

Δεφινιτε Σιγν Ποστο Οφ Τηε Ενδ
Gene Hawkins

“After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.”
Dan. 7:7-8

Daniel seven presents the four world empires that God committed into the hands of the Gentiles, the first starting with Nebuchadnezzar. This fourth beast shows the Roman Empire, the revival of which is coming to pass at this present time. The “little horn” which actually becomes the “identity” of this last beast is none other than the antichrist. The original ten horns tell us of a ten nation coalition of the end time which will give way to 7 because three of them are uprooted by this same little horn here in verse 8.

That little horn becomes known for his oratory, as it is recorded four times in this chapter (v. 8,11,20,25) that he speaks great things or great words. The word great means “huge (in size); domineering (in character)”. Thus we are told that this man of sin will be very “persuasive” with the ability to dominate those around him.

Adolph Hitler, demonstrated such “great words,” as he spoke of peace and built the military arsenal in Nazi Germany, but he was not the antichrist. Our day also boasts some of these same rather persuasive and even demanding voices including Korea’s Kim Jong Ill, and Iran’s Achmadinajad, but like Hitler, their influence seems to be local rather than global. Add to that list the current president of the U.S. who was swept into office directly because of such oratory, and some, even throughout the recent presidential campaign, wondered if such persuasiveness would mark him as the infamous man of sin.

Jesus warned that the end times would be filled with an atmosphere of deception. “And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.” Matt 24:4-6,11. Paul also reinforces this end time deception. “But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.” II Tim. 3:13 Jesus emphatically states that “all these things,” including this time of deception, must come to pass, and such deception is manifest throughout both the political and religious worlds, as Satan tries desperately to take our eyes off of Truth. It is sad today that so many, even among Christians, seem more interested in the antichrist than they are in the True Christ. A recent video on U-Tube begins with this question: “Did Jesus give us the name of the antichrist in Luke 10:18? Here Jesus “...said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” The producer of this video goes into great detail explaining that, in the “Aramaic” language which Jesus would have spoken, “lightening” would be pronounced “Bawrak” or “Bawrawk.” “Heaven,” translated from the Hebrew, means heights and is pronounced “Bam-maw.” He then points to Isaiah 14:12-14 where the fall of Lucifer is recorded and the same Aramaic term for heaven along with “heights” is used. “How art thou fallen from heaven, (bamah, bam-maw)..... For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God:.....: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.” According to the video Jesus, using these Aramaic words, would have said “*I saw Barak Obama....*”. To his credit, this man issues a “disclaimer” that “this video is in no wise trying to say that ‘BHO’ is the antichrist.” He says simply “I report, you decide.” Such correlation of words is most intriguing to the natural mind and we are assured that some have seen no reason to consider the disclaimer. Some of the responses we observed exhibited anger, calling such reports ridiculous. Others thought such a thing was plausible while others were

positive it was the sure thing. We heard other “word” studies suggesting these same possibilities, during the recent presidential campaign, in regard to Mr. Obama. However the context of both the texts in this video are greatly violated. First, Jesus spoke of Satan himself, not the man of sin he will empower 250 days before the middle of the week when the latter sets up his image in the temple. Secondly, Isaiah records an event that happened even **before** God created the heavens and the earth in Gen. 1:2. We know that, because Satan had already fallen by the time he appeared to Eve in the Garden of Eden. Third, Jesus’ prophecy of Satan is yet future. John saw this same “...star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit” in Rev. 9:1. However a study of the time line, recorded in Daniel and Revelation, reveals that it will not happen until 250 days before the middle of the week when Satan will loose the antichrist from the bottomless pit to officially begin his 42 month reign of terror. According to Daniel 7:25 “... he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. (42 months or 3 1/2 years)

Even though the antichrist has not been revealed at this present time, the **spirit of antichrist** is most assuredly permeating and polluting this country and the world. “And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, (lit. an opponent of the Messiah) whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.” I John 4:3. John also connects the antichrist with the last days in I John 2:18. “Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.” With words such as these, we are sure that Jesus announcement of those claiming to be Christ in Matt. 24, are not limited to one man, blatantly claiming to be the Son of God. It rather refers to the spirit of antichrist whereby men would deny or be an opponent to Jesus in taking a place that only He can fill, as they go about assuming His Headship. This spirit of antichrist will usher in

the man of sin whose desire it is to, reign as Christ. The socialistic policies of the current U.S. administration, as well as other governments around the world, are quickly bringing all nations to the brink of one world government, which will ultimately be ruled by the antichrist. The recently passed stimulus package has quite clearly proven God's absolute; that "the borrower is servant to the lender", (Prov. 22:7) and many banking institutions and car manufacturers have indeed come under government control. Many Americans are greatly fearful that the current healthcare reform bill is going to produce the same government dominance, and that they are going to experience the same constraints of government manifest in countries such as Canada and England which have already adopted such a plan. A number of politicians are also fearful that the direction being taken by those currently in power will bring about one world currency, the ultimate of which will produce the condition that none may buy or sell without the approval of the antichrist, and they have vowed to fight it to the bitter end. Those fears would undoubtedly be fueled by the headline in the U.K. Telegraph announcing: "The U.N. wants new global currency to replace dollar." The article goes on to report that this U.N. proposal presents "the biggest overhaul of the world's monetary system since the Second World," and it is because of the declining value of the dollar around the world. Despite all the efforts of men, we know that when it is time for the man of sin to reign, prayer, elections, politicians, demonstrations, or even open rebellion will not stop him.

Recent polls show that President Obama's "oratorical persuasion" in this country is waning as more opposition to his socialistic policies develops. It also seems that he does not have the international clout that the antichrist is going to wield. Other polls in Israel show that fifty-one percent felt Obama's policies are more pro-Palestinian, compared to 50 percent in a June poll. A similar poll conducted by the newspaper in May, indicated 31 percent believed Obama to be pro-Israeli and only 14 percent pro-Palestinian. In addition, Iran and Korea seem to completely ignore any U.S. suggestion of reducing their nuclear capabilities, and recent reports declare that Poland has

apparently has no confidence in the President, accusing the U.S. of betrayal because the administration plans to “scrap” the missile defense system scheduled for installation there. The debate rages on as to whether or not Mr. Obama did this to placate the Russians, and some members of congress have declared that they will oppose the plan because of the threats to our own national security.

Thus we must conclude that no, he is not the antichrist. We are however, assured that he, along with other government leaders at this time are speeding toward the one world control of antichrist prophesied by scripture.

As intimated earlier, this spirit of antichrist is by no means limited to the realm of politics, and it has been present since the early days of the Church Age. There are many ramifications, both political and religious, but the spirit of antichrist can be summed up in one word: **“control!”** and the deception of which Jesus spoke, is Satan’s primary tool in gaining it. Scripture plainly tells us that Eve was deceived, as Satan persuaded her to partake of the forbidden fruit, thus gaining power over her and laying the foundation for himself to become the “god of this world.” The very purpose of deception is to dominate others, and Jesus’ warning becomes increasingly relevant day by day, as men try to assume a role that belongs only to Him. He commended the Church at Ephesus because “...that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans.” He then denounced the Church at Pergamos because the deeds of the Nicolaitans had given way to full fledged doctrine as they “...hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.” Rev. 2:6,15 The word Nicolaitan means “victory over the people” and in the Church it bespeaks the practice today of the hierarchy or “clergy” exercising power over the people or “laity.” Paul warns of this subtle practice in II Cor. 11:3,4. “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him (me).” Preaching another Jesus

means declaring a vision of Christ that is not according to the gracious spirit presented in scripture. It also indicates one who would try to gain the control that only Jesus should command. The modern charismatic practice of “personal prophecy” is simply one means used in an attempt to exercise control over other people, and such control has evoked accusations, even from the world, that some in our area are indeed a cult. In addition some Church leaders have also told their hearers: “If you resist me, you are resisting God,” with the implication that “there will be severe consequences if you even think about not adhering to my words.” The fact of the matter is that the only responsibility a minister of the gospel has is to preach The Word, the same Word that will not return void. We are never taught in scripture that the messenger is responsible for the results. Paul said “I have planted, Apollos watered, but God giveth the increase.” I Cor. 3:7.

So-called “Christian Rock” or “Contemporary Music” is another tool of deception, as its hypnotic effect is used to gain control in the Church, where it is primarily used to target young people. One youth leader remarked several years ago that we know what music will “stir them up” (even into an emotional frenzy) and we know that which will “bring them down.” God ordained His Word to exercise that authority, but music has, for the most part, replaced the deep preaching of God’s Word in The Church. Many are using such soulful music to stir people up to worship, and one pastor, who is experiencing phenomenal growth in numbers, land, and influence, has made the statement that “one purpose of worship is to hasten the Second Coming.” Once again such a statement is presumptuous, trying to assume a control that belongs only to God. Jesus said emphatically, “But of that day (coming of the Son of Man) and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.” Matt. 24:36 If the day and hour has already been decided by God, who is man to think he can “hasten” that return?

What are we to do in the face of such an atmosphere, both politically and religiously? One answer is found in Ephesians 6:10-12. “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour

of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” “Finally (that which remains) be strong in the Lord....” is an exhortation to surrender to the overall Headship of Christ, rather than submit to the wisdom and power of men. We can stand against the deceptive wiles of the devil only by taking the whole armor of God and a careful study of these nine pieces indicate that every one of them are connected either directly or indirectly to the Word of God. As noted, The Church as a whole has failed miserably in giving It the priority God ordained and spiritual weakness has ensued, making her vulnerable to principalities and rulers of darkness. We have seen in previous messages that The Church will not “save” the world and prevent the coming judgment announced in Matt. 24. However, we most assuredly can make sure that our own lives are enlightened and that as an individual, we are ready to depart out of this world when the first trumpet sounds. Rather than following men’s ways of desperately “trying to fix it,” let us rather follow Jesus instruction. “And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” Luke 21:28

HIS LAMP AM I

***His lamp am I,
To shine where He shall say;
And lamps are not for sunny rooms,
Nor for the light of day;
But for the dark places of the earth,
Where shame and wrong and crime have birth,
Or for the murky twilight gray
Where wandering sheep have gone astray,
Or where the lamp of faith grows dim
And souls are groping after Him.
And as sometimes a flame we find,
Clear-shining through the night
So dark we cannot see the lamp --
But only see the light --
So may I shine, His love the flame,
That men may glorify His name.***

-- Annie Johnson Flint

The Church Walking with the World

The Church and the World walked far apart, on the changing shores of time.
The World was singing a giddy song, and the Church a hymn sublime.

"Come, give me your hand," said the merry World, "And walk with me this way!"

But the good Church hid her snowy hands, and solemnly answered, "Nay,"
I will not give you my hand at all, and I will not walk with you;
Your way is the way that leads to death; your words are all untrue."

"Nay, walk with me but a little space," Said the World with a kindly air;
The road I walk is a pleasant road, and the sunshine's always there;
Your path is thorny and rough and rude, But mine is broad and plain;
My way is paved with flowers and dews, and yours with tears and pain.
The sky to me is always blue, no want, no toil I know;
The sky above you is always dark, your lot is a lot of woe.

Half shyly the Church approached the World, and gave him her hand of
snow;
And the old World grasped it and walked along, saying in accents low,
"Your dress is too simple to please my taste; I will give you pearls to wear,
Rich velvets and silks for your graceful form, and diamonds to deck your
hair."
The Church looked down at her plain white robes, and then at the dazzling
World,
And blushed as she saw his handsome lip, with a smile contemptuous
curled.

"I will change my dress for a costlier one," Said the Church, with a smile of
grace;
Then her pure white garments drifted away, and the World gave in their
place,
Beautiful satins and shining silks, roses and gems and costly pearls;
While over her forehead her bright hair fell, crisped with, a thousand curls.

"Your house is too plain," said the proud old World, "I'll build you one like
mine,
With walls of marble and towers of gold, and furniture ever so fine."
So he built her a costly and beautiful house; most splendid it was to behold.
Her sons and her beautiful daughters dwelt there, gleaming in purple and
gold.
Rich fairs and shows in the halls were held, and the World and his children
were there.
Laughter and music and feasts were heard, in the place that was meant for
prayer.
There were cushioned seats for the rich and the gay, to sit in their pomp and
pride,
But the poor who were clad in shabby array, sat meekly down outside.

"You give too much to the poor," said the World. "Far more than you ought to do.

If they are in need of shelter and food, why need it trouble you?

Go, take your money and buy rich robes, buy horses and carriages fine;
Buy pearls and jewels and dainty food; buy the rarest and costliest wine.

"My children, they dote on all these things, and if you, their love would win,

You must do as they do, and walk in the ways, that they are walking in."

So the poor were turned from her door in scorn, and she heard not the orphan's cry,

And she drew her beautiful robes aside, as the widows went weeping by.

Then the sons of the World and the sons of the Church walked closely hand and heart,

And only the Master who knoweth all, could tell the two apart.

Then the Church sat down at her ease, and said, "I am rich and my goods increased;

I have need of nothing, or ought to do but to laugh and dance and feast."

The sly World heard and he laughed in his sleeve and mockingly said, aside--

"The Church is fallen, the beautiful Church, and her shame is her boast and her pride."

The angel drew near to the mercy seat, and whispered in sighs her name.

Then the loud anthems of rapture were hushed, and heads were covered with shame.

And a voice was heard at last by the Church, from Him who sat on the throne,

"I know thy works, and how thou hast said, 'I am rich,' and hast not known

That thou art naked, poor and blind, and wretched before My face;

Thus from the best art thou shut out, because thou didst not cherish thy race."

Matilda C. Edwards

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**A Contrast**

Satan is the "Father of lies,"

He will always condemn and accuse,

Indicting and plundering the children of God....

.....don't listen to his lies!

THE HOLY SPIRIT is the "Spirit of Truth,"

He will always convict and encourage,

Commending us to the loving care

And correction of our Heavenly father.....

.....take all His help you can get!

David Albrecht

## Separation!

Ray Quintana

“And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son.” Judges 13:2-3

Judges begins with no official leader and accents failure. It pictures Christendom today; as the same pattern is repeated again and again. Israel serves the Lord, forsakes Him, and is oppressed by her enemies until God hears her cry and sends a judge to deliver. We gain from this book, as we see men and women of faith overcoming in the midst of great opposition.

It closes with every man doing “that which was right in his own eyes,” like so many today who deny the leadership of Christ. Samson was born of Manoah, from Zorah, a descendant of Dan meaning “judging, discernment.” Dan was born to Rachel by her maid Bilhah. (Palpitate; to terrify, trouble.) Gen 30:6 Thus Dan is born through travail of soul. Rachel can never be truly fruitful without Dan. Samson’s birth brings great changes. Manoah, (rest,) becomes God’s channel of rest as He appears to a barren woman, with sovereign grace, which is God’s way in weakness. Man is not to furnish anything but an empty vessel, a place of rest. How is it that we enter into that rest?

Heb 4:11 says, “Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest...” The word labour is the same word as study in 2Tim 2:15. “Study to shew thyself approved unto God...” The most intensive labour is to study the Word of God, which leads us into such rest.

The woman before us is so insignificant, she is nameless, as the Lord appears, and says “thou art barren and bearest not.” Did she not know this well and feel the reproach of her condition? Possibly she cried to the Lord night and day for years. Yet The Lord touches this tender sensitive spot with such piercing words. When the Lord speaks like this it may

appear cruel, but it is always for our good. Sometimes wounds come before healing; killing before making alive. We learn our weakness before He can bring forth the “strong man.” Sarah and Abraham learned this lesson, as both were beyond child bearing. He cannot use our strength; but He graciously aids in our weakness, searching for barrenness to display His power and demonstrate His grace. Today few are able to stand this training. The reproach of barrenness is awful, especially when others are bearing children. However, these words of truth, were followed by words of grace; “thou shalt conceive and bear a son.” Is not this how God deals with us? Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.

God purposed Samson to be a Nazarite from birth, but our text reveals that his mother must also be consecrated, set apart, indeed a Nazarite. He is the result of tears and agony of soul. Separation from earth’s defilements produces the deeper spirit of separation and glorying in the Lord, one giving birth to the other.

The details of the Nazarite found in Numbers 6, have an amazing likeness to the full overcomers depicted by the 4 living creatures in Rev 4:7. “The first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.”

The Lion shows Christ as King, and corresponds to the 4<sup>th</sup> law of the Nazarite, which forbade coming into contact with a dead body. Jesus made that possible through His death on the cross. John 17:2 “Thou hast given Him power over all flesh;” is a reference to victory over our old man. We are now freed to be joined to another, even Christ, who has been raised from the dead. Romans 7:3, 4.

The first requirement for the Nazarite was to shave his head. Regardless of circumstances, or fault, the Nazarite must admit his defiled condition. Were he to be defiled in the midst of his separation, all former days would be lost, and he would have to begin anew to grow a head of hair. All spiritual lessons are not learned in one experience. But despite delays, the day does come when the vows of the Nazarite are fulfilled.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> living one had the face of a calf, or an ox, and illustrates the same truth of weakness expressed by the

Nazarite's long hair. The ox is figurative of Christ, who was submissive to His Father's will. As the ox is willing to travel the same beaten path, so Christ was willing to become the vessel of supreme obedience and sacrifice.

Christians, who surrender their wills to Him, are content to be the weaker vessel, and acknowledge Him as absolute Lord of their lives, moving in His strength alone.

The 3rd face is that of a man, corresponding to the Nazarite's abstinence from wine and strong drink. Jesus, as a Man, understood and experienced all the frailties, limitations, and temptations known to man, yet, resisted them. He did not submit to the things of this world, though He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15).

We too, are to be, separated from the intoxicants of this world. We do not live as though we are devoid of all temptations, but we have the power to walk separately from the world. The Nazarite must find his joy in the Lord.

Finally the 4<sup>th</sup>, face was that of the flying eagle, free from earth's domain. Paul in Colossians 3:1, 2, "if ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." We are a heavenly people, raised in newness of life with Christ, separated to the will of our heavenly Father. That is the heart of the Nazarite today. Is it possible to seek the things above too diligently and lay up too many treasures there? This is a deep desire for Christ, to win Him? Do we accept the shame and glory in it?

The very loss of the Nazarite becomes his crown, for this is what the Holy Spirit calls the long hair of a Nazarite. It is the consecration of His God is upon him (Num. 6:7). The word consecration is the same word translated "crown" elsewhere; The Nazarite of our day learns to glory in this crown, his infirmities, that the power of Christ may cover him. II Cor. 12:9

A fact to note is **Jesus was not a Nazarite**. He was called a Nazarene from Nazareth; and spiritually, He fulfilled all the requirements, but He violated at least two of the vows. In Luke 7:14, He not only came near a dead body, but He actually touched it with His hand. We also know from John's

Gospel, that He turned water into wine and from His words at the last supper, it seems that He partook of it. Mark 14:25.

Samson “sunlight,” is not the sun, only His representative during His absence. He is to shine as a testimony to the Lord. The Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan. Philistine rule is everywhere and he cried mightily to God for deliverance. The Spirit of God urges him to break the enemy’s yoke and lead the people into freedom.

And Samson went down to Timnath where he made his first mistake Chap14:1. He goes “down,” what a beginning for an up-going man! Next, he sees a woman of the Philistines, who pleases him, and demands that his parents get her for him, desiring an alliance with the very people from whom he sought deliverance. This union can never be, for there is no fellowship between a Nazarite and Philistine. One stands for separation from the world, the other from God. These women in Samson’s life are snares for God’s Nazarites today. The name of this woman, whom Samson would marry, is not given. She is of Timnath, meaning “portion,” and Samson would leave his own portion to seek a forbidden one, even as his parents warned; “Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren?” This is a very dangerous path forbidden for a Nazarite; for it leads through the vineyards, and here he meets a young lion.

Satan is always lurking in the vineyards of Timnath, waiting for the Nazarites. The Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily and he tears him as a kid .V. 6. After his first conflict and victory, he visits the Philistine woman. The soldier of Christ is more vulnerable to this trap than being overcome in a battle. He slays the open enemy, and is deceived by a hidden one, even as many today are likewise snared. It is the old nature claiming all that belongs to the New Man in Christ. Samson is smitten by the wile, rather than the fiery dart, or awesome power. He is embraced by the charm of the Philistine.

Legality is one of many of these fair women. It has weakened and dwarfed many today. The Galatians were in the grasp of the woman of Timnath. They were seeking their portion somewhere other than in Christ.

The Corinthians were uncovered and shorn of their strength when enjoying their portion in this world, reigning as kings without Christ, (I Cor. 4:8) boasting in their gifts, utterance, and knowledge. Many in the name of church work are ruling, limiting, and organizing, as these women snare the Samsons, shearing, binding, and bringing them down to shame and utter defeat.

The modern system of revival today is nothing more than the daughters of the Philistines. An alliance with the enemy is courted and the aid of the world is sought. The schemes to get the crowd, all are in the guise of religion.

Then there is the **Nazarite Riddle**. Judges 14:7, 8 As time elapses, Samson is again on his way to Timnath, to his wedding feast. He passes the spot of the slain lion. The remains have no evidence of the flesh, but he sees a swarm of bees. Death has made room for life, and there is honey for the Nazarite. Out of the eater comes forth meat and out of the strong, sweetness. The power that was against him is conquered by the mightier power of God. Samson finds refreshment and strength for himself and others, made possible by the New Life born into the very hold of death. It fills the place of corruption with sweetness.

By the transforming power of God, all things work together for good to them that love God. This was most gloriously expressed at the cross when the greatest power was manifest in the greatest weakness. Out of defeat came victory and out of death the harvest of a New Life. The battlefield has become a banqueting house, and the table is not only furnished with good things in the presence of our enemies, but they have provided it. All these things are not against us, as the Nazarite found, they are for him. This is the personal experience of faith. It is a secret hidden from the Philistine, as Samson takes the honey and eats, giving some to his father and mother. "And they did eat of it, but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion." V9 They could not appreciate the honey if they knew its source. Sometimes we cannot tell some spiritual things to others because the meat is too strong. They are not able to bear all the truth, though they may be eating of its fruit, even at our hands. Samson's riddle is

sometimes not understood by the Lord's own people, much less the worldly professors of religion.

After faith's experience, he proceeds with his marriage. The Lord often allows us our own way to bring us up out of death into resurrection, out of defeat into victory. Samson celebrates his wedding, with predominately Philistines, which are bad company for a Nazarite. His riddle tests their wisdom, but not as the world counts wisdom.

If they could guess the meaning each one would receive a change of garments as a reward. It is the mystery of the life of faith, that out of weakness comes strength, and out of death, resurrection. A robe of righteousness will fit such wisdom. The Philistines, who represent professed Christendom, failed to tell the secret; but Samson loses his wager, for the Philistine woman discovers his weak side. He can tear a lion to pieces, but a weeping woman is too much for him. He himself gives away the answer of the riddle, and tells it to her people. The secret is known by the Philistines, yet it is not known, for they do not understand it.

In conclusion, this world is filled with hornets, and stricken with leprosy. But out of trials, and travail of soul fruitfulness comes. It is the way of weakness. He is our strength and by the Grace of God, out of this empty, weakened, vessel is born strength in the Lord. "When I am weak, then am I strong." It is the mark of a separated life. Weakness must be felt and our need realized, not theorized. The Rock, in which we abide, is not only a refuge from danger, but the great store house, where all is provided but drawing upon this sufficiency requires faith in the precious Word of His promise. As Samson discovered (Jud. 15:19) this is where the water is plentiful, springing up for a poor and needy one such I. Any time, any place, even in the most unlikely place there is the cleft in the Rock. It is the cross, where our Lord was bruised, from whence all refreshment and victory comes. It was by being bruised for our iniquity, the Lord of glory brought forth water for this thirsty soul. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit, enabling us to drink to the full. Revived and strengthened in the place of victory, free at last. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

## Editorial October 2009

“And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” Luke 8:8

There are a number of times in scripture where we read “Jesus cried,” and all of them indicate a matter of great urgency. The above text is, in part, the parable of the Sower, describing the various types of ground whereon the seed might fall, and Jesus is vehement in His assertion that men need to hear The Word of God. Matthew tells us that the parables are designed for this very purpose, to separate those who will hear from those who do not. They are indeed a mystery to the one whose heart is closed, thus Jesus said “.it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.” Matt. 13:11 Jesus as The Judge issues the same decree when He said to the seven Churches “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;....” Rev. 2 So it is today that Jesus is still crying out with great urgency for the Church to simply hearken to His Word and receive the seed He would offer.

Great urgency is again seen in John 7 as “ In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.” V. 37 Note here that this is not an announcement of salvation, but rather of The Holy Ghost, as Jesus’ cry continues. “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)” V. 38-39 If this portion does in fact refer to initial salvation, as some have said, meaning that salvation and the infilling of The Spirit are the same thing, it means the disciples and others who had that great experience on the Day of Pentecost were not even born again, because we are told here that the fulfillment of this cry would not be realized until after Jesus was glorified. Surely The Master’s urgent invitation to come and drink of these waters, to be filled with The Holy Ghost, is still a matter of urgency in our day.

He cried again in John 7:28 as He tried desperately to persuade the Jews that He was indeed the Son of God. “Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.” The word “cried” means “to call aloud (shriek, exclaim, intreat, and tells of the tremendous urgency even to us, of the fact that He is the Very God.

Next, listen to His cry of desperation as He finished the final hours of His mission on earth, fulfilling the demands of God’s Righteous Government. “And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Mk. 15:34. We can in no wise imagine the depths of this cry that means “to shout (for help or in a tumultuous way).” As Christians we will never come anywhere near, knowing the tumult imposed by Satan, our sin, and the judgment of God, inflicted on Christ that day, but we can rejoice that such a cry gives way to another, found in verse 37 “And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.” The next verses tell us that this cry brought forth the rending of the veil in the temple, but only John tells us what He said. “When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.” John 19:30 This was a mighty and triumphant cry of victory, but notice the order of the last two cries as anguish and desperation gave way to complete release and triumph. Can we not be encouraged that this same pattern will prevail in our own experience as we too cry out to Him, even in great desperation and anguish? Will He not also bring us to the glorious dawn of complete victory and deliverance from the test we must endure?

#### ANOUNCEMENT

The lessons from the 2009 Denver Youth Camp entitled “Then Shall I Know” are available on CD. You may order them from Gospel Fellowship, P.O. Box 141 or Grace & Glory P. O. Box 831, Grandview, Missouri 64030.

# THE COVENANTS CONTRASTED

## Hebrews Chapters 8 and 9

**“Now to sum up** (literally, to sum up under one head) **what we are saying, We have such a High Priest**, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man: - Ch. 8:1,2 R.V.  
Bro. Paul always emphasized the ordained place of Jesus Christ, especially in writing to the Jews. He begins this chapter by setting Him forth as the Head of all things under the new covenant. Ephesians 1:10 says, “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, He (God) might gather together in one (lit. sum up under one Head) all things in Christ.” As High Priest, He is the Head. The importance of His priesthood is expressed here by naming seven salient facts.

1. He sits on the right hand of God's throne. He does not operate from the earth, as did Aaron and his successors, but from heaven, in close fellowship and counsel with the Father, who is the Majesty in the heavens.

2. A minister of the true sanctuary and true tabernacle. The Greek order of the words of verse two indicate that the word “true” modifies both the sanctuary and tabernacle. The Mosaic structure was only a shadow, not the real one. The original word here rendered minister is not the usual one for deacon, or servant; but it is a stronger word. It means to minister publicly at one's own expense, to serve as priest. Jesus Christ has all the wisdom, might and skill in Himself to minister as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary; hence, it is absolutely sufficient and effective. We read in chap. 7:35, “He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

3. He ministers not according to Moses law, but according to unlimited grace - vs. 4.

4. His is “a more excellent ministry.” It is unlike any other. It is superior to all others. It carries through, goes beyond, knows no bounds, fails never .

5. He is the Mediator of a better covenant, an eternal one.

6. The covenant was established on better promises, even of grace.

7, A new covenant -- written in the mind and on the heart -- vs. 10,11. The first covenant was typical, temporary and faulty.

It could not satisfy the conscience, or change the heart. The old covenant is described in ch. 9 as being material and earthly, and not spiritual and heavenly. Its sanctuary was on earth. The tabernacle was made by human hands. The candlestick, table and shewbread were all natural, earthly and perishable things, being only types, or shadows of supernatural, heavenly, eternal and imperishable realities. They all represented Christ in certain particulars.

**“And over it** (over the ark of the covenant) **the cheribims of glory shadowing the mercy seat**, of which we cannot now speak particularly” - ch 9:5. The cheribims figure the highest grade, or rank of believers in the church. Because the Apostle was writing to Hebrew Christians, who were still babes in Christ, being more, or less occupied with the types and shadows, it was not time for him to speak to them in detail concerning the cheribims. They could not appreciate the truth about full overcomers. Ezekiel describes them in the first chapter of his prophecy. In Rev. 4 and 5 they are called “the beasts,” or more correctly, “the living ones, or creatures,” as in Ezekiel 1. **“The holiest of all,”** or most holy place vs. 3,7, is a figure of heaven where Christ now is. The high priest went into the holy place only once a year, which figured Christ’s ascension into heaven in our behalf. He alone could come into the presence of God; but now since Jesus has gone into heaven with the efficacy of His sacrificial death, all who believe have unhindered access into God’s presence. See ch. 4:16. **“By His own blood** (that is, by the act that He purchased our salvation by pouring out His blood), He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” - vs. 12. He did not literally take His blood to heaven with Him, as some foolishly suppose.

Let us tabulate the seven results of redemption named in this chapter.

1. Christ’s redemption is eternal - vs. 2. He atoned once for our sins. The typical high priest had to make atonement once every year.
2. He opened heaven for man, and it will never be closed except to unbelief and rebellion - vs. 8,12.
3. Christ being a perfect man, rendered a perfect service in offering Himself as a sacrifice to God.
4. His redemption purged the conscience from dead works vs. 14. Those typical sacrifices were indeed dead works; that

is, they had no redeeming power. They could not take away sins. Hence, the consciousness of sin never left the offerers, except in certain cases, like David, they looked beyond the type to the antitype, Jesus Christ, by the illumination of the Spirit.

5. Christ became the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of His sacrificial death - vs. 15. His intercession is perfect, sufficient and without cessation, or end. He said, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

6. Believers have promise of an eternal inheritance - vs. 15

7. Everlasting, or eternal covenant - ch 13:20. These sevens are not accidental, but wonderful. They speak of the divine and eternal perfection of God's plan of salvation. This ninth chapter culminates with the three appearances of Jesus.

1. Once in the consummation of the ages, He appeared or was manifested to "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" - vs. 26. Reader, do you believe that He put sin away? Why then should it have any more power over us? See Rom. 6:14. He put it away "ONCE." He was not all His earthly career putting it away. He did it once by His death on the cross. See also vs.. 28 and Rom. 5:6,8,10.

2. He is now appearing in the presence of God for us - vs. 24. See also ch. 7:25 and I John 2:1.

3. Unto them that look for Him, He shall appear the second time - vs. 28. He came once and redeemed us for Himself. He is coming again to bring us unto Himself. He is coming for them that look for Him. Reader, are you looking for Jesus to return? Are you expecting Him soon? The signs of His imminent coming are many and powerful. Therefore, we read here also of **Three appointments**.

1. "It is appointed unto men once to die." Those only escape death, who accept the meritorious death of Christ in their behalf.

2. All men are appointed for judgment. Happy and safe are all those who have accepted the judgment that fell upon Christ in our stead. They shall not come into judgment - John 5:24. They have passed out of death into life.

3. It is appointed unto believers to meet the Lord when He comes. The church will meet Him in the air - I Thess. 4:17. The Jews will meet Him on earth. The church will be gathered to the heavenly Jerusalem, and Israel to Jerusalem in Palestine - Isaiah 25.

## **An Unreasonable View**

Some say that Jesus Christ is not High Priest to Gentile Christians. Their argument is, that Jesus is not called High Priest in any Epistle except Hebrews. That is no proof. Opposers to Divine Healing use the same argument. They say that healing is not taught in any of them: hence they say, It is not scriptural. The birth of Christ is not mentioned in Mark's and John's Gospel. Does that prove they did not teach His humanity? No chairs in the kitchen and pantry is no proof that there are none in the house. Each book of the Bible was written for a distinct purpose with a distinct message. It was not necessary for every book to teach everything. According to the critic's argument, we might insist that The Acts of the Apostles deprive the Hebrews from the right to the high priesthood of Christ, for the first twelve chapters record God's dealing with Israel, but no mention is made of His priesthood. It was necessary therefore that the Book of Hebrews be written to explain to Israel the spiritual meaning of the sacrifices, the offerings and the furniture of Moses' tabernacle. The high priesthood of Jesus Christ is the very foundation of redemption. Consider the following:

**First.** Observe that Christ was "**called an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec**, and not after the order of Aaron." This fact is expressed four times. Had it been Aaronic, it would have been no better than that of Aaron. Therefore, His priesthood was not instituted for Israel alone. It was in the purpose of God before Israel had an existence. Based upon this fact we read, "And being made perfect, He (as High Priest) became the Author of eternal salvation unto **ALL THEM** (not Hebrews only) that obey Him. - Heb. 5:9,10 with 7:11. Melchisedec was "the priest of the Most High God, even the God of Abraham, not then the God of Israel.

**Second.** Observe the offices, or activities of a high priest. "Every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices, wherefore it is of necessity that This Man have somewhat also to offer" - Heb. 8:3. Aaron could not offer himself. He had to offer the flesh and blood of animals and birds; but Christ offered Himself, which was the beginning of His priestly ministry. Thru the suffering of death by the grace of God, He tasted for **EVERY MAN**, not for Jews alone - Heb. 2:9. Note more about His High Priestly ministry. He became "a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God,

to make reconciliation (propitiation) for the sins of the people” - Heb 2:17. The identical Greek word here rendered reconciliation is translated “propitiation” (which signifies to be gracious by way of atonement), in Rom. 3:25. Was His reconciliation, or propitiation for the Hebrews only? Let John answer. “And **He IS** the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours (the saints) only, but also for the **WHOLE WORLD** “ - I John 2:2. And that was the basic phase, or fact of His high priesthood. “For if, when we (Gentiles as well as Jews) were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” - Rom. 5:10. This was written to Gentiles and it agrees with Jesus own words - “**Because I live, ye shall live also**” - John 14:19. Are not all these statements expressive of various phases of Christ’s high priestly service? What part dare any one apply to Hebrew Christians only? What part is kept from the participation and enjoyment of Gentile believers? And what part is not a high priestly activity?

Jesus Christ possesses three offices - Prophet, Priest and King. He finished His prophetic ministry just before He ascended on high, having begun His priestly service on the cross. His kingly office has not yet begun. Under which of the three titles does he now carry on? Under his priestly title, of course. “But this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood, wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” - Heb 7:24,25. Who dare rise up and limit “**them**” to the Hebrews? If He is the Propitiatory, or Mercy-seat for the sins of the whole world, is He not also the necessary Intercessor for all believers, Gentiles as well as Jews? “And for this cause (because He offered Himself without spot to God), He is the Mediator of the new testament (or covenant)” - Heb. 9:14,15. Oh, was that not for the Hebrews only? Says one. Emphatically NO, for God “will have **all men** to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the Truth: for there is one God and one Mediator between God and men (not Jews only), the Man Christ Jesus, **who gave Himself a ransom for ALL**, to be testified in due time, whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle (I speak the truth in Christ and lie not), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity - I Tim. 2:4-7.

It follows then absolutely, that as the Mediator, Christ offered Himself a ransom for all men. As High Priest, He is the Propitiation for the sins of all men. As High Priest, He died in our stead and tasted death for every man. Now, being made High Priest forever, and as such having divorced us from our sins and reconciled all of us to God by His death, he perpetuates His priesthood by interceding in behalf of **all believers**. The following was written to Gentile believers, but Hebrew believers are not excluded: "He that spared not His own Son, **but delivered Him up for us all**, how shall He not with Him also freely give us (Gentiles) **ALL things**," even His high priestly service? "It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" - Rom 8:32,34. Not as the Prophet, not as the coming King, but absolutely as the High Priest of the Abrahamic covenant, He carries on during this church age in behalf of the church. Remember that Jesus Himself said (John 14:19), "Because I live, ye shall live also." And He must live as our High Priest, being made priest "**after the power of an endless life**" - Heb. 7:16. If Christ is not our High Priest, than we have not as much as Israel had in Aaron. If we have no high priest, we have no salvation; for there is no remission of sins without the shedding of blood. Therefore Jesus Christ, as High Priest, had to offer Himself **a ransom for all**, and now He has to keep, by His own intercession, **all them that believe**.

**Note the importance of tithing** in connection with Christ's relation to Melchisedec. "And here (under law) men that die (like Aaron) receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth" - Heb. 7:8. If it was proper and divine for Abraham to give tithes then to "the King of Salem, priest of the Most High God," whose priesthood came to an end, how much more important must it be to give tithes today to our High Priest, through His representatives?

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Joseph Addison said:

*"When all the mercies, O my God
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder love and praise."*

“HOW DO I LOVE THEE?”

Albert C. Astle

***“So when they had dined, Jesus said to Simon Peter,
Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me....?”***

John 21:15

How is your love for Jesus? It was Edgar Guest who wrote, “How do I love thee? Let me count the ways. I love thee to the depth and breadth and height my soul can reach.”

Consider Song of Solomon 2:5 and 5:8: Two times the Shulamite, who portrays the Bride of Christ, declares, “I am sick of love.” Even though these two declarations appear to be the same, they are completely opposite in their meanings.

Let’s consider 5:8 first: “I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my Beloved, that you tell Him, that I am sick of love.” Have you ever taken an inventory of your love for Jesus? Song of Solomon Five is a great help.

This “sickness” applies to our love for Jesus, and means, “being faint and in pain from grief and longing.” The Bible describes her sickness in Verse 6: “My soul failed when He spoke.” What caused the Bride to be so faint and in such pain? In the first six verses of Chapter Five, we discover the reason for this sickness. What is so amazing is that she had actually invited Jesus to “come into His garden, and eat of His pleasant fruits” -S.O.S. 4:16. In Chapter 5:1, her Beloved has accepted her invitation and declares His intentions, only to find her door locked! Her Bridegroom even knocks and calls to her, but she does not answer.

What was wrong? Just what was it that caused her love sickness? Notice her excuse for failing to open the doors of her heart. First, “I sleep.” We all need our “rest” in Christ! Second, she excuses herself because she is ready for her rest and her feet (her walk) have been washed and she does not want to defile them. Third, her hands dropped with myrrh, and her fingers with sweet smelling myrrh (vs. 5). “Well,” you say, “what’s wrong with that?” Very much! WHERE IS JESUS? He’s still outside longing for the love only she can give Him. The Bride is completely taken up with what she is in Christ. She has completely forgotten the One who has made her complete. This is what can be best described as “head

knowledge.” This knowledge will never put Christ first, and most certainly will never win Christ as Bridegroom.

Listen to Jesus’ description of this very problem in Revelation 2:4: “,,,,,,You have left your FIRST (preeminent) LOVE.” This problem is one the old carnal nature can easily fall into. Notice the pronoun “my” in verses 3-5. Six times she uses this pronoun and four of them are the direct result of Jesus’ work in our lives. Oh Beloved, listen to the heart of one who has discovered this great truth. Paul declares in Philippians 1:21, “For me to live is Christ.”

In spite of all the beauty we have as the result of God’s provisions, and His working in our lives, they are incomplete unless our Beloved Lord is there to enjoy and fellowship the beautiful person he has made us. Notice in Verse six that the Beloved has withdrawn Himself and doesn’t even answer her calls. Why? Because she (and, we) must learn that all our beauty and purity are the result of “God working in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”

The Bride’s love for her Beloved was there all the time. It was in her heart, but became hidden amongst all the beauty she saw in herself. The Beloved so wisely withdrew Himself, for in His absence she was healed from this love sickness. It was her love-filled heart that stirred her to seek for her Beloved. Only our beautiful and Beloved Jesus Himself can make the beauty truly beautiful!

The watchmen of the city mistook her for a “lady of the evening,” and took away her veil, but that did not stop her. Why? Because her love-sickness had turned into the driving force in her life. It really took the quiz of Verse nine for her to discover the true source of her beauty and her healing. The daughters of Jerusalem asked the typical question, “What is your Beloved more than another beloved?” Or, according to today’s popular thinking, “Why not go to other churches until you find one which satisfies you?” Read Psalm 42:1-2. It defines the soul love for Jesus Himself, not just for what He has done for you or me only, but in and through us. “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, So panteth my soul after thee, O God.” My soul thirsteth for God. For the living God.....

It is never the beauty we see in the reflection of ourselves in the world’s looking-glass that so satisfies (propagates) God, it is the beautiful CHRIST in us! In chapter

8”5, the Bride is identified as the one “leaning upon her Beloved,” and not only on the “blessings” declared in Ephesians 1:3, but also, the Blessed One! Oh, may we never forget -- our beauty is only IN CHRIST, and it is never apart from our personal beloved Bridegroom Himself.

All it took was the absence of her Beloved for the Bride to realize her total dependence on the ONE who made her so beautiful! She was healed! Verses 10-16 reveal the great need for all saints: ONLY JESUS IS ALTOGETHER LOVELY ! Only Jesus is our first love! All of our beauty, strength, victory, service, and everything else, is the product of God’s conforming us to the image of his Son, Jesus Christ!

Now, we will consider Song of Solomon 2:5: “....I am sick of love.” As we mentioned, this love-sickness is different from the pain and grief the Bride experiences in Chapter 5:8. Here, “sickness” is Jesus love for us, and means, “overwhelmed!” Essentially, the Bride is declaring, “Jesus, Your love for me is more than my mind can grasp, or my humanness can appreciate!” F.M. Lehman puts it this way:

“Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the sky of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky.”

Let’s see if God’s Word can help us understand this sickness. Paul prayed for this sickness in Ephesians 3:14,19 “For this cause, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.....to know the love of Christ, WHICH PASSETH KNOWLEDGE, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.” In II Corinthians 5:13, the Bride’s love-sickness is described as being “beside ourselves” (or, overwhelmed and more than my mind can grasp). In II Corinthians 12:2-5, Paul uses such expressions as “I cannot tell; God knoweth,” “heard unspeakable words,” to explain love-sickness in I Corinthians 2:9, Paul shows us another picture of love-sickness: “....Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him.” Peter, also declares love--sickness this way: “Whom having not seen, ye love; in

Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory”

Paul even provides us with the reason for the love-sickness in Romans 11:33-36. “....How unreachable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out....” this can be said of Jesus’ love for us as well as God’s judgments.

The Shulamite, our portrait of Christ’s Bride, tells us just why the love of Christ is so overwhelming in Ch. 2:1-4:

She declares in v. 1, “I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.” There are blossoms in abundance in Sharon and beautiful blooms in the valleys, but just what is it that makes the Bride, Jesus’ first choice? She is the product of HIS WORK in her.

She continues, “As the lily among thorns, so is my love (for Jesus) among the daughters.” V. 2 These daughters are literally other Christians. It is overwhelming to realize that “my love” for Jesus means this to Him! It is HIS WORK in her which makes her unique among other believers.

The Bride declares in verse 3 the UNIQUENESS OF JESUS over all others! In the forest there is nothing but trees, yet among all these “others” stands Jesus. Not an oak, not a stately cedar or pine tree, but of all things, an apple tree! This is overwhelming! Besides the Unique Christ, the Bride delights in the comforting shade of her “Apple Tree” and His fruit which so satisfies the depths of her soul. Praise God!

Besides the foregoing wonders of Jesus’ love for her, now in Verse 4, He brings her into His banqueting house, and over her, raises His “Banner of Love.” In Jesus’ banqueting house there are wonderful celebrations; however, when His Bride is present, He celebrates her fellowship, and signals to all who pass by with His Banner of Love. With this banner, Jesus is declaring to all that the celebration taking place is the deepest and most sacred of all relationships a human can have with Him!

Isn’t this overwhelming? Isn’t this more than a mere human being can search out or understand? Is it any wonder, and do you feel the same way, as the Bride in Verse 5, as she cries, “Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick (overwhelmed) of love?”

It is interesting that she prays for Jesus to “stay her with flagons and comfort her with apples” as the cure for her inability to understand and grasp just why Jesus has done all

this for and in her. She feels the need of “comfort” (restoring and refreshing), and she is asking Jesus to give her flagons, or raisin cakes (energy bars). She is so overwhelmed in Jesus’ Banqueting House that she cries out to Him for help.

He hears her cry and responds to her love-sickness, as He reaches over and picks her up in His great and mighty arms as she tells: “His left hand is under my head” to hold me and protect me in my human limitations, and with His right hand He embraces me, holds me close to His heart. Me? Oh, what are you telling us Jesus? With this very real security and loving embrace, He is telling us we will never understand fully while in these earthen vessels. He tells us, through Paul, “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but **then** face to face: now I know in part; but **then** shall I know even as also I am known” - I Corinthians 13:12.

Oh, what glory awaits us on our wedding day! Until then just lie back in Jesus’ secure arms where nothing can pluck us out, and yield to His love. He never gave the Bride her energy bars, but he most certainly comforted her with Himself. Who needs raisin cakes when we have Jesus’ mighty arms embracing us? Please, don’t insult Jesus by trying to earn His security and love; you’ll just make yourself sicker. The greatest blessing we will ever be to the Lord and to anyone else, is to yield to **what we are** and to **who we are** in him -- because of Him!

“For of him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.” Romans 11:36.

Do you have your healing yet?

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Prayer To The Master Artist

Lord, take the canvas of my life and paint thereon a Masterpiece  
Allow me not to mar Thy work, nor cause its progress thus to cease.  
May I be yielded so to Thee, that stroke by stroke, Thou shalt  
complete  
A portrait clear, reflecting Thee, of yielded life, surrendered, sweet.  
May ever day bring forth results, a clearer likeness, Lord to Thee,  
That those who look upon my life will see, not I, but Christ in me.

Connie Colenberg

## RECIPE FOR CHANGE

***“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Psalm 139:23-24***

Do not go any further if you fear conviction or the changes that will take place if you yield to the Holy Spirit.

According to this text, David asks the Lord to search him. This is the first step in changing our lives to a more complete spiritual walk with the Lord. This begins with a searching of the flesh. We must allow God to convict us (personally, and as a nation) of all open or concealed fleshly habit or sin. Jeremiah 23:10 states our nation's present condition: "For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourned, the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force is not right." Our nation is going through the worst time in our history of open adultery and other grievous sins, and many are saying it's okay because no one is getting hurt. Scripture tells us that judgment begins in the house of the Lord. A short time ago we saw many well-known preachers, teachers, and so-called Christian entertainers fall from their positions of prominence because of sins of the flesh. Let us look at ourselves and judge our flesh daily, even hourly if necessary.

David continues, saying, "Know my heart." This is the second step of judgment to which we must subject ourselves to in order to acquire the crown of righteousness which is laid up for us in heaven. To allow the Lord to look inwardly at the spiritual condition of our heart is probably the hardest part of spiritual obedience and growth. Every one of us has some hidden attitudes and feelings that we don't want anyone, even God, to know about. We may have become arrogant and conceited that we are better than other Christians because we know the Bridal Message. However, to know and to attain are two different things. We also may know a little of God's Grace and think we have it made. We must realize that head knowledge does not qualify us for anything. Let us allow the Lord to search our innermost thought and attitudes that He may know our hearts.

David now says, "Try me." If this is truly our prayer, we must be willing to accept whatever the Lord allows to happen to change us. Hebrews 12:5-8 declares that His chastening is because He loves us, and as His children we cannot and will not change without His guidance. All parents know that if children are left to their own ways, they will almost always take the wrong path, because it seems easier at the time. Let us use Job for our example.

He did nothing to cause his problems, but the Lord wanted to perfect him and to reveal Himself to Job in a greater measure. Job accepted the Lord's chastisement and said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." We must agree with God that He knows what is best for us, and agree with whatever He allows in our lives.

The Scripture continues, "and know my thoughts." Only when we dare put ourselves under the pressure that God allows in our lives to test us, are our true thoughts revealed. This time of testing reveals our innermost weaknesses and true thoughts. If we have not had any problems, we may think there is no need to look inward to those deep recesses of thought; but God sees what is there and knows our need. Only the stress of pressure applied by Satan, as allowed by God, initiates a "Job experience." We may get knocked down, stepped on, then kicked, and spat upon. Then we wonder. "Where is God?" Well, He is right there beside us as He has always been. The same things happened to our Savior, so He knows exactly what we may be experiencing, because He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. We will be tried in order to purge out all traits of the old creation that we might come forth as pure gold.

"And see if there be any wicked way in me." Whether it be family problems, health, or job related issues, the Lord is using each situation to refine us to be the Christians HE WANTS US TO BE, and not what WE imagine we should be. Each of us if given the choice, might stop short of the very best that our Lord has for us; but endure the chastening as from the Lord, and at the end you will see what God has been working in you.

"And lead me in the way everlasting." The Hebrew word for "lead means "to guide or to govern." We should pray as David prayed, for the Lord to guide us in these troubled times that we are suffering as individuals, and as a nation. The

way that He would have us go is to walk with Him even as Enoch walked with Him -- not ahead, or behind, but in the same rhythm as He walks. Amos 3:3 says, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" We must agree with God so that He can chasten us and change us into the followers of Christ that He want us to be. We only know how to do this through Paul's Gospel.

-- Ronald Holdgrafer

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Rapid Transit

It has been said that if each person who heard a particular piece of gossip passed it along to two other people within fifteen minutes, that the whole world would know the gossip in about eight hours!

John Bunyan, when still unconverted, saw two women whispering together and he assumed they were gossiping - and he wanted to listen! He drew near to overhear their words, and discovered they were talking about Christ. As a result, Bunyan was converted.

If Christians were all "gossiping the Gospel" we would see more sinners come to Christ.

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\* Be controlled by God's gentle spirit, or you'll be bridled by His loving hand.

\* Your shoulders of encouragement can help lighten the heaviest burden.

\* We must live in this world but we don't need to let the world live in us.

\* Temper is what gets most of us in trouble. Pride is what keeps us there.

\* If it seems things are going easier, maybe you are headed downhill.

