of the Lord Jesus was magnified." We see the results of this work in verse 18. "And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds."

We see the inward work of the Spirit bringing forth outward deeds of God's law. It took the word of God to bring the people to this place in God. See how powerful the word of God was manifested as we take up the next two verses.

Verse 19 reads, "Many of them also which used curious acts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver." What is it that brought about such a change in the people?

Remember the words of Jesus found in John 6: 63: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing, the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life". The children of God had spoken the words of life unto the hearts of the once wicked people. Their labor was not in vain because it was in the Lord.

A mighty work of God took place within the hearts of the people. Luke had these words to describe the work: "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed" (Acts 19:20). Every child of God must see the growth of the word of God within himself before he can expect to see that word growing and prevailing in others.

Rising From the Dead

Man is dead to the things of God while in sin. The soul

serves as a slave master to the human spirit. Satan uses the mind of the soul to feed the heart with his lies. As long as man remains in unbelief, he cannot so much as know that he is being directed by the devil.

A man has to die! To die means more than physical death. We have indicated above how Christ died to the former glory with the Father when he was found in the earth in the form of a servant. In this instance, "to die" carries the meaning of indifference. Christ was not under the control of the former glory.

When I say that a man must die, I mean that he must become indifference to the things of the soul. He must remove himself from the controlling work of the flesh. The Spirit of God must take over his life. If the person refuses to turn from the control of the soul, he runs the risk of dying to the things of God.

There is a case in the Old Testament of a man who died to the things of the Spirit that I want to share with you. The man's name was Nabal. He was as foolish as his name implies. The man, however, had a wise wife whose name was Abigail. The third party in our case was David.

During the time Saul was chasing David from place to place, he took up in the country of Nabal. Nabal was a wealthy man. David and his men guarded the sheep of Nabal from those who would have stolen them. In due course of time, "David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep" (1 Sam. 25:24).

David sent young men to Nabal asking for a helpful hand during his time of need. Nabal sent a reply unto David which greatly

angered him (vv. 10-12). David set his heart to war but Abigail, Nabal's wife, learned of his foolish act and intervened on behalf of her household (vv. 18-19).

Abigail met David in route to their home and was able to persuade David not to take it upon himself to shed blood seeing how God had anointed him to be king. Abigail said, "Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my Lord ,whom thou didst send (v. 25).

In the end, David testified, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand" (vv. 32-33).

In the mean time, back at the ranch, Nabal was getting drunk (v. 36). Abigail did not tell him about her deeds that day. She waited. "But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became as a stone" (v. 37).

When a person dies physically, he too becomes rigid. The inward death, however, proceeds the outward death. In Nabal's case, he lived about a week and a half after his heart turned against the things of God. "And it came to pass about ten days after, that the Lord smote Nabal, that he died" (v. 38).

The Lord God does not want man to become hard hearted. When

the word of God is preached, the hard hearted person rejects the truth. The Lord God desires a tender heart within the people. The heart is styled as the ground.

The word of God is preached like unto a sower sowing seeds. When the preached word falls on good ground, death comes to the controlling power of the soul. The human spirit is quickened or receives life from God because the soul ceases to blind the spirit to the word of God.

Warfare between the Spirit and the flesh is about who controls the heart or human spirit. While the soul is rebellious, the spirit is meek. The spirit will receive the word of God and will grow mightily if the word of God is able to reach the spirit. Satan, realizing as much, blinds "the mind of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4).

The reason Paul could preach the gospel of Christ is because God "commanded the light to shine out of darkness." Paul said that God's grace "hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (v. 6).

It was not so with all in Israel. There were many who loved the darkness of their religion. Jesus said, "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which said, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears,

and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matt. 13:14-15).

The heart of an unbeliever cannot understand the things of God. As such, Satan feeds the heart thoughts of the flesh. He uses the mind to create images which become fixed positions of the heart in responding to the issues of life. Satan builds on the initial work by bringing doctrines of devils to the unbelievers (1 Tim. 4:1). These teaching demons are skilled in the letter of the Bible. As such, they teach a way unto men which seems right but death is the end of their work (Prov. 14:12).

You see death is a rich concept. We wish now to speak of death as it relates to the resurrection. Recall our earlier discussion pertaining to the Corn of wheat bringing forth "the full ear of corn (Mark 4:28). We showed how the corn is a type of the spirit which fell from heaven into the ground of Jesus' heart. The Spirit (Corn) brought Jesus to perfection in God. At the age about 30, he was declared the Christ of God. In point of truth, the Spirit of Christ within Jesus had produced the perfect man of the Spirit. Jesus was anointed (Christed). His spirit, soul and body were completely controlled by the Corn. He had become the Corn.

In John 12:24, we have another mention of the corn of wheat. Jesus said, "verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

We have said that the Christ Spirit in Jesus brought the soul of Jesus to be as the Spirit. We called this the production of the

full ear of corn, in other words, the Spirit had produced himself. Having reproduced himself, the spirit (Christ) stood alone as the only righteous one in the earth. We know that one as Jesus Christ. In order for much fruit to be produced, the new corn of wheat had to fall into the ground and die as did the original Corn.

Dying took place in Jesus' human spirit. As Christ dies to the glory he had with the Father and took up the work as a servant in the earth, Jesus died to the things of the world. His human spirit (heart) completely rejected everything not of the Father. When he was baptized by John, the Holy Ghost descended from heaven and lit on his flesh, covering him with the Christ Spirit (John 1:33).

From this position of being Christed, Jesus went forth to produce himself in others. It was not the flesh who went forth. The flesh was enclosed in the Spirit. He was baptized into Christ. He put on Christ.

We see his work outlines in a parable. Jesus said, "Behold, a sower went forth to sow" (Matt. 13: 3). The sower was "the son of man" (v. 37). The "Son of man" is a title used by Jesus to show that the outward Jesus was the Son of the spirit (Luke 1:35). Son of man was another way of saying that Jesus was the son of the inner man called Christ.

The seeds of the sower fell on some grounds which yielded no fruit (Matt. 13:4-7). We are interested, however, in the seeds which fell into good ground for only the good ground is productive. Jesus said, "But other fell into good ground, and brought forth

fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold" (v.8).

The fruit was possible because the corn of wheat did not abide alone. When God brought forth Jesus as the Christ, he did what he saw his Father doing in him (John 5:19). Jesus went forth and made disciples. The key ingredient in Jesus' making was the word of God. Like the seeds sown by the sower, the word of God grew mightily, first, within Jesus. After Jesus, the same word of God grew mightily in the apostles. From the apostles, the word of God grew mightily in the church.

Again, I shall bring forth a high thing of the spirit. The word of God is spirit and life (John 6:63). When this word is received, it is able to bring forth perfection in the child of God. The process is as follows: The gospel of Christ must be preached. Upon hearing this good news, the hearer must hold fast to its teachings. As the person does so, the life in the word of God comes to the heart. The heart must be filled with God's love. This takes time, but the end process is by the Holy Ghost given unto us (Rom. 5:5).

It takes God time to remove from the heart, those life time of teachings that the believer has received from the world. As God seeks to remove the soulish influence upon the heart, the devil fights to maintain control. By and by, however, the whole heart will be recovered by the Spirit. When this occurs, the work of God flows over to the soul.

The soul is the seat of rebellion. When the spirit is freed from the enslaving power of the soul, the spirit is able to teach

the soul her rightful place. In submitting to the spirit, the Lord God would have produced a holy marriage between the soul and spirit. The Holy Ghost seals this marriage by smearing (baptizing) the two with the anointing.

The final frontier is the body. As the heart and soul are covered with the Spirit of God, they are rendered dead to things natural. They are sanctified unto God. The body has to join in this marriage. When the Spirit comes upon the body and remains, the body also is rendered dead to natural things. The whole man, spirit, soul and body is thus wholly sanctified unto God (1 Thes. 5:23).

The soul is the body of the spirit. The soul and body are tied to one another. If the soul leaves the body, there is a body, but it is dead. When the soul leaves off controlling the spirit, the soul is dead to sin. God gives the spirit a body as it pleases God to do so. This body is a glorified body.

While Jesus was on the earth, he walked and talked, ate and slept as did other men. Once he was Christed, he took up a glorified body. This body is referred to being baptized into Christ or simply putting on Christ (Gal. 3:27). As the glorified body of Jesus could not be seen with natural eyes nor understood in the soul, men needed God to reveal unto them who Jesus was.

Peter, by revelation, understood that Jesus was Christ. He was able to see the Spirit covering the flesh (Matt. 16:16-17). Six days later, he, James and John were given a vision of that which God had made Peter to understand (Matt. 17:1-2).

Jesus Christ is the believer's perfect example in everything. What Jesus did, all believers must do. The Church must come to the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the statute of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13). To do so, each member of the Church must die and arise from the dead as did Jesus Christ.

Throughout this Chapter, I have been discussing the death and resurrection. When the corn of wheat died, it arose in new life. This process is brought about in each believer while yet in the body. Very few have ever witnessed such conversion because the church generally does not understand spiritual things.

Behold the words of Paul found in 1 Cor. 15:35-44. Paul is speaking of that which had taken place within him. speaking of things that would one day take place within him. He had to die and arise from the dead before he could do a work for God.

When properly understood, Paul's words show forth the spiritual manifestation of the perfect work of God wrought in his life. Yes, the outward manifestation will take place of that which Paul spoke. To the one who has to wait for the outward manifestation to know of the death and resurrection, it is too late to do him any good in this life.

Your Fathers Tempted Me, Proved Me, and Saw My Works

Chapter #4

At the turn of the 20th century in Los Angeles, California, the Lord God brought forth the word of God to the united states. Many will say that the word of God had been preached for hundreds of years before the Los Angeles, California experience. God shall surely prove them incorrect.

God's chosen vessel was a man of color by the name of Seymour. There have been books written about this move of the Spirit, but I have not read one written with the anointing of God. What is clear, God moved by his spirit in Los Angeles during the early 1900's.

The Lord God brought together men and women of all races. For a time, they allowed the Spirit to have his way. In due course of time, the church split like unto denominational churches. Before the split, you could find people working the gifts of the Spirit. Whites and Blacks were joined together in the Spirit.

Sadly to say, the true work of the Spirit was brought down by the fleshly walk of the leaders of the movement. They did not allow God's love to cover their differences. They wanted to have their way in matters.

Once divisions began to take place in the movement, it was doomed as an effective church to show forth God's true love to denominational churches. The strong words of Paul to the Corinthians applied to the work at Azusa Street in Los Angeles. Paul wrote, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto

spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ" (1 Cor. 3:1). The heart of the problem was pride. Men and women had their own perception as to how the church should have been run. They freely offered their advice, but in too many instances, the counsel was of the flesh. Yet, they thought that they were walking in the Spirit.

Let us go on with Paul's words to the Corinthians. As we do, the pure in heart will be able to see how they applied to the work at Azusa street. Paul wrote, "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet are ye able. For ye are carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men" (vv. 2-3).

The reason the Corinthians were carnal was due to pride. They did not humble themselves before God to hear the way of the Spirit. The same can be said of those who were the leaders in the Azusa Street work of the Spirit.

Like the Corinthians, the leaders of Azusa street thought that they knew God. They thought that they were in a position to go out and lead others. What they knew of God was the first principles of the doctrines, and most did not know these.

The Hebrews writer said, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrines of Christ, let us go on unto perfection: not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrines of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment"

(Heb. 6: 1-2).

One cannot leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ and go on to perfection, but that one knows Christ. Sadly to say, the church turned away from God before He could teach her who He is. As the principle thing is the foundation upon which all is built, when the principle is at fault, all is shaky.

Ask the average church member of one of the denominations stemming from of the Azusa Street work to tell you who is Christ. Stand back and watch the answers corm forth. I have done this on many occasions. Sadly to say, I have not run into one person who could teach me who Christ is.

There are many though who exhort themselves as great teachers. Many explain Christ in the manner of denominational churches who repudiated the Azusa street work. Practically, everyone calls Christ another name for Jesus. They say that Christ means the anointed one. Then they go on to say that Christ was an office or function which Jesus held.

The Christ of God is God's Spirit. As God is a Spirit, the Christ of God is a Spirit. This is the clear teaching of the Bible. The Bible calls the Spirit of God, Christ Spirit (Rom. 8:9). The Bible does so because there is but one Spirit (Eph. 4:4). If Christ is the Spirit of God, how can Christ also be born on December 25? The deeds of the churches show that they lack understanding of this principle doctrine.

The only reason to account for God's people's ignorance of Christ is found in the carnality of the people. As the Corinthians

were guilty of envying, strife and divisions, so were the men and women of the Azusa street ministry.

See the work of Satan in bringing the ministry down. "For while one saith, I am of Paul and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man" (I Cor. 3:4-5). The Corinthians divided up the people of God into camps. The one camp was of Paul and the other of Apollos.

Do you not see the same evil spirit at work at Azusa? The camps at Azusa took on racial tones. Whites and Blacks went their separate ways. Among whites, they divided into different denominations. Blacks did as the whites. Before long, the church looked like the segregated society of the world.

Men justified their wicked deeds by saying that the races could not get along. Yet, many of the same men said that they were filled with God's Spirit. How could they have been filled with God's Spirit and the works which followed in their wake were of the flesh?

Whatever the denominations claim, as being of God today, is tainted by the work of the flesh of several generations ago. Men and women are yet lifting up the divisive leaders of their denominations as "great men of God."

Go with me to the book of Galatians. The Bible tells us: "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). This is not an optional directive. God has spoken a command unto his church. To keep away from the works of the flesh,

the church must walk in the Spirit.

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these ... variance (strife), emulations (jealousies), wrath, strife (factions), sedition (divisions)" (vv. 19-20).

Take note of strife, jealousies, factions and divisions listed as works of the flesh. Verse 21 includes envyings. When the Azusa Street Ministry started, it was void of these works of the flesh. Because there was unity in the Spirit, God was able to wrought great works of the Spirit.

When the works of the flesh began to take hold in the church, the work of the Spirit died down. Satan began to work through those who had given him place, and the leaders were not able to see the devilish work due to their own lack of watchfulness.

James has told us, "where envying and strife is there is confusion and every evil work" (James 3:16). Envying and strife characterized the Azusa Street in just a few short years. Men and women packed and left. Some went one way, and others went another. Some went back to their old ministries.

Was God directing this divisive work of the flesh? To say yes is to accuse God of being unholy. God does not work works of the flesh. Our God works by his holy Spirit. Satan produces confusion and every evil work. He is also the one who divides the people into denominational camps.

The Spirit of God was waiting on the brethren to humble themselves. God desired to see the love of God in their midst. Had they been filled with God's love and not Satan's envying and

strife, they would have forgiven one another.

A Spirit filled church would have seen the envying and strife as did Paul with the Corinthians. Moreover, the Spirit-filled church would have taken authority over the works of the flesh. The leaders would have suffered long with the people until God brought about a change.

Of course, this did not happen because the church, while once a Spirit-filled church, had become like the church of Ephesus. The church of Ephesus had works in the past that were pleasing unto God. She even pleased God by hating some of the things God hated. The Lord Jesus said unto her, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. 2:4).

The first love of God's people must be God. These children of God had left off loving God and had begun to love their religion. The Lord said, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick' out of his place, except thou repent" (v.5).

These words apply to the Azusa Street ministry. Just as the church of Ephesus left off loving God, the Church of Azusa Street did the same thing. God gave them opportunity to repent, but they repented not. We know that the Azusa Street church repented not because they became chopped and divided.

The light that God had brought to the United States via the Azusa Street Ministry faded away as the people refused to repent. The people went their own way. These are they whom many in

denominational churches today, hold up as great men of God. They see not how evil the work was in dividing into denominations when God had drawn them out of their denominations unto himself.

Your Fathers Tempted Me, Proved Me, and Saw My Works

The forefathers of the early Pentecostal movement were not unlike the first generation of leaders who served during the time of Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

The story of how twelve spies were sent into the promise land to survey the land is well known. Ten of the spies refused to trust God to bring to pass his spoken word. These caused the whole nation to lose their covenant relationship with God for the space of 40 years (Num. 14:26-35).

The Lord God called his people "an evil congregation" (v. 35). Until the people of God acknowledge their sin regarding the evil work of division among the early leaders, they show forth agreement with those leaders.

This is the same problem Jesus was face with in his days.

Jesus' words to the leaders of Israel apply to the leaders of the church today. He said, " Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye are like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (Matt. 23:27).

The elders of Jesus' day did not appreciate Jesus telling them that they were not holy before God. You can believe that the elders in Pentecostal churches are not happy today to hear that

Jesus' words are unto many of them. Yet, it is true.

When the elders of Azusa street turned from following God, they turned to following the world. Their meetings became like any other church in town. Yet, God had called these to show forth his love, power, and wisdom that denominational religion might turn to God.

The elders were faced with "giants in the land." The land refers to the land of the denominational churches. Each denomination can be viewed as a city fortified against God. Rather than humbling themselves before God, allowing the Spirit to iron out all differences between and among them, the elders instead brought up an "evil report."

They were like the 10 elders who said during Israel's first attempt to enter into the promise land: "The land through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which came of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight" (Num. 14:32-33).

The word is unbelief. The elders did not trust God to provide for them during the Azusa street ministry. They looked at the "giants" of denominational religion, and they became fearful of persecution. They joined in with the spirit of the giants of denominational religion. The truth of the statement is evident in the many denominations that came out of the Azusa street meeting.

Looking back to the book of Acts and moving forward to the

epistles, one cannot find denominational religion as been founded by God. We have shown how Paul preached against the attempt of the Corinthians church to divide along denominational lines. "For while one saith, I am of Pauli and another, I am of Apollosi are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man" (I Cor. 3:4-5).

Paul made it clear that Apollos nor himself were anything. He showed the people that they were mere vessels of God. Indeed he told them that God had used many other vessels to bring his people unto himself. He then went on to say, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (v.6).

The focus was not on the person who plants, nor on the one who waters, but rather on God who gives the increase. "So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth but God that giveth the increase" (v.7).

When attention is given to the things of the Spirit, man's admiration is lost to the glory of God. When attention is centered on the things of the world, "great men," like unto worldly leaders, pop up and lead the people after themselves. They called themselves children of God and may well be, but of a truth their works are of the devil.

As the leaders of Israel identified with the evil religious leaders of times past during Jesus' time, so do religious leaders today identify with their evil forefathers. Jesus said, "Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full

of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Matt. 23:28).

Examine the history of the Pentecostal movement from about 1920-1990. When you do, you will be hard pressed to find true love among those who called themselves the people of God. We have also shown you how the churches divided up along racial lines.

I know that some will say that their denomination was not racist. They will even point to a few people of different races serving as members or at least being able to minister at their conventions and in their assemblies.

This proves the point that their work was a work of the flesh. Even the world allowed for some racial mixing during the time of legal segregation in the united states. It was nothing of an outstanding Black man like Booker T. Washington or George Washington Carver to be the speaker at conventions where other Blacks were not invited.

Regarding this latter point, many Pentecostal churches mirrored the example nearly perfectly. From the side of Whites joining Black congregations, the world has shown forth this same pattern in her organizations. What we have is the same spirit at work in the churches as was at work in the world.

Indeed, until recently, some Pentecostal churches would not allow fellowship among churches of the same race if they were not of the same organization. This is what we expect to see in worldly churches. God, however, desired to make the Azusa street ministry like unto the early church of Peter's day. Even more, the Lord God desired to use the Azusa street church to usher in the day of the

glorious church spoken of in Eph. 5:27.

Sadly to say, men and women failed the Lord. Today, their children are yet failing the Lord. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchers of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets" (Matt. 23:29-31).

So long as the Jews in Jesus' day did not repudiate the acts of their fathers by repenting, they were tied with their fathers in their wickedness. Their testimony about not killing the prophets if they had lived in earlier days, was only vain words. Just as surely as the opportunity availed itself, they did as did their fathers.

This is a strong warning unto the churches today. You must repent of the wicked deeds of your fathers. You cannot escape the damnation of hell in reaping benefits from the wicked works of your fathers by saying that you were not there or that you did not have a hand in their wicked deeds. You are tied to your fathers by the same spirit of error.

Jesus sought to show the elders in his day this truth. Many rejected him out of hand. A few, however, did believe. Of those who rejected Jesus' words, we find them persecuting him and afterward his disciples. The same pattern exists today. Those who tell the people this truth about their hypocritical and iniquitous

ways have long been persecuted.

You do not have to join the evil doers any longer. Desire in your heart to know the truth. Ask God to reveal unto you whether the words I am conveying are of Him. Understand that you cannot hear from God when your heart is inclined toward your own religious beliefs. You must empty yourself of all things and desire the filling of the Spirit.

"Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Whereof I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest" (Heb. 3:7-11).

The elders of Israel during Moses' day did not believe God. They allowed themselves to see the mighty work of God in that they were prevented from going into the land of promise. The land of promise is styled as heaven. Heaven is a place in the Spirit. As the unbelieving elders could not lead the children of Israel into the land of promise, the elders of the first generation of the Azusa Street ministry could not lead the natural church into the realm of the Spirit.

The fathers of Israel tempted God with their unbelief. They also proved his love for them. God loved the people so that he allowed them forty years to consider their unbelief. They had opportunity to acknowledge their faults before God and to encourage

their young ones not to rebel as did their leaders. They also witnessed to the mighty works of God in that they were able to testify that their hope was the Lord.

We are faced today with the children of the fathers of the Azusa street ministry. The children have grown up to be elders. How shall the children respond to the call of God in their day? Shall the children tempt God, prove him, and see his work for forty years? Or shall the children acknowledge the sins of their fathers as well as their own as did Nehemiah? (Neh. 1:6-7) The Lord God knows.

By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them

With love I have written this chapter. The Holy Ghost desires good for God's children. God's children also must desire good. As goodness is found only in God, every work must be judged in the light of God's good word.

The Bible tells us that we are to "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15). I cannot remember one single person who has admitted that he was a false prophet during the time of his ministry. Yes, there are men and women who can look back over their lives and acknowledge that they have made mistakes. I speak not of this.

A false prophets comes in sheep's clothing. He is a deceiver. In order to deceive another, one must first be deceived. In the deceived state, the false prophet speaks as if he is correct, and

others are the false prophets.

Thanks be unto God that he has given every person an opportunity to know the truth. Jesus said, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7: 16-17).

The true prophet of God seeks only to please God. Being sure of the One who sent him, he speaks the words of God. The false prophet speaks of himself. He speaks the words of his own heart. The true prophet is a humble servant of God while the false prophet is a proud servant of the flesh.

How do we know the false prophet from the true prophet of God? Do we know by way of that which conforms to one's denominational doctrines? The answer is no! Yet, this is the way prophets are judged in the natural church. The natural church measures things by the scale of her own devising. She has established a set of ethical and moral principles based on the letter of the Bible. As such, each denomination has its understanding regarding the Bible. They are loosely joined with other denominations by a general belief in a Jesus who is somehow God and man.

We have discussed this matter above. In doing so, we indicated that the Azusa Street mission never allowed God to teach her leaders who God's Christ is. Failing to know the Christ of God, the leaders moved off into a doctrine similar to that of denominational churches. Even today, Pentecostal churches teach a doctrine of Jesus akin to the other denominational churches.

Of a truth God did call for the Azusa street ministry. No one who knows God will speak against the Spirit's work at the start of the Azusa street ministry. During the spiritual work of Azusa Street, God had him a people, Black and White, with no regard for denomination, nor nationality, joined together with a common spiritual bond.

Those of the beginning work of Azusa Street looked very much like the church found in the book of Acts. The witness in Acts is that "all that believed were together and had all things common" (Acts 2: 44) . I have not read where the Azusa Street ministry parted with their possessions and goods that everyone might be cared for as did the early church (v. 45). What is known is that men and women gave their hearts over to the Lord. In this, they counted not their possessions as their own (Acts 4:32).

During the early days of Azusa Street, the "tree" (assembly) was known by the fruit of the Spirit she began to produce: love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Gal. 5:22-23). Seeing these fruit, the child of God could take heart, for Jesus had said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:16).

I would be a liar to say that the fruit of the Spirit was not being produced. I would be remiss not to say that the Azusa Street Ministry was only in the beginning stages of spiritual fruit production.

The tree of life was at work at Azusa Street. Because the tree of life was at work, God was able to produce after himself.

Jesus said, "Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit" (v.17). You cannot call God's work at Azusa evil and please God.

We have shown you how the elders of Azusa Street became like unto the 10 spies that Moses sent out to survey the land of promise. The 10 spies brought up an evil report unto the people. The Azusa Street elders did the same thing. How could such a thing be, seeing that God was working in Azusa?

The answer is simple. The devil was working also. When God's leaders became unwatchful. Satan planted tares among the wheat. The tares have but one job: to choke the life out of the wheat (See Matt. 13:24-30; 37-43).

In the church of Ephesus (Rev. 2:4-5), we showed above how Satan worked to remove the fruit of the Spirit from the assembly by attacking their love. Satan worked against the Azusa Street ministry in like manner.

Now let us see what Satan did next. Keep in mind that the church of Smyrna followed the church of Ephesus in order of the seven churches of Asia Minor. God allowed persecution to come to the church to deal with the lack of love revealed by the Ephesus church. I am showing you that the seven churches of Asia Minor were prophetic churches. They painted a picture as to the future of the church at large.

The third church was the church of Pergamos. This church reveals the tares Satan had planted. There were some in the church who held to the doctrine of Balaam and others who held to the

doctrine of the Nicolaitans (vv. 14-15).

The church at Azusa street also had tares in her. writers tell us of how the once humble assembly became a proud divided people in just a few short years. During this time, the Lord was yet with the church, but she was progressively marching toward total darkness.

We see this march in full bloom when we consider the fourth church of Asia Minor. within the Church of Thyatira could be found Satan's religious system embodied in "that woman Jezebel" (Rev. 2: 20). Jezebel seduced the people of God to the spiritual fornication of herself. This was Satan's masterful work. He choked the word of God out of the church such that Sardis was called a dead church (Rev. 3:1).

Satan worked the same way at Azusa. He used tares to bring divisions into the Azusa Street mission. He caused the people to turn from being led by the Spirit to the leading of the flesh. The Azusa Street mission died out. She became like the church of Sardis.

Jesus' words yet ring true, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." The latter fruits of the Azusa street ministry can be summed up by two words: envying and strife. As the corrupt tree brings about envying and strife, Satan had replaced Jesus Christ as lord over Azusa.

"Know ye not, to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" (Rev. 6: 16) . As long as the

humble mustard seed existed, God was able to bring life unto Azusa. When the elders went to sleep on their watch and allowed tares to come in the church, they contributed to the humble mustard seed (earlier Azusa street Ministry) becoming "a tree so that the birds of the air (evil spirits)" came and lodged in the branches of her.

Note the parallel between the early church of Acts and the early church of Azusa street. Both had the same testimony. Each was a church where Christ was in their midst. Unlike the early church, Azusa did not wait on the Lord to teach her that which God had taught the apostles pertaining to Christ.

When satan got a foothold in the church, the Spirit's work came to a standstill. Satan began to build in the assembly. He built envying and strife. The Azusa church became like unto any other denominational church. Every work which followed can now be shown to be characterized by division not unity.

The symbol of that which is of the Spirit is unity. The Church of Christ was admonished to endeavor (to do all necessary) "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). The church is beseeched "by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Cor. 1:10).

The Church of Azusa Street failed in both of these areas. What Paul warned the church to protect against, division, came to past. Division characterizes the work of Satan. When any church shows forth the fruits of envying and strife, divisions will

follow. These divisions can be seen today in denominational churches. The very fruit of denominational religion is division. This is a work of the corrupt tree.

It is impossible to make a corrupt tree good. Neither can a good tree be made corrupt. The tree is either one or the other. The tree of life is the good tree. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the corrupt tree. The tree of life is single while the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is divided even in its name.

There is a blatantly wicked side to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as well as a deceptive religious system on the other side. Satan moves men and women from the blatantly evil side of his tree to the good side of religion while maintaining control over them both. As he is the devil, he cannot escape pitting one group against another. Rebellion is a mark of the devil that follows in all of his works.

Jesus said, "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matt. 7:18). When the Azusa church yielded her members to obey sin, she left off serving God. There may have been a few saints within the church's midst who truly loved God, but they were as Joshua and Caleb among the many spies who brought up an evil report.

Though Joshua and Caleb believed God, enough of the elders sided with Satan until God allowed the covenant with Israel to be broken. Such would surely have been the case at Azusa for God is no respecter of persons.

Understand that once the Azusa church turned from following God as evidenced by the divisions in her midst, she was no longer being led by God. Were they the children of God? Of course they were, but they had yielded unto sin. When this occurred, the good tree of God ceased to produce.

All of the denominational churches which came out of Azusa in her fallen condition, came from the corrupt tree. It is evident that this is so because 70 years later the divisions which characterize Satan's religious system yet remain.

Jesus said more, "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:19-20). Because God has not allowed judgment to come against denominational religion, many feel justified in their divisive work.

Wait a little longer. God will prove that which is of God. The good tree shall stand, but the corrupt tree shall be hewn down.

That Which Is Natural

Chapter #5

In the game of sports, some athletes have the ability to perform above and beyond the very top players of their sport. When Jack Nicklaus was a young man, he could be counted on, week after week to be at the top of the leader board. Jack Nicklaus was a very good golf player.

In baseball, Henry (Hank) Aaron was able to hit as hard and as far as anyone who has ever played the game. His career total of home runs is the top of the heap. Hank Aaron was a very good baseball player.

Ask anyone today about basketball's best athlete for the past century or forever, and the name Michael Jordan will no doubt be at the very top of a short list. The first, second, and third choices may well be: 1) Michael, 2) Air Jordan, and 3) Michael Jordan. Without question, Jordan can play the round ball game.

Persons who make a living in sports have their way of explaining the ability of one athlete over others. Many times, commentators have contributed the greatness of a top athlete to natural ability. The announcer over XTMC TV might be heard saying, of any of the three stars mentioned above, "he is just a natural born athlete."

The word natural, as used by the commentator, has to do with innate ability. The same commentator may speak words pertaining to another player who is not nearly as good, as being "very smart" or

"a hard worker."

Not everyone appreciates the "natural born athlete" designation. This is especially true when other players are presented as being "smart" or "workers" at their positions. Yet, there is no or little dispute as to who is the best in the particular sport.

On the surface, it appears that a natural born athlete would be the people's choice as the "king pin" in the game and in the hearts of the fans. This may be in most cases, but we also see some resistance on the part of others (like our commentator) who clearly loved smartness and hard work.

What is at the root of our discussion? I am introducing the next chapter. It is needful for us to set the table before we eat. Not all have understanding about our subject. Some, with a degree of understanding, care not for the things under discussion.

My role is to bring to the table, that which the Spirit of Christ is serving at this time. Regarding our topic: "That Which Is Natural," confusion abounds. So as to make clear the naturalness of things, I am serving up what you are sharing.

I spoke of confusion regarding our topic. I will now give you two definitions of natural. See if they make much sense to you. Natural pertains to nature. Natural means illegitimate or born out of wedlock. Such a son is called a natural son.

Two things stand out in our definitions: 1) that which is natural pertains to the nature of a thing and 2) natural things can be illegitimate. The nature of a thing has to do with the

essential quality of a thing. Legitimacy has to do with that which is lawful.

Naturalness appears to be close to what we call normal. We may therefore define natural to mean that which occurs in the ordinary course of events. Illegitimacy has to do with transgression of the law. We may define an illegitimate act as any act which rebels against due authority.

Are we there yet? Have we come closer to making sense? If not, bear with me a little longer. If that which is natural pertains to nature, then it pertains to nature at whatever level nature is defined. If illegitimacy means a transgression of the law, then any law transgressed represents an illegitimate or natural act.

Let us add a couple of terms in our discussion that we have not previously entertained. These terms are soul and Spirit. By soul is meant, the natural man. By Spirit is meant, the heavenly God. There is a nature of man and there is a nature of God. Man has laws which govern his societies and God has law's governing his kingdom.

We must make a distinction between the nature of man and the nature of God. We must also distinguish between heavenly laws and earthly laws. As we do, we see the natural or normal occurrence in both. The difference is that God calls the normal occurrences of man's life illegitimate while man extols them as the highest virtues.

We have come full circle. The natural athlete is praised for

his natural ability to perform while at the same time, he is said to be "illegitimate" as a worker or a smart person, in other words, he is accused of transgressing the law which says that one should be smart and work hard to excel.

Which of the two: soul and Spirit is known as an accuser? The soul is a rebellious spirit when not subject to the Spirit of God. The accuser of the children of God is called "that old serpent", called the Devil, and Satan."

John has written, "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night" (Rev. 12:9-10).

Accusations can be false or true. Satan is the accuser of the brethren in every thing false. Now you be the judge as to whether the accusation of the commentators are true or false regarding the natural born athlete. If the accusation is true, there is something to learn from the accuser. If, on the other hand, the accusation is false, then it is like unto that which Satan does.

We are able to tell much about a person based on the nature of the person. If the person's nature is of the soul, he will behave like unto the consummate soul, i.e., Satan. On the other hand, if the person's nature is like God's, he will act as does God.

John Baptist has some words to share with us. "Then came also Publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, exact no more than that which is

appointed you" (Luke 3:12-13). They were not to extort the people.

"And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, and what shall we do? And he said unto them, do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your ways" (v. 14). John had a word from the Lord for those who came unto his baptism. False accusation was an illegitimate act. The people had to reframe from this transgression of the law of God.

In both cases, we have the nature of men on display, and the legality of their acts. The publicans were known for their work of exhortation. The people hated them because of their deeds. They showed forth the nature of the consummate soul.

Satan extorted the world from Adam. He had no right to anything of God's creation. Adam was given all the wealth of the earth. By guile, Satan extorted all from Adam becoming "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4).

The soldiers were also of the same nature of Satan. They had accused others falsely, done violent acts, and were greedy of filthy lucre. In each one of these acts, the consummate soul or Satan is foreshadowed. We have seen above where Satan is a false accuser. He also is a father of violence.

When Cain murdered Abel, his brother, he did so because he was of "the wicked one" (1 John 3:12). During Noah's times, Cain's influence could be found through out the earth. "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth" (Gen. 6:13).

Satan also lusted at God's kingdom. He said in his heart that he would take over God's throne. He saw the glory of God's kingdom (it's wealth) and desired that which was not his (lsa. 14:12-14). Satan's love of money is the root of all evil (1 Tim. 6:10).

While the Publican and the soldiers had past experiences in the works of the rebellious soul, they indicated a desire to change. John showed them that they had to have a change of heart. Prior to coming unto John, they were of the nature of the wicked one. The change of heart was required in order to become like unto the Spirit. Jesus would later tell them that they had to be born again (John 3:3).

The nature of the rebellious soul cannot please God. The born again experience brings a person out of the natural life of Satan into the spiritual life of God. For the first time, eyes are made to see and spirits are empowered to enter into God's kingdom (vv. 3,5).

All who are of the soul are natural. This means that they are of the earth, earthly. Their wisdom is human wisdom, and they are of this world, the devil being the god thereof. They are also bastards and not sons of God (Heb. 12:8).

Natural Man

To call a person a bastard is to say unto him that he is natural. Yet, natural men and women feel offended if they are referred to as bastards. Consider the university professor (whose school is among the best in the world), who is known to be a

humanist. He believes that every thing centers in man. He feels that man is the only one who is able to save man.

According to the Bible, this professor is a bastard. God says that he is not of God's nature and he is therefore illegitimate. On the other hand, this man is well liked by his peers, he has a reputation of being a good man. He is among those who work very hard to save the environment.

See how the two worlds clash. The world of God calls every thing of the professor's world natural. By natural is meant, of the nature of the creature. In this world, God has said, Satan is lord.

The Holy Ghost directed John to write about the professor's world, saying, "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). Consider John's words. If these words are truly of God, then the professor is a very "sick" man. In other words, we may say that the mind of the professor renders him incapable of thinking, speaking, and acting naturally.

We will return to the truly natural thoughts, words and deeds in our next section of this chapter. For now we wish to show how the natural ways of God differ from the natural ways of man. Under the heading, "natural man," we shall now flush out this man.

The man of the soul is the natural man. This is the one whom Jesus said needs to be born again (John 3:3). This is the man who is of the world. Speaking of the world, Jesus said unto his disciples, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before

it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:18-19).

The world is the home of the natural man. Little wonder he spends so much time and money to preserve the world. Recall our professor above; he was a well known environmentalist. People gave him rewards for his work in helping to save the planet. But of what use is the professor's works if John is correct in that which he has written about the world?

John said, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 John 2:16-17).

How can John and the professor both be right? They cannot. Either the world is going to pass away like John has said or the planet will be saved by efforts of such men as our professor.

Let's bring John and the professor together for a discussion. John is the first speaker. John says to the professor that his works are vain because God has shown him that the Lord God shall destroy this earth as Peter has said (2 Peter 3:10). John asked, "What good is it for you to spend so much time on that which shall perish?"

The professor answered by saying, "Since the beginning of time, man has been deceived into thinking God would destroy the earth." He said, "the evidence weights against John's and Peter's

words because the earth is yet standing." He then went on to tell John that, "If there is a god, he has far too many things to do than to waste his time on something that man can handle."

What accounts for the diverse views as held by the likes of John and the professor? We have indicated that from the point of view of God, the professor is blind to the truth. We said that he had a sick mind. Moreover, he is considered a bastard because his nature is a kin to Satan's and not God's.

At this point we shall divide the natural man of the soul from the natural man of the Spirit. The Bible is our source book. Speaking of the natural man of the soul, we are told that he "receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor.2:14).

If this be true, it is in the best interest of every man to know whether he is that natural man or not. To help you to know, I shall share with you some scriptures as to how the word "natural" is used in the Bible. In doing so, we shall pull the cover off the natural man.

In Rom. 1: 26-27, Paul speaks of a work which God did in connection with the natural functions of men and women. He said, "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature" (v. 26).

Verse 27 helps to put into perspective that which is spoken of in verse 26. "And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use

of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet" (v. 27).

Within the context of speaking about the natural man of the soul, we can speak about normal or natural behavior of men and women. Paul said that when a woman turns her attention to another woman and lust after her, that it is against nature. Likewise, he said the same for men lusting after other men.

We may look at the usage of the word natural to mean that which is produced by nature. We can say that the natural function of a thing is under discussion. This would, of course, indicate that there is a normal pattern within the nature of the soul. Moreover, we see that God expects even the rebellious soul to adhere to the normal or natural usages of things.

The use of natural is not associated with the rebellious soul exclusively. In Rom. 11:21, Paul speaks of a tree with natural branches, saying, "For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee." The natural branches actually refers to spiritually natural branches. The nation of Israel is the subject of Paul's teaching. He was showing the Gentiles who had only recently become Jews in the Spirit, that the natural or true Jew is of the Israel of God.

We have indicated above the usage of natural as in the natural man. The natural man is the man of the soul. In other words, the natural man is the fallen man. Whenever God's children think, speak and act based on the leading of the soul, they show forth a

life of the natural man.

The natural man of the soul has in common, the nature and characteristics of the principle of animal life. Animals have a natural body, so does the natural man. In 1 Cor. 15:44, Paul shows the difference between the natural body and the spiritual body, saying, "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and spiritual body."

Paul goes on to say in verse 46, "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual." He equates the natural body with flesh and blood, (v. 50), saying, "now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

We come now to the disposition of the natural man's heart. We have indicated above that the natural man cannot receive things of the Spirit of God. We showed that they are foolishness unto him (1 Cor. 2:14). As the natural man calls the things of God foolish things, God has made foolish the wisdom of the world.

Paul shows the work of God by way of preaching, saying, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent" (1 Cor. 1:18-19).

Paul then asked, "where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the

world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (v.v.20-21).

The natural man does not trust God even because he does not believe God. He has made himself to be his own god. For him, salvation is found in man's ability to solve his own problems. As for a Savior from God, he says, "away with him."

"For the Jews require a sign, and the Greek seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (vv. 22-24).

Unto the one who puts his trust in God, Christ is revealed as God's wisdom and power. Both are granted unto the believer by the Holy Ghost's work of baptism. As for the natural man, he rejects the need for a Savior. He therefore makes the cross of Christ of none effect. He must, on his own, go through life as best he can.

What he does not realize is that once he rejects God, he lines up with the devil. He may not believe in the devil either. It is his choice to believe or not to believe. What is certain is that he will not render God to be less than almighty nor will his unbelief change Satan from a totally wicked devil who corrupt men and angels.

When the natural man rejects God, he opens himself up to powerful works of Satan. The devil uses his evil spirit to draw such a person deeper into soulish things. Some become so deeply involved until they become dead to the things of God. When this

rebellious soul.

Jude had this to say of them: "But these speak evil of those thing which they know not; but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves" (Jude 10). These put themselves in a position where they will receive the judgment of God.

Jude warns men who are headed in the direction of the natural brute beast, saying, "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gain saying of Core" (v. 11).

Jude went on to describe the natural man's heart as it is given over to the deep things of the soul. He said, "There are spots in your feast of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, forming out their own shame: wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever" (v.v. 12-13).

We have dealt with "that which is natural" in connection with the rebellious soul. The proud soul's end is death. Jude did not pull punches. He said that the man who rejects God is "twice dead." The end of that soul is eternal damnation. Our attention must now turn to "that which is natural" in the Spirit.

That Which Is Natural In The Spirit

Let me restate a truth that needs to be understood before wading into the waters of the Spirit. The soul is a spirit, but it is a natural spirit. Natural is used here to mean of the creature. This natural spirit was made by God to be in submission to the human spirit. When the soul rebels against God, the soul elevates herself over the human spirit even enslaving the spirit to the will of the soul.

The Holy Spirit pertains to God. The Bible teaches us that "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). The Spirit of God is a heavenly Spirit, while the natural spirit or soul is an earthly spirit. Satan is a spirit who claims to be the Spirit of God. It is only a claim though. In due time he shall be revealed for what he truly is, the rebellious, consummate soul.

There is a norm which God has established for the whole of his kingdom. When we speak of that norm, we have in mind the ordinary course of events in the Spirit. A little understood truth can be used to help us in this matter. In Genesis 1:11, "God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind.

What did God mean by his kind? Did not the Lord God bring forth everything after the goodness of God? Yes, For after all had been created, the Lord said that it was "very good" (v. 31). There is none good but one, that is, God" (Matt. 19-17). The "good God" brought forth after his kind, in other words, the grass, herbs and

fruit trees produce naturally.

The God kind is the kind of the Spirit. The natural production of those things spoken of in Gen. 1: 11 were of the spirit. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). The flesh can only produce flesh. At the time of God's works in Gen. 1:11, the flesh was not in existence. Indeed, man had not even been created so as to have a rebellious soul (flesh). All that was brought forth (born) was of God.

See the operation of God. The Spirit (we shall refer to the Holy Ghost as the big Spirit) brings forth spirit (for which we shall call little spirits). God brings forth of himself in all of His works. On the other hand, the consummate soul or Satan brings forth of himself.

Every good thing is of the Spirit of God. Every pretentiously good thing is of the natural spirit or soul. Only the good things of God are the normal things in his kingdom, all other things are illegitimate. We may say they are bastard things. These include everything brought forth of the uncovered flesh.

Let us wade a little deeper into the waters of the Spirit. We wish to reveal unto you the normal life of a child of God. The natural life of the child of God is that which goes forth by way of the Spirit. Unless God opens up a person's eyes, he cannot see this life. On the surface, God's children look like the children of the world.

Once in a while, the Lord God gives man a glance at spiritual

things. The Lord brings the spiritual to the level of the physical in order for man to believe that God is and that he is a rewarder of them that seek him with diligence (Heb. 11:6).

When Jesus Christ arose from the dead, he was no longer a flesh and blood man. He had no need for a physical body in heaven inasmuch as heaven is a spiritual place. Jesus was given a body like unto angels (Matt. 22: 30). Because he loved unbelieving Thomas, the Lord Jesus transformed into a body like unto his former physical body. He did this to convince Thomas that he had arisen from the dead (John 20:27). Jesus did not do any more than did other angels when they met with men in the earth (see Genesis 19:1-3).

What Jesus did and the angels of Lot's day was to reveal the normal body of God's children. The normal body of God's children is a glorified body. This body is suited to move between heaven and earth as God has honored it.

At a lower level of honor, the Lord God reveals the natural life of a servant of God by cheating on time. Time is a function of the soul. There is no time in the Spirit as we know it today. When man fell from the Spirit to the soul, he brought forth the clock. The clock ticks away second by second, counting down the time yet available unto natural man before returning to the dust.

The fountain of youth is sought by men, but he looks in all the wrong places. Only God is able to defeat time. The fountain of youth is the natural or normal life for the child of God. Again, the outward man of the child of God perishes "yet the inward

man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16).

From time to time, the Lord God leaves a witness of the normal life in the Spirit by cheating time. Moses is one such example. Death did not rob Moses of life, the Lord God took him out of the earthly realm.

"So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord ... And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eyes was not dim, nor his natural face abated" (Deut. 34:6-7).

Natural carries the meaning of freshness or vigor in all with eyes to see. Moses' normal life was the natural life of the child of God being manifested as a witness unto men that life is found in the Spirit.

Moses had passed the threescore and ten years spoken of in his Psalm. It was Moses who wrote, "For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; For it is soon cut off, and we flyaway" (Psalm 90:9-10).

Moses spoke truthfully regarding the life span normally expected of a man or woman in the earth. Yet, Moses exceeded that norm by 50 years. In doing so, he witnessed to the normal life of a child of God in the Spirit. The child of God does not grow old as do men and women in the flesh.

The work of God in Moses was a glorious work. Even more glorious would have been the work had Moses sanctified his heart to

receive God's word to speak to the rock when Israel was in need of water. Because he disobeyed God, he was not able to lead the children of Israel into the promise land (Num. 20:12).

There are those who will no doubt read what I have written and take issue with the conclusion reached, namely, Moses was an example of God's witness unto men of normal life in the Spirit. The unbeliever will say, many people have lived to reach old age even atheists. They will conclude that I am wrong in what I have written.

Only God can show a person that which is of the Spirit. It takes a humble heart to receive the things of the Spirit. If you humble your heart before God, and ask him whether I speak of myself, or whether He has birthed the words written, then shall you know.

The magicians of Pharaoh were able to produce snakes by casting down their rods as did Moses. When all snakes were congregated, the snake of Moses ate up the others. There remained only the work of the Spirit (Ex. 7:10-13).

The Bible tells us that Moses' natural force (strength) was not abated nor had his eyes lost their ability to see. This man was in perfect health when God called him home. Satan may preserve the natural life of a person for 120 years, but you can be sure, he is gone to have something wrong with him.

I know of people who have lived over 100 years, but I do not know of a single one who had not grown old in the years. Moses was clearly the exception. To see this is to see the work of God.

Let us wade a bit longer in the waters of the Spirit. There is a "natural face" of every child of God. The Lord God blesses his children to see this face. The "face" is a representation of the true person.

As long as a child of God keeps in memory who he is, he is able to live above the worldly life of men and women in today's society. If he loses sight of his true person, he become like unto those around him who are of this world. In doing so, he loses out on the opportunity to shine before the people the glorious light of God as did Moses.

James helps us to understand this point, saying, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was" (James 1:22-24).

The natural face or normal face of the child of God is the face of the spirit. It is the presence of the new man within. When one refuses to do as God directs, one forget who one is, as well as, whose one is. Under a spell of darkness, he goes about as if he was not saved.

Our final word has to do with caring for the sheep. There is a natural or normal response to the sheep by God's true shepherds. They respond as did Jesus. Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11).

The whole life of God is given unto the sheep when one truly

covers for the sheep. Only those with the life of God can give life. Those who are saved but are walking in the flesh, cannot give life. They need life (I speak not of salvation) themselves. Life is day to day existence. If a person lives in the flesh, then all that he has to give is the flesh. On the other hand, if he lives in the Spirit, he has life in the Spirit to give.

Not many have come to that place in the Lord whereby the Lord has said, that they care for the sheep as he did. Of course the apostles did, but not many of those trained by them were so designated.

One exception was a young man by the name of Timothy. In writing to the Philippians, Paul had this to say: "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state (Phil. 2:19-20).

It is sad to say, but it is yet true today, there are very few men who can be counted on to care for God's people naturally. Again, the word natural referred to above relates to the normal behavior of the child of God. Paul had no man true to the right nature of God to send to the Philippians, save for Timothy.

To The saints

Chapter #6

When I was a young man in college, we use to rejoice at the playing of a song entitled, "When The saints Go Marching In." There was great excitement stirred in us as we listened to the band while our football team was marching toward the opponent's goal line.

When the Saturday's game was over, we took sleep, and on Sunday morning, many of us could be found in the local churches. Again, we rejoiced in the song, "When The Saints Go Marching In." The excitement of Saturday at the football game could be felt once again on Sunday at church.

Who were "the saints" of our rejoicing? They were no ones in particular. Yet they were all of those who would go to heaven after they died. Not all viewed the saints in this light. Some saw themselves as being saints. They called themselves saints of God.

Among those who called themselves saints of God were some of my friends and family members. As for me, I knew I was full of sin. Yet, there were many who fellowshipped with me, who called themselves saints, and they were as carnal or wicked as I was.

To make matters worse, I had a few friends who were trained in the ministry; two in particular come to mind. Both were former students of theology at Ivy League schools. Whereas I was bold in sin, my two friends did what I did, and they even went further in

something I refused to do.

If they were saints, I was a saint also. There was nothing different between them and me, save for Sunday morning. They could be found preaching on Sunday mornings, and I was found sleeping. But Sunday evening, we could be found pursuing out fleshly pleasures together.

Professional sports teams are called by the name of saints. What kind of saints are these? They are saints of the world. What kind of saint is a saint of the world? Any person who calls himself a saint without the holy requirements of God evidenced in their lives are worldly saints.

We have mentioned two groups of saints. The first group is made up of religious men and women who live worldly lives, but call themselves saints. The second is made up of people who blatantly represent the opposite of sainthood. These are mockers of that which is holy.

Both groups are of the world. The lord over both groups is the devil. What a person thinks determines what that person is. "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 25:7). Those who think that they are saints in their hearts are indeed saints. The question is whose saints?

This is a question that religious men and women refuse to come to terms with as individuals. They can see the other person's fault, but not their own. They are quick to condemn a person for a given deed, while thinking or doing the deed themselves.

The Bible has said, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is

he." This is a truth of God. Our earlier words pertaining to the ministers who viewed themselves as saints is no exception. But how could they have been saints when every thing about their lives was more in keeping with that which is written about the world than about God?

Again, I answer, that they, and the multitudes of other religious people like them, are saints of the world. This simply means that they are sanctified into the religious system of satan.

To be sanctified is to be made holy, purified. The god of this world requires "holy living." He demands purity of his children. Holy living in the soul is that which is defined by the soul as holy living. It does not mean that God approves of it. In point of truth, God despises it.

Witches go through a sanctifying ritual to "purify" themselves. They are of the same spirit as everyone else in the world. Satan's religious system is styled after that which is written in the Bible. Satan deceives men and women with works of the soul because the people, like my two friends mentioned above, are not pure before God.

In the Old Testament, God had his priests who served him in the temple. The priests were sanctified unto God. They offered up sacrifices for the sins of themselves and for the people (Lev. 16:11-15).

What about the nations who knew not God? Did they have a form of priesthood? The answer is yes. Nation after nation could be found with a priesthood. These nations were wicked before God, but

yet they had priests serving their gods.

As the priest of God had to sanctify themselves unto the service of God, the heathen priests had to do likewise unto their gods. Satan requires faithful servants. He rewards those who are faithful unto him. He also torments them while at the same time telling them that they suffer for righteousness sake.

Saints are brought forth of God and of the flesh. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. These saints will take on the character of the flesh. What is the character of the flesh? The flesh focuses attention on the outward man. It seeks to find goodness in the deeds of the person.

Using this definition, many people are named to be saints who know not God nor desire to know him. The person may be a very wealthy one who gives much to the poor. In his giving, society may ordain him a "saint."

Another person may have done heroic deeds in saving a ship from disaster by his quick thinking. Those faced with immanent destruction may look back on the incident and call the hero a saint of God even an angel.

In both cases, men and women can be seen esteeming the person as some great one. They may hold a day in his honor without so much as one time giving thanks unto God for the accomplishment. The heroes may go on to national or international fame because of their deeds.

The truth, however, yet stands: that which is brought forth of the flesh is flesh. It matters not how much the world praises a

person for the works he or she has done, it is still of the flesh. That which is of the flesh is not of God.

The opposite of the flesh is the Spirit. "That which is born of the spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). The character of the Spirit can be seen in the inward man. The inward man is of God. This man is the meek one. He is totally committed unto God. This one is the Spirit of God.

The outward man is of the flesh, he is the old man. The Bible tells us not to esteem the old man rather to die to the influence of the old man. How then do men and women make saints out of other men and women, but by the flesh?

Hear God's word. "That ye put off concerning the former conversation of the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind (Eph. 4:22-23). Why would God tell us that the outward man is corrupt and that he needs to die in the believer if he is to be declared a saint?

Of course, he would not. God does not deal with the flesh in his holy works. Man looks on the outward appearance. The Lord God told Samuel to see as does God, saying, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16: 7).

The outward appearance is that which is observable with the senses. This is the method of science. God said to look not as

does science, rather to see in the spirit. Science, on the other hand, says to look not as does God, rather truth is only that which is observable with the senses.

When men and women judge the deeds of others based on that which they are able to see with their eyes and hear with their ears, they conform to this world's view of knowing based on the outward appearance. When they crown one to be a saint using the same method (outward appearance), they commit a work of the flesh.

God looks at the inward man of the heart. The child of God can only see the inward man of the heart by believing God to reveal him. In trusting God to see as does God, he proves that he is a saint of God. Yet, the world may not so much as think that he is worthy of a decent burial.

The child of God must go beyond seeing as does the world (putting off the old man). Paul has said, "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24). The saint of God is the one who is born of God. This is the man within the man. God glorifies this man but man glorifies the flesh.

All glory of the flesh goes unto the devil. All glory of the inward man goes unto God. Most men and women desire a religion whereby individual accomplishments are esteemed. They wish to share in God's glory in the flesh. But God has said, "That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1:31).

To The Saints

Consider the words of Paul found in 2 Cor. 12:1-6. "It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven" (vv. 1-2).

Who was that one caught up to the third heaven? Was it Paul, the man who was born Saul? The answer is no. Saul had to die in order for the spirit man to live. The one caught up to the third heaven was not flesh and blood. Paul did not know whether he had received his glorified body or not.

Men and women do not have a problem with Paul being a saint of God. Many indeed look upon Paul as if he "walked according to the flesh" (2 Cor. 10:2). Paul had a flesh and blood body, but Paul did not perform any works for God as a natural man. Yet, countless of people elevate Paul as if Paul, by his much studying, had come to a knowledge of God, excelling all others. Such is a error which needs to be corrected.

Without question, Paul was a very smart person. His own testimony reveals as much. He excelled in his religion (Gal. 1:14). But when God saved him, he gave up his smarts for God's smarts. Paul had to let go of the years of teachings that he excelled in.

Hear Paul's words, "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" (vv. 11-12).

Before coming to the knowledge of God, Saul was a very religious person. His religion was of the soul. The soul is a very hard worker. The soul labors hours upon hours to produce a forty minute sermon. The soul searches the commentaries to see what one great man after the other has to say about its topic. After much study, the soul prides herself in a job well done.

This is the way Saul operated in the Jews religion. But the day came when he heard the Spirits' call unto the soul to cease from her labor and find rest in the Lord (Matt. 11:28-30). This soul did and is able to share with others because he did.

The Paul who wrote second Corinthians had nothing to do with the smarts Saul had of his religion. Paul was dead to Saul's religion because he had learned to rest in the Spirit. Moreover, he had come to understand that there is no good thing in the flesh (Rom. 7:18).

The one who Paul was dead to is the one men and women glorified. It is nothing to hear a Sunday school discussion about Paul and other apostles being great men of their day. The people view them as if they were mere men. This is the view of the carnal child of God.

The Corinthians viewed Paul as do most church goers that I have met. They saw Paul as a great man in the same light of a general who leads a nation to victory. Some of the Corinthians had begun to bring about division in the church because they sided with

Paul while others sided with Peter, Apollos and Christ (1 Cor. 1:12).

Hear Paul's words, "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul" (v. 13)? Paul wanted to know from the people whether Christ was the author of division. He knew that unity characterized the spirit of Christ (Ps. 133). He knew that Peter, Apollos and himself were all of Christ's Spirit. Therefore, each of them was connected to God by the same Spirit.

The people being carnal walked as men (1 Cor. 3:3). They understood nothing more than the focus of the outer man. Not so was the case with Paul. Paul understood that he had died to the outward man. He declared that he was crucified with Christ. The truth was that Saul and all of his education had died and Christ was alive in Paul (Gal. 2:19-20).

Thus the "St. Paul" referred to by many in the natural church is not even known in the Bible. The natural church makes statues of her saints. Paul was not of the natural church. We have seen how he was dead to the natural man. He even told the people of God to look not on the outward appearance (2 Cor. 10:7).

Paul makes it clear as to who is the saint of God and who is to be glorified in 2 Cor. 11:5. In verse 3, he said, "And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell" (vv. 4-5).

Who is the man Paul was speaking about? It was the inward man. According to Paul, the inward man is the one to glory in.

Now look back on the statues of the natural church; are they of the inward man or the outward man? They are of the outward man. What about pictures of Paul, are they of the inward man or the outward man? They too are of the outward man.

If they are of the outward man, then they pertain to death because Paul had died to the outward man. If Paul was dead to the outward man, how can men and women today honor Paul as "st. Paul the divine?" They can only do so in the flesh.

What Paul repudiated, the natural church honors. Hear what he had to say of himself, meaning the outward man. "Yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool" (vv. 5-6). Paul calls men and women fools who glory in the flesh.

A saint of God is the inward man. As the child of God yields to the inward man, his works are seen in the day to day walk of God's child. We are told about the fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22-23. When we see true love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance being manifested in the life of a person, we see not the person, rather the Christ within.

As Christ is a Spirit, the only way one can truly know that Christ is being revealed and not a counterfeit, is by the Spirit of God. Humility is required to receive the revelation from God.

This message is to the saints of God. The natural man, however, thinks that the message is to the outward man. He feels that I am speaking to the ears of all in the assembly. He thinks

that everyone is capable of hearing the message and all can get something out of it.

The natural man is wrong. Only those with ears to hear, hear the things of the Spirit. The natural ears hear not that which is of God. If the natural man gets something out of the message, be sure that it did not come from God.

The saints of God hears as did Paul. How did Paul hear? He heard by revelation. When one hears by revelation, the Spirit of Christ makes known that which is heard. This knowledge goes to the human spirit and from the heart, the soul receives understanding.

The natural man receives understanding in the soul without the spirit's teaching. This renders the understanding to be of this earth. If understanding is of this earth, God did not have anything to do with it.

Ye saints of God are sons of God. You are not sons by way of natural birth. You have been brought forth by God (John 1: 13). It is high time to recognize who you are in the Lord.

If a man does not know Jesus to be the Christ in the Spirit, he cannot know the saints of God. Jesus is a saint of God. He is very Christ. All children of God are Christians; that means they are of Christ. Christ is the sanctified One. All who come unto God must come through the sanctified One.

Whom The Father Hath Sanctified

Do not confuse sanctification of the Spirit with natural sanctification. Let me show you the difference between these two

by way of an old testament example. The children of Israel were sanctified before God. This means that they were set apart unto God's service. They were as one man in the Spirit.

When the children of Israel turned from following the holy laws of God, they became unholy, but this did not change the nations sanctified state. While some were unholy and in many cases, most were, yet God said, "I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal" (Rom. 11:4).

Moving to the New Testament, we continue with the example. During Jesus' ministry, many religious men were guilty of natural sanctification like unto their fathers before them, who had bowed the knee to the image of Baal.

Chief among the religious men were the Pharisees. On one occasion, Jesus said, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matt. 23:23).

By connecting the scribes and Pharisees to Moses' seat (position of authority), Jesus showed that the nation of Israel was yet sanctified unto God. There was yet a law and Moses was that law giver. The people were charged to carry out Moses' law. There were elders over the people with the authority to keep the people in the way of the Lord.

While the nation was sanctified unto God, the leadership of the nation was not. Yet, among themselves, they were esteemed as

the great men of God. They had developed a set of rules, creeds and practices to govern their daily lives. This they called holy unto God. In that which they had developed, they pronounced themselves to have been sanctified unto God. Their sanctification was illegitimate or natural.

When Jesus came preaching the gospel of the kingdom, their works were exposed. Jesus said that they made the word of God of none effect by their tradition. In doing so, they willfully rejected the commandment of God (Mk. 7:9).

Jesus Christ came as that sanctified One of the Father to bring the people in line with God's will for the nation. He saw how men had developed their own way of worshipping God. What they taught the people was summed up as "the commandments of men" (V. 7).

We have much such teaching going on today with the large number of denominational churches in the world. All cannot be teaching God's word because some teach things that are diametrically opposed to what others call "the word of God."

Some teach that "the sanctified church is down the street." Those in the down the street sanctified church can be found in all the same places of the none sanctified churches. These may not have fellowship with each other. Sometimes, they accuse each other of teaching things from "the pit of hell." Sadly to say, their division is not of God.

The people today claim authority to reign as did the Pharisees. Because the traditional teachings of the Pharisees were

rejected by the Lord, we know that all traditionally based teachings of men are also rejected. We know this because "God is no respecter of person: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35).

If a person fears God, he will keep God's commandment. To fear means to lovingly respect or highly reverence God. Such a disposition of the heart, will yield fruit of the Spirit. Sadly to say, when the "fruit test" is applied to denominational religion today, they fail very badly. Most can be found producing fruits like unto the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21).

The scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day also produced works of the flesh, therefore Jesus told the people not to do after their works. "For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers" (Matt. 22:4).

The works of the flesh are natural works. The natural man works to receive glory in the flesh. The natural church builds outward buildings. The buildings may be large assembly halls, but the biggest building work is that found in building up the outward man.

Spiritual building work focuses on the inward man. This work prepares the hearts of the saints of God to be as God is: to have a meek and quiet spirit; to be meek and lowly in heart. When God finds a servant like unto himself, the Lord God will build him a house. The Lord God may use that servant to build physical structures, but they will not be natural structures.

The physical building work of God is always performed by holy men of God. These sanctified ones have a right relationship with the sanctified One. On the other hand, the natural church builds based on the decision of their building committee, trustees, or board of directors.

"But of their works they do so to be seen of men" (Matt. 22:5). When the "First Church of the Left Corner" builds a new building, the "Second Church of the Right corner" is pressed into action. Before long, the Second Church of the Right Corner will erect an even larger building. What is this, if it is not a work to be seen of men?

If the Second Church of the Right Corner starts a T.V. Ministry, the First Church of the Left Corner will be pressed into action. These view themselves as competitors like unto business rivals. They evidence a spirit in operation like unto the world's businessman's also.

To tell the churches that they are acting out deeds contrary to God's love is to invite a defense of their organization or denomination. Retrenchment sets in when repentance is demanded. In blindness, however, a man does not see the need to repent.

The blind religious leaders are also the ones who lead in the attacks against the truth. On one occasion, the Jews took up stones to stone Jesus. "Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of these works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest

thyself God" (John 10:31-33).

The blind Jews could not understand that the Christ referred not to the natural man, rather to the inward man of the spirit. They knew that God was a Spirit; but they did not understand that God had chosen the body of Jesus to dwell in during Jesus' works in the earth.

When Jesus proclaimed, or instance, that he was the bread of life which came down from heaven, the Jews found this hard to believe. Had they understood that Jesus was dead to the flesh, then they would have understood also that the "I" referred to by Jesus was the inward Jesus or Christ. The inward Jesus or Christ came from heaven to tabernacle in the body prepared for him (Heb. 10:5). Jesus was the body prepared for the Christ of God.

Returning to the situation found in John 10: 31-33, we see Jesus counseling the Jews, saying, "Is it not written in your law, I said, ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God" (vv. 34-36).

Unlike the works of the Scribes and Pharisees which were done to be seen of men, Jesus Christ's good works were done to please the Father. Works done to please God are always works of the Spirit. The Spirit of God works from the inside of a man to the outside. God's works glorify the inward man. Man works from the outside to the inside. He prides himself in what he has done. The focus of his works are on the flesh's ability to perform.

It is high time for the church to recognize her error and turn from her sins. A saint of God is like unto the One who is sanctified by God and sent into the world. God sent his Son from heaven. As flesh and blood only dwell in the earth, God's Son, sent from heaven was not natural. God's Son is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col.1:27). If the Spirit of Christ is not in you, then you are none of his (Rom. 8:9).

With Boldness They Speak Thy Word

Chapter #7

With great fanfare the preacher entered into the city. His advanced party had proceeded him getting as many local pastors as would agree to support his ministry. The preacher had men in high positions to endorse his campaign. There were politicians, sports figures, entertainers, and businessmen and women who supported the preacher's work.

When the "big meeting" began, the preacher had a little to say about many things. He gave attention to one cause after the other. He also preached his message for the week. He called his text, "The Word of God."

Listening to the words preached by the preacher, one could not deny that they were from the Bible. Moreover, it was also clear that he had done a lot of hard work in putting his messages together. When he addressed a particular topic, he referenced at least three to five of the greatest scholars in that area.

The preacher had so much going for him until some felt that his was the perfect ministry of God. Had it not been for one voice in opposition, the preacher would have scored a perfect 10 with the people.

The voice of dissent came from a most unlikely source, the "town's fool." The town's fool was a woman who was so designated because she could be counted on to act foolishly on any matter. The woman posed a problem for the town and the preacher

because she said that she knew the Word of God also. She kept shouting in the preacher's meeting that the Word of God said he was a fake. This she did for three nights of the seven night campaign before she was barred from attending.

It was clear by the second evening that the preacher was annoyed with the women. By the third evening, he made it clear that he would not continue the campaign if they allowed "the fool" to return.

The meeting continued without the town's fool being present. On night number six, an unexpected thing occurred. When the meeting was over, a T.V. crew desired to interview the preacher. Thinking that this would boost his appeal, he consented to the meeting.

During the interview, the interviewer asked the preacher to explain to the people what is meant by the Word of God. The preacher answered saying that the Bible is the written Word of God. The interviewer asked a follow-up question as to whether a person can trust that which is written in the Bible to be truth? The preacher assured him that every word was true and is the truth.

Upon hearing these words, the interviewer said that the preacher was unwise in not hearing the words of the "town's fool." The preacher, keeping a straight face, asked "Why so?" The interviewer said that the definition of God's word given of the preacher in the interview evidenced the "town's fool" to be right on both counts: namely, that she knew the word of God and that he was a fake.

The preacher having taken about all that he could, disrupted the interview with words to the sort, "There are at least two fools in town." While the preacher cut off the interview, he was not able to stop the T.V. station from airing the interview and the commentary of the interviewer.

The interviewer did not have much to say in his commentary, but what he did say caused the local town's people to demand his job. The town's people were much angered by the commentator's words that they were being duped by the preacher.

As the T.V. station was in another city, the town's people began a letter writing campaign to get the reporter fired. He was called to question about the matter by the manager of the T.V. station. The manager asked him to give his side of the story.

The reporter told the manager that he had decided to attend the meeting of the preacher thinking that his luck might change. When he got there, he was surprised to see every important person in town at the meeting. He said that of itself did not bother him, but he did become disturbed by the woman's interruptions. Yet, he said that he did not think that the woman's actions was bad enough to warrant barring her from the meeting.

He said that the woman's words were puzzling to him. After they kicked her out of the meeting, he decided to do a story on religion. He thought he might interview the preacher and the woman whom everyone called the town's fool. He indicated that he spoke briefly to the woman and that she was not very coherent in her speech.

One thing the woman said stuck with the reporter. She said that "the preacher could not be for real with every liar in town courting up to him." The reporter said that he remembered reading something like that in the Bible. Once he returned home, he did a Bible search for that scripture.

The reporter said that he had not intended to make a big thing out of the interview, but that the woman had made a legitimate point that he thought worth pursuing. The manager, not understanding asked, "And what is the point?"

The reporter said that the Bible says, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own" (John 15:18-19). The manager told him to go on.

The reporter said that "every liar in town," quoting the woman called the town's fool, "were at the preacher's meeting, they were courting up to him." If the Bible is the Word of God, then the town's fool was right in what she said about the preacher being a fake.

The manager looked at him and said that he would recommend him to receive a local journalism reward for the work he had done. The reporter was glad to know that he would be rewarded for his work rather than to be outside the station looking for work.

The above parable is a very serious teaching. The fact that it is a parable indicates the weight of the teaching. At question is the very Word of God. One cannot take lightly the words of the town's fool.

Was the well-known preacher correct in defining the Word of God as that which is written in the Bible? If so, where is the letter found? Paul speaks of the Spirit and the letter in connection with the Bible.

Consider Paul's words to the Corinthians. "Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you" (2 Cor. 3:1). The tone of Paul's words reveal unto us that he knew these Corinthians. Paul knew them in the Spirit, and his relationship with them was of the Spirit.

In verse 2, Paul wrote, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men." The work that God had given Paul favor to perform among the Corinthians was known unto others by the godly manner of their lives.

Paul went on to say, "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart" (V.4).

The Word from God to the Corinthians was that God deals with the heart. The Lord God does not look on the outward appearance, and neither did Paul. "And such trust have we through Christ to Godward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our Sufficiency is of God" (vv. 4-5).

This brings us to our key verse. Listen to Paul's words that you might see the error of the preacher in our parable. The Lord God wants you to see how men and women are indeed duped into

religion.

Paul wrote, "Who hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life" (v. 6). The focus of Paul was on being made an "able minister." Was the preacher in the parable an able minister? Not according to Paul.

Paul said that he was an able minister of the Spirit found in the letters of the Bible not of the letters themselves. As for the preacher of our above parable, he called the letters the Word of God. He also brought forth a rebuke from the one whom the town people called the town's fool.

A study of "the word" in the Bible is helpful in understanding the error of the preacher of our parable. As we undertake this search, be prayerful that you might receive the full blessing of the Lord.

The Word

In the Old Testament, "word" has three significant usages, we shall share with you these meanings. The first usage of 'word' is in relation to divine revelation. When God spoke by way of the prophets, it was God speaking and not the prophets.

The basic understanding of how God works is important to an understanding of how God speaks. We shall deal with both, the method of God's work, and how he speaks in one example. Our example is taken from the book of Zechariah. The word was given unto the prophet for another.

In Zech. 4:6, we have the person's name unto whom was the word of God. "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the Word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Take note that the word of the Lord came unto the prophet by way of a vision (vv. 1-3).

With a vision the Lord God causes a person to see certain people, objects, or things. But, however clear the vision may be, the person does not understand what he sees until God gives the understanding. Zechariah understood this truth. We see his wise response to the vision in verse 4.

Zechariah said, "So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these my lord?" A vision given by God must also be interpreted by God. The reason should be clear as to this necessity. A vision from God is of the Spirit of God. No man understands anything of God but by God's Spirit. If God does not open the matter, it is sealed.

We see this point realized in Daniel's visions of the end time. Daniel desired to know the meaning of the visions. He had seen what would happen, but he did not have understanding. This tells us that God teaches the heart or spirit within first, and afterward understanding comes to the soul.

In Daniel's case, the Lord God answered his prayer, saying, "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: Many shall run to and from, and knowledge shall be increased" (Dan. 12:4).

Returning to the Word of God to Zerubbabel, we see God's method of work in general as well as how he speaks. God does not allow any flesh to work a work of God; the Lord God does his own work. He told Zechariah to show Zerubbabel that the work could not be done by his might (human strength) nor by the power (mental ability) of a man. God's work is done by his Spirit.

The Spirit of God produces spirits to perform His works. These spirits are called ministering spirits in Heb. 1:14. Each child of God is a spirit also. In other words, God reproduces himself in the spirit or heart of the believer. The inward man is the man of the Spirit. He is also referred to as the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:4).

Take note of the method of God's work in reconciling the world back unto himself. "To wit that God was in Christ (the spirit), reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). Christ was begotten of the Father in eternity. In due time, Christ came down from heaven as the bread of life. He found him a home in the babe in Mary's womb named Jesus (Heb. 10:5). It was through Christ that the Father directed Jesus in all of his works.

Regarding the work of God in speaking, this work is no different than any other of God's works, He yet works by his Spirit. When Jesus spoke unto the people, he did not do so of an ability found in the soul. Had he done so, he would have glorified the flesh; this he did not.

Jesus said once that his doctrine was not of his soul. He said this to Jews when they "marveled, saying, How knoweth this

man letters, having never learned?" (John 7:15).

Hear the words of the Lord, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of his doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (Vv. 16-17). That which is of God comes from the spirit. That which is from man comes from the soul.

God is a Spirit and the Spirit only begets spirit while the flesh only begets flesh (John 3:6). When Jesus spoke, it was not Jesus the son of Mary speaking. Jesus had to die to the outward man in order to teach the church that she must die to the outward man. It was the Christ in Jesus who spoke for God. Was it not also the Christ in Paul who spoke for God? Did not Paul call the inward man Christ? Of course he did. It was no longer the outward Paul working or speaking for God because the outward man was dead. It was Christ in Paul (Gal. 2:20). And God was in Christ performing the work.

We have been long in speaking on "the word" as used in revelation because it is fundamental to further understanding. The second usage of God's word has to do with creation. It was by the Word of God that all things were created. "For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps. 33:9).

God did not work any differently in creation than he did in reconciling man back unto himself. God always works by the Spirit. The Spirit of God brought forth his only begotten Son (Christ) in eternity. Through Christ, God created all things (Eph. 3:9). Keep in mind that when the Bible speaks of Jesus Christ as creating all

things that the Jesus spoken of was not of the flesh. We have shown you that there was an inward Jesus called Christ already. This is the One referred to as being Creator.

Where was the Father when the Son was being used to do the works of creation? "To wit, that God was in Christ," directing the work. What about the Holy Ghost? The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Christ which also proceeded from the Father (John 15: 26). God uses the Holy Ghost as "that Spirit" which "moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:2).

The Father is before all. He is above all. All spirits of God come from the Father. In the end, there is but one Spirit (Eph. 4: 4). The Son came forth from the Father as the only begotten Son (John 1: 18). God in the only begotten Son created all things by the spirit of Christ called the Holy ghost (Compare 1 Pet. 1:10-11, and 2 Pet. 1:21).

The final use of "the word" has to do with Satan and not God. Satan uses men and women to speak words of their own heart as if God was speaking to them by the Spirit. These words are begotten by the soul. When a person speaks of his own heart, he represents the devil.

As God's spirits work to bring to pass every word spoken by God, Satan's evil spirits seek to bring to pass Satan's words. Men and women are greatly deceived when they speak of their own hearts and those things spoken come to pass. They understand not that Satan is able to fulfill prophecy as well as does God.

In Deut. 13: 1-5 , we see how men and women can receive

supernatural things but that they are never of God. God does not work in the natural world whether it is called simply natural or supernatural. God works by his holy spirit.

When a person speaks words received from a dream or vision, they may come to pass (v. 1) . God knows the cunning works of Satan. He teaches his children not to be caught up in the signs and wonders. Do not speak evil of them either because God does signs and wonders. The child of God is to be watchful in a case like this.

Being watchful has to do with a submissive spirit to receive God's Word as to the signs or wonders. As the child of God stays prayerful before God, the Lord God will reveal the idolatrous doctrines of the prophets (v. 2). When the person directs any to follow after the flesh, he leads in following other gods.

The New Testament follows the Old Testament usage of "the word. " The New Testament reveals how God worked in the Old Testament. Jesus said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).

That which is spirit comes from that which is Spirit (John 3:6). Only the heart or spirit in the person can be quickened by the words of life. As the heart or human spirit receives the ~spirit-filled words, life comes to the spirit. It is from the spirit that life flows to the soul.

God does not reveal himself unto a man's mental power. The natural mind of man cannot know God (I Cor. 2;14). God reveals

himself unto a person's spirit. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing."

The Christian message comes to the spirit by revelation from God not by hard study in Bible school. The Christian message is the Word of God (I Cor. 14:36). The Word of God is related to the word of God. As the word is spirit and God's children are spirits, we see the Word of God being God in John 1:1 from which the words come forth.

With Boldness They Speak Thy Word

Consider the preacher of the above parable. Did he receive the word of God by his hard study? The answer is no. The preacher knew every religious scholar of the flesh, but he did not know the Word of God.

I know a man who has received the Holy Ghost, but he has also been fighting God insofar as going on to perfection. This man is a preacher of many years. His problem has to do with things taught him during the years of his religious education. In a word, he wants badly to share in God's glory in the flesh.

The man has been shown God's perfect will over and over again; but he has chosen to believe a lie. This man has not the peace of God, and his words tell the story of his fleshly walk. Rather than speaking faith words to build up the saints of God, this man speaks words of fear. His words are measured to tear down and not to build.

The preacher of our parable spoke similar words. Because his

words came from the hard study of the letter of the Bible, he had no life to impart. It matters not that he was accounted a great preacher by the worldly church. The worldly church today is as the church of the Laodiceans who said that she was rich and increased with goods having need of nothing. What she did not know was that her works were not of God. According to the Lord, she was "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:17).

There is a way which seems right to the natural church today, but the end of that way is death not life. The preacher in the above parable is a token of the church today. Many will stop up their ears to these words, but others will receive them with gladness of heart.

The preacher was much learned in things of the soul. He demonstrated a master of soulish things as he was able to minister as do the scholars in sociology. When they write professional papers, they spend much time searching out their topic, and they seek to convince their readers by footnoting the renown scholars in their field of study. This is the same thing religious scholars do. What then is the difference between their work and the sociologist? One writes about sociology, and the other about religion.

The child of God who walks in the Spirit, does nothing for God by way of his mental ability. He must die to the intelligence of the soul and allow the Spirit to live God's intelligence through him. His mind must give way to the mind of the Spirit (Rom. 8:27).

The man mentioned above who is fighting God's work of perfection in him, is doing so because he feels that there is something good about his mind. He truly thinks that God uses his mind to "process" matter before he speaks it to the people. Though he has been told that his mind is natural, and that the natural man cannot receive the things of God, (I Cor. 2:14), he, nevertheless, seeks to make something good out of his fleshly mind.

In the assembly where our man pastors is a woman who is looked upon as a fool. This woman has been speaking boldly the word of God unto God's people, but the pastor and the elders treat her as if she is a foolish woman.

Speaking of foolish woman, the town's fool in our parable was one such person. The town called the woman a fool because the woman did not agree with the worldly ways of the town's people. The town's fool boldly proclaimed the word of God. It was the town's fool who saw through the false teacher when all others in town held him up as a great man of God.

The town's fool was used by God to reprove the well known preacher. God uses whomever he wills. It was not that the town's fool was a minister of the Gospel of Christ every Sunday; she did not know very much about the Bible at all. Moreover, her conversation was not coherent as testified to by the reporter. The town's fool was chosen by God to deliver a message of salvation unto the town's people, but they did not have ears to hear.

You may ask, how could the town's fool be used to utter God's word while the preacher only spoke the letter? The answer is

simple; God has mercy on whom he wills and shows compassion on those he chooses to show compassion (Rom 9:15). The Lord had mercy on the town's people, but they did not recognize the mercy of God. He pitied the woman whom the town called a fool.

The Lord God put His words in the mouth of the town's fool, and she spoke God's word boldly. Her spirit filled words convicted the preacher. In responding to his conviction, which was God's mercy unto him, he did not allow the chastisement to turn his heart. Instead he lashed out at the woman, showing that he did not have the fruit of the Spirit in his life (Gal. 5:22-23). Had he the fruit of the Spirit, love would have covered anything contrary to what he was doing. Peace would have kept his anger away. Gentleness would have allowed him to be kind to the woman. Longsuffering would have aided him to take whatever comes with a meek spirit, and faithfully continue in God's service.

Because he did not have the fruit of the Spirit, he acted in pride, even arrogance by saying that if they did not bar the woman, he would not continue the meeting. What does God have to say about the arrogant ways of the preacher? "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: Pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate" (Prov. 8;13). Have you heard the proud preacher pronounce that a man must treasure his good name? Maybe you have, or perhaps you have not. As for me, I know of many who think their words are of God.

Those that speak such words are proud men and are not afraid to say as much. What they mean by their "good name" is that their

community speaks well of them. Sadly to say, many preachers today are just like the preacher in the parable who was well spoken of by the community.

A good name must be testified to by God before the name has any value in the Lord. When the community speaks well of a person, the person had better be sure that he does not fall under the woe of God. Jesus said, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you? for so did their fathers to the false prophets" (Lk. 6:26).

The world loves her own. When a preacher comes preaching a Christ who is a commercial hit to the business community, the business community will endear such a Christ. This is the Christ preached by the natural church today. The natural church preaches a Christ whose birth date is celebrated by the world and the church together. The two are in fellowship every Christmas.

How can two walk together except they agree? The world could never love Jesus Christ because he was not of the world, (John 15:18). The world loves the money she makes during Christmas and Easter owing to the Christ who is said to have been born and arose from the dead respectively. The naturalness of the Christ the church is preaching today is also testified to because the world hates the Christ of the Spirit.

The Christ of the Spirit is God's Son. There are no pictures that can reveal a Spirit Christ. The Christ of the world is a natural man; therefore pictures and all manner of commercial products can and are made about him and of him. This is the Christ the world loves, the one they are able to profit from in the flesh.

The children of God are called on to preach the word of God. The word of God is Spirit and life. The children of God must preach the Christ of the spirit. The Christ of the Spirit is the inner Jesus. Preach with boldness that Jesus is the Christ as did the apostles.

Yes, the worldly church shall persecute you. Yes, you can expect threatenings. What should be your response? Prayer? "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word" (Acts 4:29).

The Mouth Of Them That Speak Lies Shall Be Stopped

Chapter #8

There are a number of things God actually hates. Many more things are an abomination, and yes, even more things are wicked before Him. Hate is a very strong verb. Some say that hate and abomination carry the same degree of dislike in the eyes of God. It may be so, but I am using hate as a stronger expression of God's emotions toward wicked things.

An abomination is a detestable thing. The froward is an abomination (Prov. 3:32). Wickedness itself is an abomination (Prov. 8:7), so is a false balance (Prov. 11:1), the sacrifice of the wicked (Prov. 15:8), a proud heart (Prov. 16:5), and of course, the man of sin (Matt. 24:15).

Hate carries the meaning: to dislike, to detest and to abhor. It is within the realm of the heart that the emotion of hate is seen. A person can hate his brother for no apparent reason. Hatred leads to murder (1 John 3:10-15). Indeed, hatred is the opposite to love.

"God is love" (1 John 4:16). The opposite of God's character is Satan. Satan is hate. These emotions: love and hate describe God and Satan respectively. Within this context, I speak of hate as being the strongest expression of one's dislike for another or a thing.

The writer of Proverbs gives us a list of things that God hates. "these six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an

abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren" (Prov. 6:16-19).

Each of the above hated things boils down to but one cause, "the big lie." Satan is the father of "the big lie." Jesus once said unto some religious Jews, "If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me" (John 8:42).

Why didn't these Jews love Jesus? Because they knew not the love of God. They understood the love of the world. Their religion was of the world, their thoughts were of the world, their words were of the world, and consequently, their deeds were of the world.

The world does not love God. The world loves her own. The world hates God and his Christ (Ps. 2:1-2). Had the Jews mentioned above been of God's Spirit, they would have received Jesus as "the Christ of God." They would have loved with the Spirit and not with the soul.

Because the Jews did not receive the One whom the Father had sent, they showed forth not a love for the Christ of God, rather a hatred. Thus Jesus asked, "Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word" (John 8:43).

The true test of a person's love is found in his or her ability to hear. Those who hear with the ears of the soul, hear

the voice of their traditions. They place stock in the things of the flesh. On the other hand, those who hear what the spirit is saying, hear with the ear of the Spirit. These understood the inward man as he speaks.

The Jews of John 8:44 were among those who could only understand natural words. Because they were limited to the natural in hearing, they revealed their father as being the father of natural things.

Jesus said unto them, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (V.44).

Our topic is entitled, "The mouth of them that speaketh lies shall be stopped." Now we know who is the father of those who speak lies. There is a father of lies and there is a Father of truth.

Jesus said that satan was at one time in the truth but he did not remain. When Lucifer rebelled against God, all truth departed from his heart. He was left with a heart filled with lies. From his heart, he brought forth the first lie. This made him "the father of it." All lies therefore can be traced back to one wicked source, the devil.

When God created man, satan was given opportunity to prove the man's love for God. The Lord God set forth boundaries that satan could not cross over. God planted a tree in the midst of man's

heart; the tree of life. The Lord God also allowed satan to plant a tree in the midst of the soul.

Satan could not enter into man's spirit or heart because God's throne was there. Adam was a "living soul" (Gen. 2:7). The soul received life from the Spirit of God. Satan's presence in the garden of the soul was as a tree also. The tree was called "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

Let us take up reading in Gen. 2:8, "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. " This work of God was the outward picture of the garden of Adam's heart.

"And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also is in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (V.9).

Garden carries the meaning of a cultivated place. In the Song of Solomon, we see where the Shulammitte' s lover had planted a garden. In chapter four, verse 16, She cried, "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits."

The Shulammitte 's garden was her heart. The Lover of the Shulammitte had cultivated that garden for himself. In chapter five, verse 1, we see the Lover's response to the call of the Shulammitte: "I Am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb

with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

The "I Am" had come unto his Shulammitte, that bride, whom he also called sister. This was the fairest of all who made up the bride. The "I Am" spoke, "My dove, my undefiled is but one; She is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praise her. Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners (Chapter 6:9-10).

The Lord God Knows His Own

Back to chapter five we go for a response from the Shulammitte to the coming of the "I Am." She said, "I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night" (Chapter 5:2).

The "I Am" had blessings "As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountain of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore" (Ps. 133:3). The knock upon the Shulammitte's heart was her Lover's call to open up yet more unto Him that she might receive the full blessing.

It was true that the "I Am" had eaten of the honeycomb and drank his wine and milk produced in the heart of his Shulammitte. It was also true that He gathered His myrrh with His spices, but He

desired the Shulammitte to go yet higher in the things of the Spirit.

Yes, the suffering of the Shulammitte came up as a sweet smelling savor. Yes, her life evidenced that she had eaten of 'the flesh and drank of the blood of the "I Am." The sincere milk of God's word could be found in the Shulammitte's heart. Indeed, she had grown by the very word.

As the "I Am" desired the Shulammitte to come up higher in the Spirit, the Lord God desired the same for Adam. Adam was brought forth as "a living soul." The Lord God desired the best for Adam. The best is found not in the soul, but in the Spirit. Adam, however, had to be tested in the soul before promotion to the born again experience of the Spirit could take place.

Satan was given a position to influence the man from the soul. God, however, hedged Adam about from every temptation of the enemy. The only possible chance the devil had to bring the man down was to get the man to disobey God.

"And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it" (Gen. 2: 15). Adam was to keep his garden (his heart) from every evil work. The devil desired Adam to eat (partake) of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He knew that if he could get man to follow him, that man would have to disobey God.

In man's disobedience, he opens his garden (heart) unto, another husbandman's work. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey;

whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness"
(Rom. 6:16)?

To keep the garden pure of weeds, Adam had to be watchful. The Lord God was available for Adam to turn to for help. The Lord God even warned Adam of the consequence of disobedience, saying, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2: 16-17).

The Lord could well have said unto Adam, "Be careful for noting: but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7).

Adam did not cultivate his heart (garden) with the pure word of God. He allowed the weeds of satan to enter therein. satan used "the big lie" to turn man's heart from God unto himself. What is the big lie?

The big lie is simply that man can become like God by disobeying God. We see the lie being offered unto Eve in Gen. 3:4-5. "And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye ear thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods (God), knowing good and evil."

God was not opposed to Adam being like unto God. In point of truth that is precisely what God desired for man. What God did not

want was for man to seek to be like Him in the soul for this was a rebellious act.

You know the story as to how Eve did partake from the liar and gave the lies unto her husband and he too partook of them (v. 6). "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked" (v.7). satan had stripped man of his glory of God and had reduced him to the naked glory of the flesh.

The Mouth Of Them That Speak Lies Shall Be Stopped

Have you ever heard the saying, "He stopped his mouth." I imagine that you have. In some preaching circles, it's a big thing to stop the mouth of a speaker. To stop one's mouth simply means to prove the person wrong in that which he has spoken.

When I was a young man, there was a preacher who advertised his ministry by proudly proclaiming that he would give anyone a large sum of money (six figures) if they could stop his mouth. This proud man was very sure of the doctrine he preached.

We know that Satan felt sure of his campaign against God. When Lucifer stated that he would "ascend into heaven," he was not joking. Lucifer felt capable of exalting his throne above the sons of God. He knew that place where he wanted to sit, "upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north" (Isa. 14:13). Lucifer wanted to "ascend above the heights of the clouds." The goal was to "be like the Most High" (v. 14).

Though this evil thought took place many years before man was created, he still held unto the unlawful desire. The unlawful

desire was a lie of his heart. Lucifer was the first to believe the big lie, namely, he would be like God in the flesh.

When he spoke those words in his heart, he sinned. We may say that his own heart deceived him. Moreover we may say that he lied. God proved him to be a liar when he fell from the realm of the Spirit to the realm of the earth.

It is needful to see Isa. 14:12 through the eyes of God in order to appreciate the fall of Lucifer. Once Lucifer sinned, he could no longer remain in the presence of a holy God any more than could Adam remain in God's spiritual garden (Eden).

The Lord God put the man out of the garden, signifying that he could no longer approach unto the Spirit world of God because when he fell, he became natural. "Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. 3:23-24).

The "way of the tree of life" is the holy way of God. This way is found in the Spirit. Jesus Christ declared that he is "the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:16). To come to the Father, man has to be born again (John 3:3). This birth is of the water (word of God) and of the Spirit (life of God). The word of God is spirit and life. Through the word of God comes the Word of God or the Spirit of Christ. Christ must dwell within the heart to have God's life.

Adam could not return to the tree of life which was found in

the garden of the Spirit. Lucifer could not return either. Each had to humble himself before God, acknowledging their faults, before "the way" to the Father could be found. Lucifer's rebellion was so deep until he refused to throw himself upon the "Rock of Mercy. " Refusing God's love, he dug a pit for himself and all angels and men with similar wicked ways.

Isaiah has written, "Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us" (lsa. 14:9-10)?

God calls the ending from the beginning. Satan's lot is sealed. Hell is awaiting Satan, just as sure as it shall be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14). "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophets are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever" (v. 10).

Regarding Lucifer's fall, it took place before man was created. Satan was the devil when God placed man in his garden . Lucifer fell from the glory of "the anointed cherub that covereth" (Ezek. 28:14) to a bitter enemy of God.

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations (lsa. 14:12). Lucifer fell to the ground during the time of his rebellion. He was in the second heaven and God cast him out to the ground. Peter called Lucifer's world, "the world

that then was, being overflowed with water, perished" (2 Peter 3:6).

He goes on to speak about the world of Adam, saying, "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (v. 7).

We see the results of Lucifer's judgment in Gen. 1:2 where the earth, which was made to be inhabited (Isa. 45:18) was a waste land. Moses described the earth as being "without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep" (Gen. 1:2).

This was the condition of the earth due to Lucifer's sin. Clearly God cannot be accused of darkness. In God's kingdom is light. The Lord God delivered his children from the kingdom of darkness and translated them "into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13).

Satan's kingdom is full of darkness, not God's. Hear John's words, "And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness" (Rev. 16:10). As for God, "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).

If there is no darkness in God, then don't say that God created darkness in order to bring about light. God created good and very good creatures. He created everything after "His kind" (Gen. 1:11). God's kind is the good kind. Goodness is only found in God.

The earth was "without form and void," but "God himself that formed the earth and made; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited" (Isa. 45:18). We know that Lucifer's sin was the cause of the vain condition of the earth.

If stopping one's mouth means to prove one to be wrong, God certainly proved Satan wrong in his proud desire to be like God in the flesh. We may say that God stopped Satan's lying mouth. But like the proud preacher who offered a six figure sum for anyone who could stop his mouth, Satan did not even recognize that God had repudiated his wicked thoughts.

When Adam came on the scene, Satan was very much at work seeking to overthrow God. He deceived the woman and through the woman, he brought down the man. Even in this work, God stopped Satan's mouth once again.

While it is true Adam sinned and sin proved to be a very destructive agent in the life of man. God's love unto Adam was revealed by covering him with coats of skins. He clothed man with his love. The love of God was demonstrated unto man as God gave his only begotten Son for the salvation of man (John 3:16). Once more the Lord God stopped the lying mouth of Satan.

After the work of salvation, Jesus Christ entrusted the overcoming power of God with the church. Satan lit in on the church like a bat out of hell. Everywhere he could, Satan sought to bring division among God's people. He planted tares among the wheat, but the leaven was delayed in working due to the

watchfulness of the apostles.

Paul was one who understood the need to stop the lying mouth. He was faced with religious Jews who desired to enslave Gentiles with the yoke of bondage they were under. On one occasion, Paul wrote, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19).

Paul was showing the unrighteousness of man before God. He knew that the Jews were wrong who preached salvation by works of the law. Paul understood that God's grace is the only way to salvation (Eph. 2:8).

We are blessed with insight into what it means to stop a mouth in that which Paul has written. We may restate Paul's teaching on stopping the mouth with the words: "let God be true, but every man a liar, as it is written, That thou mightiest be justified in thy saying, That thou mightiest overcome when thou art judged" (v. 3).

In writing to Titus, Paul once again stressed the importance of stopping the mouths of lying men. He said that "... there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision" (Tit. 1:10). Paul went on to say, "whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (v. 11).

A person's motive must be right before God in teaching people. Satan has him many ministers carrying forth his gospel of Christ (which is in truth antichrist but they know not.) Satan ministers run the gamut from the most blatantly evil men to the most pious of

men. They conform to his tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Those who are blankly evil conform to the evil side of Satan's tree. Those who are pious are the good men of Satan.

By these two groups, Satan spreads his lies. There is something for every person. As the soul is full of variety, Satan offers religion like unto a buffet breakfast, you choose your religion to suit yourself. You may have the church of your choice in Satan's religious house.

On the other hand, God's children are bought with a price, they are no longer their own. Having a kind and gentle Father, they trust that He knows best for them. Thus, God's children affirm the church of their Father's choice. They are led by the Spirit to the pastor whom God has designated to feed them and to take the oversight thereof (Acts 20:28).

The mouths of Satan's ministers must be stopped today even as the apostles did in the early church. Paul's words to Titus are important today because we face the same enemy of God and his children as did the apostles. The difference is that the apostles did not have to face a devil who for seventeen hundred (1,700) years has sat as lord over the natural church.

Satan's lies are so ingrained into the very fabric of society until the voice of religion seeks to drown out any voice which speaks against her natural Jesus. Yet, any Jesus that is worshipped by the senses is an act of idolatry. God is a Spirit and He must be worshipped not via the senses, rather by the Spirit (John 4:24).

When worship goes forth via the senses, it is worship of the soul. The soul is not capable of worshipping God because the soul is natural. The natural man does not know God. He cannot receive the things of God because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor. 2:14). It takes the Spirit within a person to worship God. The spirit does not require any natural thing in worship.

The mouth of the preachers of lies must be stopped. God's people must be delivered from their leavenous doctrines. As David has said, "... the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped" (Ps. 63: 11). Make no mistake, the Lord God shall put an end to the lying tongue of the natural church.

They stopped The Mouths Of Lions

The natural church yet boast of her riches and having need of nothing. Her leaders understand not the wretched conditions she is in. They do not see that she is blind and naked. This sad condition is made sadder because many of God's children are caught up in the lukewarm church of today.

Since the time of the church's apostasy, seventeen hundred years ago, Christ has been on the outside of the church. The Lord God does not dwell in an unclean vessel. The Lord yet says unto the church, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do no appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Rev. 3:18).

The Lord's Christ goes on to say, "As many as I love, I rebuke

and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (v.19). This call to repentance is a call to the ones the Lord both rebuke and chasten. There are those caught up in the natural church who are true children of God. I might add that the number is not a few. To God's children, Christ says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (v. 20).

If you have not heard the knock in times past, you will hear because the sound is growing louder as the end draws nigh. Paul was dull of hearing the knock until the sound became so loud that he could not resist any longer.

To the children of God caught up in the religion of man, the Lord asks, "Why persecutest thou me" (Acts 9:4)? Just as Paul did not know the Lord, so it is with the church today. Jesus had to reveal himself unto Paul. He is still revealing himself unto his children who have been fighting the pricks of love for so very long. They know that "it is hard ••• to kick against the pricks" (v.5). Yet, many of God's children kick.

In each generation since the apostasy, God has sought to overthrow the devil's stronghold on the church. During this time, the father of lies shall be brought low. Though the devil roars like a lion, seeking to devour all of God's children (1 Pet. 5:8), he cannot because God has him a remnant today capable of stopping the mouths of lions.

Look back on the faithful children of God. I want you to see how they were involved in spiritual warfare. The heart of

spiritual warfare is about a lie verses the truth. The lie fills the mouths of Satan's ministers in the earth aimed at accomplishing the big lie.

As for God, his ministers have the word of God in their mouths. It is by the word of God that the mouths of the liars shall be stopped. The power is not in man to stop a lie, but the power is in the Christ of God.

The Hebrew writer has written, "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets" (Heb. 11:32). What does the writer wish to convey unto us?

He tells us in the verses which follow, saying, "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouth of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to fight the armies of the aliens" (vv. 33-34).

The children of God in the Old Testament fought the same enemy as the righteous church fights today. There is one difference between the work of God today in warfare and that which he wrought in the Old Testament. Today, the Lord God has not called for the church to be the agent of judgment against wicked men as was the case in the Old Testament.

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh, For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty

through God to the pulling down of strong holds" (2 Cor. 10:3-4). Think not that Gideon's weapons of warfare were carnal. God does not use carnal things in his work.

I did not say that Gideon did not use physical weapons. There is a difference between that which is physical and that which is carnal. Paul was a physical person, but his flesh was covered with Christ. He called upon the church to put on Christ (Gal. 3:27).

Once the physical item is covered with the anointing, we may say that it is Christed. As such, it is no longer natural or carnal rather it is holy unto God. That which is holy unto God must first be sanctified. A sanctified vessel is one set a part from the profane and is offered unto God.

The church of Jesus Christ is another example to show forth the difference between the physical and the carnal. The church is made up of many members. The head of the church is Jesus Christ. Jesus had to be covered by the Christ Spirit before he was able to do a work for God (See Acts 10:38 and John 1:33). Jesus Christ is the head of the church.

The body of the church is made up of members starting with the apostles and reaching down to this day. We have shown you how Paul had to put on the Spirit of Christ. Paul was late in coming to the apostleship compared with the original twelve.

The original twelve apostles had to be anointed as was Jesus before them. When Jesus was baptized by John, the Holy Ghost descended like unto a dove and set upon his physical body and remained on him. He was covered with the Spirit. He was literally

"in the Spirit."

The same thing occurred when the apostles received the Holy Ghost in Acts 2: 3. Luke has written, "and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." They had put on Christ. Understand that the apostles were like their Head. The Head was Christed (anointed) and so were the members of the body.

Walking in the Spirit, the apostles did warfare with Satan. It took the same Spirit for Gideon to do warfare. Gideon was not a general of a natural army, using the strategy of "West Pointe" to gain victory. Gideon was a vessel through whom God worked.

Recall how the Midianites, Amalekites and the children of the east gathered together to fight against Israel in the valley of Jezreel (Judges 6:33). Now see what happened unto Gideon. The writer of Judges said, "But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon. It Gideon was clothed in the Spirit. The physical person was shut up unto God. In this state, Gideon led the children of Israel to victory.

At the heart of Gideon's battle was the need to deliver Israel from a lie. The children of Israel had turned from the truth and had given themselves over to the false gods of the Amorites. They had not obeyed the voice of the Lord their God (v. 10).

Gideon was chosen to stop the mouth of the roaring lying lion of the Amorites. Again, he did not approach the battle with carnal weapons nor with a carnal mind, he allowed God to take up the fight.

In this sense, Gideon was like Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David and Samuel. Each one of these had to stop the lying mouth of the roaring lion of their day. A graphic picture of the lying roaring lion can be seen during the time of the godly king by the name of Hezekiah.

Hezekiah was faced with a big problem brought on by a pending invasion by the Assyrians. Sennacherib was the king of Assyria. He sent a messenger unto Hezekiah by the name of Rabshakeh. In the name of his king, Rabshakeh blasphemed the God of Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:22).

He sent messengers unto Hezekiah, saying, "Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the King of Assyria. Have the gods of the nations deliver them which my fathers have destroyed; as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which were in Thelasar? Where is the King of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah" (2 Kg.19:12-13)?

When Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers, he did not seek to call the army to battle as a general steeped in West Pointe strategy. Instead, Hezekiah went to the house of the Lord and prayed. The end results is that God dispatched one messenger to Sennacherib. By this one messenger, God destroyed one hundred eighty five thousand (185,000) Assyrians in a single night (v.35). The threat ended and God was glorified.

The remnant of the Lord in today's church represents faithful

servants of the Lord. Their job is to stop the roar of the lion today.

Let No Corrupt Communication Proceed Out Of Your Mouth

Chapter #9

I wish to define a term for you. No doubt you are familiar with the term, but I am not sure that all have understanding as you ought. The term is corruption. What is meant by corruption?

We know that corruption is not good because we speak of bad children as being corrupt. Hold on there! Who are the "we" being referred to? There are some who take issue with bad children being called corrupt because their definition of bad means good. This is precisely the point I am making regarding the definition of corruption. Some call the corrupt thing a holy thing.

The wisest man of the Old Testament, Solomon, became as the village's fool in his old age. The unwise decision he made in marrying "strange wives" cost him and the nation dearly in his old age.

Solomon's wisdom was of the Lord. When he followed hard after the Lord, the wise words of God proceeded out of his mouth. Indeed, "when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon wisdom, and the house that he had built, And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his minister, and their apparel, and his cup bearers, and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord there was no more spirit in her" (1 Kings 10:4-5).

We may say that the breath was taken out of the Queen. "And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own

land of thy acts and of thy wisdom" (v. 6). She went on to say she did not believe what had been told her" ... until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard" (v. 7).

Verses 8 and 9 bring out the honor and glory of Solomon's God. The queen said, "Happy are the men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom" (v. 8). To whom did the queen credit for Solomon's wisdom? She gave the glory unto Solomon's God.

Verse 9 reads, "Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice." The queen had seen the light. Her mouth spoke right things.

Truly the Lord did love Israel and the Lord did take delight in setting a wise king over her. To know that king is to know the "young Solomon." The young Solomon is the One spoken of in the New Testament, "which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24).

The old Solomon was as the village's fool. He acted the part of "the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (v.22). Many today look upon the old Solomon as if he was wise unto God. They see his errors and understand not the corrupt nature of his heart.

Let us return to the "strange wives" mentioned above. "Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of

Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love" (1 Kings 11:1-2).

The Lord God had spoken wise words unto the people of Israel. Solomon would have done well to have heard the wisdom of God in this matter as he had done in other matters. Because he did not hear God, his wisdom was corrupt through the whorish women that he joined himself to.

"For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites (vv. 4-5).

Solomon was truly acting in the realm of the "old man" when he turned his heart away from God unto the gods of men. During this time of Solomon's reign, he was a tool of Satan. Solomon gave up his Lord God for another lover. As he had loved God in times past, he showed forth the love of Satan.

I am not saying that Solomon did not have any love in his heart for the true and living God. To the contrary, he did. His problem was that he gave Satan place to operate when he sinned. In not repenting, as did David his father, once the matter was before him, Solomon allowed Satan to build a strong hold in his heart.

"And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father. Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods" (vv. 6-8).

The strange wives of Solomon counted his deeds as a blessed thing. These women were pleased that Solomon had provided for them a place of worship according to their heart's desire. To them, Solomon had done a good deed.

Even today, men and women cannot see anything wrong with Solomon's deeds. I do not mean, the actual building of the high places for the strange gods on the "mount of corruption" (2 Kings 23:13) during Solomon's day, I am referring to their like corrupt deeds today.

Men and women build places for strange gods on the "mount of corruption" of their heart as did Solomon. They allowed man's religion to stand side by side with God's. A typical example can be found among those who hold to their denominational doctrines when the doctrines run contrary to the written words of the Bible.

Let us say that God has pastor "A" to ordain person "B" as an elder of God's people. Let us further say that God sends the ordained elder to denomination "C" to speak to his people. If denomination "C's" rules say that the elder cannot speak in their assemblies unless he is ordained by them, and refuse to hear the

elder, they show forth a rebellious spirit to God's will.

It was a rebellious spirit or heart found in Solomon that caused him to enter into the corrupt things of other gods. As I said earlier, all Solomon did during his time of the "old man" was not unto God. Is it any difference today with denominations that exclude God's servants from preaching to his people because of their decrees?

I have personally witnessed the rejection of preachers sent by God to denominational churches. I have been rejected myself no few times. In some of these cases, pastors had affirmed that God had sent me unto them to minister, but fear came upon them. Some had even announced to the people that I would speak, but they changed their mind.

It was not that they had a problem with my message, rather they were afraid the ruling elders would call them into question for their actions.

Such fear is a function of witchcraft control over God's people. Whenever a servant of God cannot freely receive from God to perform his duties, he is under the power of witchcraft. I might add that the problem is wide spread in churches today.

Too many men and women in denominational churches are controlled by a spirit of error. Pastors are moved from one congregation to another, not because God has moved the pastors, rather because he or she has gotten a little too powerful.

It is sad to have to report such things. They should not once be named among those who call themselves saints of God. The

reality is, nearly everyone reading these words know that I speak the truth. What many people do not know is that God is no more in these wicked works than he was in Solomon's works as the old man.

The old man is the man of corruption. This man seeks control by the flesh. The flesh is corrupt in its dealings. Only the Spirit is pure before God. Solomon was pure before God as the young Solomon or "inward man." He could have been one hundred seventy (170) years of age and yet have acted as the young Solomon.

In like manner, he could have been thirty five (35) years of age, but was acting out the role of the old man. The "old man" is a disposition of the heart wherein he refuses to hear the word of God. In not hearing God, the old man reasons through a plan of life which seems right unto him, but the end of the plan is only death.

Corruption is found in the old man. To corrupt means to ruin or destroy. The strange wives of Solomon ruined Solomon's relationship with God. In like manner today, men and women who hold to their religious creeds and doctrines above God's word, corrupt others.

Like the wives of Solomon, however, they do not see themselves as corrupting agents. To the contrary, they call that which is corrupt, holy. The zenith of deception can be seen in the wickedness described above. Solomon's strange wives corrupted him with words. Pastors corrupt others with words today.

Words are too important to not hear with the ear of the Spirit. Jesus Christ has warned the church that she should not be deceived by any man (Matt. 24:4). The way man deceives another is

through that which he communicates.

Let No Corrupt Communication Proceed Out Of Your Mouth

We showed you in our last chapter that the mouth is the source of Satan's lie. We revealed that the lying mouth must be stopped. Given that the lying mouth must be stopped, corrupt communication has to cease. Whenever the mouth speaks a lie, it does so to corrupt.

If a mouth is taught the truth, the lie can be replaced with that truth. Thus, those who once corrupted can be made to save from corruption. We stress this point because we realize that many people lie base on ignorance, not to willfully deceive.

Paul comes to mind as one who spoke the lies of his religion boldly until his mouth was stopped. When his eyes became opened to the truth, he declared Jesus to be the Christ with great zeal, even as he had done wickedly with much zeal.

The writer tells us that Paul was blinded on the Damascus road. What was he doing on the road in the first place? He was looking for God's children, "whether they were men or women, (that) he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem" (Acts 9:2). Paul had a hatred for God and his children due to ignorance, not to a willful desire to do evil.

Paul's own words reveal unto us how God deals with the person who sins ignorantly. He said, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor,

and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (1 Tim. 1:12-13).

Some of you are blasphemers as was I before the Lord God showed mercy unto me. A blasphemer is an evil speaker. Paul was an evil speaker because he held up his religion above God's word. Men and women do the same today when they seek to make their man made denominational religion to be right.

We see the same spirit at work in some religious Jews when Jesus proclaimed that he and his Father were one (John 10:30). We are told, "Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which is those works do ye stone me" (vv. 31-32).

The Jews heard something that Jesus said that they did not understand. Rather than humbling themselves before God to know the certainty of the matter, they trusted that they knew God and that their religious views were correct.

"The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God" (v. 33). The Jews accused Jesus of the thing that they were guilty. Whenever a person refuses to allow God to reveal the truth, he defends a lie. As he speaks in defense of his religious lie, he speaks evil of the things of God.

This was Paul's problem before he was converted. It is the problem with many religious men and women today. I am often confronted with situations where men and women speak freely about the corruption found in their place of worship. As long as I hold

my piece about the truth; they openly tell of fornication, adultery, backbiting, lying as well as envying, and strife.

Recently, I asked two women, one in the northeast, and another in the southeast, to describe the general character of their church for me. Both women said that envying and strife can be found in their places of worship. I asked both about the longevity of the condition. One said that for six years, she had been in the assembly and for all the six years, she has seen envying and strife. The other lady indicated that the condition of envying and strife has been going on in her assembly much longer.

The witness of the two women is typical of witnesses that I have heard over the past twenty (20) years. On occasions when the Lord God has had me to minister to those who openly discuss the fleshly walk of their churches, too often the people become defensive when they heard the truth.

Let us return to the witness of the two women who described their assemblies as being characterized by envying and strife. James tells us, "If ye have bitter envying, and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth" (James 3:14). James understood that envying and strife is not the wisdom of God.

He said, "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish" (v.15). The assembly which is characterized by envying and strife is not of the Spirit of God. This assembly may be very religious, but it is not being led by God's Spirit. Just the opposite condition obtains I "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work"

(V.16)

The same people who openly discuss their churches character, some have gone so far as to outline details of the evil works of both pastors and the flock), have all too often sought to defend their religion once they were shown what they spoke revealed Satan's operation and not God's.

The Lord God is not pleased with a person who knows a thing is wrong and yet speaks as if that thing is right. The mouth must speak truth. Those who can see the error of their assemblies can become vessels of change if they would only acknowledge the truth.

When God showed Paul his blind condition to the things of God by allowing physical blindness to come to him, Paul yielded unto God. The Lord God sent "a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias" to recover Paul's sight and to bless him to be filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 9:10,17).

After Paul's healing, he spent a few days with the disciples at Damascus. "And straightway he preached Christ in the Synagogues, that he is the Son of God. But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests" (vv. 20-21).

While Paul was blinded by his religion, he blasphemed, persecuted and injured God's people because they affirmed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. Once Paul's eyes came opened that the children of God were not calling Jesus, the outward man, God, rather the Christ Spirit in him, he was able to boldly

proclaim the truth.

See God's love, grace and mercy all rolled up into one as he stopped the lying mouth of Paul and filled that mouth with the loving words of the gospel of Christ. He that before blasphemed the truth said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jews first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

The Lord God is looking for many Paul's in these last days. Men and women are today just as deceived in their religion as was Paul. They must stop defending something that their own leaders openly declare, namely that God did not give the church denominational religion. Their leaders have had no problem confessing that denominational religion was birthed of man.

The leaders are like the witnesses mentioned above who openly proclaimed the fleshly works of their assemblies but seek to make those works to be of God. When the leaders of denominational religion are told that if God did not introduce denominational religion to the church that it had to come from the devil according to James, they shift gears to defend that which they have already said was of the flesh.

If God does not give a thing, there is but one other source it can come and that is the flesh. If it is of the flesh, Satan is lord over it. You cannot say that God did not establish denominational religion and at once say that God is leading denominational religions.

Whenever a man establishes anything, it is birthed of the

flesh. Whenever God establishes anything, it is birthed of the Spirit. Only that which is birthed of Spirit brings forth spiritual things. If the root of denominational religion is found in man's attempt to solve his religious problems, then the fruits are also of man. If a work is of man, it is cursed, not blessed (Jeremiah 17:5).

It is time for men and women to become clean with God as did Paul. "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another" (Eph. 4:25). The old man must be put off before you can put away lying. The way of life of your religion has deceived you into cheating God of his due holy honor.

"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (v. 26). With whom should you be angry? Have ye not been angry with me long enough because I tell you the truth? You should be angry with the devil for deceiving you. You should not be angry with the pastor of the church.

If you allow your anger to come against men and women, you do wickedly. You must not "give place to the devil" (v. 27), by holding something against your leadership. Allow God's love to cover your leadership. Many of them desire to be free as much as the next person.

"Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (v. 28). This is an act of repentance. Every person must bring forth fruit meek of repentance to show

forth the inward change of the heart.

We now come to the most important work that you must do. The work is cast in a negative mode, but it is that high thing of God. You are to "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (v. 29).

First, the lying mouth of the gainsayers must be stopped. This is done by "Holding fast the faithful word as he (God's elder) hath been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince (convict) the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers ... whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake (Tit. 1:9-11).

Once the mouths of the gainsayers are stopped, they must be filled with correct speech. Correct speech has nothing to do with grammar, correct speech is that which is birthed of the Spirit of God.

Speech of Grace And Seasoned With Salt

All correct speech begins and ends with Christ. As the church has erred in her preaching for the past 1700 years, she must turn from the error to the truth. Just as the spirit of error has worked so many years in the natural church, the body of Christ must now be fed the good word of God.

Unto the natural church, Christ is yet a mystery. We know this because she is not able to explain her own doctrine as to how

her Christ (Jesus) is God. Many scholars have for years thrown up their hands insofar as explaining how Jesus is both God and man.

Unto the yielded vessel of God, the mystery of Christ is part of his first teachings. This one understands what the greatest Bible scholars of fifty (50) years understand not. Deception on the church's part has blinded her eyes to the truth.

The writer of Hebrews speaks about "the doctrine of the first principles." He said, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptism, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment" (Heb. 6:1-2).

The natural church has left the first principles of the doctrine of her natural Jesus. She has gone on to perfect her religion in envying and strife. This July day of 1994 has witnessed to the wickedness of man's religion via an article in one of Miami's local newspapers.

The article was found in the religious section. It was about racism in one of the largest denominational churches in the world. The speaker was a member of the same faith, but not of that same organization. He said he was not sure racism has been brought to an ended in the large denominational church as late as 1994.

The man who spoke is pastor in a midwest church with a local congregation the size of a small city. To say that racism is in the church today or during anytime in her history, is to affirm that Satan's work is going on, not God's.

The natural church is characterized by envying and strife as we have indicated above. We also showed you that every evil work can also be found therein. It is not surprising therefore to hear religious men speak about racism or any other abominable thing associated with denominational religion because it is of the flesh, not of God.

The church of Jesus Christ is the Church of the Spirit. Christ is her head. Christ, however, is not a function or office which Jesus holds. To the spirit filled church, Christ is the very Spirit (Son of God). Herein lies the mystery of Christ. The natural church cannot see that Christ, spoken of in the New Testament, refers to the Spirit which was in Jesus, not Jesus the Son of Mary.

The natural church looks upon Jesus of Nazareth and sees both a man and a god. She uses mysticism to explain her views that Jesus is both man and God. When pushed for a clear word as to how flesh can become Spirit, a cop out is often heard, something on the order of: "Don't ask how, just believe."

These same people, however, will drill another man's views into the ground with questions of "how." They understand not that they apply a double standard. On the one hand, they tell the hearer not to ask them how the most important teaching of their religion can be. On the other hand, they reject and even call others cults who lack definitive answers to their views on religion.

I ask whether the standard set by the church should not be

used to judge all? If so, only the group who can defend every aspect of their doctrines clearly and without pretense should be worthy of leadership.

The early church was worthy of leadership because she could defend the gospel of Christ. There was no man who could stop the mouth of the apostles with their religious views. The church did not preach a Jesus who was both a man and a god. They preached that Jesus was very Christ. To them Christ was the Spirit who came from heaven as the bread of life and took up his abode in Jesus at his conception.

Never did the apostles leave on record a doctrine which leaves the legitimate question of men unanswered. To the contrary, only unlearned and foolish questions were to go unanswered because they gender strife (2 Tim. 2: 23). All other questions were to be answered.

The soul has a problem with answering every reasonable question because the soul is limited in her knowledge. On the other hand, the Spirit is free to answer every man because "the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor.2:10).

The Godhead is certainly one of the deep things of God. The reason the natural church cannot explain the Godhead is because she only knows "the things of a man." The spirit of a man within knows the things of man. This spirit cannot know the things of God but by the Spirit of God.

Hear Paul's words, "For what man knoweth the things of a man,

save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (v. 11). If the Spirit of God knows the things of God then anyone with God's Spirit can know those things even the deep things of God.

The church has testified against herself as being of the flesh by not being able to defend her doctrine as to Jesus being God. I speak this to the shame of the natural church. I do not include the early church among those who can/could not explain the Godhead.

Again, hear Paul's words. See how they convict you for the error of your way. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (v. 12).

God has given his spirit filled church a spirit to know. The gift of "the word of knowledge" (1 Cor. 12:8) is one manifestation of the church's ability to know the things of God. The Spirit speaks a word of the Spirit's knowledge to the child of God who humbles himself before God to know spiritual things.

A large part of the natural church, however, has closed her eyes to believing that God works by the gift of the Spirit today. When men and women persist in their ways, they cut themselves off from knowing the things of God. This was precisely what the religious Jews did during Jesus ministry, the reason they could not understand his spiritual messages.

The mystery of Christ is no longer a mystery to those who have humbled themselves before the Lord God to know the mystery. Many religious men and women, however, are still in darkness because

they have refused to empty themselves of their views. Yet, they pray as if they desire only truth. They deceive themselves.

Paul left these words with us: "Master, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds" (Col. 4:1-3).

Paul was a bond servant of the Lord, he was imprisoned by men, but men could not stop his mouth from declaring the mystery of Christ. Because he spoke unto the people about their religion, wicked men did him much wrong. Yet, Paul did not allow circumstances to stop him from preaching that Jesus is very Christ.

It was Paul who divided Jesus and Christ in his epistles. Paul tells us that Christ was that Spiritual Rock which followed the children of Israel in the wilderness (1 Cor. 10:4). In verse 9, he said that Israel tempted Christ. To Paul, Christ was the Son of God.

The Christ of God was already on the scene fifteen hundred (1,500) years before Jesus was born. Christ was feeding the children of Israel spiritual drink, helping them learn about the coming servant of Jehovah. The servant of Jehovah was another way of saying, the Son of God or Christ.

In due course of time Christ said unto the Father in heaven, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me" (Heb. 10: 5). Jesus was the body prepared for the

servant of the Lord. The servant of the Lord was His Son or Christ. Paul understood this doctrine and he taught it, albeit, in a mystery to those who refused to humble themselves before God to know the truth.

A child of God is duty bound to speak the mystery of Christ. He must open the eyes of the blind. Blind eyes have to see that Jesus is very Christ today as much as they had to understand (see) this doctrine during Paul's day. I do not mean that men and women today are to believe that Jesus is the holder of an office called Christ. I mean that they must believe that Jesus is very Christ in the Spirit. Man must understand that the Spirit has consumed the flesh and blood Jesus, never to be seen (known) again after the flesh (2 Cor. 5: 16).

Regarding the mystery of Christ, Paul knew that he had a charge before God to make His Son known unto men and women with eyes to see. Thus he wrote regarding the mystery of Christ: "That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak" (Col. 4:4).

If a person cannot make the mystery of Christ known in simple words, he shows forth that he does not have the simple wisdom of God operating within him. We have indicated above that the natural church lacks the Spirit of God, and thus, her doctrine pertaining to Jesus (her natural Christ) is not even understood by the perpetrators of the doctrine.

Yet, Paul says "That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak." Is the church today suppose to be less able to make manifest the mystery of Christ? God forbid. The church today is

expected by God to have far excelled the knowledge of God revealed by the apostles. The truth is, however, the natural church has not yet reached the foundation message level of the early church in understanding.

Those of God's people who have understanding to spiritual things are to instruct others. The beginning lesson is about Christ, and the ending lesson is about Christ. What is the proper attitude of God's servants in instructing others?

"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. 4:6).

Depart Not From the Words of My Mouth

Chapter #10

The word of the Lord is a mighty word in the mouth of a righteous man. God's word will perform the acts of God because it is His word, and God will see to it that the spoken word comes to pass.

In Jer. 1:11, the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah. God asked, "Jeremiah, What seest thou?" Jeremiah said, "I see a rod of an almond tree." Verse 12 reads, "Then said the Lord unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it."

Whatever God's word was as represented by the almond tree, Jeremiah was assured that God would perform that word. It does not mean that Jeremiah understood the word of God. He received a word from God, but unless God opens the understanding, the word is a parable.

Here is wisdom. God's vision unto Jeremiah means what God says it to mean. If God did not give the meaning to Jeremiah, he could later give it to another person. It is even possible for God to withhold the meaning for thousands of years before making it known.

If such were the case, the truth stands; "I will hasten (watch over) my word to perform it." God is the only One who watches over His word to perform it. In due course of time, that which is spoken by God shall come to pass.

Miss not the point being made here. The point is that the word of God might come unto a person, but when it comes, the person

does not have understanding to that word. Understanding cannot come until God reveals the meaning of His word.

We may liken the situation above to a group of archaeologists discovering writings of an ancient people with no known expert to interpret the language. Many experts will give opinions about the discovery, but none would be able to give understanding.

Until someone comes along who is able to read the ancient writing, the world would be at a lost to know the importance of the word before her. No doubt, much study will go into the ancient writing, and some experts may guess correctly regarding some of that which is written. Yet, the people still will not know the certainty of the matter.

University professors may write books on the ancient writing, and a distinguish aware maybe given unto those who made the discovery, but men would still be at a lost as to what the writing meant.

In Daniel's time, God wrote a message unto a wicked king. The message said, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin" (Dan. 5:25). Suppose this message was not interpreted. Let us say that our archaeologists discovered this particular writing. How could the world ever know the meaning of these words?

The world would not be able to know the meaning by anything she is able to bring to the table of understanding. Great scholars would be able to associate the letter with other letters and may even claim to have understanding, but they would have only deceived themselves and others.

Men lacking in understanding would in no wise stop the performance of the word from God. Let us say, the writing was a message of warning for a particular generation. If God did not have a servant to interpret His word, that generation could have been destroyed never knowing that they could have been saved if only they had understanding to God's word.

Going back to Daniel's time, we know that the wise men of Babylon did not understand the writing on the wall, "nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof" (Dan. 5:8). The wise men could behold the letters, but they could not look into the meaning of the letters.

The letters were carriers of the word. It was first needful to crack the casing of the letters in order to get to the word. The Babylonians had not invented any instrument to aid in this work. They were at a lost, though they had God's word right before them.

To be sure, God's word is what God says it to be and not what man says. It is God's interpretation of His word that spurs him to carry out His will. Men may write 10,000 books about that word and not even come close to understanding God's will in the matter.

To know God's will requires humility. Proud men and women fail to know God's will because they fail to understand their hearts are religiously proud before God. Such was not the case with Daniel.

Daniel was able to read the hand writing of God because Daniel approached God in humility. The religious wise men of Babylon

approached their gods in false humility which is pride. They could not know the word of God because their gods were not able to help them.

The word of God came by way of the Spirit of God. All gods have not the Spirit of God at work in them. Thus, they have natural minds. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14).

How did Daniel gain wisdom to understand the writing on the wall and to know the meaning of it? He humbled himself before God. As a humble servant of the Lord, God was able to put His word, written on the wall, into the mouth of Daniel.

Daniel said, "And this the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN, This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighted in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians" (Dan. 5:25-28). The Lord God had spoken, and none could change his word. It was not God's word that could be seen with the eye, i.e., MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. otherwise, the king and all his people would have had direct access to God's Word. God's word was the meaning of the letters written on the wall.

It was the meaning of those letter that God could have concealed or revealed as He did. By revealing the meaning of the letters written, Daniel spoke the sure word of God.

Let us say that Daniel approached the king and said unto the king that the letters written on the wall were the word of God. Let us say further that Daniel pronounced each letter correctly and gave insight into the type of writing God used. What is likely to have been the king's response? No doubt the king would have dismissed Daniel as being unable to give him anything of substance.

We know this did not take place with Daniel because the Bible records the historical account for us. Yet, what I have used as an illustration is what Bible scholars do with the Bible today. They can tell us much about the time something was written, the language it was written, the correct spelling of the words, and the meanings of the letters. What they lack is that which the wise men of Daniel's time lacked; they lack the word of God.

That which Daniel spoke was proven to be the Word of God because God performed that which Daniel spoke. Verses 30-31 tell us, "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old."

Truly, the Lord God hastened His word to perform it. The record is before us. We can turn to Daniel for an account of the king's downfall or we can go to one of the public libraries and find the same information written by men who knew not God.

Every child of God should desire God's word. David has written, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer." This man understood the value of God's word.

Solomon also understood the value of God's word. In the book of Proverbs, he has left us many wise teachings. We have to keep in mind, however, that these teachings are only "letters" until God gives the understanding.

Depart Not From The Words Of My Mouth

Weighing against the wise words I have just uttered is man's ability to understand natural things. Satan uses the natural words to build his doctrines. As man is capable of reasoning through matters, the intelligent person feels sure his opinions regarding the meaning of Solomon's sayings are correct.

On the other hand, God says that he cannot receive what Solomon has written nor knows because Solomon's work is of the Spirit, and man's mind is natural (I Cor. 2:4). Because many men and women do not believe God, the aforementioned truth is debated. In the end, however, man shall let God be true and himself be the liar.

Solomon wrote, "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge" (Prov. 1:20-22).

The average person reading these words would have some degree of understanding. He or she may well be able to speak eloquently about the meaning of wisdom, what it means to cry, and to show

where streets are found. The same one could likely define "chief place of concourse" in the historic sense of people gathering at the entrances to cities. He or she will no doubt be able to give meaning to a simple one and a scorner. They will surely not miss the opportunity to discourse on loving simplicity and scorning. Finally, he or she would likely have a fields day showing how fools hate knowledge.

The sad thing is once they have finished, they are likely to feel they have given helpful advise to the hearers. If they are preachers, they could even feel they had spoken the word of God.

The truth is a person does not need the Holy Ghost to perform as outlined above. All that was mentioned above pertaining to Prov. 1: 20-22 was of the letter. Satan deceives men and women into believing that their understanding of the letter is spiritual understanding because the subject matter pertains to the Bible.

To truly understand what Solomon has written requires nothing short of a revelation from God. A revelation from God can mean unfolding a truth never before understood by man or simply the unfolding of a truth hidden for a period of time. Either way, God must make the truth known in order for it to be of God.

Satan deceives religious men and women through inspirational knowledge. I speak of knowledge derived from a person's natural mind. Again, because the subject being dealt with is in the Bible, a spiritual or divine influence is thought to be behind the inspiration. The truth is, the person meditates in the soul, processes his thoughts and derives at a conclusion.

On Sunday morning, you may hear the testimony of the preacher as to how he meditated on subject matter "A." He may say a thought came to him, and he spent several hours researching his topic. He may go on to say he is sure God has given him an inspirational message for the congregation.

The above testimony is a familiar testimony to many of you hearing these words. Many of you see nothing wrong with the testimony. Much, however, is wrong. Firstly, the Lord God must direct a person to meditate. God must give the person the subject to meditate on.

Let us deal with these two points. Many people meditate on scriptures day in and day out as a habit. There are people who write books on meditation. Many read these books without being directed by God. How then can they say that God gave inspiration unto them when He didn't so much as direct to meditate in the first place?

The second point is that if God did not call you to meditate, then you can be sure that God did not give you the topic to meditate on. The negative response to my wise words can be seen among those who use the Bible as a book to justify their fleshly desires.

A person may believe that he can go to the Bible, find a promise made by God, and hold God to the promise. Regarding meditation, he may find these words: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is

written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Josh. 1:8).

Can a person rightly use Josh. 1:8 to justify not hearing from the Spirit like Joshua as to what to mediate on and when to mediate? Why did God have it written that the Spirit spoke to Joshua what God's will was for him? Was it not to show that Joshua had to be led by the Spirit?

The child of God is always to be led by the Spirit of God so as not to fulfill lustful desires like choosing when to meditate and what to meditate on. When a person decides what to study, when to study, how long to study, he or she acts in the flesh.

Now consider the preacher who prepared for his message on Mother's day. For the past 20 years he said he has spoken on Mother's day because it is a time dear to his heart. He said he is more likely to give up his first Sunday than to miss preaching on Mother's day.

Can this Man be seen for what he is? Some of you can see him as a religious man, a man who is not led by the Spirit of God. This is the same man who testified above regarding meditation on subject matter "A." It is the same man who went to Joshua 1:8 to justify his position according to the Bible.

This man is the man of the flesh. The man of the flesh has the words of the flesh in his mouth. These words are letters and not Spirit. As such, this man's message kills. Only the man with the word of God in his mouth gives life.

Solomon had the word of God in his mouth as he wrote the wise

sayings found in the book of Proverbs. He tells us about his writings, saying, "The Proverbs of Solomon the Son of David, King of Israel" (Prov. 1:1).

David was "the King of Israel." Of all kings found ruling Israel, David was King. Solomon was also a king, but he was "the Son of David, King of Israel." As David was a man after God's own heart, he certainly fulfilled all of God's will (Acts 13:22).

To say that he was the son of David, Solomon meant that he was brought forth by the spiritual father of Israel. David was "the King of Israel." The Lord God reigned in the heart of David unlike any King before him or after him. Being the spiritual father of Solomon, David taught Solomon the wisdom of God.

It is the wisdom of the king that Solomon shares with us in the book of Proverbs. But who is the King? We have just said that David was the King. Having said as much, it is needful to give you understanding.

Solomon was David's natural son by way of Bathsheba. Though David had done wickedly in being able to marry Bathsheba, God forgave him. David had Bathseba's husband, Uriah, killed and took his wife unto himself (2 Sam. 12:9). He also had a child by Bathseba who died.

"And David comforted Bathseba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her; and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the Lord loved him" (v.24). It was the love of God that allowed for Solomon to become the son of David in the Spirit.

David had many sons. Two of them tried to take the kingdom in

the flesh. Certainly these two sons were David's fleshly children, but they were not sons in the Spirit as was Solomon.

Solomon had the words of the "sweet psalmist" in his mouth. Who was this "sweet psalmist," and what made him sweet? "Now these be that last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel said, The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and his word was in my tongue" (2 Sam. 23:1-2).

"The anointed of the God of Jacob" is "the sweet Psalmist." He was sweet because he had tasted of the Lord. He had the Word of God in his mouth. Unlike the preacher mentioned above who meditated when he wanted, David was led by the Spirit. He declared that he was a vessel for the Spirit to speak through.

To understand this thought is also to understand Solomon's words in Prov. 1:20: "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets." Wisdom is the Christ Spirit found in the child of God. By way of the Christ Spirit, God speaks to men and women. He must, however, have a vessel to speak through.

David was that vessel. God taught David the holy ways of God. David in turn taught these same holy ways unto Solomon. Both men understood that God worked by his Spirit.

Unless the Spirit of the Lord is speaking, the words are not worth hearing. When God speaks, every ear should hear. Sadly to say, not all ears can hear. He that can hear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying in these last days.

"My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my

understanding: That thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge" (Prov. 5:1-2). The only son that matters is the son of the Spirit.

Solomon had come to the point in his life that he too was a spiritual father. Like his father David, he sought to instruct his spiritual children in the wisdom of God. Solomon knew the need to stay away from every wicked work. He was well able to instruct in things of God and to show the vain ways of the flesh. Regarding women, he had a life time of knowledge as to their ways.

In Proverbs 5:3-5, he had the following to say: "For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth to smother than oil: But her end is bitter wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell."

Solomon had allowed the strange wives of his to lead his heart away from God. In his old age, he built high places for his strange wives to worship. Rather than Solomon converting the strange wives to the God of Israel, they caused him to error.

In this thing, Solomon sinned. His sin boils down to a lack of faith in God's word pertaining to marrying strange wives. "The Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after these gods" (I Kgs. 11:2).

Verses 9 and 10 read, "And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, And commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which

the Lord commanded."

Solomon did not hear God in this area. It was a mistake not hearing God. Because of his sin, God divided the kingdom into two kingdoms. The Lord God allowed the southern kingdom to remain for David's sake but the northern 10 tribes, he gave to Solomon's servant (v. 11).

You see, Solomon had learned much about what not to do by way of experience. Solomon had learned more about what to do via the Spirit. As he taught his son in Proverbs, chapter five, he was being directed by the Spirit.

The Spirit had taken up speaking by way of Solomon. As Solomon wrote, he did so under the inspiration of God. That Solomon was able to share so much wisdom with us is a function of God's mercy unto him.

We now come to Proverbs 5:7. This verse, we have used to take our taught for a subject of this chapter. The words are wise words of God. Only the Lord God is able to make a man or woman this day understand Solomon's words.

These are the words of the Lord's Christ. "Hear me now therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth." How many of you heard the Lord's Christ's words? Must he speak again?

You must hear the words of Solomon. Solomon was not speaking as the old Solomon of the flesh. Solomon was speaking as did "the sweet psalmists of Israel." As such, Solomon was not speaking, but rather the Spirit of the Lord was with his mouth. His tongue spoke

as God directed. The same God must give you an ear to hear the words in Solomon's mouth.

My Mouth Shall Speak Truth

To hear means to understand that which is spoken by God. The world cannot hear God because their ears are dull of hearing spiritual things. Carnal children of God face the same condition. Even those who desire the things of God must show forth a more than average willingness to receive from God the high things of the Spirit.

Hearing is as important as speaking. If hearing was not as important as speaking, why put so much attention on hearkening to the voice of God? These two go together. God has joined them and man cannot pull them apart.

See the connecting of speaking and hearing God's word in Deut. 28:1. The Lord had Moses to write, "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth."

Moses had God's word in his mouth. The servant of God was speaking a right then and there word unto the people. The children of Israel had to hear the word spoken in order for them to comply. It was a time of blessings or curses. God gave Moses to unfold unto the people God's wisdom in receiving the blessings and avoiding the curses.

Key to Israel's success was their willingness to hear the command given unto them regarding the right attitude in dealing with God's word. Nothing short of perseverance was required. Israel was to hear (receive) the words from Moses as the very words of God. These words were to have been laid up in their heart that they sin not. Out of the treasure of their heart, they were to endure all tests until the end.

Israel could not choose their tests. The Lord of Israel was in charge of the Testing Department. As was God's pleasure, Israel was subject to trials. They could be sure that God would not allow more to come to them than they were able to bear. Even in their tests, God had a way for them to escape.

We see this teaching in the New Testament. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13).

The focus was not on Israel avoiding their trials; God ordained trials to make His own children. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trials which is to try (prove) you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (I Pet. 4:12-13).

The tests God calls a people to undergo are for the good of the people. The word of God was in Moses' mouth as to how Israel

could receive the manifold blessings of God. The people had to hear the words of Moses as the sweet words of God.

As it was with Moses, so it was with Solomon. Solomon had the sweet words of God in his mouth. When these servants spoke God's sweet words, men and women had opportunity to share in the sweetness of the words. How could they share? By hearkening diligently to the words of God.

Today, God does not require anymore nor any less of His people. The word of God is found in the mouth of God's servants. This word is to be received with an attitude to live that word unto the end.

"Doth not wisdom cry? And understanding put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of the high places, by the way in the places of the paths" (Prov. 8:1-2). Where is the cry of wisdom not voiced? The high places of the soul with much pride has not stopped wisdom's cry. The voice of understanding is uttered in every place.

"She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors" (v. 8). The gate is an access route. It is at the entrance of the city (the Lamb's wife [Rev. 21:9-10] even at the very door of the heart that understanding is now speaking.

We see a picture of this very thing as the Lord's Christ stands at the door of the natural church knocking. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20).

The knock on the hearts of man is a knock unto those who

could receive the manifold blessings of God. The people had to hear the words of Moses as the sweet words of God.

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The knock on the hearts of man is a knock unto those who

confess to be saved. The evidence is that they are not in fellowship with the Lord's Christ because He is on the outside of their religion. The cry of understanding is unto those with ears to hear (v. 22).

"Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man" (Prov. 8:4). The "son of man" refers to the work of the flesh. Men have raised up "sons" in their religion. They have not learned the true sonship found in the Spirit.

Solomon, of course, understood true sonship. He declared at the outset of Proverbs that he was "the son of David, King of Israel" (Prov. 1:1). The son of David," as I shown above, refers to David's spiritual son. The "King of Israel" refers to the King on high.

Because the shepherds of the flock have not fed the flock the things of the spirit, the Christ of God knocks on the door for anyone who will hear His wise words. The Lord God is not pleased with the shepherds. "Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord" (Ez. 34:9). I say unto you, O shepherds you must hear.

"Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to come from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves anymore; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them" (v. 10).

The shepherds of denominational religion have long devoured the flock by way of the letter in their mouth. They have preached, "How beautiful of the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace,

and bring glad tidings of good things" (Rom. 10:15).

Their gospel has been a gospel of the soul. The peace preached by them is a false peace. Otherwise, why would the Christ of God be on the outside of the church knocking for the people to come out to Him?

The words in the mouth of the unfaithful shepherds are words of death. They preach the faith found in the letter of the Bible. Because it is the Bible being used, they call their letter ministry "the word of God."

No longer shall the shepherds devour the sheep with the doctrines of man. "I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, Saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and I will strengthen that which was sick: But I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment" (Ez. 34:15,16).

How shall the Lord God feed His flock? He shall feed them by His trusted servant, David. The Lord has said, "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it" (vv. 23,24).

Surely the Lord God was not speaking of Jesse's son in the flesh. David died thousands of years ago. The spiritual David is being spoken of. This David is the man of the heart. In the Spirit, David shall feed the sheep of God. David is "that Spirit.

Only God can reveal who David truly is.

As it was with Solomon, so shall it be with the end time church. Solomon saw David in the Spirit. He was the son of David. David was spiritual King of Israel. The Lord God was God over all. God is yet God of His people and His "servant David a Prince among them."

"O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart. Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things. For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips" (Prov. 8: 5-7).