starting with the 7 miracle-signs of John “to believe” and continuing with “believing” (John 20:30,31) from many Bible Reports, from Fear to Faith and into the One Baptism of the One Salvation

“But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, LORD, who has believed our report?” (John 12:38, Romans 10:16 and Isaiah 53:1)

“But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed:

‘Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.’”

(Romans 10:18 and Psalm 19:4)

“All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people.”

(Romans 10:21 and Isaiah 65:2)
Publications of SunGrist_Bible:

NOTE: All publications are both ebooks to promote “green” and Desktop Computer Publications with spiral binding for low cost.

The LEARN CHRIST from the Apostles and Prophets Bible commentaries.

{this set of LCC commentaries is designed to take you through the whole Bible}

Volume 1: The Old Testament According to the New Testament, the ASPI.
Volume 2: Christ for Individuals, the five books of the Apostle John.
Volume 3: Believe and Be Baptized, the 14 letters of the Apostle Paul.
Volume 5: The Message of the Writing Prophets.
Volume 6: Jeremiah and Prophesy.

Other Bible Teachings Published by SunGrist_Bible.

{a thorough look at distinct groups of Bible teachings on current subjects}

1. Some Sounds of Sound Faith.
2. A Cup of Water, a condensed version of Mark with comments.
4. What the Churches Don’t Want You to Hear, that they are leaders in the Falling Away.
5. Friends of Jesus in this Bible and Computer Age, a challenge sufficient for the Falling Away.

Live Green, Think Green, and Read Green with ebooks from SunGrist_Bible {hard copies of all the publications above are available if you insist, and home demos are available only in New Mexico and North Texas (call 817-296-0328)}

Everything Bible, Free or Almost Free
Bible Reports For Believing
by Jerry V. McMichael

Dedicated to my family, immediate and extended like John Quinn, a friend and former Naval Air shipmate, who provided the original inspiration for the writing of these Reports. Well, the inspiration was simultaneously from two fronts: emails with John Quinn and an invitation to perform the wedding ceremony for my oldest grand-daughter, and preparation with a short inspirational message from the Wedding Feast at Cana which showed among other things the personal interest Jesus has in the marriage of a man and woman. Josh and Bryony with their recent wedding provided impetus on the first miracles sign from Jesus of the Gospel of John, the wedding feast at Cana, and my total family of children with their spouses inspired the recent completion. The prayer with writing and distribution is that all might know the challenge of the two-stage salvation process, of “believe” and “believing”, along with millions churched and unchurched variety and in the majority, captive to the world’s philosophy who attempt to define their own status and standing in the sight of God independent of the Bible as the sole criterion for faith and practice, in effect like spoken of in Romans 10 attempting to bring Christ down or up by human efforts and wisdom. “We are the sheep of His people, and the people of His land” regardless of our statements of defiance and independence, an ultimate and inevitable accountability will be given to this LORD God and Creator of the universe, “Our Father which art in heaven.” While not a popular phrase “in the world”, God Himself through the pages of the Bible defines these millions as unbelievers. {Notice below that this is not friendly and good company for these millions of unbelievers, but hopefully it will give you a little heavenly perspective of how evil unbelief is in the sight of Our God!} And that all readers might as presented in one of the last chapters find the proper balance between “fear and faith” even while they find the “believe” and “believing”.

“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” (Revelation 21:8)
BIBLE REPORTS FOR BELIEVING, like the other ebooks in the Bible Teaching series listed below, are based on exegesis of Bible Scriptures, sometimes topical and sometimes more textual. REPORTS is centered around Isaiah 53:1, “Who has believed our report”, as quoted by both Jesus and the Apostle Paul, with all of its implications for unbelievers today, and others with lack of faith and “the faith once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3); for where can you draw the line between unbelief and lack of faith and the faith, whether among church members or the unchurched!

Bible Teaching Series of Ebooks:

NOTE: Live Green, think Green, and Read Green with ebooks from SunGrist_Bible and save trees. {We have a few backup hard copies of these books if you insist or don’t have a computer and Adobe PDF.}

1. Some Sounds of Sound Faith.
3. A Cup of Water.
4. What the Churches Don’t Want You to Hear!
5. Friends of Jesus, John 13-17.
7. Bible Reports for Believing.

Copyright @ July, 2008 by SunGrist_Bible, P.O. Box 960, Cloudcroft, NM 88317

http://biblecombibleman.com
# Table of Contents

## CHAPTER 1  
*Introduction to Bible Reports*  
12

## CHAPTER 2  
*Bible Reports for Unbelievers*  
20
- 2-1: Judgment on Churched and Unchurched. 20
- 2-2: Evangelism of Unbelievers in the Church? 23
- 2-3: Judgment and Appearance in the Bible. 25
- 2-4: Appearance Versus Righteous Judgment. 28
- 2-5: What Are We Going to Do About It? 31
- 2-6: With the Spirit and with Reports for Unbelievers. 35

## CHAPTER 3  
*Who Believes?*  
38
- 3-1: Good NEW Things in the Old Testament. 38
- 3-2: Revelation 21, Last Chapter of the Book. 39
- 3-3: Full Extent of the REPORTS for Unbelievers. 43

## CHAPTER 4  
*The Wedding Feast at Cana (John 2)*  
50
- 4-1: Christ at Cana, The First Miracle-Sign. 50
- 4-2: The Seven Miracles of John and Faith. 53
- 4-3: The Seven Miracles: Signs for Believing. 54
- 4-4: "Believe" is the Positive Approach to the Negative of “Unbelief”. 56
- 4-5: A Bible Definition of God’s People. 58

## CHAPTER 5  
*Reports to Make Believers (John 4)*  
60
- 5-1: Jesus Taught the People in Samaria about A Special Gift of God. 61
- 5-2: Jesus Taught the Samaritans that He was the Messiah. 63
- 5-3: “You People of Slow Belief” from Jesus. 65
- 5-4: False Worshippers by their Unbelief Restrict the work of Jesus. 67
- 5-5: Slow Believers are Believers. 70

## CHAPTER 6  
*Believers or Disciples: Which is First? (John 5)*  
72
- 6-1: Believing in Context of the Gospel of Christ. 73
- 6-2: Christ in the third Miracle Healed the Man Helpless for 38 years. 76
- 6-3: The Reason the Jews Persecuted Jesus. 78

---

*Bible Reports for Believing*  
4
# Table of Contents

6-4: Jesus, “My Father and I Have Been Working” (John 5:17) 79  
6-5: Judgement. Life, and Everlasting Life Teachings of Jesus (John 5:24-30) 79  
6-6: Four Legitimate Witnesses to Him as the Son of God. (John 5:31-39) 81  
6-7: Jews (Judaism) as a Prototype of Bad Leadership in Religion. 82  
6-8: Believing and Disciples and Life in the Gospel of John. 87  

## CHAPTER 7  
“*My Church*” and “Believing” (John 6) 90  
7-1: Development of the Purpose of John in John 6. 94  
7-2: The Bread of Life Teachings of John 6. 101  
7-3: Jesus Answer to the Jews, “How Can He Say I Came Down from Heaven?” 102  
7-4: Jesus Answer to the Jews, “How Can This Man Give Us His flesh?” 103  
7-5: The Concrete of “Believe”, “Believing”, and “Disciples” in John 6. 104  
7-6: The Two Miracle-Signs of John 6. 104  
7-7: Teaching of Jesus: The Living Bread from Heaven. 105

## CHAPTER 8  
*Disciples and Friends: Fruit that Remains (John 9-14)* 108  
8-1: “Signs” in John 9-14 to Progress the Purpose of John 20:30,31. 108  
8-2: Learning from the Bible Classics. 110  
8-3: The Last “Believing” Clusters of John 9-15 Around the key words. 114  
8-4: Last 8 “Believing” Clusters of John 9-14. 116  
8-5: From the Cross Prediction to the Friends of Jesus (John 12-15). 118

## CHAPTER 9  
*God’s “Called” People versus God’s “Chosen People”* 126  
9-1: Matthew 20:16, Pivot and Conclusion for the Teachings of Matthew 19-22. 126  
9-3: Two Halves to the Conclusions of Matthew 20:16. 129  
9-4: A “Called versus Chosen” Outline of Matthew 19-22. 129  
9-5: The “Good and the Bad” Called to the Wedding Feast. 131  
9-7: Focus More on House of God of the New Jerusalem of the New Earth. 135  
9-8: What to Do About the Falling Away? 136  
9-9: Bad Habits of the Seven Churches of Asia Minor. 138

---

Bible Reports for Believing
# Table of Contents

## CHAPTER 10  
**Bible Reports of The New Earth**  

10-1: The Report of the New Earth from Isaiah 65. 145  
10-2: From Reports of the Prophet Isaiah to New Testament Reports. 147  
10-3: The word “Word” from Revelation 19:11-16 to write the Gospel of John. 148  
10-4: The One Thousand Years of Revelation 20 is the “Last Days” of the Bible. 149  
10-5: What about “Hades” for Certain in the Bible. 150  
10-6: The Unseen World in an Unseen Dimension of Space. 154  
10-7: Hades in the New King James Version is Translated Hell in the King James. 156  
10-8: You can See the Whole Creation Groaning. 158

## CHAPTER 11  
**Popular Preachers of Prosperity**  

11-1: Correlation Between Hiding and Heaping Up. 163  
11-2: Jeremiah was Opposed by the official prophets and priests. 163  
11-3: God’s People Worse in Jeremiah’s Day than the Falling Away. 166  
11-4: No Authorized Popular Preacher during the Falling Away. 168  
11-5: To Unchurched and Churched About the Churched. 170  
11-6: Profit Correction on Prophesy (Speaking in the Assembly) in I Cor 14. 171  
11-7: Popularity of the “Peace” Message. 176

## CHAPTER 12  
**A Bible Message on the Gospel of Prosperity**  

12-1: Introduction. 182  
12-2: The Bible Gospel of the Kingdom. 184  
12-3: The Real New Birth is the One Baptism or Salvation. 187  
12-4: Who Called and Authorized These Popular Preachers of Prosperity. 188  
12-5: The Treasure of the Real Gospel is in Earthen Vessels. 189  
12-6: Popular Preachers Practice Forbidden Deceit with the Bible. 190  
12-7: Any Other Gospel of Another Kind Brings a Curse. 191  
12-8: The Gospel of Prosperity is Just Plain BAD! 192

## CHAPTER 13  
**A Real Report on the Gospel of Prosperity**  

13-1: The Dangers, Unwise Wisdom if you Would, of the Gospel of Prosperity. 196  
13-2: Reports of the Bible, Oracles, and Bad Reports of Special Revelations. 197  
13-3: Psalm 37. 198  
13-4: A Real God-given Report on the Good Life Now. 198  
13-5: First Command or Teaching and then Blessing. 200
# Table of Contents

13-6: Contrasts of Wicked and Those that Wait Upon God. 201  
13-7: God Laughs at the Unjust and Patiently Waits While He Tabulates. 204  
13-8: Consider some final Bible Reports on the Prosperity of God’s Salvation. 206

## CHAPTER 14  
*God’s Reports Accomplish.*  
210

14-1: God Turns Rumors into Reports to Accomplish His Purpose. 211  
14-2: Well, Here God’s Purpose is From One of God’s Reports in the Bible. 214  
14-3: The Purpose of God’s Words: to ACCOMPLISH and PROSPER. 215  
14-4: As you pray “thy will be done”, you are praying for this Purpose in Christ. 216  
14-5: What is left after the “kingdom of God” on earth is “the World”. 217

## CHAPTER 15  
*Statements of the Obvious.*  
218

15-1: Shoestring Reasons for Tragic Decisions. 219  
15-2: “They all with one consent began to make excuse”. (Luke 14:18) 220  
15-3: In the Same Boat. 221  
15-4: The American Conscience today like Romans, “Excuses and Accuses”. 222  
15-5: The American Democratic Faith Replaces the faith of the Bible and Jesus. 223  
15-7: It is Obvious that All Have Heard the Reports of the Bible. 224  
15-8: It is Obvious that while the majority will not listen, a few are saved. 225  
15-9: It is Obvious that all of the called of God’s people are not saved. 225  
15-10: Obviously 3 out of 4 seeds of the Word of God reports fail to save. 225  
15-11: Obviously the initiative and final outcome is with God, but not automatic. 226  
15-12: The “Righteousness” of Man and of God from the Bible. 226  
15-13: Where the Majority Goes Wrong on the Rightness of God. 226  
15-14: The God of love and wisdom reaches out to wayfaring humanity. 227  
15-15: The Only Way to Rightness is by God’s Way of “By Faith”. 227

## CHAPTER 16  
*Righteousness of God and Man.*  
228

16-1: The Ten Commandments. (Exodus 20-Exodus 32) 231  
16-2: The Laws of a Holy and Righteous God. (Leviticus 4-18) 239  
16-3: More from the Bible on the Righteousness of God and Man. 241

## CHAPTER 17  
*Respect for God.*  
252

17-1: Current Popularity of God’s Name in Vain Does Not Make for “Guiltless”. 253
Table of Contents

17-2: The Beginning of Wisdom is Respect for God. 253
17-3: You can not separate God from the Name and Character of God. 253
17-4: The First Four Commandments Strongly Demand Respect for God. 254
17-5: The Summary of the 10 Commandments Highlight Respect for God. 255
17-6: Salvation and Respect for God. 256
17-7: Covenant with God. 256
17-8: The Righteousness by Faith apart from struggles to attain Rightness. 257
17-9: The Protestant Pope Pastor Rick Warren. 259
17-10: “IN THE WORLD, OF THE WORLD”, and Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. 267
17-11: “Manifest to Us and Not to the World”. 269
17-12: Respect for the Name of God and Christ by Which you Call Yourself. 270
17-13: Calamities, Curses, and Chastisement from God. 271
17-14: Gustav Grieves the Gulf Coast. 272
17-15: Calamities and Curses in the Bible. 273
17-16: Now we are ready for Dedication of the House of God by Solomon. 278

CHAPTER 18  Prime Loyalty  282
18-1: This Continuing Process of Believing is a Matter of Prime Loyalty. 283
18-2: Anything Short of Prime Loyalty Creates a “god”. 283
18-3: Give God the Prime Loyalty. 284
18-4: Continuing Processes in the Bible Describes Sin and Believing. 284
18-5: “Loyalty” as “Charity” or Love with Feet. 285
18-6: Prime Loyalty to Your Church or God the Father. 285

CHAPTER 19  Fear and Faith: To Whom is He Talking?  288
19-1: Reports To Believe and For Believing. 289
19-2: The word “Reports” in the Bible. 290
19-3: Who Is He (he) Talking To? 291
19-4: Extremes of Fear and Faith. 292
19-5: Some Main Tenets of John’s Commentary on “Believing” in I John. 295
19-6: The One Baptism, alias the One Salvation, with “Believing”. 297

CHAPTER 20  Strong Delusion  302
20-1: Consider the Mountain to Climb in Order to Turn Away From Truth. 303
20-2: What Happens to the Unbeliever or Departee in this Lifetime on Earth? 304
### Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-3</td>
<td>What God does in This Lifetime to Those Who Turn Away from Truth!</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-4</td>
<td>Love of Truth in the Abstract Can Wipe Out Real Truth in the Concrete.</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-5</td>
<td>“We don’t have to win, only Fight” During the Falling Away.</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-6</td>
<td>What Will Get Church Members Over that Hump as they turn away?</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-7</td>
<td>The Body of Beliefs called “The LIE” of Falsehood.</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-8</td>
<td>Non-Religious Dimensions of Personality without God retention.</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-9</td>
<td>Greed in America has Disintegrated the American Economy.</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-10</td>
<td>Strong Delusion from American leaders about the Economy.</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-11</td>
<td>How This Relates to the “To Believe” and “For Believing” Gist of this Book.</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CHAPTER 21  
**Religious Dimensions of Personality**  
326

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-1</td>
<td>Basis of Chapter--Ephesians and ONE COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS.</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-2</td>
<td>What is the Meaning of Faith?</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-3</td>
<td>What Is the Meaning of the Bible according to the Bible?</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-4</td>
<td>Bible Words for Salvation in the Bible.</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-5</td>
<td>Peter Provides Explanations for “Faith”, Rock and rocks, and the Church.</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-6</td>
<td>Religious Dimensions of Personality According to the Bible.</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-7</td>
<td>Covetousness as in the Parable of Bigger Barns Destroys Personality.</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-8</td>
<td>Covetousness and Greed Destroy any Nation.</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-9</td>
<td>Covetousness and Greed Destroy any Community or Church.</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CHAPTER 22  
**Continuing Faith**  
338

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22-1</td>
<td>Two Steps of Salvation in BELIEVE and BELIEVING of John 20:30,31.</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-2</td>
<td>“Evil Heart of Unbelief in Departing from the Living God” (Heb. 3:12)</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-3</td>
<td>Covetousness Causes a Straying from Faith and Personality Destruction.</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-4</td>
<td>Misunderstood “Covetousness” has two basic Meanings in the Bible.</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-5</td>
<td>Covetousness is Destructive: (1) nationally to neighbors; and (2) to self.</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-6</td>
<td>What Caused the Recent Destruction of the American Economy?</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-7</td>
<td>Covetousness in America Has Made of Churches a “Den of Thieves”.</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-8</td>
<td>Cover Up of the State of the American Economy Eclipsed by Churches.</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-9</td>
<td>Saving and Continuing Faith versus “Believe and Tremble” by James.</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-10</td>
<td>Reconcile “workout your salvation” with salvation “not by works”.</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-11</td>
<td>“With the Holy Spirit”, the Place of the Spirit in the Bible Reports.</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-12</td>
<td>Back To The “Fear and Faith” of I John 4:18.</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-13</td>
<td>Today, Chose God’s Eternal Rest over Any Unbelief!</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Table of Contents

## CHAPTER 23  
**What Were God's People of Jeremiah Thinking?**  354

- **23-1:** From “Continuing Faith” of John to the Prophets Jeremiah and Isaiah. 355
- **23-2:** Thoughts of Isaiah 55 for the Thinking of God’s People. 356
- **23-3:** The book of Isaiah as background to fully understand Jeremiah. 359
- **23-4:** Isaiah 1 as a Summary of Isaiah and of the Prophetic Message of the OT. 362
- **23-5:** Surely Jeremiah 1-6 Provides Insight on the Thoughts of the People. 365
- **23-6:** Concluding Purpose and Prayer of this Book Against Excuses. 371

## CHAPTER 24  
**Top Two Abominations of God's People**  374

- **24-1:** The Rest of Jeremiah 1-6 is a Commentary by God on The Two Evils. 374
- **24-2:** “I Have Not Polluted Myself, and Gone After the Baals. 376
- **24-3:** Going Backwards and Not Forwards, Their Backs to God. 378
- **24-4:** Dialogue Between God and Jeremiah on the Two Evils. (3:6-6:30). 379
- **24-5:** The Temple Message of Jeremiah. (Jeremiah 7 and 23) 381

## CHAPTER 25  
**7 Messages for the 7 Miracle/Signs of John**  386

- **25-1:** Top Message of 7 Miracles is Faith in Jesus as Co-Creator of Universe. 387
- **25-2:** Message on “Wine” to go with the Miracle of the Wedding Feast. 388
- **25-3:** Message on Life to go with the Healing of the Nobleman Son. 389
- **25-4:** A Message on Health for Healing of the Man of Infirmity 38 years. 390
- **25-5:** Fourth Miracle-Sign and Message on Bread and Living Bread. 392
- **25-6:** A Message on Weather for Jesus’ Wind and Waves Control. 394
- **25-7:** A Message on Spiritual Blindness to Go with Healing of the Blind. 394
- **25-8:** The Holy Spirit took over in the world for Light After Jesus. 395
- **25-9:** On Resurrection and Life to go with the Raising of Lazarus. 396

## CHAPTER 26  
**Miracle of the “Fountain of Living Waters”**  400

- **26-1:** Jesus Offers “Living Water” at Jacob’s Well in Samaria. 400
- **26-2:** The Backsliding of God’s People in Jeremiah Away from Living Water. 401
- **26-3:** Abominations of People in Jeremiah are Against God the Father. 402
- **26-4:** Connection between Commandments and Righteousness. 405
- **26-5:** Last Reports of the Bible Make a “Record” for Everlasting Life. 406
- **26-5:** Last Word of the Bible, the book of Revelation, and the last chapter. 408

### Appendix:  
"Rivers of Living Water"  411
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table of Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| 11 | Bible Reports for Believing |
CHAPTER 1

Introduction to Bible Reports

Even as the second step in the two-step process of salvation was introduced in the “Believe and Be Baptized” volume, volume 3 of the LEARN CHRIST commentaries, that second step being “Be Baptized”, God’s part in salvation and the baptism being the “one baptism”, or “one salvation” doctrine of the whole summary of total doctrine in Ephesians 4:5, so in the “believing” of John 20:31 behind the initial faith of the “believe”, you have this same second step of the two-step process in faith and salvation. Actually, like the Gospel of John itself, the primary source of these Bible Reports in this book BIBLE REPORTS FOR BELIEVING, this book is even more about the BELIEVING than the BELIEVE. Primarily because you can have “believe”, that is initial faith, without the continuity of “believing”; but you can not have “believing” without first the ability to “believe” that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God; and while thousands of church members have based their confidence, and still do base their confidence in that initial faith and single act of faith and profession for salvation, they do not for many years, especially 40 years, continue to exercise that faith that is so necessary for salvation, a salvation that can last eternally and that generate the religious dimensions of personality which Jesus called “the abundant life” (John 10:10).

By no means are young and initial believers neglected. For example even as John 4 is directed to believers of the first kind, so chapter 5 based on John 4 is on “Bible Reports to Make Believers”. God has a certain way through the Holy
Bible Reports for Believing

Spirit, the new birth, and engendered faith to make or create believers for Himself and for eternity on the new earth, and that certain way through the Lord Jesus Christ and His death on the cross {the atonement} He has well communicated through the Prophets and the Apostles like the Apostle John.

REPORTS, like any book especially on Bible, that is well developed, has gone through 3 stages of development: first as Reports for Unbelievers, then as Reports for Believing, and finally as the realization was made that the believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah and Son of God was complete with approximately the first 8 chapters and still the Reports were going on and on, until it was hard to stop adding chapters, with the final comprehension that “believe” and “believing” are a two stage process. Our problem today, especially, in the Falling Away, is not to get people the proper Bible Reports to believe in this Jesus--even “the devils believe in God and tremble” writes Pastor James--but to get church members and others beyond the first stage of “believe” to the second stage of “believing”. And to be honest while the first 8 chapters centered primarily around the seven miracle signs of John are necessary foundation, most of the book is to promote the kind of continuous “believing” that engenders real salvation, an abundant life here and an everlasting life that begins here and continues on the New Earth.

And this is also true in the Gospel of John itself, especially as supplemented by the epistle of I John where John, and the Holy Spirit through John, found it necessary to write a little but very definitive “Commentary on Believing”; many of the terse statements of which you have puzzled over for years if you are at all serious about study of the Bible as the Word of God. This two stage saga is also highlighted by the obvious fact that the Apostle John seems to end, like Morris points out in the New International Commentary on the Gospel of John, with the statement of purpose of the Gospel Report in John 20:30,31; and then after this seemingly conclusion, let us say it could be the conclusion of the first stage part, to believe, if you could really complete sever one from the other, which you can not, comes John chapter 21 with more resurrection appearances of Jesus to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias where “Jesus showed Himself” {this was the third time Jesus showed Himself to the Apostles as John notes in John 21:14 after “He was raised from the dead“) (John 21:1) “again to the disciples“, where Jesus leads Peter all the way from belief to believing with the challenge to feed the sheep in proportion to the real love (John 21:17) {also a three time question about love with a three time demand to feed the sheep--three appearances, three questions, and three demands for ministry that “at the mouth of two or more witnesses, every word might be
establish”—the famous Top Topic #3 of the Bible about which you have heard, the “If Two Agree”, or more, “The Composite Witness of the Bible”; and then the terminal focus of Peter and Jesus on the Apostle John with Jesus statement that if John “remains until He comes again” Peter what business is that to you, and John’s effort in those few verses of the last of John 21 to correct the false rumor that John would live until Christ came again. (John says that is not what Jesus said, and that the rumor was false, John 21:23). Finally in the chapter conclusion of John 21:24 and 25: (a) John notes personally that he is that Apostle John whom Jesus loved in a special way, the same John who wrote all these chapters of the Gospel of John, and known among the Apostles and the first Christians as the Apostle of a True Testimony—and by the way that theme of “the fellowship of the Apostles” as a way to separate those in fellowship and out of fellowship, then and today, John will continue in I John as he knows that he must develop more the second stage of believe and believing; and (b) a brief flashback in John 21:25, the last verse of the Gospel, with the many “other things” Jesus did, see here how it goes beyond just “signs”, even though I hope you will come to know the signs of John as miracles and more, much more, with the impossibility of a library big enough to contain all the books that would elaborate on all the things Jesus “did”, “one by one”.

Our confidence in the Lord Jesus as the Messiah {Hebrew for Christ}, the Son of the Living God is based on our confidence in the Reports of the Bible as the Word of God; and vice versa. Since ultimate truth is a circle about the character and personality of God, rather than a flow of logic, scientific method, syllogisms and generalizations as we humans have been trained by the world to do, faith in the reality that God used over 40 men over a period of more than a thousand years to communicate truth in Reports from God to those humans who would listen and meet the criterion for understanding is intertwined in a spiral about the three members of the Trinity--Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and the Book that God wrote.

In this book, “Reports for Believing”, we try to simultaneously look at both the content of the Reports and the method, the Bible as the Word of God, that God chose to deliver those reports; thus to hopefully engender “believing” at the same time in both the Book and the prime message of the book, that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. Yes, this implies a certain amount of faith that God lives; that is, that there is a “the Living God”; and that since He lives and precedes all human history as recorded in the Bible, that He strives to communicate to His human creatures. Don’t you just feel a lot better now by just accepting that “fundamental postulate of all rational thinking”, or as expressed
in one of the Reports of the Bible, the book of Romans on the human side from
the Apostle Paul, and in particular the 17th verse of the tenth chapter:

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”
(Romans 10:17)

How many reports directly from God, in the Bible, and indirectly from His ser-
vants through the years have you heard? {You will be held accountable, you
know, for every one of them you have heard; for the God of outreach and
love, just two aspects of His personality or character, is also the God of
ultimate judgment and justice, though also is in His large list of personal
characteristics is also patience and forbearance. Yet there is also a limit
to the patience of God with Jews and Gentiles.} Jew or Gentile, the Reports
from God have gone out over all the world, so that the Apostle Paul continues
under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit {“holy men of God spoke as they
were moved by the Spirit” (1 Peter 1:21)} on the subject of hearing after
the Romans 10:17 verse above.

“But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed (and quotes from David and
Psalm 19:4): ‘Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words
to the ends of the world.’” (Romans 10:18)

The sound of these words and as they are gathered into Reports like in the
Gospel of John and in the book of Romans, often both based on the earlier
reports from the Prophet Isaiah would be what it is desired you will read and
hear in these following pages as you would simultaneously develop confidence in
the Book of Reports and the prime and consistent message of those reports,
expressed by the Apostle John in the following gist of the Gospel of John:

“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples,
which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may
believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you
may have life in His name.” (John 20:30,31)

Yes, I added to “the Son of God” as part of the challenge to faith, the way it
was expressed by Simon Peter when Jesus said “Will you go away also?” after
many disciples followed Jesus no more; but in one of the first public profes-
sions of faith, and certainly the most famous, Peter expressed for the Apos-
tles and other disciples present that: (1) to whom in the world should they go,
since only Jesus had the words of eternal life; (2) that they believed that
Introduction to Bible Reports

Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ; and (3) that they believed that He was and is the Son of the Living God. There are many “gods” that clamor with their own brands of reports for your faith! These are not living gods; and to beg one of the issues of this book, one from the Prophet Jeremiah, these other gods often treated as if they did live and did demand loyalty, are “broken cisterns that can not contain water.” About the only thing they can do for you is to give you an alternative loyalty to other than the Living God, most generally it means that you in the final analysis give your loyalty and faith to the only other supernatural being in the Universe, Satan himself.

However, back to the gist of the Gospel of John above, in John 20:30,31 {and by the way, have you ever seen so clearly stated in any religious or secular report the gist or purpose of a book as in John}, already you have with faith in Jesus and the Book of the Reports another challenge to believe—that all these things were done in the presence of the disciples {we know at one time besides the 12 Apostles, there were over 500 disciples, and for example there were 120 in the upper room after the Ascension of Jesus--oops, another challenge to faith but I warned you that ultimate truth as Dr. R.A. Millikan, the nobel prize winning physicist would say, travels in a circle about the Trinity of God and the Bible Reports}, that the disciples were there around Jesus during His approximately three and one half years of ministry before Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension; and that these disciples indeed saw all these “signs” that Jesus did. {By the way Simon Greenleaf, the former Dean of the Harvard Law school and a recognized authority on evidence, stated that the testimony of the Gospel writers--Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John--would stand up in any court of law; that what they told and wrote of these sounds and words and reports would be a “prima facie” case for Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God.}

And perhaps you have not realized that anytime you deal with the Book and the Reports of the Book, you are simultaneously dealing with history and God. Even as Bible scholars like to say “The Bible is a gradual revelation of God coming to an eternal climax in Christ”, so God made Himself known to humanity in the history primarily of the Jewish people. Of course in the book of Acts and primarily through the Apostle Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, that history of God expanded to the Gentiles throughout the Roman world. For example, although Paul established the church at Ephesus--later crucified with Peter at Rome according to tradition--by the end of the first century the Apostle John had lived and pastored there with Mary, the mother of Jesus, for many years.
Fret not; we are not going to repeat the whole history of the Hebrew nation from Abraham to Moses to the Promised Land, and beyond that through the United Kingdom under David and Solomon, nor the Divided Kingdoms of Israel to the north and Judah to the south, with respectively their ordained captivities in Assyria for Israel, Babylon/Persia for Judah; although the challenge of this last and darkest period in the history of the Jews also brought the message of the prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and at the end of the Old Testament, Malachi. We will not repeat this history of the Jews, because Paul, a Hebrew of the Hebrews and a religious lawyer of the nation, did that for us in the book of Romans; except to say that we Gentiles were the second choice of God the Father for His own people. “We were grafted in the main branch” (Romans 11:23), Paul would say and does say. And any time during this Fulness of the Gentiles (Romans 11:25), another phrase from Paul, this time where no doubt America leads in believers and in evangelization of the world, we dare not forget our real place among the total body of the kingdom of God.

All this has been said in order to bring you back to Paul’s argument of Romans 10:16 (“who has believed our report”) and following. What was God doing while most of the Jewish nation was rejecting His own Son, and therefore also Himself? You were asked by this writer earlier how much of the reports you have heard; however here in Romans 10 the focus of Paul, and God through Paul, is on what the nation of Israel has heard by way of reports. Know then in the first century and know today is the historical fact that most of Israel, except of course for Jesus and His Apostles and early disciples and early churches, rejected Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God. But you see, Paul makes the point in Romans 10:19 and with a quote from Deuteronomy 32:21, by the way written during the time of Moses and while the Hebrews were still forming up as a nation:

“But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: ‘I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation.’” (Romans 10:19 and Deuteronomy 32:21)

What it comes down to is DID ISRAEL REJECT GOD OR DID GOD REJECT ISRAEL? And since the history of the total Bible reports, from the law of Moses and Deuteronomy to Paul and Romans, tells us that God was going some-
day to give priority to a nation of Gentiles over Israel, and that this decision by God was recorded in these words from God Himself before Israel even became a nation {they were still more a tribe or congregation wandering in the wilderness at the time, having not yet entered into the Promised Land}, then you must decide that God made the final decision and choice.

NOTE: This is important; for although through the years, you may have thought that the ultimate decision on salvation, or the relationship between you and God, was your own, it is not. Just like with Israel, God makes the final choice!

And while there is neither time nor space in this brief introduction to describe how specifically from Zechariah and Daniel, two-thirds of the Jewish nation would be rejected by God a specific time after the Crucifixion, and how one-third would believe but go through persecution; and also introductions as in the other Writing Prophets and their reports of how the majority of God’s people would then come from among the Gentiles.

It is not that God didn’t try, and not that God does not try; and bottom line of Romans chapter 10, Paul makes that clear with a quote from Isaiah 65:1.

“All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people.” (Romans 10:21 and Isaiah 65:1)

And even as the cover for this book represents those outstretched hands of God for all His human creatures, and for salvation--the meaning of the hands of God—so also these “Reports for Believing” based on John and Romans, John and Paul, Jews and Gentiles, would prayerful represent the best humanly possible of God’s outreach for you! This introduction to you of Isaiah 65 with the first verse, where you get the picturesque image of God reaching out to His people in spite of the heart ache of rebellion and disobedience; and how He does that all day long for every day since the creation of this Universe, will finally conclude in the last chapter of this book, just like the rest of Isaiah 65, with THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH. For even as salvation through the fulness of the Gentiles after one-third of the Jews of Jesus’ time was the plan of God, not an after thought, so also the NEW HEAVEN and the NEW EARTH were in the Old Testament plan of God; goodness, you see it here in Isaiah hundreds of years before Christ. As the days in Israel darkened, as keeping the covenant of God seemed hopeless; and about the same time that God introduced an improved way of salvation through Christ and righteousness by faith with the assistance of a
NEW birth, He also began to present the ultimate hope of the New Earth where righteousness would finally be achieved, where the New Jerusalem would be lowered down from earth on Mount Zion, and where God would finally and eternally dwell Himself with man. You hear and will hear a lot of sounds about eschatology, the “last things” of the Bible; but you will not and do not hear much about this New Earth, yet it is the very key to God’s plan of salvation for humanity, Jews and Gentiles.
While the Bible subject of "Reports" and "Reports for Unbelievers" comes from Romans 10:16 (based on a quote from Isaiah 53:1), the plea of which must be to the unchurched as well as to God's people of His congregations since the Prophet Isaiah complains to God for all the Prophets and Apostles "Who Has Believed Our Report?", and is a chapter of Romans listed the most fundamental of Bible reports that must be passed on to unbelievers of both the churched and unchurched variety (by the way I want you to consider the possibility that exactly where the Jews as the once chosen people of God were during the time of Christ and before that the Prophets like Jeremiah and Isaiah is where the churched unbelievers, especially in America, are today); however first we will start our journey of Bible reports in this chapter, and as a basis for the rest of the book on "Den of Thieves" with an effort to distinguish according to the Bible between the two kinds of unbelievers, those in the churches who like the majority of the congregation of Israel in the wilderness "departed from the living God"--those same people who become the victims of the Falling Away, and then those outside the churches who are also unbelievers.

2-1: Judgment on Churched and Unchurched.

Churched Unbelievers in Judgment are Punished more severely than Unbelievers outside the church. While of course the word "unbelievers" is not to be ignored in the Bible, it is by no means a predominate word in the Bible. Look in a complete
concordance, and you will find that “unbelievers” is strictly a New Testament word found 10 times and the supporting word of “unbelief” 16 times with two fine shades of distinction in meaning, unbelief as disobedience in the Greek word “apeitheia” and unbelief as distrust in the Greek word “apistia”. {Of course, this gives us clues that the equivalent concept and practice of those who reject God can be found in the Old Testament Hebrew words for “disobedience” and “distrust”--a lack of trust in God--of which we know there was plenty in Israel and in the persons of the Old Testament starting all the way back to Adam and Eve when they disobeyed God’s command not to eat of one certain tree, trusting in the lying Satan more than they trusted in God their Creator.} Just one verse, that of Revelation 21:8 where “unbelievers” are found in the eternal lake of fire because of their unbelief, right there in the middle of the eternal fires with those of sexual immorality habits, murders, and adulterers, alone, reminds us that we dare not overlook these 26 references to “unbelievers” and “unbelief” that we have. Then when you compound that with sort of the theme background of Bible for this book in Hebrews 3:12 where brethren of the churches are told that there is the possibility for them to have “an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God”, we dare not neglect such scriptures as we are also heeding the admonition of “how can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?”. Yes, the reports for unbelievers at the fundamental level, perhaps more for those unchurched than the churched, are about the salvation that a loving and patient God has provided by the sacrifice of His own Son on the cross for the sins of the world {redemption and the atonement}; and further what this God of the Bible and the LORD God of Creation expects all human beings to do about the atonement, namely repent, believe, and confess our sins with the mouth for salvation.

Of the 26 Bible references to unbelief and unbelievers, it no doubt is the parable Jesus told on “The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant” of Luke 12:35-59 where we read the startling words from Jesus Himself where eternal punishment for “unbelievers” (12:46) is portioned out among all the churched and unchurched unbelievers; and where the two categories of unbelievers are clearly identified as: (1) “the servant {like a church member} who knew his master’s will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes” (Luke 12:47); and (2) then the less knowledgeable servant--“he who did not know” (12:48)--received only a few stripes. Of course the less knowledgeable servant, designated also by Jesus as an unbeliever, would have to correlate with the unchurched unbeliever that has already been mentioned several times in this book. The kinds of persons, agnostic, atheists,
non-hearers of the details of the Gospel for whom the REPORTS would go out of the possibility of faith and salvation, these most critical of all reports for them! Of course, we at basis are trying to discover the similarities and differences between the churched and the unchurched unbelievers; because for one thing as we work with the Holy Spirit—Whose job it is anyway to “convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment”—to reach, teach, win, and develop these people both in and out of churches, it surely will make some difference in the approach we are lead by the Bible and the Holy Spirit to make toward them! {I think a church member was recently horrified when I suggested “Evangelism in the Church” just as many are still horrified that there was need for evangelism in the Israel of God’s people, the congregation that stood before God and Moses, in the wilderness.) As we get further into the Falling Away, and I hardly see how we can go much further in the intolerance toward sound doctrine (II Timothy 4:3,4), much further in the heaping up in pulpits and on TV of “itching ears” Bible teachers, and much further in the rising tide of the flood of sin and lawlessness in the world with “Dens of Thieves” in the churches; however, with more progression the possibility exists—if you buy the prime theme of this book from Jesus, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and the rest of the Bible, that the greater need will exist for Bible evangelism (especially in the rescue of sound doctrine) in the churches than for in the rest of the world. Of course, for churches and individuals, there is always a time limit of “today”, that today being different for each individual and church and known only by God: (1) the 7 churches of Asia Minor had only so long a time to straighten out the doctrine and behavior of their churches; (2) the perilous times of follies among church members of II Timothy 3:1-9 and where those follies were revealed lasted only up to the time the bad attitudes and bad behavior of church members like “love of self”, etc turned into the fables of II Timothy 4:3,4; and (3) this time limit of “today” is also one of the basic reports for unbelievers that we wish to present with warnings for the churched like “brethren, beware”.

{Bottom Line: If I was among the vast number of unbelievers, in the church or other wise, and if concerned about eternity at all which I think is a fundamental concern of all humanity, then I would want to know that my eternal punishment in the lake of fire and brimstone would be less than some others who knew more. You see even here we must make a distinction between the unbelievers in the church, who have become that way over a period of 40 years or more because of “an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God” who knew more of the Master’s requirements and those who knew less perhaps because their pastors were not as faithful in preaching ALL SCRIPTURE and with ALL methods.}
2-2: Evangelism of Unbelievers in the Church?

I know it is startling to talk about Evangelism in the churches: it is almost as bad as calling an assembly of God’s people a “Den of Thieves” like Jesus did, and Jeremiah before Him at the direction of God. And perhaps it would be wiser to call it something else, for church members are supposed to be the examples for Christ and God to all others in the world; the leaders in morality and ethics and examples for the community; and the best of Christians, if you would. In fact, in general we do not think of Christians apart from church membership.

What can we call it then if not EVANGELISM; for it is apparent both that unbelievers are in the kingdom and churches since Jesus told about the “tares”, and it is also apparent that the Apostle Paul often made efforts at something akin to evangelism among the “brethren” of churches when he gave warnings like “Beware brethren” of the possibility that a church member can develop, even over a period of 40 years, “an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.” (Hebrews 3:12) What would you call this: a warning of the possibility that the best can stumble and fall, like we know from recent news, happened to Reverend Ted Haggard—head of the National Evangelical Association, pastor of the New Life Community Church in Colorado Springs, and organizer and leader in the large church growth of that assembly. You remember when it was made public by a fellow gay that Haggard was both gay and used drugs over a habitual period of time, Haggard was forced to resign; however, for sake of reference for the gist of this book, you notice how for weeks by the lies of denials he tried to hold up an APPEARANCE of innocence of both charges. And further you will notice how recently with the new pastor there has been efforts to make all feel good about what happened for the sake of Haggard and primarily for the sake of all those he won to the church membership of the New Life church. While later, in the name of thoroughness on the “Den of Thieves”, we will want to look at how “righteous” and “believing”—even full of habitual sin, perhaps the worse of all the extreme efforts to promote and maintain an APPEARANCE.

Just a minute, let us get a little God perspective as given in the Bible on these matters of the sin of homosexuality and drug usage before proceeding to the Bible admonitions not to judge according to APPEARANCE, but “to judge righteous judgment”. For one thing “homosexuality” is clearly identified in I Corinthians 6:9 as a companion of thieves, drunkards, the covetous, idolaters, fornicators, adulterers, sodomites, revilers, and extortioners, and specially stated that such will not inherit the kingdom of God; also as unrighteous which
bottom line as we will see in a few moments is the same as saying “unbeliever”. The unrighteous by habit is the unbeliever by habit primarily because “the just \(\text{and justified}\) shall live by faith” and righteousness comes both legally and by inward re-creation by the grace of God when a person believes. \(\text{More about this in the next section as we look at Romans 10 and the fundamentals of belief as well as the fundamentals of the opposite, unbelief.}\) Right now, we are dealing with the trouble that both Ted Haggard and the rest of the New Life Community church are in; and how that assembly of church members might very legitimately be suspected as a “Den of Thieves”. You know how they say, and we all find some validity in it, that a person is known by the company they keep. Can most of these remaining approximately 10,000 church members of the New Life assembly be known in character, morality, and spiritual maturity by the “integrity” of the leader that taught them both how to become a Christian and how to live as a Christian. \(\text{The alternative is to think that the example of such a pastor or leader of a congregation has nothing to do with the spiritual maturity of those he has won and trained.}\)

Now, right now, we must distinguish between sin as a few time exceptions to the rule; and sin as a continuous habit in the category of the “sinneth” of the King James and of I John. The Apostle John distinguishes between the two types of (1) once-in-a-while sin and (2) habitual sin with the two separate words for “sin” and sinneth, first stating in I John 1:8 that if any person says they do not sin they are a liar and the truth is not in them, then stating about the second category of sin in I John 3:1-9 and other places in I John that the one born of God can not “sinneth”, that is can not live in habitual sin.

Perhaps what the new pastor, the rescuers of the National Evangelical Association, and the justifiers of the New Life Movement, as well as the protectors of the purpose driven churches should be doing is to take a stand consistent with the Apostle John, also to preach what is really in the Bible on sin and sinneth. Surely the new pastor, unless he is closely akin in integrity to Haggard, should be concerned about EVANGELISM in his church lest there be others among the thousands who heeded the example of Haggard as well as what he said, who were overcome by APPEARANCE more than “righteous judgment”. What is being said is that while we all are aware of the power of the words “judge not lest you be judged”, while we are strongly influenced by the American Conscience of toleration, while our inclination is to never cast the first stone or any stones at all, this can very well be a weakness, inspired and used by Satan and the worldly and unbelieving, to promote and protect the tares in the Falling Away. First of all, we must understand judgment in the context of what is being taught, and
secondly we know that Satan does quote Scripture out of the total context of the Bible as he did against Jesus in the temptations in the wilderness.

What we are going to find as we look at the biblical origin of "Den of Thieves" in a later chapter is that most of the Temple worshipers were living contrary to the commands and will of God all week, then coming to the Temple to justify their way of living, claiming that since they were in the House of God, they were safe from any real judgment of that sin. In other words, they expected even God—and especially their own princes and other leaders—to accept them as believers and righteous because of their APPEARANCE in the temple, and that somehow that one day attendance would wipe out, or justify, what was practiced all week and what they knew they would practice the next week. Why the ladies of the home missionary society would go home to make cakes for the worship of idols, leading their children and husbands to assist them in the heathen-like practices by tending the fire and gathering firewood; and the mere fact that you can isolate such practices from what diverts believers today from "the living God"—that is, the making of idols and substitutes for the real and living God in our own minds—is a big sign that we have not fully comprehended the total meaning of the first commandments: (1) You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and soul; and (2) You shall not make any graven image to God. To make a graven image to God, like J. B. Phillips had in mind years ago in the book YOUR GOD IS TOO SMALL, is often today the process of creating in your own brain a god that does not really exist. Certainly not the God of the Bible and the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2-3: Judgment and Appearance in the Bible.

What is needed is a broader perspective based on more Bible, and in total context about Judgment and Appearance from the Bible. Of course, preachers have always been sensitive to accusations and opinions that they are judging others: you no doubt have heard the common sayings from the pulpit, perhaps less from the popular preachers and less today than in former times, like: "If the shoe fits, wear it"; or, "I am just being a fruit inspector", and "you shall know the tree by its fruit". However, in the total context of the Bible, including the most famous quote of "judge not lest you be judged", we can do better than this on the proper exercise of judgment.

Along with the shock of finding "homosexuals" and "thieves" as prohibited from the kingdom of God of I Corinthians 6, we find some more startling news about "judge" and "judgement". In fact the very prime subject of I Corinthians 6 is
to promote proper judging and judgment among church members as contrasted to the bad habit of taking a Christian brother to court before unbelievers.

“Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?” (I Corinthians 6:1)

And the context continues to teach that:

1. The saints--real Christians and real believers--will judge “the world”. (6:2a) Try this, the next time somebody trained by Warren waves a finger in your face because you criticized a church or another church member, “I am practicing for eternity where I will judge angels and the world.”

2. If church members are going to judge the world in the future world of the new earth under the new heavens, how can they be unworthy to judge these small matters in the local church (6:2b). In other words that even as Christians are appointed to be judges of things and people, even angels we will see, in the future world, so is the least of the church members appointed to judge people and matters in the local church. {You know in reality in the recesses of our own mind, we do this anyway; why not dispense with the APPEARANCE of such worldly toleration.} By the way, this is one of the many bad things about the Christian philosophy of Rick Warren as he would promote the protection of the church and the church covenant at all cost, thus preventing criticism and other church member judgment (if they disagree, the method of P.R. is to kick them out--later in this book will be discussed Warren’s fallacious concept of inherent unity based on control by church leaders, not the unity which the Spirit gives as in Ephesians} and justifying the local church as it is in APPEARANCE.

3. If we are going to judge angels in the eternal life, we had better get use to judging things in this life (6:3).

4. Of course, judgment should be exercised primarily by those most esteemed in the church such as pastors and other leaders. Churches should appoint some of their esteemed members to exercise judgment over other church members. (6:4)

5. Sometimes we act in churches like there is not “one wise man among us” who can exercise judgement, and act as a judge (6:5a). Why not listen to the Christian and Bible based wisdom of someone who might compare your church to one of the bad churches of Revelation or to a “Den of Thieves”. Do we not have the
gifts of wisdom and wise men in our churches, in the kingdom, and among Christians; or have we come to accept only the worldly wise of American Society as the leaders of wisdom. (You might say that we have an inclination to accept as wise only those esteemed in society, not in the church, as wise: say like Oprah, and Uncle Phil, and intellectual leaders in the psychology of toleration and the American Conscience, or just plain goody-goodies.)

6. You know we just do not have the perspective of Paul and the Word of God, the perspective of God Himself, on how horrible it is for a Christian brother to go to law against another Christian: and for that matter, to take the side of the worldly against another brother (6:6).

7. Paul under the inspiration of God calls it "an utter failure" of Christian judging and judgment to go to law between Christians. You see still so much of our trouble is that we do not recognize the world as separate from Christians, and we do not appreciate that even in the United States that the world outside the kingdom of Christ is controlled by Satan, the prince of this world. Also, that the "Friend of this world" is the enemy of God. (6:7a)

8. You should be cheated or allow yourself to be wronged (in the category of turning the other cheek), before you fail to find a judge in the local church that can exercise judgment between two brothers. (6:7b)

9. You that wave your finger in the face of a brother who exercises a judgment on the people in a particular church, "you, yourselves do wrong and cheat" if you prohibit proper judgment. (6:8)

10. Perhaps you have not understood the fundamentals that "unbelievers" of the world and of the law courts are the same as the "unrighteous": and that these people of the world--yes also the world system of the U.S.--will "not inherit the kingdom of God". (6:9a)

11. Perhaps you have been deceived into the American Democratic Faith of toleration with a failure to recognize that absent from the kingdom of God will be: fornicators (don't forget the spiritual fornicators of the Prophets who substitute other gods which are not Gods), idolaters (don't forget mental and false idols of the living God), adulterers (once again remember the habitual sin versus the occasional and temporal as in "sin" and "sinneth"), homosexuals, sodomites, thieves (will we be able after extensive study to consider members of a "Den of Thieves" of a local church as excluded from...
the kingdom), covetous {yes, according to Pastor James where wars come from is from “the spirit within us that lusteth, or covets, to envy}, drunkards {and I wonder how different drug addiction is to drinking in the sight of God especially as we later consider how the body of a Christian becomes a temple of God to be respected}, revilers {your garden variety troublemakers in the local church}, and extortioners. (6:9,10) Well, that pretty well identifies the good old boys of the world for us!

2-4: Appearance Versus Righteous Judgment.

One reason church members are so defensive against human judgment is that through the years churches like other organizations of society have learned to play the impression and APPEARANCE game where things are considered to be just as you see them without historical and thorough knowledge just as long as evidence is not brought up that makes the impression otherwise. In other words if you do not talk about it, it does not exist. We have seen military leaders more so in recent years come to emphasize impression as even more important than the reality itself, and politicians have long played with impression over appearance. Even a political as previously beloved as John F. Kennedy in his book PROFILES IN COURAGE wrote that a key to politics is “seeming to say something without really saying it.” {Of course, he was talking about what other Senators and politicians of the past had done, not himself; however, we know better for while many of us were supporting him we knew nothing of the oft extra-marital relationships--once again the difference between an often and habitual habit as compared to one who might stumble once or twice on this sin.}

Jesus dealt with this problem of appearance and judgment as recorded in John 7, and He Himself gave us the words “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment.” (John 7:24) So what we see is that judgement is good when it is “righteous judgement”, bad when it is done according to appearance only. We would think back to the previous section where church members must judge in this life as they will judge in eternity, and we start looking around on how to judge correctly thus come to Jesus and John 7:24 to realize that as we act as judges among church members that we must judge righteously, which we might briefly describe as according to the will of God, the teachings of Christ, and the words of the Bible. This is what righteous judgment would be: what God has identified through Christ and the Bible as being righteous; and of course as we will discuss quite extensively later the Holy Spirit helps us with this righteous judgment since His job on earth is “to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8-11).
1. The Appearance of Learning Credentials versus Learning from God. Remember the incident of John 16 where Jesus taught in the Temple, the Jews marveled that He knew so much about the Old Testament and spiritual matters, and they were concerned that He did not have the appearance of academic status and learning. Jesus before and after having told them often that what He knew and taught had been given to Him of God the Father; therefore to judge righteous judgment about His qualifications to teach would be to consider His true and righteous words of the Father as the source of the teachings, perhaps even the pre-earth eternal time Jesus had spent with the Father. Even before that, and at the beginning of John 7, there was the controversy with his own brothers where the appearance to them was that Jesus was doing secretive work--"If You do these things, show Yourself to the world" (at this point in his life His own brothers like James did not believe in Him) -- when in right and righteous truth Jesus did not walk openly in Judea (the province of Jerusalem and the religious leaders) because the religious leaders of the Jews were trying to kill Him.

2. The Appearance of Hiding versus Safety. Jesus told His brothers two judgements of righteous judgment or decision or evaluation which they also could not yet believe or accept, their minds being cluttered by the obvious appearance and opinion of the world: (1) While the time of the brothers was now, the time for Jesus to by works and word to build up opposition enough for crucifixion was yet a couple of years away; and (2) The world around them did not hate the brothers of Jesus, but they did hate Jesus because by deed and words Jesus testified that the works of the world are evil. (This is a problem today as many church members would, like the brothers, be friends of the world as with everybody, and when the testimony of a faithful witness to Jesus stirs up the guilt of the worldly, they will often turn to solace in both character slander of the faithful witness and consolation from their friend/church member. This is another contemporary case of appearance over righteous judgment.)

3. The Appearance of Unsound Doctrine versus the Doctrine of God. Jesus responded to the Jews (word is used in context of Jewish leaders since the Apostle John as the other Apostles and Jesus were also Jewish) criticism of His lack of learning credentials with righteous judgment about the Doctrine that comes from God. It did not belong to Him, Jesus said, but to the God who sent Him; as a matter of what if anyone will do the will of God as Jesus was doing the will of God that person would KNOW about the soundness of doc-
trine, whether it was from God or whether Jesus originated it on His own, or as another matter of fact as somebody else today might generate it.

4. The Appearance of Flattering words about The Speaker, from the Speaker versus the righteous judgment of Seeking the Glory of God. With a word of caution about so many preachers especially on TV today with their many self-promotions and special revelations from God, Jesus teaches us also in this chapter how the person who speaks for himself seeks his own glory as contrasted to how Jesus sought the glory of the God the Father who sent Him to planet earth! This made Jesus “true”, He said, which is still another way of saying “righteous” as in righteous opinions of judgment; and further the God Who sent Him is true without any unrighteousness in Him. {A clue as to how we can get away with labeling a church today as a “Den of Thieves”, in fact perhaps most churches since it is during the Falling Away that the love of “many that will wax cold”--obviously the majority IS: (1) when we seek the glory of God; and (2) when we speak righteous judgments consistent with the doctrine and teachings of the Bible as the Word of God.}

5. Those Who Appear to Keep the Law versus those who break the law. Jesus reminded them of what Moses gave them the law of the 10 commandments even as we have been given those same commandments today, and in fact have them explained quite extensively; and yet they were going about to scheme and find an opportunity to kill Him, which they immediately and vehemently denied because the appearance in their fine robes and positions and status was otherwise. {In other words they could lie and get away with it at this point before it became obvious they paid Judas to betray Jesus in the Garden.} And here we will have to admit that Jesus had a measure of His righteous judgment not only because of the previous time spent in the past with the Father, but also because of His ability as the supernatural Son of God to look into the future and behind closed doors and in the hearts of all men, not hidden from Him. An advantage and wisdom we can have only to the extent that we are “WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT”.

6. The Appearance of Sabbath Day Observances versus Doing the Real work of God on the Sabbath Day. There was no need for Jesus to answer, “Who is Trying to Kill You” (7:20) since they knew as well as Jesus, and He did not desire to play their games. Instead Jesus turned the focus to another appearance versus righteous judgement where on the Sabbath Day Jesus made a man completely well. The Jews themselves in order to keep the law of Moses would circumcise on the sabbath day, thus providing a sort of limited healing of a person. And
such objections to this healing of Jesus was the final of this passage incident of judging according to appearance rather than according to righteous judgment.

2-5: What Are We Going to Do About It?

The question and question asked in the sections above are too critical to delay about the Falling Away and the Den of Thieves, except for the details that required later chapters of the book.

1. We are going to continue in all ways possible and as much as possible to PROMOTE BIBLE UNDERSTANDING. Surely even the elite of denominational leadership and religious popularity such as Olsteen and Warren would not object to this goal even when it counters their personal philosophies of religion as set forth in the two popular movements of (1) Things and Cares for Things, and (2) Purpose Driven Lives and Churches as a substitute for Christ and Holy Spirit in the place of “purpose”. So widespread has this self-purpose substitute become among even the once conservative SBC, that denominational workers had developed a focus on it as an influence that might have on the local churches of the SBC. Just a deeper look at the message of the book of Ephesians, where God’s purpose suggested by Carver’s book THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE CHRISTIAN CALLING goes even deeper into real Bible oriented purpose as Ephesians 1 reveals, and hopefully illuminates, on how the purpose of God for all remaining human history is to unite all things in heaven and on earth under the Lord Jesus Christ. While this is a kingdom of Christ reality established by Christ two thousand years ago on this earth and a reality to be progressively each year striven for, it full reality only as the old earth and heavens disappear and God finally “makes all things new.” In other words, when the kingdom of heaven--where God’s will is now completely done by angels and the “spirits of just men made perfect”--and the kingdom of earth--where we struggle each year to grow the influence of Christ and the kingdom--become one under the leadership of Christ, and then Christ turns over that kingdom to God the Father and for “the glory of God the Father”. (Perhaps there is one exempted period of history remaining for this world age where the kingdom grows as it is doubtful how much growth in the kingdom there can be during the “little while” after the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from earth, Satan is consequently released from restrictions by the work of the Holy Spirit, and the Falling Away’s rising tide of the flood of lawlessness and sin becomes by far the dominant movement of world age history as also the events unfold as the Man of Sin and Satan develop and lead the greatest army of anti-Christ of all time, and as culminated during that “little while” in the last great Battle of Armageddon until Christ comes to terminate it!)
If you can not see now in the trends and movements of current history a vast movement of opposition to Christ and God from Muslims and Communists, with the many candidates appearing on the scene for the position of “Man of Sin” or “Son of Perdition”, then you must have your head in the sand of fundamentalist propaganda from the SURFERS OF THE FALLING AWAY like Hagee, LaHaye, Warren, Olsteen, and Stanley. {In a few moments this “Surfers of the Falling Away”, these leaders of the “Den of Thieves” gang will be explained further.}

2. However right now I can not resist the goal of establishing in public a Restoration, spiritually and politically, of the SBC by real southern Baptists. I am saying that these fundamentalists that took over the SBC during the last 20-30 years under the leadership of SURFERS like Stanley, Criswell, and Adrian Rogers {while during the takeover Rogers only slayed thousands of good pastors and teachers, and their careers, Criswell and Stanley have killed their ten thousands in the name of the Scofield Reference Bible notes} are not real Southern Baptists. If you investigate their backgrounds, even though large SBC churches made the mistake of calling them to their churches out of the obscurity of Bible Baptists, they were generated and trained by other denominations. {Later we will want to deal in more details with the current history of the SBC where churches riding on the flooding surf of the Falling Away, with its emphasis more on the world and the concepts and philosophies of the world- -perhaps in the trend of Wayne Oates we might want to call them the “unspoken influences” of the community of the world--are the responsible ones for the creation of fundamentalist leadership.}

Yet is felt that the possibility exists of real Southern Baptists, with the assistance of Southern Baptist State Conventions, like in Texas, wrenching the control of the SBC conventions back from the devastation from Georgia, Virginia, and Tennessee. I know, one of the reasons the so-called moderates of the SBC like Dr. Bert Dominy {forced to leave Southwest Seminary for Baylor Seminary by Stanley and other fundamentalists during their takeover} and the former pastor at FBC Amarillo, Winifred Moore, who ran and lost the presidency to Rogers and Stanley, later having to retreat to true SB conservatism at Baylor, the main reason they offer is to cease the fighting among Christians. While this is noble, and by doing so they were able to save their careers which many other Christian brothers at the same time could not do, it is felt that at some point we must contend for the faith while as much as possible not being contentious. However, there is a fine line of distinction between “contend” and “contentious“;
and we must find a way to straddle this one fence in a regain of control of the SBC.

You know this would be about the biggest blow of our generation and generations against the Falling Away and the “Den of Thieves”. You know, it can not be co-incidental that the same period of history where we came to notice the results and evidences of the Falling Away like divorce among church members, the gays, the heaping up of itching ears Bible teachers, the intolerance toward sound doctrine with the running off of sound Bible preachers, and the rising tide of the mystery of lawlessness as church members' love for Christ waxed cold as more of the influence of the world of sin was allowed in local churches...I say it can not be co-incidental that we notice this movement in southern baptist history a the same time we notice the fundamentalist's warfare and takeover of the SBC. {But this is more a subject for later after we have established a firm foundation in the Bible for the contemporary Dens of Thieves. Let it be said, however at this point, that no one feels more secure in their man-made Houses of God today than these fundamentalists leaders. No one feels more their status and safety and permanent position in the kingdom, first in the kingdom, thinking that they “stand”--yes, if Stanley can write on “Spiritual Warfare” at the same time he leads the fundamentalists in warfare against other southern baptists, all things are possible for them, never for a moment until perhaps they read “Den of Thieves”, that they also could fall and have fallen!}

Yet I still must introduce the phrase “Surfers of Popularity” as applied to these fundamentalists leaders before proceeding on into the third goal of what we must do about the “Den of Thieves” and the Falling Away. What we find is that these popular preachers and Bible teachers like Warren and Osteen are surfers on the history of the Falling Away. {Always recall that popularity is a bad sign during the present Falling Away, and that Billy Graham was the last pre-falling away preacher of fame.} You have to give them credit for being students of the majority of the American people, and what these people want and are looking for. What Americans are seeking from churches and their religious leaders consistent with what they want in their lives otherwise, is security, things, and safety. Warren, Olsteen, and hundreds of other “itching ears” Bible teachers have found smooth ways to give it to them without offending aggressively other church members and leaders. You see it in the “Gospel of Prosperity” that news indicates is now the belief of other 60% of Americans; you see it in the self-expression philosophies, in the things of mega-churches where “buying and selling” is done by merchants in the House of
God like Jesus objected to in His day, and you see it in the “faith resources” where these movements among women promote things and trinkets in the name of the faith of Christ!

3. Then it behooves us naturally to consider a third goal of what to do during the Falling Away and expansion of the Dens of Thieves: to rescue sound doctrine. There is not much money, glory, or fame in this; and certainly a very minimum amount of fame, although one might be accused quite often of trying to steal the fame and glory in the kingdom of such best-selling and popular preachers of the Bible as Olsteen and Warren. You will not appreciate this goal of the rescue of sound doctrine unless you have become convinced that “the time will come”, that period of history that Paul introduces in II Timothy 4:3,4, has already come and that the church members of intolerant doctrine of whom he speaks have already come—“the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine”—they are here now as leaders and followers in the churches {thus by the way also making local churches a “Den of Thieves”, the stealing of sound doctrine among other things}, and with this “heaping up of itching ears” Bible teachers we right now have on the American scene many false prophets in the category of those who came to the local church at Ephesus immediately after Paul and came to the notice of the Apostle Jude during the first century to interpret his efforts on evangelism. {You know it is amazing how we can admit the Bible truth that false and itching ears Bible teachers came to Ephesus after Paul, even that many of them were in the 7 churches of Asia Minor, or that many existed in the first century against whom Jude wrote, also that Jesus told of their inevitability in the “last days”; yet we can not find in this generation in our pulpits or on TV or among the local churches and denominations, one single Bible preacher and teacher that we are willing to label as a “False Prophet”. I am afraid that there is something wrong with us and our Bible understanding. Perhaps that we have been overcome by the so-called “toleration” of the American Democratic Faith, placing our faith as citizens above our faith in Christ and the Bible. But this matter of the American Democratic Faith above the faith of Christ and the Bible is also more a matter for later discussion.}

4. Present “Friends of Jesus” as a challenge sufficient for the Falling Away. This is very positive and challenging in the face of all the negatives we must consider during this Falling Away and the rapid expansion in the dens {gangs} of thieves {surfers}. {Later in the book as “Gangs of Surfers” is used I hope you will remember the background development of this chapter.} Friends of Jesus is a challenge for both old and young alike. While most of the 12 Apostles,
excluding Judas Iscariot and adding the Apostle Paul born out of due time, with careers already behind them such as fisherman, tax collector, and lawyer, can not be considered as young when they accepted the challenges of John 13-17 to pass from servants of the Master-Christ to “Friends”, a good example of a young man that did follow in their footsteps was the young man Mark. After a few years and some bad decisions, he focused on telling the story of Jesus in his famous Gospel.

5. With the Holy Spirit and with Reports for Unbelievers. This also and lastly we will continue to do in 2008 and beyond, increasing our activities to reach with Bible reports both the churched and the unchurched unbelievers. Granted that while efforts to convey Bible reports to the unchurched unbelievers is most generally called “evangelism”, the efforts to reach churched believers like Paul did in Hebrews 3:12--“beware, brethren lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God”--might more appropriately be called “preventive” rather than corrective. Like the rest of Hebrews and much of the New Testament, the goal is to keep church members from the extent of stumbling that ultimately leads to the point of no return past their own personal “today” or “now”, and plunges them into the giant abyss of the Falling Away from which there is no rescue!

2-6: With the Spirit and with Reports for Unbelievers.

In the spirit of B.H. Carrol’s first professor of evangelism at Southwestern Seminary, later the President of the same seminary, and who wrote the well-known book on evangelism entitled WITH CHRIST AFTER THE LOST, this book as with one of the 5 purpose of Sungrist_Bible and the website www.biblecom-bibleman.com is “With the Holy Spirit and with Reports for Unbelievers”. “With the Holy Spirit” for it is considered that we work in vain and fruitlessly if we do not recognize that the Spirit has the purpose on earth to convict of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and above the Bible is added to “Bible Reports” to clarify that this reports or testimonies to unbelievers come strictly from the Bible; and finally “for Unbelievers” instead of “after the lost” to focus on the reaching of unbelievers both in the church and outside the church.

This book by no means is an effort to duplicate the movement among Baptists of members getting saved in Arkansas and other SB states of the early 1960’s. I can recall no Scriptural basis for that movement except from evangelists with a holier than thou attitude and a perchance for numbers much like many groups go to mission fields like Thailand to baptize several times certain “con-
verts" for their own denomination. Back then nobody even thought about the Falling Away as an immediate happening in the United States, and forbid “among Southern Baptists”--thanks to the fundamentalists we can see it better now--much less talked about it as a fundamental necessity for evangelism within the churches. This type of evangelism, like this book, must be based on Scripture; and must be in the category of warning to all brethren in the church like the Apostle Paul gave to the Hebrew brethren in Hebrews 3:12, that is, “Beware brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.” This we will not be able to do unless we: (1) recognized that there are many “tares” in the churches since Jesus said they are in the kingdom; (2) it can not be an effort to separate them from other followers of Christ since Jesus warned that if efforts to separate the tares from the wheat were made, some wheat would be culled by mistake (in other words innocent Christians and church members might be harmed); (3) yet there has to be a counter to the bad influence that the tare-leaders exert in the churches so that at bare min we must talk about the reality of tares over the appearance of complete holiness in a local church; (4) we must get beyond the excuse making of how at least they are sinners that are trying since after 40 years of cultivating an evil heart of unbelief they are far beyond that point of innocence; and (5) the subject with which we continue in this chapter, we must get away from Public Relations (P.R.) Appearance to the realities of righteous judgment. Not easy; yet it is important that we go solidly based on the righteous Judgments of many Scriptures, promoting a unity based on the inherent unity in a church provided by the common Holy Spirit, not on protecting the church by enforcement of a man-made church covenant. This we will do in this book, God willing!
“Who Believes” is short form for the Bible quote, “Who has believed our report?”, within itself reports in the Bible found in the Gospel of John, and by Jesus, and in the book of Romans, from the Apostle Paul.

A word of warning as we research on this subject through Jeremiah and the rest of the Old Testament, even the New Testament on the same subjects where it properly interprets the Old for us, it becomes often a bleak and discouraging subject. I recall when I wrote “The Message from the Prophets”, the last volume of the LEARN CHRIST COMMENTARIES, with a thorough look at what happened to Israel during the long history of the Old Testament from Moses to Malachi, from struggles in the wilderness to formation of the United Kingdom and through the period of the Divided Kingdoms with Captivity, a somber even bleak mood was created like when a book or movie has a sad ending. Later I realized that while the majority of the chapters and pages of the Old Testament book are discouraging without a good ending, the deepest message of the Old Testament in the ultimate “all things are made new” turns the bleakness into glorious hope.

3-1: Good NEW Things in the Old Testament.

Whether it is a book or a movie, we generally like a happy ending. For example almost buried in all the pages of Isaiah where the judgments of God against
Israel and other nations is laboriously predicted in detail, you will find periodic shorter passages on the hope of the new earth under the new heaven. In Ezekiel where like Jeremiah that Prophet under the direction of the Spirit of God drags us through all the wrongs back in the Temple at Jerusalem, periodically there are mentions of a “new heart” and “new spirit” for the people that will allow them to live up to the requirements of the law by faith. At the same time as Isaiah and Jeremiah, there are many of the minor Prophets before and after, likewise dealing with the bleak and the new messages of hope.

Like with the history of Israel, God’s originally chosen people, the history of the Temple is one of ups and downs with a predominance for the bleak side of down. Yet within those major and minor Prophets who both recorded history and made future predictions which became history, there was both the question as to whether God would ever dwell with men; and then also the greater ray of hope that God would on the new earth make a place where He would eternally dwell with men. Bless the hearts of the fundamentalists who have allowed the Bible Notes of Scofield to dominate their eschatology, they have become so prejudiced by a false hope of a thousand years glorious kingdom on earth, that they have confused all those passages about the new earth and the new Jerusalem with such a false one thousand year kingdom. For example you have no doubt heard of the quote from Isaiah where “swords are beat into plowshares” (Micah 4:3), “spears into pruning hooks”, no longer nation against nation, and war no more, also “where the lion shall lay down by the lamb” referred to as Israel here on earth, even for the false one thousand year kingdom.

A careful chapter by chapter review of Isaiah will show several chapters on God’s judgment against a rebellious people and other wicked nations, then like a ray of sunlight in the darkness either a chapter or part of a chapter like a jewel dug from the deep dark earth with a message of hope of the new earth under the new heaven.

3-2: Revelation 21, Last Chapter of the Book.

Granted that also bleak is the dominant subject of “Den of Thieves”, in spite of primarily coming to us from Jesus and Jeremiah; but we must keep this bleakness in the total context of the messages that God has given to us in this Book called the Word of God. Faithfulness to the total message from Apostles and Prophets will both provide a balance between the dark and the light, the good and the evil, the believe and the unbeliever, the new and the old; but also provide in the bottom lines of the New Testament the proper interpretations that
Who Believes?

make sense of the whole history of Israel, the temple, and salvation. And it will not hurt if you can engender a little faith at the beginning of this research to recognize that like Pastor James said at the Great Jerusalem Conference on Circumcision that “known unto God are all His works from the beginning”. Sometimes we are easily confused because of our human frailties with how much of this history God predestined, but the confident statement of James was that God knows all of these works that are going to happen. Further from the rest of the Bible we find that God in the new earth is going to “make all things new”. Besides the new earth on which dwells a new humanity of regenerate souls but also lowered from heaven after destruction of the old heavens and earth will be a New Jerusalem; and at that time God will Himself dwell with men in a new relationship, where there is no need anymore for a Temple. In fact, the Apostle John tells us that after he saw the New Jerusalem lowered down from heaven, he failed to see any temple in the New Jerusalem, deciding that there at this point in salvation history was no need for a temple because “the LORD God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple” (Revelation 21:22).

And I hope, with or without a little faith, you will recall that this is the bottom line of both the Word of God, the outcome of the believe and unbelief, temple and no temple, house of God and church of the firstborn stories; and hopefully has been adopted and implemented for this book on the “Den of Thieves”. Right now, up front I will warn you that a methodology of this book is to emphasize “Believe” over “Unbelief”, the positive over the negation, the good end results over the bad. For example on the eschatology of “last things” unfortunately we have heard more on hell, more on the destruction of the old earth and heavens by fire, and the majority of the world--Jews and Gentiles--who chose unbelief over belief than we hear on the positive. As REPORTS are given to you for unbelievers, the intent is to stress believe over unbelief, the ultimate newness of the new earth over the destruction of the old earth by fire, and the New Jerusalem where there is no need for a Temple over the fumbling efforts of men to create a place where they thought God would dwell.

1. How simply the Apostle John in Revelation 21:1 puts the destruction of the old earth by fire with the straightforward words of “for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away” starting with the more positive statement of faith about the new heaven and the new earth, “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth”. Now, if you can believe that John really saw this and faithfully translated it to us, which I do believe, then you have come a long way toward turning all these negatives of unbelief into faith. One fellow Engineer, a brilliant person in the high IQ society, once said to me, “What if all this is not true”, to which I
immediately replied, “Please consider that it all may be true”. And perhaps if you are an unbeliever to whom I am addressing these reports, I would ask you to add a ray of hope to your darkness of despair by considering the possibility that this is exactly what a God of love would do for those who adopt the proper attitude toward Him. He has never expected a majority, while loving all people, whether it be the majority of the Jewish nation or the majority of the Gentiles. In fact the Bible often tells us how God laughs at and holds the majority in derision, especially those who consider themselves to be wise. The primary reason God selected the nation of Israel to be His own people is because of the commitment that He made to Abraham to bless his children, and because He had chosen Israel to be the little nation that would bring His own Son into the world for the salvation of the world, also because like Paul explains in Romans God made Israel the custodian of the “oracles of God.” If nothing else, we are indebted to Israel for Christ and for the oracles of God, the book of 66 books which God wrote through Apostles and Prophets.

2. After John witnessed the new heaven and the new earth which will happen after the destruction of the old, he then saw the holy city of New Jerusalem lowered down from heaven. (Revelation 21:2) Sometimes when we read in John 14 that Jesus went back to heaven to prepare a place for us in His Father’s house of many mansions, we do not realize that this is the very “house” as part of the New Jerusalem that will be lowered to earth. Also as we look at Jerusalem and Mount Zion today, while we see little beauty there, especially with a Moslem mosque right in the middle of the mount, we must realize that this Mount has a special place and meaning in the heart and mind of God. And perhaps much of that comes from the fact that He long ago decided that this would be the place where He would build His New city as a light to all the nations that lived centered around the New city. This would be the time and the place when God would finally “dwell” among men. What God enjoyed in fellowship with man and woman in the Garden of Eden, He is going to more than restore on the new earth.

3. John also heard things. He heard a loud shout from heaven which said, “Behold the tabernacle of God is with men...” (Revelation 21:3) Please consider this the bottom line of all that will be said about temples and churches, all houses of God, in the pages of this book on “Den of Thieves”. Here at the end and the bottom line of the story, all temples and houses of God are thoroughly cleansed as God Himself dwells with men. In fact another bottom line which you may also miss unless you read carefully in Revelation 21 is the last verse, verse 27 where nothing that defiles shall enter the New Jerusalem, or causes...
Who Believes?

an abomination or lie {please keep this in mind when we look thoroughly later at the abominations of 10 commandments violations and the lies which allow the people of the Temple and Jeremiah’s day to make the House of God into a Hideout for Bad Habits}.

4. This requires the creation of a new kind of person, and John in that same verse 27 identifies that kind of person who carries no lies, abominations, or does not defile, as “only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.” (Revelation 21:27b) What the ultimate goal of Jesus was when He twice cleansed the temple of God as recorded in John 2 and Matthew 21, what God through Jeremiah was really after in efforts to cleanse the Temple at Jerusalem from lies and abominations, from a false sense of security, is what God achieves right here at the end of time. Never forget as you read the pages of this book and the discouraging pages of the Bible about the failure of God’s people, that here at the end God achieves all that He has intended. God throughout history has chosen a very small remnant of believers among Jews and Gentiles that He has automatically written in heaven in this Book of Life. And the Book with the New Jerusalem will be lowered from heaven to this earth after the destruction of the old earth. {Heaven is not destroyed with the destruction of the old earth, only the old heavens, the canopy if you would over the old earth or the space that surrounds this rotating earth. All we know about heaven is that it must be about cloud level since the Bible tells us that God sits on the great white throne with the clouds as His feet, and we know somehow it is invisible and unfelt in a somewhat separate dimension that is outside the ability of our human sensors, like visible light and touch to pick up.}

5. Please do not fail to note the ultimate benefits and blessings of the great ultimate reality that GOD WILL TABERNACLE WITH MEN. (Revelation 21:3)

(1). God will eternally dwell with men;

(2). The dwellers on the new earth will be the new people of God {consider please, all people of God that God selects and from which God tries to cull a people for His name as only predecessors to the real and ultimately defined REAL people of God to be called “God’s People”, and consider also the bottom line definition of the people of God in the New Testament book of Romans where Paul as chief interpreter of the Old Testament and the bottom line tells us that the real people of God are a small number of Gentiles and even a smaller number, often called a remnant, of Jews--you see the emphasis of God is on quality rather than
Who Believes?

quantity which should not surprise you, and this is righteousness by faith quality over quantity.};

(3). God will not only Himself be with these dwellers on the new earth, but He will be "their God" (21:3)

(4). While we would like to know much more about the living conditions and environment of the new earth, especially for us Gentiles of the nations around New Jerusalem {perhaps much like the Garden of Eden}, we do see much from the single verse of 21:4 about the living conditions: (1) there it will be all good because there will be the complete absence of sorrow with no more tears; (2) death is abolished as the new residents of the new earth live eternally (start getting rid of that concept of heaven on earth where all sit around eternally to look at a beautiful city with streets of gold, and consider that you will be busy in the country side that surrounds New Jerusalem); (3) and there will be no more pain and sickness. {All nations we are instructed later in this same chapter are required to periodically come to this abode of the Father and the Son and of the 12 Apostles over the new Jewish nation to worship, also a place of provision for the healing of all nations.}

NOTE: There is so much more to say on the New Earth, the New Jerusalem, and the benefits when God tabernacles among men, and will be presented in later chapters; but now lest we lose the flow of "Who Believes Our Report", or reports, we need to lay it out in this chapter, much of it of course for further Bible research and development, also for concurrent presentation with a concurrent theme of the "Hideout for Bad Habits", hopefully in the last few chapters bringing these two contrasting themes--the good and the bad--with chapters like "Continuing Faith" and "Top Two Abominations of God's People".

3-3: Full Extent of the REPORTS for Unbelievers.

Even as Paul and John come together with a quote from Isaiah 53:1 on "Reports" (John 12:37-41 and Romans 10:16), so also this book comes together with chapters on "Hideouts for Bad Habits" and "Reports for Believing" in the book of this book of "Den of Thieves", more specifically are brought together in the last chapter of "Called God's People versus Chosen God's People". If you read carefully about God's people, the new Israel, as defined by Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, also the teachings of Jesus in the Gospel of John as in other Gospels, and the comments John made like in John 12:37-41 on Reports, you will find a consistency and unity which can easily convince you of
the Bible as the Word of God. Having considered briefly the end, and hopefully encouraged by it, the bottom line of the Bible story, we must now fill in some of the middle history in order to understand and fully appreciate the twin simultaneous themes of this book: (1) Churches today which make themselves a “Den of Thieves” \(\text{our preference is for the phrase “Hideout for Bad Habits”}\); and (2) some justice to the Bible on the Reports for Unbelievers. Unfortunately most of the “unbelievers” we are given examples about in the Bible for our own help are unbelievers among God’s own people, first in the Jewish congregation and then in the churches. In fact we must explore the possibility that by the time of Malachi and even before that, as Paul will explain to us in Romans, there was always only a “remnant” of God’s adopted people from the great body of God’s selected people. Sometimes it almost seems that God selects like out of Egypt a large body of people uniquely for Himself, so that later from that larger body He can whittle down to a very small remnant of His real adopted people. And even as in the time of the Fullness of Gentiles, also written about from Paul in Romans, God’s people in America as the fullest of all Gentiles, have temporarily replaced the Jewish nation as the majority of the selected people of God, so after completion of the fullness of the Gentiles, we in American may expect an almost complete Falling Away from the status as God’s people like was experienced in Old Testament times and later in the time of Jesus. What we have in the book of Hebrews is a brief history of the Falling Away of the Hebrews in the wilderness for 40 years, as they saw the works of God and still developed an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, and that of course was early in their history of development as a nation, also as a somewhat selected people of God--of course we know that only approximately four of them survived to be adopted people of God, that is over the age of 20; what we have in Jeremiah is an almost complete Falling Away among temple attendees--the "generation of His wrath"--except of course for a small remnant, "two and one, clans and cities" which would include some of the captives like Daniel in Babylon; and what we have in II Timothy 4:3,4 is a complete Falling Away of God’s people, primarily the Gentiles and the Gentile leaders in America, in churches and denominations as they: (1) become intolerant toward sound doctrine; (2) make Christian and church decisions based more on their own “desires” than on any control from Christ; (3) heap up Bible teachers and preachers, even prophets, of “itching ears” in churches, over TV, in their pulpits and Sunday school classes; (4) churches turn away from the truth; and (5) churches turn into fables. While we might consider these are the great Falling Away, recalling that the Great Apostasy is reserved for just before the Second Coming of Christ according to Paul and II Thessalonians, it would seem that both the Old Testament history is a long record of different periods of falling away as is the history of the Christian churches starting with
the history of the seven churches of Asia Minor where lack of love and unsound doctrine precipitated a threat from the Ascended Christ to remove their candlestick, and the perilous times of II Timothy 3:1-9 speak of ups and downs among Christians and their churches which are like mini-falling aways.

1. "LORD, who has believed our report?" (Romans 10:16 and Isaiah 53:1) We could laboriously dig our way through Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Old Testament Prophets and history to get a proper God-given history on these matters and the REPORTS, also the same for the 27 books of the New Testament which give us the proper interpretations of these Old Testament matters; but why do that when God in His providence of the writing of Scriptures has provided the Apostle Paul, the book of Romans, and Paul's summary of the REPORTS in Romans chapter 10.

   (1). Notice this is a plea to God that so few people have believed our reports about Jesus and salvation, a tacit recognition that unbelief among Jews and Gentiles is more prevalent than faith; and also a recognition that the majority not only do not believe what is necessary, but that the majority of humanity, Jews or Gentiles, do not achieve the ultimate salvation of the new earth. Also that the struggle to be God's people in Temples and churches is seldom grace-ful and successful; and not only does God identify that as the trend of history, but also that He has ordained that it be this way! {This is getting a little ahead of what we will find in Romans 10, and in the larger context of Romans.}

   (2). You will find as you turn to Isaiah 53:1 that these are primarily REPORTS about Jesus and about faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Also they are reports about salvation as the complete verse is: "Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" (Isaiah 53:1), "arm of LORD" being often and consistently used in Isaiah and in other books of the Bible as synonymous with the "salvation of God". And when you read into chapter 53, a famous chapter on Jesus as the Saving Servant of God, you will see that the "He" of many verses is Jesus: (1) He grew up non-illustriously with little attention in a little city of Palestine at a time the nation of Israel itself was somewhat insignificant in the world; (2) He was despised and rejected by men, although the very Son of God; (3) He bore our sorrows, was bruised for our iniquities in the Crucifixion, wounded for our transgressions; (4) He did not open His mouth during the mock trial and Crucifixion; (5) He was cut off from the land of the living; and so on with so many predicted details of the life, Crucifixion, and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ as to be without denial that
the “He” is Christ, the Jesus of Nazareth born in Bethlehem. {It is interesting
that some of the “scoffers” which will be addressed later, but which you
already know about and hear from often, would claim a time of writing for
the book of Isaiah after Christ until at least one copy of the manuscript of
Isaiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls was dated as at least two hundred years
before Christ.}

NOTE: At any point such as this, we could bog down in the details; but the
flow on REPORTS must continue, be placed instantly in one chapter before
us, and then reviewed and further developed in later chapters.

2. Even as there is an obedience toward the gospel of Christ, there is also the
opposite of disobedience toward the gospel. Believers practice the obedience
and unbelievers practice the disobedience. {Later you will read a chapter
about the people of Israel in the Old Testament under the title of “to obey
is better than to sacrifice.” While humanity has found and still finds many
ways to make sacrifice, and the sacrifice of service, always to God and
made clear in the Old and the New Testament histories has it been more
important to God Himself to see obedience. God said often and said early in
the Old Testament, in fact in the words that He spoke Himself to the
Hebrew congregation before Mount Sinai, that far more important to Him
than the sacrifice of blood animals was the obedience to His commands and
covenants.}

“But they have not all obeyed the gospel...” Paul writes in Romans 10:15, just
before the REPORT quote from Isaiah, and with somewhat of a summary of how
most of Israel up to that very time of his life as a leader and lawyer in the
Hebrew nation had not believed in God, and they were the select people of God!

3. In the very next verse, Romans 10:17, is careful to be more positive than neg-
ative about the unbelief of Israel, with a definition of how faith comes: “faith
cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” The REPORTS to which
Paul and Isaiah make reference, especially the reports on Jesus, are designed
just like in this book to generate faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; that faith can
only come if you hear the Word of the reports or in this case read the reports.
This book and Romans and Isaiah, indeed the whole of the Bible, is based on the
Bible as the Word of God. Read any of them, like in Isaiah, and you will find that
the Prophets are only recording, just like the Apostles, what God told them to
say. “God said”, “I decided” where the “I” is God, and “Thus saith the Lord”
Who Believes?

clearly identify for the reader who has eyes to see and ears to hear that God the Father is the source of the words.

4. Passing on to the flow of the REPORTS in Romans 10, with a summary of much of the rest of the Bible, Paul begs the issue of perhaps even though the REPORTS were given to Israel maybe they did not hear. {Unbelievers today would also like to proclaim a certain ignorance of hearing of the Word-Reports; but we know from the Bible the many incessant and constant and world-wide manner in which they continue to hear from the Holy Spirit who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; of from other Christians and preachers; even from the Bible itself sometimes; from their own conscience that God has put in everyone of His human creations; and yes, even nature and the collective Conscience of American Society.} The answer of Paul is a quote from Psalm 19:4 that the sound of the Word has gone out across the whole earth, the words to the end of the earth. {Likewise we know from Jesus and Matthew 24 that after the gospel goes to every nation, a process He started with His kingdom when on earth, then “will the end come”: and we can legitimately feel that by now through the past efforts of the U.S. and other Christians and churches, and in the process of the fullness of the Gentiles lead by the U.S. the gospel has indeed gone out to every nation.}

5. Well, okay the argument {Paul was always a lawyer and master of logic based on the Bible} of Paul proceeds: perhaps they heard but did not understand with the words “did Israel know?” (Romans 10:19)

(1). Yes they knew, and Paul quotes first from Deuteronomy 32:21; and you know that to be Moses and the people of God before Palestine to the extent that already Israel was REPORTED to about the salvation of God for the Gentiles, and the threat and promise to them at that time of how they would be “provoked to jealousy” by a nation that did not even exist {yes, that is us and the other Gentile nations of the world}, a foolish nation {yes, that is us also, now}.

(2). Isaiah (65:1) states it more clearly, Paul argues in Romans 10:20 where God Himself states: {a) that He was found for those nations who did not seek Him (more of the grace and plan of God); and (b) God was manifested to those who did not seek Him. {For more on how God and Jesus manifest themselves to believers and not to the world, please refer to John 15 with}
the three questions from Apostles and the three answers of Jesus of “how He will manifest Himself to us and not to the world.”)

(3). Finally Paul comes in 10:21 and with a quote from Isaiah 65:2 to give God’s summary of the history of how Israel has heard and known. {This is a reaction, if you would, of the majority of the nation of Israel to the REPORTS from God Himself.}

“But to Israel he says (see once again how in the Bible it is God that does the talking), “All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people.”” (Romans 10:21 and Isaiah 65:2)

NOTE: I promised that Paul in Romans would not only summarize the Old Testament for you on the unbelieving history of God’s own people, but how Paul through the Holy Spirit of God would also give the proper meaning and interpretation!

Paul continues the REPORTS and arguments of Romans 10 with the question in Romans 11 of “has God cast away His people?” This is another way to talk about the remnant that God chooses from all His people, Jews in the past and even some in the present, and mainly Gentile church members in the present. It also begs the issue that is a burden of this book, and as introduced by Christ in John 15 where God does cast out many of His unfruitful people—also the threat of candlestick removal of churches by the Ascended Christ; that God today for churches like for God’s people in the past of the Jewish nation does cast out those selectively called His own people, but not yet fully adopted. Also, you see in this I know, the difficult issue of the predestination of God versus freedom of choice; however we cannot neglect it from the words of Romans, nor can we neglect its importance for the twin themes under discussion in this book.
The whole world loves a wedding ceremony, especially a wedding feast; and in the second chapter of John we have recorded some oldest events of a wedding feast of historical record. It was recorded by the Apostle John because Jesus was invited and came to the wedding feast; and because it is the first miracle-sign listed in the Gospel of John of only the 7 miracle signs that John presents in his version of the life of Christ.

4-1: Christ at Cana, The First Miracle-Sign.

Do we need to be reminded as to how important marriage is to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ? The Bible chronicles the time of history before the Second Coming of Christ as a time when the most critical events of life will be going on: that is, men and women will be “eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage”. That just about summarizes life anytime except for the addition of child bearing. As we quickly look at the Wedding Feast at Cana we are reminded that this marriage was so important that it was the time and place of the first miracle of Jesus, that of turning the water into wine.

1. WHEN JESUS IS INVITED HE COMES.

“Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.” (John 2:2)
Dr. B.H. Carroll, former president of Baylor and Southwestern Seminary has written a lesser known book on the Approachability of Christ. Anyone who tried—the lame, children, the blind, even the tax collector and member of government—was allowed access. Beyond that we see here in John 2:2 how approachable Christ is to us in all areas of life including something as personal as a wedding. WHEN JESUS IS INVITED HE COMES!

2. ORDINARY PROBLEMS BECOME EXTRAORDINARY SOLUTIONS WHEN PRESENTED TO JESUS.

“And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, 'They have no wine.'” (John 2:3)

Even as Jesus came to teach and practice the teachings of God the Father, so the same Father who tells us in the Bible to "humble yourself under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him because He cares for you", has the Son confront the cares of ordinary marriage problems with some extraordinary solutions. It engenders a faith that can remove mountains as we realize often that the only real mountains have to be removed from the mind, then the extraordinary can happen.

3. EVERYTHING IS BETTER WHEN JESUS IS INVITED AND PRESENTED OUR ISSUES!

“His mother {Mary of course who was there} said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it.” (John 2:5)

Those who knew and know Jesus best will assure you that everything works better when Jesus is invited and also when any large or small care is committed to Jesus. You know what I mean: you have known a relative, perhaps even a mother or father who knew Jesus well, or a pastor through whom you knew you could see Jesus, or a saintly childhood friend. And I am sure with those pleasant memories, come some assurance to you about Jesus that everything and anything works best when Jesus is invited, whether a wedding, a marriage, the raising of a family, even church worship and church decisions.

4. WHATEVER YOU HAVE AND ARE, JUST COMMIT IT TO HIM.

“Fill the waterpots with water.” (John 2:7)
SIMPLY GIVE JESUS THE 150 GALLONS OF WATER AND THAT IS ALL THAT IS NEEDED!

5. LIKE THE SERVANTS AT THE FEAST YOU MAY FIND YOURSELF PARTICIPANTS IN A MIRACLE.

“...the master of the feast tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from but, the servants who had drawn the water knew...” (John 2:9a)

You can become a participant in the miracle of marriage where God joins the two together and the two become one; or participants in the miracle of child birth; or participants in the outworking of the new birth in a Christian family.

6. THAT FOR WHICH YOU PRAY FOR THROUGH JESUS IN PRIVATE, GOD WILL GIVE YOU PUBLIC CREDIT.

“...the master of the feast called the bridegroom...You have kept the good wine until now” (John 2:9b,10)

God and Jesus like prayer in secret, but do not hesitate to make public the benefits and answers to your prayers and commitments.

7. AS THE YEARS AND AGING PROGRESS, WITH JESUS THE GOOD GETS BETTER!

“You have kept the good wine until now.” (John 2:10)

Also Jesus does not need aging to make it better. With Him there, the best can come first and later the better.

8. EVERYTHING JESUS DID AND DOES IS TO SHOW HIMSELF AS THE SON OF GOD AND IN ORDER TO GET DISCIPLES TO BELIEVE IN HIM.

“This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory: and His disciples believed in Him.” (John 2:11)

Where in the world did we ever get this marvelous concept of marriage as a man and woman raised in different places and from different families by a miracle become ONE, but FROM GOD AND JESUS?
The Wedding Feast at Cana

4-2: The Seven Miracles of John and Faith.

The chosen word for miracle by the Apostle John in the Gospel of John, and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is “sign”. You will see, however, from a careful reading later of John 4 that the Apostle John got the word for miracles from Jesus.

“Then Jesus said to him (the nobleman of Capernaum), ‘Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.’” (John 4:48)

Okay, so the Jews were slow to believe; but John pastored right up to 100 A.D. to the Gentiles in Ephesus. He wanted them to believe without miracles, to believe based on the teachings of Jesus except for the resurrection of Jesus Himself. Which by the way, Jesus might have called a "wonder" instead of a miracle-sign. Below in a somewhat poetic form is a roll call of the only 7 miracle-signs that you will find in the Gospel of John. You will find them interspersed throughout the chapters of the Den of Thieves, and part of the concluding chapter where the two parallel and prime themes of Den of Thieves comes together: (1) Churches as Hideouts for Bad Habits; and (2) Reports to Encourage Unbelievers. You will enjoy these chapters, and especially the Gospel of John on which it is based. John was so gracious and positive, perhaps much like the Master Jesus that he loved and served.

1. The Wedding Feast at Cana, the turning of water into WINE.

2. The healing of the Nobleman’s son sick unto death, the second SIGN.

3. Jesus healed the helpless man by Bethesda’s pool, 38 years BENIGN.

4. With the blessings of Jesus on 5 loaves and 2 fishes, and with leftovers, five thousand did DINE.

5. The Walking on Water in a storm and seen by the disciples, an awesome SIGN.

6. The man blind from birth caused to see who would not tow the Pharisee’s harassing LINE.

7. Lazarus from the dead, a precursor to Jesus’ resurrection, and yours, and MINE.
The Wedding Feast at Cana

4-3: The Seven Miracles: Signs for Believing.

Signs are meant to point to something beyond themselves. The signs we are most familiar with are advertisements; and although often elaborate and impressive they point to a product beyond themselves. You will find in the reading of John in this chapter and the six more to follow that are centered around the miracle-signs that they point primarily to what Jesus taught and did. And even the signs have a deeper meaning than to pass out a miracle. For example you might consider below a deeper meaning to the seven miracle-signs of John.

1. Water into WINE: faith in Jesus as co-creator of the processes of nature.

The water into wine was used by Jesus to attract attention. This was shortly after His 12 disciples started to follow Him, and He wanted them to believe in Him. And right now, you should be aware that all the leap of faith to believe that Jesus can and did perform miracles you need is to be in the first chapter of John. In fact the giant leap of faith, is found in the first three verses of the first chapter.

“In the beginning [notice how John started it like the Creation story in Genesis] was the Word [this word of “Word” for Jesus Christ was given to John when he previously wrote the book of Revelation (Revelation 19:13), and it naturally implied that Jesus was a lot more than the God-man when He coexisted with God the Father before and during the Creation of the universe], and the Word was with God [get it, Jesus was with God before and during Creation], and the Word was God. {Well, this is a giant leap of faith that most of the Christian world believes, that Jesus like the Father and the Holy Spirit is God. God is three distinct Persons, and they are one in the sense that they are all three God and in that they teach the same, are the same in character and personality, and work the same way.} All things were made through [one of the largest words in John and in the Bible, that Jesus the pre-existent Christ and Word was the mediator in Creation: in fact what you will find as one scholar has said is that “God the Father is the originating cause in Creation and in many other ways, God the Son is the mediating cause, and God the Spirit is the effective cause.”] ...Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” (John 1:1-3 with comments)

Furthermore of Jesus as the Master of the world environment and natural processes, Paul would later write in Colossians “through Him all things consist” (Colossians 1:16-18) Hanging right in there with gravity and the laws of gravitational attraction between heavenly bodies and the earth, and photosynthesis, and
winds and other weather patterns and climate changes is Jesus holding them all together, and Master over them! Believe that, it is a matter of logic that the God-man when on earth would naturally exhibit some control over the nature through which He had been the medium of Creation. It was not possible that the humanity in Jesus could completely dominate the God that was in Him as the Son of God.

But even as scholars have said, “the fundamental postulate of all rational thinking is God” and the Bible says, “the fool has said in his heart {in his “heart” as his head knows better} there is no God, so it just makes sense when there is a complicated design like the way the universe grows, processes, and holds together, a complicated design like the human body, personality, and soul and spirit, a complicated design like a snowflake and an apple and water and the periodic table and the modified Bohr theory of the atom and light which sometimes behaves like waves and sometimes like particles...that is, such complicated design and designs demand a Designer. If a heathen in the jungle of South America found a Printed Circuit Board fallen from a Satellite in orbit, perhaps from the Satellite shot down by the KW and SM-3 we designed, tested, and developed at Raytheon for the Navy, even such backward people as far as intellectual processes would look for a designer.

2. Healing of the Nobleman’s SON: faith in Jesus, to see, to work and heal at a distance.

You are going to see time and time again from the reading of the Gospel of John as presented 7 times in 7 chapters and interspersed in this book, that Jesus worked because He saw His Father work, and because that is what His Father instructed Him to do when He came to planet earth. God the Father has been in the healing business for thousands of years since His Creation of man in the first place; and because God heals as the distance of from heaven to earth, Jesus also heals as the Son of God at a distance. God loves, Jesus loves; God cares, Jesus cares; God heals, Jesus heals; God works, Jesus works; and God saves, Jesus saves. (This is the main way They are One as Jesus so aptly presents in John 14.) In fact, we might easily expand this to say that Jesus was also the mediating cause in Old Testament history when God was originating a healing process just like today Jesus is the mediating cause in prayer--we pray through Jesus to the Father as He is on the right hand of the Father making intercession for our sins--when we pray to God the Father as Jesus taught us to do in the model prayer.)
The Wedding Feast at Cana

3. Jesus' command to take up his bed and walk: faith in Jesus as superior to all other healers.

4. His feeding of the five thousand: faith in Jesus to multiply a little to meet the needs of many.


6. Sight to the man born blind, considered a matter of sin: faith in Jesus for physical and spiritual healing.

7. Lazarus raised from the dead after four days: faith in Jesus as Life itself and Resurrection.

4-4: "Believe" is the Positive Approach to the Negative of "Unbelief".

Both "believe" and "unbelief", believers and unbelievers are in the Bible, and we would dare not neglect any portion of the Bible as Word given from God Himself. However, at the same time note that the Gospel of John under the leadership of the Holy Spirit of God (yes, the effecting cause in the writing of Scripture also), chose predominately the positive approach of "believe". No other book of the Bible uses the word "believe" like the Apostle John in the Gospel of John, and no other book has its stated objective and purpose as John has in John 20:30,31 recorded in the very body of the book.

While we dare not neglect as also part of the Word from God, all the scriptures on unbelief and unbelievers; it is also true that the positive and opposite scriptures on "believe" and "believers" dare not be neglected. Even as "ALL SCRIPTURE" is given by inspiration of God and profitable, so also the methods God in His Word advocates for the spreading of all scripture go hand in hand with a faithfulness to the total Bible, such as “doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness.” Many pastors and TV preachers today in their efforts at self-promotion, making disciples to themselves (like Ted Haggard did in the new life church movement and as head of the National Evangelical Association--later adding the sin of lying to cover up his homosexuality and drug sins; and we still have not come around to the possibility that those disciples he made may have enough major problems in the very central spirituality of their conversions in which he assisted them as to fill up a church with empty people that may well be labeled by Jesus and Jeremiah as a “Den of Thieves”--as what we really find in the Evangelical Movement is a continuation of the fundamentalists, moral majority movement of good people without sin, and more a old fashioned gospel
of custom and community traditions, a glorification if you would, of the community heritage of Bible Baptists as having all the answers all the time), and personal gain are even more likely to choose their own methods, or singular method, as they are to neglect major topics and doctrines of the Bible such as the Falling Away and their own members who are using the church or denomination as a “Hideout”. We just can not comprehend that a fighting spirit as manifested throughout church history in America by the fundamentalists is the opposite of the spirit of Christ, also of the spirit of grace and graciousness as seen on the part of the Apostle John in the Gospel of John as well as in the little epistles of John.

Actually we can learn about the process and results of “unbelief” by a hard look at the positive and opposite of belief; and when it comes to Scriptures on believe and belief there is little doubt that the single book of the Bible which leads in this category is the book of John. The Gospel of John leads the 66 books of the Bible on the subject of believe and faith, and many recognize that the very stated purpose of John is to present signs for believing in order that the reader or listener may believe in Jesus as the Christ and as the Son of the Living God, thereby having life from God and life eternal. Once we see from a preponderance of Scriptures that “believe”, the verb form, and belief are trust and confidence in God and what God says, we can more easily see unbelief as a slap in the face of God that we do not believe Him or the words which He has delivered to man. Of course as long as we see the Bible as a good book to study and learn about rather than what it is, an over one thousand year effort on the part of God, using over 40 different authors during that period, to communicate what He considers most important to man. {Thus much of the effort today in Bible study and so-called Bible preaching is more “about” the Bible than the message of the Bible itself that God is communicating to man.} This is independent of a good spiritual Bible survey where it is emphasized that “the Bible is a gradual revelation of God coming to an eternal climax in the Person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ”. This is true; but more important is the fact that God today, like from the beginning of the Bible with the books from Moses and Job, is trying to talk to us! Faith in the Bible and faith in God and the Lord Jesus Christ go hand in hand. If you believe in a God of such character that He wants us to know truth and eternal truth, then it makes is much easier to also have faith that He did communicate to the world in the Bible, and that it is His Word; and further that He made Himself fully known in His own Son by what Jesus taught, said, and did. {By the way this would be considered the prime REPORT of the Bible for unbelievers to be considered in the John Quinn Corner for unbelievers of the website www.biblecomb...}
bleman.com, and of the reports in the book with the assistance of the Holy
Spirit. Remember that in the spirit of Carroll and Scarborough of “With
Christ After the Lost”, we would emphasize “With the Holy Spirit and with
Reports for Churched and Unchurched Unbelievers, remembering that deeply
into the Falling Away there may be more unbelievers—the tares in the king-
dom and the churches—in the churches than in the world especially as men
with itching ears teachings like Warren and Joel Olsteen make it so popular
to be a church member, the surfers on the rising tide of the mystery of
lawlessness that we must discuss later.}

4-5: A Bible Definition of God’s People.

You will notice that both Paul and John quote on “Reports” from Isaiah 53:1, and
in the larger context of both John and Romans 10:16 there are efforts on the
part of the Word of God to define exactly who are and who are not God’s people.
Well, it is certainly much better to use the Word of God, and the consistency of
the Word of God, to define the elect of God rather than such methods today
as: (1) a rewrite of history to give Roman Catholic leaders an authority that the
Ascended Christ never left them (Ephesians 4:7-12), nor did Jesus state or imply
when He described the rock upon which He would build “My Church” (Matthew
16:18); (2) a special revelation of generation of 4 new Bibles, unique to LDS, and
completely different from the Christian Bible to give them a similar authority to
control the entrance to salvation and excommunication from THE CHURCH (?);
(3) special revelations among the charismatics, as if the Word of God came out
of them or to them only (I Corinthians 14:58) that can easily identify the elect
as the speakers in unknown tongues and the excited in worship; and (4) the hard
to justify, but none the less real, exclusiveness of the fundamentalists that took
control of the SBC whereby salvation can be determined by whether the believer
accepts the Scofield Notes on eschatology. Not to short circuit such “preju-
dice” and “partiality” among those claiming to be Christians, we would take the
clear word of God on Reports and then build around these the conclusions of the
last chapter of “Called God’s People versus Chosen God’s People.” It would be
agreed that today as in the wilderness many called by God Himself “My people”
ever made it to heaven, also in the parable of the wedding feast from Jesus
many were invited to the wedding feast just in order to fill the churches, but
later when it was discovered at the Separation after the Gathering and Second
Coming that they did not have the proper wedding garments.
While the emphasis in Romans 10:16 from Paul and based on Isaiah is less positive—"Lord, who has believed our report?", John is more positive in the reason for the writing of his version of the life of Christ.

“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." (John 20:30,31)

One might say that perhaps Paul was more realistic than John, but they both as you will see in the details of John chapter 4 faced up to the realities that most of the Jewish people refused to believe in Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, the Son of God. As we proceed from the first miracle-sign recorded in John 2, you recall about the turning of water into wine at the wedding feast of Cana to the second sign in John chapter 4, the healing by Jesus of the nobleman’s son; you will see how selective the Apostle John is in order to remain as much as possible on the positive side of believers over the negative side of unbelievers. One might think that John was entitled to be more positive in that his long ministry was at Ephesus among the Gentiles, while that of Paul was first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles. However, it is Paul that organized so many churches among the Gentiles, including the church at Ephesus where John pastored; and Paul considered himself to be the Apostle primarily to the Gentiles. I think that you will...
find that John and Paul were both realistic and positive in the expectations from either "believing" or "unbelieving" hearers of the Gospel, but that John under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit chose the more positive route as a focus for the Gospel. However, you will find in John chapter 4 three kinds of responses in favor of believe or unbelief: (1) you will find the Gentile Samaritans who believed in Jesus simply because of what He told them, in order words because of the teachings of Jesus; (2) then you will find the Jewish nobleman of Capernaum in Galilee was among "the people" who had to have "signs and wonders" in order to believe, as Jesus Himself is quoted by John as saying; and (3) then third you have a group of unbelievers hardly mentioned and with only two verses and nothing about the real incident in Jesus' hometown as recorded in Mark 6:1-6. Both Mark and John list the quote from Jesus that a prophet is without honor in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house; but while Mark gives the details of the rejection back at Nazareth, and recorded how Jesus Himself could do no mighty works there "because of their unbelief" except that He healed a few people, John gives a shorter version of the same quote from Jesus in John 4:44, and leaving out the details of the rejection at Nazareth where Jesus could do no mighty works because of the unbelief of His own people.

5-1: Jesus Taught the People in Samaria about A Special Gift of God.

The special gift of God Jesus taught about was what He called "living water." Of course, Jesus initiated conversation with the woman of Samaria who was at Jacob's well in order to secure water by asking for a drink of water. The woman was shocked because Jesus was obviously a Jew and he was willing to speak to a half-breed Samaritan woman. The Samaritans with their background of the northern kingdom of Israel who inter-married with Gentiles, were considered as Gentiles and even worse than that as half-breed Gentiles. Jesus was different from other Jews in that He was willing to speak and even ask a drink of water of the Samaritan woman.

Quickly Jesus turned to evangelism, the making of a believer out of this half-Gentile, by saying the equivalent of "if you only knew". If you only knew WHO is talking to you, and if you only knew the gift of God that this WHO can give to us of living water. And isn't it true also today that while we would feed and cloth and visit the sick and needy, and provide a drink of water, the greatest gift of God that we can give to any person on this earth is the living water which leads to everlasting life.

1. The Greatest Gift.
Seems like there is a famous message entitled “The Greatest Gift”; and while I am not sure whether it is based on what Jesus taught the Samaritan woman here, we know that Jesus said this gift of God was living water.

2. The living water was not everlasting life but would spring into everlasting life.

Note that while the living water, Jesus taught, was not within itself the everlasting life; and we certainly do not want to promote evangelism like that by Peter Popoff where magical water is sold, Jesus is getting to a deeper spiritual reality where the living water becomes once inside the believer “a fountain” which in turn “springs up into everlasting life” (John 4:14)

You know how often Jesus compared the process of believing with eating the bread of life, or even eating His own body and drinking His blood which was the hard saying where He lost many disciples and a hard saying Catholic leaders have perverted to be the real body of Christ in the Lord’s Supper. The comparison here is with living water.

3. Jesus distinguishes between ordinary water and this living water.

The way Jesus distinguished between this spiritual water and physical water like at Jacob’s well was in terms of with the living water the believer would never thirst again. Jesus noted what the woman and many responders also know inherently, and that is that God can provide as a gift, and Jesus can give this gift, to satisfy a thirst for God and the eternal that all humanity has. {You see how the woman recognized Jacob, the father of the Jews, as a forefather.}

4. When Jesus told her things about herself like she had been married five times, she began to believe in Him as a Prophet.

Jesus and God know all about us. There was a certain translator in China that was working on a Chinese translation of the English version of the book of Romans. Finally after hours and days of work he said, “The One who wrote this book is the One Who Made Me”, because He knows things about Me that only My Maker could know.” We recognize that the Bible is the Word of God, Romans and the other of the 66 books, and in the words and teachings of the Bible we come to recognize that our Creator knows us. He knows the thirst we have for our Maker and He knows the thirst we have to live both more abundantly now as He intended in the Garden for us to live and to live forever.
However there was much more to this beginning of faith on the part of the Samaritan woman. Not only did she know about her forefather Jacob, but she also knew about the Old Testament and Moses. She knew the prediction Moses made and recorded in Deuteronomy that someday God would send to His people another Prophet like Moses, and how His people should listen to him. Read it as recorded in Deuteronomy

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear...I will raise up for them a Prophet like you {Moses is now getting into what God told Him when the assembly of the people before Horeb did not want to listen to the voice of God directly lest they die}...from among the brethren {from the Jews and half-breed Samaritans}, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.” (Deuteronomy 18:15,18)

God told Moses, “It is good” what they say when they say “let us no longer hear the voice of God lest we die”. Perhaps they would have died had they continued to listen directly to the voice of God as it boomed out from Mount Sinai with the lightnings and thunders, and the promise from God that if any man or animals touched the mountain they would die. “It is good” God told Moses at Horeb, and sometimes we overlook this while we realize how in the “Confusion of the Congregation” the people did ask to hear God directly no more.

Well, here was a Mediator that God’s people could listen to without fear and without dying. A Mediator who overcame some of the awe of holiness by taking on human form and flesh. {Jesus was both God and man; and while sinless, the people could see and witness His obvious humanity more sometimes than His holiness and sinless perfection.} Jesus was that Promised Prophet that the people should listen to. And even as the people preferred to listen to Moses the Prophet more than God directly, just for survival sake, so also God already had at Mount Sinai in mind another Prophet like Moses, the Prophet Jesus, to whom the people could listen without dying; and in fact to whom the people must listen and believe in order to have salvation. Thus Moses continued in what God told him at Sinai.

“And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.” (Deuteronomy 18:19)

5-2: Jesus Taught the Samaritans that He was the Messiah.

5-2: Jesus Taught the Samaritans that He was the Messiah.
Jesus taught the Samaritans that He was the Messiah \{Hebrew for the Greek word of Christ\}, and they believed Him. It is a good description of the teaching work of Jesus that we read in Deuteronomy above as Moses told exactly what God said to him on Sinai. When God said that He would put the words into the mouth of Jesus and how that Jesus would say exactly the commands of God, God was talking about the teaching ministry of Jesus. Also when Moses, and God through Moses, talking about the people being held responsible for what was saved and how they would be cut off from among God’s people, it was a reference to salvation. It was also a somewhat shield reference to this Prophet Jesus as the Messiah, the work of Messiah or Christ which became clearer through the later Prophets like Isaiah.

The Samaritan woman knew like most of the people in Palestine of that day about the Messiah which would be called Christ. She knew her Old Testament, and the people knew their Bible. She knew, in short, that the Prophet that could tell them all things would also be the Christ-Messiah that would provide the salvation of God.

“The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When He comes, He will tell us all things.’” (John 4:25)

“Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am He.” (John 4:26)

NOTE: How foolish do the critics look who superficially say that Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah, the Son of God. Here alone, and many other times in the Gospels, does Jesus say “I am”. And no wonder the scoffers and gainsayers like in the Jesus Seminar, and in their book The Fifth Gospel, strive to discount the book of John as part of the Word of God, even as part of the Bible saying that we would strive to preserve the teachings of Jesus without the miracles and claims to be the Son of God.

Well, part of the teachings of Jesus, most fundamental in the teachings of Jesus—which by the way God has commanded to be listened to and heeded, even believed, is that Jesus is both the Prophet and the Messiah, the Son of God. \{If you need more on Jesus as the Messiah, please read the book of Isaiah, especially Isaiah 53.\}

1. The Samaritan woman believed.
Reports to Make Believers

The Samaritan listened to Jesus teach how that He was that Prophet and the Messiah-Christ, then she BELIEVED and went from the well to the village to tell all the people, “Come see a man that knew and told me all things that I ever did,” and “is this not the Christ.”

2. The Samaritans believed.

Because of the witness of the Samaritan woman, the Samaritans flocked out of the village to see and listen to Jesus for themselves; and then in John 4:42 the record plainly tells us that the Samaritans believed not simply because of what the woman said to them, but because they had heard for themselves about the Prophet and the Messiah. And what did they believe, scoffers?

“...and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.” (John 4:42b)

5-3: “You People of Slow Belief” from Jesus.

Another category of believers whom Jesus calls the YOU PEOPLE of “slow believers”. Now we would progress further into John 4, as we come to the second miracle-sign of the Gospel of John, to a category of believers which Jesus Himself called “slow believers”.

“Then Jesus said to him {the Jewish nobleman who pleaded with Jesus to come down from Cana to Capernaum in order to heal his son before he died}, ‘Unless YOU PEOPLE see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.” (John 4:47)

Yes, these words the Apostle John remembered as coming directly from Jesus; and for years at Ephesus as pastor he pondered over them, perhaps often taught and preached them to his congregation; and then near the end of the First Century after writing the book of Revelation, sat down to selectively record all that Jesus said and did in the presence of the disciples. Did you notice that when we read earlier the stated purpose of John in the writing of the Gospel of John.

“And truly Jesus did many other sings in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book...” (John 20:30,31)

John knew that Jesus performed a lot more than 7 miracle-signs. John had, no doubt, in his possession the other Gospels written by Matthew, Mark, and Luke.
There is a lot of internal indications in the Bible that Mark even wrote the Gospel for which Paul gave him manuscripts and an outline at the home of John and Mary, the mother of Jesus. It is easy to think that John had preached and taught often from these three other Gospels. It is also easy to think that John with peculiar and special knowledge of Jesus as the disciple whom Jesus loved in a special way wanted to write a more positive account of the life of Jesus, selecting only seven miracles around which to weave the teachings and other doings of Jesus, and that how that the selection of only 7 gave the message that there was something more important than miracles in what Jesus said and did! Have you stopped to think that there is a message in only 7? If John is going to properly reflect the life of the Jesus that he knew so well, then the other than what is written than 7 miracles within itself tells us something about the content of the teachings of Jesus.

1. The "YOU PEOPLE" are the Jewish believers, like the Nobleman; and Jesus and John wants us to know the Jewish people of Jesus’ own kin and own blood to be "slow believers". No doubt as Jesus Himself said made this statement of “you people will not believe unless you see wonders and signs", He was still smarting over the rejection in Nazareth that John only briefly mentions for a positive emphasis in His Gospel. However John does not want to distort the truth that most of their own kindred in the Jewish nation did not believe Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah-Christ, the Son of God; and it is not coincidental that John, perhaps parenthetically adds a few verses before this slow believer statement that a Prophet is not without honor except in His own country and among His own people. {Recall other Gospels give the details of the rejection at Nazareth.}

2. The “signs and wonders” of Jesus statement of John 4:48. What we learn from John, his method of writing and his purpose as clearly stated in John 20:30,31 about selecting only a few of the many signs Jesus performed in the presence of His disciples, is that the word for miracles, the word "sign" came originally from Jesus Himself. And we might want to add what Jesus meant by “wonders” since we know from Jesus and John that by signs He meant miracles; and what we find by a look at the rest of Scriptures, knowing of course that since all Scripture originates with God the Holy Spirit and therefore will be consistent with the same word have the same God given meaning in one place as in another, that what Jesus meant by “wonder” will be the same as for example in Acts 2:19 (of course, a quote by Peter from Joel 2:28-32). There it is clear that while “signs” are done on the earth beneath, the “wonders” are done in the heavens above; and are more the natural acts of God. In fact some of those signs and wonders are defined as “blood and fire and vapor of smoke", also in the
diminished light of the sun, the moon and the stars on the Great Day of the LORD and Lord just before the Second Coming of Christ.

Anyway we now have from John 4, two of the three categories of believers and unbelievers that were promised in the introduction. The Samaritans who believed in Jesus as the Christ because of what He taught them, no miracles required; the people like the nobleman of Capernaum whose son lay sick unto death back at home; and the other Jewish people, which by the way are the majority of Jewish people, back at Nazareth who remained unbelievers in spite of what Jesus did and taught them. Of course, Jesus did heal a few sick folk, but nearly not all that He desired to do in his home town and among His own people; and we are astonished to know as we read in Mark that Jesus Himself could do there no mighty works because of their unbelief.

5-4: False Worshippers by their Unbelief Restrict the work of Jesus.

While John with his largely positive emphasis, like on believers more than on unbelievers and on “true worshippers” with no real mention of false worshippers at least in the Gospel of John {he did previously in Revelation with the messages to 7 churches}, would not find this in keeping with His primary purpose of the Gospel, we might still conclude based on both the context of John and John 4 and the rest of the Bible that FALSE WORSHIPPERS THEN AND TODAY, TODAY IN MANY CHURCHES, RESTRICT THE WORK JESUS HIMSELF CAN DO IN AND THROUGH THEM. Even as Jesus back in His hometown could do no real “mighty works” because of their own unbelief except to heal a few sick, even so in many churches today, Jesus because of the lack of faith of the church members can do no mighty works among the people except to heal a very few folks, sometimes and often even the few are not healed and the excuse of the members is made that “it was the will of God”.

By the way you will see some sections to follow in red type, and there is a special reason for that. This book “Den of Thieves” actually has two simultaneous themes: (1) Many of our churches in the U.S. today have become “Hideouts for Bad Habits”--what Jeremiah and Jesus called “Den of Thieves”; and (2) Reports of Unbelievers, which now after the considerations of John and this chapter we might more positively want to call Reports to Reach Believers. This must come together as one united theme before the conclusion of the book, which will be done in the last chapter with the expected title of “Reports to Reach Believers”, and this chapter will have as its foundations such sections as this and red sections to follow centered around the 7 miracles of John, TO ULTIMATELY COMBINE “CONTINUING FAITH” WITH NO-NO HABITS!
In short, never let it be said that “there is no focus” to “Den of Thieves”. After all, do you not think that there in the Temple when Jesus cleansed it, and even among a few of God's People of false worship in the Temple of Jeremiah were a few believers like the Samaritans, a few slow believers like most of the Jewish people, and even more unbelievers where Jesus could do no mighty works.

1. The definition of “True Worshippers” by Jesus to the Samaritan woman as He taught the essentials of salvation.

First of all, please, as a preliminary, a major supporting sub-theme of the primary theme of this book, note that true worship does not depend on the location.

Part 1 of the True Worship definition from Jesus:

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.” (John 4:23)

(1). God in the Old Testament times, more so in the New Testament times and message, and today is busy about the task of “seeking” true worshippers. In fact, one might say that God works in churches today to seek true worshippers, sometimes successfully and more often not, and increasingly less successfully as we fall deeper into the great apostasy called the Falling Away in II Thessalonians.

(2). "The hour is coming" referred to Old Testament times and all the predictions of more large scale and true worship, while naturally the “now” refers to how Jesus as the Mediator, Messiah, and Saviour made possible through the Cross and the message of believing this True Worship. You might make note of something you will hear about often in the main pursuit of this book theme, how that even as the real Temple or House of God where God will dwell among His people and be fully worshipped, by the way there is no temple building in the New Jerusalem as God and Jesus Themselves form the Temple, so real and full and complete Houses of God do not exist until this true worship in the New Jerusalem.

Part 2 of the True Worshipper definition from Jesus:

Also even as in the Old Testament times and in Herod's Temple of the day of Jesus the gates did allow the passage of abominations and the unclean and offensive to God and in churches also today, so in the New Jerusalem through those gates will pass no abominations or offences.)
(1). God is Spirit. While God is a Person much like He has created man, He is above all a Spirit. Also God has sent the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, to do His work on the earth of convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. When you see in your church worship, the world being convicted of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment in your worship service then the Spirit of God is in your worship. The opposite is true, when the preaching and the worship is such that sin remains untouched, righteousness is watered down, and the judgment of God is ignored then you can bet that the Spirit is neither there nor true worship. According to II Thessalonians near the end of the Falling Away the Holy Spirit will be withdrawn from the earth, this is the famous loosing of Satan who was bound when the Holy Spirit was first sent to earth on the first passover after the Ascension; and many churches in their worship and worship services will never notice the difference. (Parenthetically we should not honor the Pentecostals and Charismatics here since they have so well fabricated and faked evidences of the Spirit, like in tongue-speaking, they will continue on in tongues and vain repetition and shouting long past the withdrawal of the Spirit from earth. Also note please that the Spirit will not be withdrawn from inside true believers and worshippers, and above all note as some proponents of false doctrine claim that this withdrawal of the Spirit from earth is as Christians are withdrawn from earth to meet the Lord in the air. There is nothing more at this point as this is the time of the Second Coming of Christ, while in II Thessalonians the Falling Away, by the way on the part of Christians and God’s people and the leaders, also the visualization of the man of sin and the attack on Jerusalem and the camp of the saints and the final great battle, are still going on after the withdrawal of the Spirit.)

(2). Those who worship God must worship Him in spirit and truth. Even as the Apostle John will after the Gospel of John write the little epistles of John where he urges fellow church members to “test the spirit” of their members, so Jesus lays the foundation for understanding on true worship and on true believers and worshippers when “spirit and truth” are emphasized over appearance, formality, and “a form of godliness”. Even as Paul had written in II Timothy 3:1-8 of a “form of godliness” among church members “which denied the power thereof”, and this spoke of the internal inside believers as con-
trasted to external form and religion, so the power thereof would also include the “spirit and truth”, real spiritual reality, from Jesus.

5-5:  Slow Believers are Believers.

Like John and John 4, we should end on a more positive note than false worshippers of God. This we will do with the Slow Believers as represented by the Jew-ish nobleman of Capernaum, and in fact his whole household, who did believe when they saw the miracle-sign which Jesus performed. Jesus told the nobleman, “Go your way back to Capernaum as your son lives”. He believed Jesus and went home; and on the way home his servants met him to say that his son had begun to amend and was well. The nobleman asked the servants, at what exact hour did he begin to get well; and they told him “yesterday at the seventh hour”. The nobleman noted that this was the exact hour that Jesus said your son lives. The nobleman believed and his whole household believed.

It is far better to be a slow believer than an unbeliever that never comes around to faith, who like the people of Nazareth restrict what Jesus can do in their own life and in the life of others by their unbelief. We should definitely distinguish between unbelievers and slow believers; we must distinguish between reports of unbelievers and the slow to believe, and we would be more positive in our expec-tations when we give reports on Jesus and salvation, especially from the Gospel of John, more positive that people will believe; and further in this book we will switch from extensive emphasis on “Reports for Unbelievers”, in the church or outside the church, to “Reports to Reach Believers”.

Positively look at the number of “believes” in John 4:46-54 centered around the miracle-sign of the healing of nobleman’s son. {A trend learned from Jesus that John will practice as the word “believe” looms large and significant in the following chapters of the Gospel of John right up to the stated purpose of reaching for “believe” of 20:30,31.}

1. Jesus used the word “believe” in His description of the people of His own nation that were slow to believe, as in “you will by no means believe” (4:48).

2. When in John 4:50 it is recorded that “the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and went his way”, it was after Jesus told him to go on his way as his son lived.

3. There is another reinforced believing on the part of the nobleman, and his household, as he had his faith reinforced by the evidence in John 4:53,54 that
the son got better at the same seventh hour when Jesus said your son lives. 

{For those who are carried away by the present day carriers of the false 
Gospel of Prosperity and faith healers, you will note several things about 
this healing by Jesus, who by the way learned to heal from the way God 
has healed and continues to heal: (1) Jesus healed by starting the healing 
process; and (2) Jesus healed as the son got better.}
CHAPTER 6

Believers or Disciples: Which is First? (John 5)

The Apostle John had the last word on the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently also the last word on believing, discipleship, and God's plan of salvation. While we are reconstructing by exegesis in seven chapters this Gospel of Jesus built around seven miracle-signs, we find we must modify some of our fundamental concepts that we have built up through the years in our churches of superficial and simple Bible teaching and preaching, more often the result of the pragmatic practices of Americans, on believing and discipleship. For example, have you noticed that in the stated purpose of John's Gospel as recorded in John 20:30,31 rather than finding anything about discipleship or disciples, except at the beginning where all these recorded miracle-signs were done "in the presence of the disciples", we find first "in order that you may believe" and second "that by believing you might have everlasting life." What we will decide in this study of the scriptures in John centered around the third miracle-sign of John is that the continuous process of believing takes precedence over discipleship; and rather than write a title for this chapter like "Believers created into Disciples", it would come closer to being a title like "Disciples turned into Believers".

NOTE: All text in brown as shown below is as much in support of the prime thrust of "Den of Thieves" or "Hideout for Bad Habits" as it is for the second thrust of Reports for Believing based on the seven miracle-signs of the Gospel of John.
Believers or Disciples: Which Is First?

And we may find this a very key to what we have struggled with in the Bible on the thesis of “Den of Thieves”; that is, obviously there are selected God’s People, even called God’s people, who with time—sometimes even 40 years or more—who turn out not to be God’s people at all. Could it then be that first certain men and women of any generation are called to be disciples, then when it is obvious that their initial belief does not pass into the continuous believing of John, they also cease to be disciples of Christ (perhaps still disciples of some earthly leaders and churches and denominations, sad yes), and these are the called that are also not chosen. And unexpected with this only the third in the series of seven on the miracle-signs of John with the primary thesis of, up to this point which may need to be modified slightly based on exegesis, of REPORTS to create believers, we have perhaps come closer to an integration with the simultaneous theme of “Hideout for Bad Habits”, that based on Jeremiah and Jesus that many of our churches have clearly become a “Den of Thieves” in the same sense meant by Jeremiah and Jesus in the two cleansings of the temple. (This last week I heard another man of extensive education spouting his real ignorance of personal experience with the Scripture, as dealing with the Resurrection of Christ, and I’m sure many of you saw it on television, said the Bible was confused on the records of the cleansing of the temple and when it happened, not realizing that there were two cleansings of the temple, one near the beginning of Christ’s ministry and the other closer to the end. ) The first recorded in John 2, and the second in Matthew 21. Oh ye of so much wisdom in the world and so little in the real Bible, you can easily distinguish between these two separate cleansings of the temple by the quotes that Jesus used and which Matthew and John so faithfully and accurately recorded, with the help of the Holy Spirit, as Jesus and the Apostles so habitually quoted with faithfulness. In the second cleansing the emphasis of Jesus was on the quote of Jeremiah 7:11 where there is the “Den of Thieves”, in the first it was on how “the zeal of your house has eaten me up”, a quote from Psalm 69:9. I just hope you will use such Bible ignorance on the part of those educated in religion to see the difference often pointed out in the books of SunGrist_Bible between study “OF” the Bible versus study “ABOUT” the Bible.


Before we can proceed to the third miracle-sign, and the larger context of John 5, we need to clarify some teachings on the Gospel of Christ in the Gospel of John that make it very unique among the four Gospels. I think you know, or you should know, that in the famous “Harmony of the Gospels” written years ago by A.T. Robertson, the other three gospels are harmonized closely and then...
John is listed separate, quite often with completely different content than that of the other three. This uniqueness of content proceeds beyond the simple fact that the Apostle John chose only seven of the many miracles of Christ around which to weave the teachings and doings of Jesus, for it goes to both the inclusion of many unique events in the life of Christ which are included and the more common ones of the other three Gospels which are excluded.

You would naturally expect a unique emphasis from the Apostle John as near the end of the first century, and with the experiences of the growth of Christianity in the first century in spite of oppositions behind him, and with in hand the other three Gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, as well as most of the 27 books of the New Testament from which he would teach and preach each week. Goodness, even the Apostle John was different among the disciples, and those differences inevitably became evident in this version of the Gospel Story.

1. You have noticed how different are the very first words of the Gospel of John in John 1:1-3 on the part of Jesus in the Creation of the Universe where it sounds more like Genesis 1:1 than it does like the beginnings of the other three Gospels. And I hope by now from the two previous chapters on the miracle-signs of John, that you have recognized how important a conviction of Christ as Co-Creator is for a consideration of the miracles of Christ and of John. What is meant by this: well, once you consider that this is the Christ, the Word of God or “Logia”, that existed with God in the eternity of before the Creation of the Universe and through Whom all the things of the Universe were made, then you come also to readily realize and accept that even with some limitations of being in human flesh, that He could do anything with the universe which He had helped make.

2. Jesus according to John 1 was the Pre-Existent and Co-Creating Christ, but also He was “The Word made flesh who dwelt among us” on this earth. This eternal and co-creating “Word” was made the God-man by the power of God as the Spirit of God moved over the virgin Mary and Jesus was created by God the Father as the God-man.

“And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)

3. We would keep in the context of the start of the Gospel in the first chapter with the three distinct emphasis of (1) Christ as the Co-Creator, (2) The Word
made the Son of God; and (3) still to come from John 1:12,13 of the power God
gave through Christ for humans to become sons of God by the power God puts
within them; also in the context of the stated purpose near the end where
what the disciples all witnessed was just as important as here at the beginning
where it was these same disciples who “beheld His glory”; also in with the con-
text of the 7 miracle-signs around which teachings and doings of Christ are
wrapped; and also in the context of many incidents in the life of Christ unique
to the Gospel of John like the challenging “Friends of Jesus” teachings just
before the Crucifixion in John 13-17.

4. As we wrestle with John 5 and with “disciples versus believers”, even while
we are getting closer to the real meaning of “believe” and “believing” in the
Gospel of John, and hence in the total agreement of the Word of God (you will
find with experience is that one of the most convincing proofs of the Bible
as the Word of God is the complete agreement between John and Paul,
between the Gospels and the epistles, indeed among all the books of the Bible),
that John along with Christ as Co-Creator and the Word as the Son of
God gives us another clue to understand and practice faith in the life-giving
power of God as He makes the few who believe also Sons of God, much like
Christ. John first sadly admits that most of his own nation rejected Christ,
also many of his own hometown and his own province; however, with joy the
Apostle John admits as he continues to finish a century of work with the Gen-
tiles in Ephesus that “as many as received him to them he gives power to
become sons of God.”

Unfortunately these are not the same words we hear most often from Chris-
tian theology, from the pulpits of our churches, and from books; and no doubt,
that is part of our present problem with a proper understanding of John and
the Gospel of Christ. {Perhaps you do not know of the Jesus Seminar and
with a book of the Fifth Gospel, where such sceptics with high degrees in
leading colleges and seminaries advocate that most of the words of John
were not really taught by Jesus Christ, and even vote every year, as if we
should put any weight with their little majority because of their worldly
wisdom, as to whether Jesus even claimed to be the Son of God.} Well, we
could startle them today by sayings that we also claim based on John 1:12,13 to
also be Sons of God, not like the sinless very singular Son of God, the Lord
Jesus Christ, but in many ways re-created in His likeness. And primarily it is
the same power of God working in us to make us believers and keep us believing
that worked in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ when God raised Him from the
ground on the third day.
Believers of Disciples: Which Is First?

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:12,13)

What is being said as introductory to John 5 and the third miracle-sign, introductory and fundamental to an understanding of the first two chapters on John and the first two miracle-signs, to belief and believing and salvation, is these four foundations listed above. You will find them often in John 5 and in the other miracle-signs of the seven miracles. Another unique characteristics of the Gospel of John is the pains that John took to integrate the first chapter with the purpose of John 20:30,31, with the total uniquely chosen context of this Gospel life of Christ. You will come to love it from the disciple of love.

6-2: Christ in the third Miracle Healed the Man Helpless for 38 years.

Once again this is not necessarily the third miracle of Christ, only the third miracle-sign that John chose to present in his gospel; and even as there are far more than 7 miracles in the life of Christ on earth, just like John says in the purpose of John 20:30,31, I would not contribute to the ignorance of men like on the Jesus Seminar who might take this, with their hasty generalizations, to mean that John claimed only 7 miracles for Christ; or that John in any way by presenting the gaps in the previous three gospels which could not be presented because, as he writes, "even the world could not contain the books which should be written", was claiming truth for only his gospel and less than that for the other gospels. "In the presence" of these other Apostles like Matthew, Peter, and Paul was important to John even as "in the presence" of all disciples was important in the style with which John wrote about the life of Christ, one blessed by the Spirit.

For those who miss in this incident at the pool of Bethesada, where at certain times an angel went down periodically to stir the waters and heal the first into the pool, John is reminding us that even as God was at work and healing throughout the previous long history and that is where Jesus learned to heal, God has been and is always in the healing business quite independent of faith healers. {It is questionable to what extent Jesus or God needs these so-called faith healers to intervene between the believing individual and God, who tend to take more the glory to themselves anyway and the money.}

1. A certain man, and we don’t even know his name, was there to get into the pool when the angel stirred the water; and we also know little about his condition except that he "had an infirmity thirty-eight years". It would seem that John sought to protect the personal information of the man and the details of his ill-
ness. Perhaps as the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, and as Jesus had warned
the inhabitants to flee ahead of time, as the Apostle John departed Jerusalem
for the Gentile and Roman province of Ephesus, this man of the 38 year infor-
nity went with him as well as Mary, the mother of Jesus, and were long stand-
ing members of his church. Can you imagine the faith in Jesus that this man
would have testified to, much like the love for Jesus that continued in the life
of John.

2. Jesus saw the man and knew that he had been in that same condition for a
long time. Jesus said to the man, “Do you want to be made well?” knowing full
well that often people use their illness for conversation and excuses. If they
really wanted to be healed, they would be individually praying to God and get-
ting the healing that God is always so quick and apt to provide.

3. This man almost made excuses, but it was true that he had no friend or rel-
ative close enough to put him in the water when it was stirred by the angel, and
remember it was first come, first serve. Numerous times, was the story he told
Jesus, when he was crawling to get into the water others would step in front of
him.

4. Well, enough. Jesus said, “Rise, take up your bed and walk.” (John 5:8)

5. Immediately the man was made well. Not only did he take up his bed to
carry it, but he walked.

6. Uh, oh, trouble in the land! John warns us that this healing took place on the
Sabbath Day, a no no among the religious leaders who dominated the religion of
Judaism of that day. And when John writes in 5:10, “The Jews therefore said
to him who was cured,” it is the leaders and the people that he is talking about.

7. Well, the man had the supreme excuse to be healed on the Sabbath. The
same man {in reality God-man} that had the power to heal him was the one who
also commanded him to take up his bed and walk. The power to heal, everybody
knowing that healing is power from God, was also the power to command.

8. The Jews would not buy it. {Seemingly John has separated himself and
the other disciples present from this category of the Jews, although John
knew full well that he and the disciples, like Jesus Himself, were born
Jews.} Just tell us “WHO” is this man that told you to take up your bed and
walk. In this was implied that they had the authority and would talk to him.
Believers of Disciples: Which Is First?

9. This is the amazing part, the man healed from the infirmity of 38 years, did not know WHO Jesus was or is. Jesus had withdrawn from the location at the pool of Bethesada and only a multitude was there in the place where Jesus and His disciples had been.

10. Later Jesus found the man, just like Jesus does for us today as He continues to find and work with all that He has initially touched. Jesus found him in the temple, one of the good things that happened in the temple after the cleansing of the temple Jesus had done earlier (John 2) or the one that He would do later (Matthew 21), and taught him about “sin and salvation”.

11. Even as we recognize in the power to become sons of God as an aspect of believing, and with different words from most of our church words, we find Jesus uniquely presents the theology of sin and salvation to the healed man. Of course, after healing the man and as he walked and carried his bed, Jesus had his complete attention; and much like with the woman by the well of Samaria, who Jesus started teaching uniquely with words about “living water”, Jesus here spoke of original sin and the habit of sin.

“See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing came upon you.” (John 5:14)

What could be worse than being completely helpless for 38 years, impotent to step quickly into the pool or carry ones own bed? Obvious, right, complete servitude to sin and Satan, without everlasting life, and a life damned to eternity in hell. That would indeed be worse. The man knew and recognized this!

12. The man could now also answer the WHO which tells us that John does not record all that was said between the man and Jesus, or all that occurred on that day in the temple and with the disciples. It was Jesus that healed him and saved him, and it was Jesus that commanded him to walk with his bed. The man told the Jews that it was Jesus.

13. This is all we discuss on this third miracle-sign occasion, except to mention one thing that is pertinent to the next section. And that is from these straightforward words from the Apostle John, perhaps the first indication of persecution of Jesus to be recorded in this book, certainly a significant one: “For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus.” (John 5:16)

6-3: The Reason the Jews Persecuted Jesus.
Why did the Jews start persecuting Jesus? John wants this to be clear, even as if he had in his days at Ephesus among the learned of that Gentile city also those of the Jesus Seminar who would distort everything in the life and teachings of Jesus for their own prejudiced benefits.

1. The Reason the Jews started persecuting Jesus was because not only did He claim to be and represent the power of God, but He showed it to be true by the acts of healing from God which He performed. And worse than that, it was becoming known in the public that it was Jesus who performed these works of God. People like the simple man who had been flat on his back for 38 years were believing about sin and salvation from Jesus, even testifying as to what Jesus could do!

2. John went far beyond that in the honest and faithful telling of the story as it actually happened in that John says also in John 5:16 that "the Jews sought to kill Jesus." Now don’t you know the Jesus Seminar would try to have a hay day with that even as Jews and Judaism would today, vehemently denying that any of the Jewish leaders, people, or nation actually sought to kill Jesus. Of course in this verse, the reason given by John and I am sure the real reason or excuse used by the Jews was not because of the healing, or even the teachings, but that Jesus “had done these things on the Sabbath.” (John 5:16)

6-4: Jesus, “My Father and I Have Been Working” (John 5:17)

We will make this short, but still important that you are reminded by this miracle-sign and the teaching of the context where Jesus plainly said that in the past before His life on earth both He and the Father had been working; and that obviously in the context this means that Jesus, the Word, and the Father have been working right here on earth in human affairs, one of those way as clearly indicated in John 5 is in the process of healing. {Another hopefully of which we are increasing away as we see the series of calamities that God has brought on our nation since 9/11 in the storms and droughts and floods and so on, the numerous acts of grace God performs though His angels as so many are protected during these acts of God on our nations because we do not pray, listen to Him and be humble in His sight.) In the next chapter, “God Works", we will discuss just some of the ways in which God has worked from the beginning of Creation, and that Jesus worked with Him from the beginning of Creation.

6-5: Judgement. Life, and Everlasting Life Teachings of Jesus (John 5:24-30)
Believers of Disciples: Which Is First?

Yes, in the sections above, the teachings of Jesus were in answer to the Jews in the Temple (John 5:16-23), while now Jesus gets into less reactive teachings, to give the very heart of His teachings from God the Father on judgment, life, and everlasting life. It is here in this passage of these 7 verses of John that we come to learn much about “believing” and the real implications of believing.

1. It is the believer of the God who sent Jesus, who when he hears words from Jesus, that has everlasting life. (John 5:24)

   a. Such a believer in God and Jesus does not come into judgment. {Isn’t that good news, that you do not need to experience the judgment of the unbeliever?}

   NOTE: You should see Judgment here in the context of the famous passage of John 3:16 and following in that “he that believes not is under condemnation all ready.” There is no need to wait for any judgment day as the unbeliever is already condemned, directly as a consequence of his failure to believe in Jesus as the Son of God in spite of all the wooing the Holy Spirit does in his heart every day and has for years, condemned to eternity without God and in torment where “the worm never dies and the fire is not quenched”.

   b. Such a believer passes from “death” into “life”. Many do not realize that with such believing in God and Jesus, the reality in the sight of God becomes an actuality while that believer is still on this earth of passing from eternal death into eternal life.

2. Jesus states to these Jews that the hour has now come and is coming more as He continues His ministry where: (a) the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and (2) these that hear will live. I hope that reminds you of the well known among the Jews prophetic prediction by Moses that God would raise up a Prophet like Himself. They who would not hear him would be cut off from among the people of God, and those that heard would live! (Deuteronomy)

3. Since God has life itself in Himself, God the Father has granted to the Son to also have life in Himself. Jesus is life, remember how He will teach later in John 14 how He is “the way, the truth, and the life.

4. With all that God has endowed on Jesus as His Son, the Father has also given Jesus the authority to execute judgment. (John 5:27) It is not only because
Believers or Disciples: Which Is First?

Jesus is the Son of God, but also because He is the famous “Son of Man”, the Messiah promised often in the book of Isaiah, as these Jews also knew.

5. You can marvel at the wonder of this all, but the day is coming about which you will marvel more when all the voices in the grave will hear voice of Jesus: (a) they will come forth from death and the grave in two categories; (b) the category of those who have done good to experience the call of the resurrection of the body to join the spirit; (c) and the category of those who have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation.

NOTE: We can marvel today at some of our simple leaders with their definitions of good and evil, but why not adopt the wording and teachings of Jesus Himself as the those who do good with the resurrection of life and those who have done evil as with the resurrection of condemnation.

There is one resurrection: the dead in Christ shall rise first, the dead of both categories with some to the resurrection of life and others to the resurrection of condemnation; and then those that are alive and remain shall be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air.

6. The reason that Jesus Judges Righteous Judgment (John 5:30).

It all depends on God the Father. As Jesus heard from God the Father in the long years since Creation, and before, He also learned the proper way to judge people; and this is what makes the judgment of Jesus the same “righteous judgment”, contrasted to appearance that the rest of the Bible advocates for us followers of Jesus. Bottom line, it is righteous because Jesus does not seek His own will, but the will of the Father that sent Him; and we can practice righteous judgment also as we practice concern for the will of God over our own will.

6-6: Four Legitimate Witnesses to Him as the Son of God. (John 5:31-39)

Not only does Jesus teach us here in this chapter four witnesses to truth about Him but also to four truths: (1) Jesus as Truth itself; (2) Jesus as the One sent by God the Father; (3)

1. John the Baptist was a Witness to Jesus. (John 5:33) as Truth.

   a. The Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world.
Believers of Disciples: Which Is First?

b. The One before him, and coming after him, more worthy than him.

2. The works the Father gave Jesus to do bear witness that God sent Him. (John 5:36)

3. God the Father testified to Jesus that this is His Beloved Son (John 5:37)

4. The Old Testament Scriptures, mainly Prophets, testify of Jesus to be the way of Eternal Life. (John 5:39)

6-7: Jews (Judaism) as a Prototype of Bad Leadership in Religion.

NOTE: As John and Jesus used “Jews”, especially in the Gospel of John, it considered the original definition of Jews as residents of Jerusalem. Paul as a Hebrew of the Hebrews somewhat expanded this definition to include all Hebrews and those of Israel, especially in Romans. Of course, he established a new definition based on what the Ascended Christ told Him in Saudi Arabia, and from the leadership of the Holy Spirit in the writing of Romans where a Jew is not one outward, but inward, and Jews are the new group of God’s people of a few Jews and many other Gentiles.

We would be unfair and superficial on an exegesis of John 5, by the way from the Apostle of love, that is John, if we did not acknowledge that over half of the chapter is to identify the lifelong clash between Jesus and the Jews. We would also fail to properly apply with intellectual honesty and courage the implications of the teachings of Jesus centered around this clash if we did not recognize in the religious leaders of Jesus’ time a prototype of bad leadership in religion for today. In other words, what was rotten to the core in those religions leaders, which John called the “Jews” and we need to explain shortly, is the same that is rotten to the core of Christianity today with the Falling Away in churches and denominations.

Of course Paul also talked about the Jews in Romans, deciding that the real profit of the Jews to the work and will of God was that “to them were committed the oracles of God.” Paul also admitted that he was a Jew and a Hebrew, but not in the sense of which the Apostle John is using the word in the book of John. Yes, John was born a Jew; and Jesus was born of the Jewish nation although at the very beginning of the Gospel John starts an underlying theme of truth that “He (Jesus) came unto His own and His own received Him not.” (John 1:11) Jesus was rejected by the majority of the Jewish nation, and it is this majority of the Jewish nation that John labels as “Jews”. You can not be fair to John if you do
not face up to these realities about the Jews, the rotten to the core nature of
their leaders, and these bad aspects of the religion of Judaism.

By the way, although the whole world recognizes all the bad things that have
happened in history in the name of religion, and even today, there is nothing
wrong with “pure religion” as defined by Pastor James in the book of James.

“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit
orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from
the world.” (James 2:27)

May I offer right up front, and before we get into the details of Jesus' opinion
for the clash with the Jews of John 5, and to follow in the rest of John and
even stronger in the synoptic Gospels where Jesus called the religious leaders
as "full of dead men's bones", that the Jews did not show an example of "pure"
religion and they certainly did not show an example of "undefiled" religion.
Later Jesus would tell the people to listen to these religious leaders as they
taught the law of Moses, but not to follow their examples because they would
not lift one little finger to relieve the burdens of the poor. (And Jesus, calling
this same group of religious leaders "hypocrites" that John calls Jews in the
Sermon on the Mount characterizes them as: (1) praying in the synagogue and
on street corners to be seen of men; (2) use vain repetitions in prayer thinking
they will be heard for the number of words which they pray; (3) they pray like
the heathen--of course, this would be the Muslims and well as other unbelieving
Gentiles, and I hope you have heard some of this vain and repetitious prayer by
the Muslims several times a day and over the loud speakers--where it sounds
like a man dying; and (4) they disfigure their faces with a sad countenance in
order to appear to men to be fasting--in other words for appearance before
men and "honor" from other men like Jesus will talk about in John 5:44, “How
can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor
that comes from the only God?”

1. Now that we have brought up some of the teaching content of Jesus in John
5, in particular the difference between honor, praise, applaud, or pats on the
back from other men as compared to the honor from God {alone not doctrine
easy to understand at first}, we should list some of these convictions from
Jesus about the Jews as examples not to follow today as we ease deeper and
deeper into the Falling Away in our churches. {Please do not ever forget as
part of the very basic nature of the Falling Away is that it is not a Falling
Away from churches and church attendance as there the attendance may
Believers of Disciples: Which Is First?

Actually go up in the churches of itching ears Bible teachings like you are see in the Olsteen church of Houston.)  It is rather a Falling Away from the sound doctrine of the Bible, a Falling Away from the Christ of the Bible as according to what He predicted as “sin abounds the love of many (church members) will grow cold”, and a Falling Away from God Himself. The only difference with these bad leaders of the Jews is that they never really had anything to speak of to fall away from in the first place, at least internally. Of course in the finer sense they did fall away from the examples of so many good leaders that preceded them in the nation of Israel such as Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon; and priests like Samuel and Isaiah, and leaders of the nation as Prophets like Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, Elijah, and Elisha just to mention a few. Spiritual and government leaders like Joshua, David, and Solomon; and we could go on and on with good examples of Hebrews and religious leaders that preceded these hypocrites that John calls the “Jews”.

However back to the honor from men compared to the honor from God, and John 5:44 above. Well, first of all the honor from men is obvious. The religious leaders of then, and now, were and are doing what they do in prayer and other religious practices to give applause, congratulations, and the praise of other men. While the honor that comes from God is a little more difficult. Primarily in the context of John 5, that honor is of “life” and of all those benefits from God that come with life. Recall at the beginning of this chapter as a similar contrast was made of those who received Christ and those of the Jews who rejected Christ, there was the glorious assurance that “as many as received Him (Christ) to them gave He the power to become Sons of God.” (John 1:12) It is all this honor from God that we are talking about that Jesus taught in John 5: it is life, it is an internal power, it is the adoption as sons of God just like the firstborn from the dead; it is election and justification (much of this you can read about in the first two chapters of the book of Ephesians); and of course beyond “life” is the implied everlasting life; and so on and on with the many benefits that come with LIFE. Whereas in the last sign from John 4, and in the conversation with the Samaritan woman, Jesus taught that LIFE as the gift from God of “living water”. Later we will see the same LIFE as bread, and blood, and as a vine of fruit attached to the living Branch, all metaphors that Jesus used to get the attention of people and to teach how that He is and was the “way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6), and the “true vine” (John 15:1).

2. John writes so naturally, almost casually, about this incident of teaching we might fail to realize how serious it was when Jesus told the religious leaders as in John 5:38 that “you do not have His Word (the Word of God) abiding in
Believers or Disciples: Which Is First?

you.” With all their religious and government authority {the Romans allowed them to retain both, and in Israel as in no other nation the laws of the land were also religious laws—you will recall how that Paul before conversion, and as a lawyer, was involved in both religion and law as he dragged early Christians into prison}, still they were minus the most important thing in a life of pure and undefiled religion, that of the Word of God actually being in their life. Bottom line, it means no God and no salvation!

Can we find in our churches and denominations today also many who can talk about religion and the Bible, like the Jews of Jesus’ day with much training and tradition in religion, but minus the real Word of God in their hearts and life?

3. The reason Jesus who knew the hearts of all men made this conclusion is because the Jews would not receive the One sent by that God the Father. If they had the inward motivations to reject the very Messenger sent by God the Father, the very Son of God Himself, how could they previously have had any Word of that same God within them. Even as a fruit tree is known by it’s fruit, so the inward condition of any leader of religion and Christianity is known by the acceptance or rejection of the very Son that God sent to earth. (John 5:38)

4. Further Jesus said of the Jews, and therefore of their religion, that they had neither heard the voice of God at any time nor had seen the form of God. You see Jesus, and Moses, and Abraham and all these previous religious leaders of the Jews and forefathers had either heard the voice of God and seen His form, or both. Do you see the significance and implications of this for these the majority of the religious leaders of Jesus’ day and the implications for our leaders during this present Falling Away. True, there were a few religious leaders among the Jews like Nicodemus and Joseph of Aramathea, and John and the other Gospel writers acknowledge them: but in the majority and right down to the core they were rotten. And there is no way you can accept the book of John as Word of God with all the hard teachings of Jesus about religious leaders such as here in John 5, without taking them at the face value of what they have to say. Like one practical Bible scholar said, “Just let the Word of God say what it is trying to say.” In other words, just take the Word of God at face value: the Jews as typical majority religious leaders, and as bad examples for the Falling Away of today were so bad that: (1) they had never heard the voice of God; (2) they had never seen the form of God {by the way Jesus had in heaven and often}; (3) they had no Word of God inside them; (4) they rejected Jesus as the Son of God and all that He taught; (5) they chose the
honor of men over the honor that comes from God, an appearance of religion over “righteous judgment”.

5. They were not willing to come to Jesus as the Son of God in order that they might have life (John 5:40). The Apostle John, as last surviving Apostle and as he wrote near the end of the first century the last books of the Bible, knew that future generations would wonder why, although he and Jesus and the other Apostles were of the Jewish nation, why the majority of the Jews would reject Jesus. John is partially dealing with that as this Apostle of love and one who personally at meals would lean against Christ, calling this typical majority of his own nation by birth (who by the way also crucified Christ to the extent God allowed them) “Jews”.

6. Jesus acknowledged their scholarship with the Old Testament Scriptures as they both “searched” the 39 books of the Old Testament, in a non-spiritual, formal, and superficial manner without understanding, and they also had the false hopes and claims to eternal life. (John 5:39) How far and how quickly any religious people, of that day and today, can get from the real truth of the Bible! They actually believed that they had eternal life, because they all owned Bibles, they daily and weekly would search through those Bibles much more than our church members with daily Bible readings and short excerpts of Sunday school lessons. Is it possible, one might ask, then and today for religious leaders to think they have eternal life, have the conviction that they have eternal life, and yet be so far from the truth, and God, and Jesus. Well, you read it here; and I hope you read it in the book of John.

7. It gets worse in John 5:42. Jesus calls a spade a spade; Jesus was not timid; Jesus has always spoke "truly". Point blank when faced with this opposition to Himself and His work, work from God the Father Himself, He says “You do not have the love of God in you.” Can you imagine us today saying that to some of our fundamentalists leaders when they are in the middle of fightings and splits that have torn asunder the SBC? Saying to them even as in the nature of advice from John in I John of testing the spirits (I John 4:1), that you do not have the love of God inside you. (Read carefully the book of I John to know which groups today with all the splits are part of the fellowship of the Apostles, and hence of Jesus also, and which are not!)

8. The reason Jesus could label the Jews as religious leaders without the love of God in their hearts, that is religion without love and you know what Paul wrote about that in I Corinthians 13, is because Jesus knew what was in the hearts of
Believers or Disciples: Which Is First?

all men. Time and time again, you will find in John and the other Gospels the statement that Jesus as the Son of God, and still possessing all the characteristics of God, could read the insides of men. This is such strong and sound doctrine that some still fail to face up to it as if Jesus was reading their body language, or just took it personally, instead of accepting the simple fact and truth that Jesus like God Himself could read what was in the hearts and minds of all men.

6-8: Believing and Disciples and Life in the Gospel of John.

Unfortunately as expected in the introduction to the chapter, we did not get into which comes first, being a disciple or being a Believer. Much of that is because this chapter is already very long, and we did not get into the details of chapter 6 where “many disciples turned away from Jesus.” We will in the next chapter of the seven on the miracle-signs of John because what we will find in chapter 6 of John is two miracle-signs, that of the walking on the Sea by Christ and that of the feeding of the five thousand. {Also we have the famous teaching of Jesus on Himself as the Bread of Life. See how John relates the miracle-sign to the teachings of Jesus.} We will get there, and here is a warning of what is going to be found by exegesis in the Gospel of John: you are going to find that being a disciple or learner is first, just like today being a learner after Christ in the churches comes before believing. It would seem, and we will check it as we go along, that the sequence goes like this: (1) believe; (2) disciple; and (3) “believing” where “believing” is much stronger than initial belief, where believing is a continuous process that continues throughout life and grows, and where it is this “believing” that leads to life and everlasting life. Read again the purpose of John as recorded in John 20:30,31. You will find both “believe” and “believing” mentioned; and it is the believing that leads to life and everlasting life.

Also in the other miracle-sign book chapters of this “Den of Thieves”, we will find many more teachings of Jesus on what is meant about this “life”. Of course, you know where in John 10:10 it is called both everlasting life and “the abundant life” so that we are challenged to know the full implications of this life which is received when God gives us power to become sons of God. {Sorry, due to the length of this chapter, this is all we can do for now! However, in the reading of this book on “Den of Thieves”, and realizing that two simultaneous themes are pursued throughout its chapters with an integration of the two in the final chapter of this book, “Called versus Chosen”, where we try to clarify God’s people as used in the Bible, you may wish to read all seven chapters that come from the Gospel of John and centered
Believers of Disciples: Which Is First?

around the seven miracle-signs separate from the rest of the book. They flow about every other chapter, and most generally have the word “believe”, like often found in John, in the chapter title.)
CHAPTER 7

“My Church” and “Believing” (John 6)

While the Pope would say it is “my church”, also the LDS and Church of Christ, and even some among THE Baptists, THE Methodists, and the Presbyterians; Jesus lays claim naturally to the church which He founded, calling it “My Church”. Among the conflicting claims of denominations, and conflicting efforts to define God’s people centered around themselves, let us look at the original teachings in the Bible. Back to the Source in the New Testament, and based on the Old Testament, without a rewrite of history for personal benefit and gain!

Never ever would this author or SunGirst_Bible be a part of any disrespect, or cast aspersions, on the real “My Church” of Jesus, the church of the firstborn written in heaven. Jesus started it; He established the means of membership as faith like Peter confessed as the foundation rock for this “My Church”, which we will come more to see in this sixth chapter of John as the “believing” and discipleship that goes beyond the initial “believe”; and to have any disrespect for this “My Church” would be synonymous with disrespect for Jesus Himself since the Bible identifies this “My Church” as the very body of Christ. {Just pray that you can find some measure of correlation between your church and the “My Church” of Jesus. Would it not be wonderful to have a man-made church with many members that are also members of the church of the firstborn, written in heaven!}
"My Church" and "Believing"

The most famous saying of Jesus on church and churches—"...on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it..." (Matthew 16:18)—is not in John 6, the chapter of the next two miracle-signs of Jesus; however the same confession of faith from Peter is there, indicating that John is describing the same and equivalent event and teachings in the life of Jesus in the last part of John 6 as we also read in Matthew 16 and the Synoptic Gospels. The same teachings about the church are there in terms of the disciples who stay and the disciples who go away (John 6:60-71), and in the study of this passage we come much closer to the real "believing" in Jesus as related to who are the real disciples in "My Church".

"My Church": notice that there is not even a name on it like "Church of Christ", or "The Lutheran", or "Baptist", or "Methodist", or "The Roman Catholic Church". Goodness there is not even in "My Church" the name of Jesus. You have to know about Jesus, let us say by the continuous process of "believing" that goes beyond the initial "believe" of John and of the purpose of John in John 20:30,31. Startling for many today but there is not even a word in the title "My Church" to indicate that it is interdenominational or non-denominational to please the masses. You will not find a local church or larger group, denomination, today with the title of "My Church" on it, primarily because you can not find this Church located today in any one or easily numbered multiple locations. Hopefully down at the Baptist local church and down at the Roman Catholic local church and so on, there are a few members of "My Church" there; and over in Nigeria where they do not have a building of their own, there are more members of the "My Church", and in Norway where a building is borrowed and a few poor people get together to worship, there are a few more; and on and on we go across the world picking up (actually it is God and Christ that have done the picking as we will make clear in the last chapter "many are called but few are chosen") the total physical living body of Christ. And then are you ready for this, even as in the time of Elijah that were unknown to Elijah and therefore to the organized assembly of God, 7,000 members who had not bowed their knees to Baal, today there are many members of "My Church" who are not even in an organized local church body. Yes, we are talking about "the church of the firstborn, written in heaven" (Hebrews 12:23). There is the distinct possibility that at this point in history, approximately 2000 years after Jesus made the "My Church" statement that more members of this church are physically dead than alive. (They are not really dead; and in this chapter of the book on John 6 where Peter provided the faith foundation for the "My Church" in the profession of faith that "thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God", we must come to see more about this Living
“My Church” and “Believing”

Sleep is the term that Christ preferred to describe the fact that we no longer see the dead, that their spirits have gone to heaven to wait for the Second Coming and the new Resurrection bodies. Yet Moses is still alive; Elijah is still alive, and these two were seen on the mount of transfiguration, recognizable by the disciples, as they counseled with Jesus on the Crucifixion to follow shortly; Abraham is alive: as announced often in the Bible, “God is a Living God of the Living”. Like God told Moses at the burning bush, “I Am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And as Jesus had to explain to the religious leaders of His day: God is not a God of the dead but of the living. Most of the members of “My Church” live today up there in heaven, and I am sure that they are quite aware of what is happening in real church growth of the “My Church” here on earth.

Since we would have to admit that in this country church membership has become more the province of the well-to-do and middle class, and since everything we know about Jesus is that He had a certain preference for the poor—that is, He came in order that “the poor might have the Gospel preached to them” (Luke 4:18), you may not really know many members in the “My Church”, especially since there are far more poor in countries other than the United States. Hopefully you have remembered that the word translated “church” is “ecclesia”, whether it is here in Matthew 16:18 where Jesus is talking about this church of the firstborn, written in heaven, and of which there are approximately 20 verses which have this meaning in the Bible (the same meaning is found in the Bible teachings on “the body of Christ”); most of the times when ecclesia, church, or assembly is used in the Bible it refers to a local church like at Corinth, Ephesus, Rome, etc; and then a few places where “ecclesia” is translated “assembly” it has nothing to do with Christ at all like in Ephesus where an assembly of locals came to do harm to Paul and the first Christians there.

And isn’t it horrible to think that you may not know any members of “My Church” at all! Even as you will recall the many Scriptures that explain the total body of Christ as the individual parts of the head, the ear, the leg, the arm, and so on and on, you had better hope that you have in your local man-made church some of these members of the total body of “My Church” as some country and denomination and local church has to have the leader parts such as the head and the mouth. Yet what we must learn from the analogy of the Scriptures on body parts, is that none from the perspective of God and Christ has any more importance than the other and less comely parts. Furthermore, what we should see clearly is that since there is ONLY ONE BODY of Christ, there can not in many local churches or groups for that matter be duplicate body parts. Existing right
now in the world is only one ear, or one arm and leg, and where is it? Well, all these matters we must leave in the hands of God; for only He and Christ know in the first place the exact church roll that is written in heaven, that is the way God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ wanted it and intended it in the first place, and since there has to be some correlation between that church roll written up there in heaven, exclusive of the members asleep for the earthly perspective, and our many local churches throughout the world down here on earth, Jesus taught not to try to separate in the churches and the kingdom between the real members and the fake, between the wheat and the tares.

I know it all sounds so theoretical; however much better than both the malarky that you hear from the Roman Catholics as they strain to make themselves the same as the “My Church” of Peter’s confession of faith, and they bestowed postmortem a popeship on the Apostle Peter to seal their place, they think, as the “My Church”; or even the landmark Baptists who as set out in the book “Trail of Blood” trace themselves back to John the Baptist, as a baptized believer of a baptized believer, and thus establish themselves as that one the “My Church”. IT IS NOT THEORY, and it is not completely fair to call it derogatorily the “invisible church” as contrasted to the local churches and denominations (Roman Catholicism is really another denomination and denominations are such a man-made association of local churches). All the real members, not asleep, are visible to God and Christ; and while often we would like to think we know the 7,000 of our own generation that have not bowed to Baal or some other false god, similar to the generation of Elijah which never were visible as far as we know to Elijah until he got to heaven, we must leave the final separation at the Second Coming in the hands of Christ and the Angels. You can be assured that the Angels have already been instructed where the living and dead (asleep) bodies are; that God and Christ have coordinated the locations of these asleep bodies with the church roll written in heaven, and that it only remains for the Great Gathering of the Second Coming to separate the sheep from the goats, the tares from the wheat.

Rather abstract, yes; but necessitated by this mess in which we find ourselves today with so many denominations, so many splitting churches, and new movements with a preference often for the interdenominational and non-denominational. If you find difficulty in finding your way through the Bible arguments on the three meanings of church and churches in the Bible, how much more do we find difficulties with the navigation today through this maze of churches, denominations, and non-denominations! Thank our God for the concrete over
the abstract, the concrete Bible with its clear teachings on church, churches, and assemblies, and the clear teachings of Christ with events and miracle-signs to which we will come in this chapter from John 6. That men have muddied the water of clarity with so many man-made denominations is readily acknowledged: that it is necessary to wade through all this more abstract in order to come to the more concrete, hopefully is also clear.

NOTE: By the way all his introduction to John 6 and later some parts of it are shown in RED because they are necessary to the bringing together in the last chapter--"Many are called but few are chosen"--the two simultaneous themes of this book: (1) that of the Hideout for Bad Habits, alias the "Den of Thieves"; and (2) the believing in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God. On these most important of all subjects, what you easily might call life and death subjects, we can give no less than our best mentally and scripturally. Even as red is loud, the conclusions of these two important subjects, especially as integrated into one subject in the last chapter, we would also be loud in the best proclamation of such truth. That it often plows new ground is inevitable as the contemporary problem of the "Den of Thieves" is largely ignored.

7-1: Development of the Purpose of John in John 6.

The purpose of the Gospel of John, of course as clearly stated in John 20:30,31, is rapidly advanced in John 6 both based on the Teachings of Jesus centered around the "Bread of Life", and John's own description of the life of Jesus and he and the other disciples saw it. All the key words of the purpose are prominent in John chapter 6: (1) signs, (2) believe, (3) believing and believes, (4) life and everlasting life. Like in so much of the Gospel of John, Jesus the Master Teacher provides the content for John to communicate on this purpose, here in John 6 Jesus provides for John an introduction of 2 miracle-signs--the feeding of the five thousand which introduces the chapter and the walking on water, and primarily the largest content of the chapter centers around the teachings about these key words centered around the teaching of Jesus on Himself as The Bread of Life, with the reaction from the Jews, the disciples who left primarily from the hard saying that He came down from heaven, and then the 12 disciples who chose to stay because: (1) Jesus had the words of eternal life, and (2) they had come to know that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

We will briefly introduce and survey John 6 first in terms of these key words.

“My Church” and “Believing”

By the way, John and Jesus did not originate the habit of using the word “sign” to refer to “miracle signs”, for a careful study of the Old Testament especially in Exodus and centered around what God did to Egypt to rescue His people from bondage will show that the judgment-miracles that God brought on Egypt through Moses like water turned into blood, lice, frogs, and finally dead on all the firstborn in the land that did not put blood on the post (The Passover), that these acts of God were called signs. (Exodus 7:3). (By the way also, especially to progress to the concept of “A Place for His Name”, and the other simultaneously themes of the "Den of Thieves". While in Exodus, God told His people for the first time what He was to be called and how this name would be His memorial, later the Temple was built to honor that Name.)

a. John starts the sixth chapter {actually the chapters and verses came from the King James translators, but they used the time and change of location from Jesus and John to make the chapter transitions for the most part, here it was (John 6:1) as Jesus went over to the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, the Sea which the Romans then called the Sea of Tiberias} with the reason a multitude followed Jesus across the Sea: “because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased.”

It is interesting the wording John uses as he describes the miracles previously witnessed by the people as "signs" which Jesus performed on the sick. So naturally had the Apostle John come to accept that Jesus, “in the beginning as the Word, and the Word was with God and God, so naturally had John come to accept Jesus as the “Word who dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth”, that they are just signs. And it seems by the narrative trend of the story that the country was also coming to accept these signs as natural by one who could be Co-Creator.

b. Of course, as we go deeper into John and what the crowds thought, as in John 6:14, that what we will find is the multitude was coming to accept Jesus as more the Prophet from Moses, the Prophet like Moses to which the people would listen (Deuteronomy 18:15-22), rather than to accept Jesus also as the Messiah of the book of Isaiah that would die for the sins of the world. While much of the predictions and Jesus on Christ or "Messiah" of the Old Testament can be summarized as “Prophet-Messiah", it would seem that especially here in the events of John 6 that while one group, the disciples who stayed accepted Jesus of Nazareth as the Prophet Messiah--expressed by Peter for this small group of disciples as “thou art the Christ {Messiah}, the Son of the
Living God”—the other two response groups of John 6, the Jews who rejected Him and His hard to understand teaching on “He came down from heaven”, and the group of initial disciples who went back and followed Him no more because they could not buy that He came down from heaven. {What is different today is that many of these quick disciples stay in a church named after Christ, but still do not accept Him as the Son of God that came down from heaven.}

c. It must be added about this usage of the word “sign” by John above in John 6:14, the “this is truly the Prophet”, was the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand with 5 barley loaves and two fishes, where all were filled, and for leftovers so they would not be wasted, the disciples followed the instructions of Jesus to gather 12 baskets of fragments leftover. Was the miracle more the feeding of 5000 with 5 and 2, or the collection of 12 baskets of leftovers? Well, the author of the biography of Jesus, the Apostle John, would say it is just a sign, a sign that will point in this chapter to all the implications of Jesus as the Living Bread of Life that came down from heaven.

d. Jesus Himself uses the word “sign” in John 6:26, in the plural here of the “signs” that caused the people to come across the Sea to Capernaum from the other side—in boats, they were serious about the pursuit of Jesus; but Jesus said they sought Him in multitudes not because they saw those same signs of Jesus on the diseased, those same signs that John previously mentioned in John 2:2 as the reason for the multitudes, but they sought Him for the very mercenary reason that He provided a free meal. You see the writing wisdom of John to set up in the first of John 6 for this introduction to the teaching of Jesus on Bread of Life to follow, and primarily the wisdom of Jesus in teaching to provide some focus for the crowd on teachings on the Living Bread of Life. {It must be mentioned how Jesus introduces the very core of meaning of this bread of life, and later the issue that most of the crowd reacted to in order to leave, even cease to be disciples, of eating His flesh and drinking His blood. By the way, in the very nature of parables—a subject on which John does not dwell since the other Gospel writers have done such a good job, John just shows examples of how Jesus used them and how the people could not understand and that was the intention—you will notice that not until some in the crowd, particularly the Jews and the disciples who departed did Jesus slide into the parable category with words like “drink His blood” and “eat His flesh” that confused them.}

NOTE: See how Jesus both uses the miracle-sign of the feeding of the 5,000 to start His teachings on the Living Bread of Life in John 5:26,27 and
fully explains up front all the meaning of Himself as the Living Bread of Life that came down from heaven—"the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you…"

e. The crowd reacted, they wanted more signs for believing just like previously in John where Jesus had called them slow to believe. More, more, more they were saying to Jesus: we have doubts and reservations, give us more reasons or signs for believing. This is recorded in John 6:30-34. And how did Jesus respond? In 6:35-40 with the Teaching of Himself as the Bread of Life. {We must get that the very heart of John 6, and furtherance of the purpose for the writing of the Gospel of John; and which we will as soon as we complete a quick look at the key words.}

2. Another key word of John 6 is “life” and everlasting life.

a. John 6:27 where Jesus introduces another kind of food, much like the other kind of water previously introduced that was both living water and brought rivers of living water out of the believing individual, a “food,” Jesus taught, “which endures” {how important is that word of endurance} to everlasting life. Which Jesus really starts teaching, and Jesus is seriousl about it here as John will tell us later in John 6:59. Jesus taught in the synagogue at Capernaum {Capernaum is on the Sea of Galilee and a short distance from Cana and Nazareth}. Jesus in this verse calls Himself “The Son of Man” another favorite phrase of Isaiah to refer to this same predicted Prophet-Messiah.

b. Jesus urged then and still urges today that all humanity labor “for the food which endures to everlasting life” rather than expend all their labors, though of course some are necessary, for food which perishes. (John 6:27) We will try to make that clear in one on the last chapters on the Principle of Priority since so many like God’s people of Jeremiah have made idols like “a god” in that they devote themselves more to the bread and other material things of life that perish more than to a "seeking first of the kingdom of God and His righteousness", a “man shall not live by bread alone”, and a "man can not serve God and mammon", where mammon are any creations from the hands of man.

c. Jesus teaches that God Himself provides the real bread, of which the manna from heaven in the wilderness is only a prototype and then only provided temporal food for the body (of course not to be ignored was the facts that God provided bread and quail meat and sandals and clothing which did not wear
out to His own people for 40 years in the wilderness}, this true bread from God is Jesus that came down from heaven. (John 6:31-33)

d. Jesus taught in John 6:40 that anyone who sees the Son and believes in the Son may have "everlasting life", which begins now but continues as Christ raises him up on the last day of this earth.

e. Jesus assures all the distinct groups of that day in the synagogue at Capernaum--the Jews from Jerusalem, the disciples that departed, and the few that remained of the Apostles, that with "believes" comes "everlasting life." (John 6:47)

f. "Live forever" the equivalent of everlasting life is used by Jesus in John 6:51 where the eating of the living bread from heaven of Jesus is contrasted with any material bread which is eaten. (John 6:51)

g. It is about this point in John 6:53,54, that Jesus faced by the opposition and challenges and unbelief of the Jews from Jerusalem starts to speak in parables without telling them like in the other Gospels that He is talking now in parables which are given to confuse, to hear without hearing, and to see without seeing. In other words the ones who God has not selected and not called, like the oppressors of Jesus, will not be able to understand when the Bible or Jesus speaks in spiritual parables, only the spiritual can understand. Jesus purposely toys with their confusion and attitude by a reference to "no life in you" except you eat the flesh and drink the blood. Of course most are aware of how the Lutherans and Romans and Presbyterians have also been confused by this parable, trying in unsound doctrine to deceive many that the wine and bread of the Lord's supper actually become the body and blood of Jesus. You see, parables work for that which they are intended.

“And He said, 'To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that

'Seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand". (Luke 8:9)

You would think that nothing so simple as a parable, with hidden spiritual wisdom, could confuse these PhD's and ThD's, like in the Jesus Seminar, to keep them from getting the real meaning of so much of what Jesus taught, and of the Bible. But you know, as the Bible says, "the natural man [Doctor's degree or vast education and knowledge or not] can not receive the things of the Spirit of God for
they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned.” (I Corinthians 2:14) Anytime you hear one talk like in the Jesus Seminar and in their book The Fifth Gospel of how foolish the Scriptures and the Bible are, you can bet that you are still listening to a non-born again human no matter what his credentials, reputation, and honor from men is!

h. {Life and everlasting life are numerous in John 6, but we must hasten on as this chapter grows large.} Also in John 6:54 with “eternal life” for “everlasting life” Jesus continues to work the parable on the religious leaders from Jerusalem as they must eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ.

NOTE: Once again like in previous verses of John where we explained the real meaning of the living bread come down from heaven as faith in Jesus, Jesus does break out of the parable to explain in John 6:56 that to eat his flesh and drink his blood is to “abide in Him”. It they were not so intent on opposition and dissension, and so blocked by the blinkers on the eyes, the sceptics and agnostics and unbelievers in Jesus like the Jesus Seminar, could have caught the real meaning right here, also the false prophets and itching ears teachers of unsound Bible doctrine in churches and denominations today who talk of a literal miracle where the vine and bread literally become the body and blood of Jesus. What tangled webs we mortals over the years weave for ourselves in unsound doctrine and practices!

i. There is a lot of life and living in John 6:57: Jesus teaches that even as the “living” Father sent the “I, who live” {Jesus}, so He who feeds on Jesus in the sense of abiding in Jesus as explained in the previous verse, will “live” also. There is the life: it starts with the Living God the Father proceeds with the Son of the Living God, then is passed on with honor from God into life for the responding believer.

j. Jesus goes back to the living bread analogy, or even parable, the same as the body and blood, and the abiding in him; but other words and concepts and parables that He has used to make clear to those at the synagogue in Capernaum who will really listen and who God has given eyes to see and ears to hear. (John 6:58) God’s people in the wilderness ate the manna from heaven and died {twice as they died in the wilderness after 40 years of unbelief and without the seeing of the Promised Land of Israel and the second time according to Hebrews because they were not allowed to enter into God’s eternal rest}, Jesus said whoever eats this bread will “live forever".
"My Church" and "Believing"

k. As Jesus' own disciples began to complain about the eating of His flesh and the drinking of His blood, and in John 6:63, He explained further that: "it is the Spirit that gives life, not the flesh", and how could it be any plainer, and then continued that the words that Jesus spoke contain the spirit and the life.

l. When many disciple departed to follow Jesus no more, and after Jesus turned to the twelve to say "do you want to go away also" (6:67), Peter replied for them that who else could they go to because it was Jesus who had "the words of eternal life." (6:68)

3. "Believe", "Believes", and "Believing" are other favorite words of John 6.

Actually "believes" replaces "believing" in John 6, where believes has the same sense of faith continuing with time as believing; and of course the opposite of a departure of disciples from Jesus.

a. Just before the multitude in John 6:28 asked for more signs, they first asked how they could also do the works of God they saw Jesus do; and Jesus identified the real work of God for those on earth, like the will of God also He taught in this chapter, "that you believe in Him whom He sent." Do you want to do the will and work of God; well, certainly there is no other starting place, and even finishing place for those who would go all the way to the "fruit that remains" of John 15 and the true vine, than to believe in the Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, the Son of the Living God, that the Living God sent to planet earth.

b. Jesus told the multitude, at least most of them, that although they saw Him they "do not believe". (John 6:36)

c. Part of the explanation of the will of God for planet earth that all who see and believe the Son will have everlasting life, and the resurrection of “the last day”. (John 6:40)

d. Jesus assures the listeners, and John assures all with the recorded words from Jesus in John 6:47 that all who believe in Jesus “will have everlasting life.”

e. Far more disciples [we know from other Gospels of more than 500 that Jesus sent out to do His work like the 12 disciples called Apostles] followed Jesus in this multitude at Capernaum than the twelve, and it was to these that would shortly in John 6:64 "who do not believe", Jesus said; and certainly John tells us in John 6:66 that “From that time many of His disciples went back and
walked with Him no more. {Once again in keeping with the primary theme of "Den of Thieves", it would be stated that church members "go back" today, many "walk no more with Jesus today"; but the difference since it is made so easy for them to do so, they stay in the church, sometimes even active, that somehow bares the name of Jesus and God, without the walking and going forward!}

f. We come to the very positive response of the few disciples, apart from the backsliding and those that cease to walk forward, that of the 12 minus 1 who are represented by testimony of Simon Peter when he says "we have come to believe and know {notice that as in any proper church membership or discipleship process that is real and valid, it is a learning process to be a real disciple--to "come to believe and know"} that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. {Parenthetically, you must also have your doctrine as much straight on the Living God, as well as on the doctrine of Who is the Son of God, as well as Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah.}

7-2: The Bread of Life Teachings of John 6.

1. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life" just like previously in John 4 He said that He was the living water of life and later in John 14 He would conclude for His disciples that remained that "I am the way, the truth, and the life." (John 14:6).

2. Jesus said, "he who comes to Me shall never hunger." (John 6:35) It is obvious that Jesus recognized the inherent hunger of all humanity for God, more life, and everlasting life.

3. Jesus said, "he who believes in Me shall never thirst." (John 6:35)

NOTE: Believe you me, or more important believe the Bible and Jesus, that not one church member who learns to practice this kind of "believes" of "believing"--the opposite of an "evil heart of unbelief that departs from the living God"--will be among the "Den of Thieves".

4. Jesus told them that they just did not believe although they had seen Him (John 6:36). Each word or words are critical in the teachings of Jesus, just as later every word is of John 13-17 on the disciples that remain versus the disciples that are cast off.
5. The remaining disciples, opposite of those who depart or are cast off by God to use the words of John 13-17, are identified by Jesus as the “All that the Father gives Me”, as “All that will {really} come to Me”, and the assurance is added by Jesus that this small and unique group--shortly of course before the end of John 6 the Jews will reject Him and many disciples will go away to follow Him no more--that of that very small group Jesus will reject or “cast out” none of them. And right here in John 6:36 do we have an introduction to the “cast off” concept in the teachings of Jesus that will come in John 15:2, after the introduction to Himself as “the true vine” and God the Father as the “vine-dresser”. {A teaching at which we must look in “Den of Thieves” as both an explanation of why so many church members have fallen away from their first motivations, as well as a brief look at the “Friends of Jesus” challenge, from Jesus Himself in John 13-17, that provides a challenge sufficient for the Falling Away.}

6. Jesus had in mind no personal goals or kingdoms unto Himself, of course, when He came down from heaven. {It was this “come down from heaven” of Jesus and John 6:38 that perked up the ears of the Jews, so that by John 6:41 they started to complain about Jesus as “the bread that came down from heaven”, and Jesus had to explain further how Him as the Bread of Life was related as to who could really eat this special bread and how.}

7. So what is the will of God for planet earth: (John 6:39) that Jesus should lose none of the believers that God has given Him, and would raise all of them up on the “last day”.

NOTE: It is an aside, but an important aside, especially in the light of the all the malarky from fundamentalists today that confuses the last days as running from the coming of the Holy Spirit in power on the first day of Pentecost after the Ascension to this “last day”. Contrary to all their confusion based on Scofield Notes and other imaginations, it is all over in One Day. That One Day is the Day of Lord and LORD when Christ Comes Again.

The will of God for planet earth is further expanded in John 6:40 as: that everyone who SEES the Son and “believes in Him” may have everlasting life; and further that Jesus Himself at the Second Coming of the “last day” will raise that seeing and believing person up from the dead. “The dead in Christ shall rise first.” (I Thessalonians 4:16)

7-3: Jesus Answer to the Jews, “How Can He Say I Came Down from Heaven?”
1. Don’t murmur among yourselves, Jesus said to the Jews from Jerusalem (I bet you could tell these city slickers just by the clothes that they wore), no one can come to the Me unless the Father draws Him. They were wrapped up in their own self-importance, and the honors they received from men, and looked down on the origin of Jesus which they knew to be Joseph and Mary and of Nazareth, so Jesus put things in right perspective as the initiative to follow Jesus must come from God the Father.

2. Jesus gets the attention of these religious scholars with a quote from Isaiah 54:14 of how all the people “will be taught by God” Himself (John 6:45), and then properly interprets this Old Testament quote as He does so often as this means: (1) anyone that hears and learns from God the Father comes to Jesus; and (2) not that anyone has literally seen the Father except the One standing before you that came from the Father (6:46)

3. Jesus gets back on the subject of Himself as the Living Bread of Life that came down from heaven (6:51) after an assurance that everlasting life comes to any who believe in Him (6:47) and the contrast of the manna in the heaven where the eaters died and this bread of heaven which when eaten prevents death (6:49-51)

7-4: Jesus Answer to the Jews, “How Can This Man Give Us His flesh?”

Presbyterians and Lutherans need to read this answer again today; for either like the Jews who originally heard it they failed to read the initial explanation of Himself as the Living Bread that came down from heaven as recorded in John 6:35; or also like the Jews as Jesus went into the parables after a recognition of the hard of seeing and hearing, could not understand because God has not meant that they should understand. I suspect that they have not personally and spiritually even read these words from Jesus independently of what they are officially told to believe and practice as doctrine.

Previously in John 6:41 it was a complaint from the Jews, by the time of John 6:52 a quarrel broke out among the Jews about “the flesh to eat”. And you know how by now they could not understand because of the parable of eating His flesh and drinking His blood; but with the clear explanations still provided to them that: (1) that the eternal life would continue after physical life here as Jesus raised them up on “the last day” of this old earth age; (2) that the eating of flesh and drinking of blood was a parabolic metaphor for abiding in Jesus (6:56); and that this drinking and eating was of the bread that came down from heaven, the eating of which would provide life forever (6:58)
“My Church” and “Believing”


You see when John writes the purpose of John in John 20:30,31 as both “believe” and “believing”--in order first of all that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and then secondly by a continuous “believing” for years, you may have the life of life and everlasting life, he is addressing subtly as only John the experienced Pastor can and the last living Apostle with all that personal experience with Jesus, the two categories of disciples, those who remain and those who go away. In other words, we find in John a message for both God’s people who remain in faith, “believing”; and those who “depart from the living God” because of “an evil heart of unbelief”.

Consistent with what we have found in our study of the Gospel of John up to this point, and will find in all seven of the chapters centered around the 7 miracle-signs of the Gospel of John, the miracles are indeed signs that point beyond themselves to the teachings and doings of Jesus on earth. This consistency and pointing characteristic of the way John wrote this life of Jesus is glaring as welcome to chapter 6 of John. There are two miracles at the beginning of the chapter--Jesus walking on water, and the feeding of the five thousand; and these two miracles, which certainly get your attention as unique in history are a preface to the teachings and other historical events of the same chapter: (1) Jesus as the Bread of Life from heaven, obviously related to Jesus feeding the five thousand with five barley loaves and two fishes; (2) the incident where Jesus was rejected by His own around Capernaum as the rejection starts with a rejection of His hard teaching that He came down from heaven and with the Bread of Life, certainly Jesus has the backing of such outlandish claims from the 12 disciples who saw Him walk on water, and certainly with those who recognized like John in the beginning that there could be no limitations even on earth to the Word who co-created the universe; and (3) the disciples who went away and the disciples who stayed incident of John 6:60-71.

You will notice the reason that Peter offered for the rest of the 12 disciples to stay, and when Jesus said “will you go away also?”, was not that Jesus had performed the two miracles earlier of feeding the five thousand or the walking on water, or even earlier the water into wine and the healing of the Nobleman’s son or the healing of the man infirm for 38 years, rather the reason was that Jesus had the words of eternal life. {And much more in Peter’s testimony of faith for us all which we will discuss in this chapter as part of the exegesis of John 6.}

7-6: The Two Miracle-Signs of John 6.
1. Jesus feeds five thousand not counting women and children. (John 6:1-14)

Once again to conclude on this miracle and what the people of Galilee thought of Jesus, John uses the word “sign” in John 6:14. Most of the men who saw the sign recognized Jesus as the Prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:18) who would come into the world. Unfortunately when Jesus got closer to his own home country by crossing the Sea of Galilee, yes the time He walked on water, there was less acceptance by his most “own” of His own people. (By the way while we see less use of the word “Jews” by John, we do see it coming again as in 6:41 the Jews complained about this hard teaching on the Bread from Heaven, and we do remember the Bible beginnings of the word “Jews” as a short form for the residents of Jerusalem.)


Faith began to be engendered in the special 12 disciples, the apostles, even as in John 6 the Jews complained about His teachings that He came down from heaven, and quarreled, many disciples followed Him no more because of the hard sayings about eating flesh and drinking blood. This was fifth of seven miracle-signs in the book of John, with only two more to complete the purpose of John of John 20:30,31, only two more around which to see the character and personality of the “Word made flesh” at the introduction to John, and miracles almost taken for granted as they accepted the first words of John about Jesus as the Co-Creator of the Universe. If they did not believe it before, and you will recall that it is was during the miracle-sign at the wedding feast of Cana where John announces that the disciples “began to believe in Him”. Goodness, John knew; for he was one of those 12 disciples.

7-7: Teaching of Jesus: The Living Bread from Heaven.

Even as Jesus taught in John 4 the difference between water and the water which He could offer to the world as “living water”, so now in John 6 Jesus teaches the difference between the bread which He provided in the miracles of feeding five thousand with five barley loaves and two fishes as He can also provide as Son of God, and as Co-Creator of the Universe, sent by God for that very purpose, a “living bread”. So we continue to learn more about the “life” that Jesus provides; and how He Himself is the way of life as well as truth and way.

Hopefully the picture is beginning to dawn on the reader that the difference between the tares and the wheat is greatly encompassed in the difference
between “believe” and continuing to believe called often “believing”. It is also the difference between fruit that remains and is pruned by God, and fruit that does not remain which God the master vinedresser casts off.
“My Church” and “Believing”
CHAPTER 8

Disciples and Friends:
Fruit that Remains (John 9-14)

To look at six chapters of John at one time would be quite ambitious, if it were not for the unity of authorship and purpose that the Apostle John provided in the writing of this life of Jesus. John is a skilled writer. Of course he had the whole first century to wrap up this book of the New Testament, with many years of talking about Jesus in the pulpit of the church at Ephesus, in visits to other churches--for surely his travels were more than to the Island of Patmos where the Romans imprisoned him for a year--and in conversations with Mary, the mother of Jesus, whom Jesus committed to his care. That John, unlike Peter and Paul, in fact unlike all the other Apostles, survived the Roman and Jewish first century persecutions is a marvel of the grace and protection of God. No doubt, much of that was the special protection of the Ascended Jesus that also appeared to him on the isle of Patmos to give him the revelations of the book of Revelation. There was a rumor in first century Christianity that John would live until Christ came again, a distortion of what Jesus Himself said to John in the presence of the other Apostles. In the last passage of John, John 21:20-25, John modifies this rumor.

"Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but 'If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?'" (John 21:23)

8-1: "Signs" in John 9-14 to Progress the Purpose of John 20:30,31.
Hope you remember the purpose that John recorded for the writing of his life of Christ, a purpose most clearly stated than in any other book of the Bible; however since you have slept since the reading of the previous chapters from the signs of the book of John, all of which mentioned “believe”, it is repeated below.

“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ (remember this is Greek for the Hebrew word “Messiah” in the Old Testament, a word heard most often in the book of Isaiah), the Son of God, and believing you may have life in His name.” (John 20:30,31)

As in the other chapters of John from John 2 centered around the sign of the wedding feast at Cana, from John 4 on the sign of the healing of the nobleman’s son, from John 5 on the healing of the man with an infirmity of 38 years, from John 6 on the feeding of five thousand and walking on water, now in John 9-14 we continue on signs--here the last of the seven miracle-signs is (1) Jesus’ healing of the man born blind in John 9:1-12 and (2) the raising of Lazarus from the dead of John 11. While we would not minimize the place of the Holy Spirit in the writing of this as in all other of the 66 books of the Bible—“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (through the Holy Spirit” (II Timothy 3:16,17)), that is “Holy (and wholly dedicated) men of God spoke as they were moved upon by the Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21)--we would again point out the creativity of the writing of God exemplified here by how he carefully chose just seven miracles from the many, and a few teachings and actions—the “things” of John 21:25 which Jesus did if everyone were written, the world itself could not contain the books that would (the historical facts, implications, and interpretations with versions and translations) be written—those seven progress in complexity from the simple changing of water into wine to the final miracle of bringing Lazarus back from the dead.

In the case of the most difficult, the bringing of Lazarus back from the dead, even a faithful disciple like Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus--this was the Mary that anointed the feet of Jesus with fragrant oil and wipe His feet with her hair (John 11:1)...this same Mary at first could muster only enough faith to say “Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died” (John 11:32), and many of the Jews that had joined the women around Mary and Martha to comfort them concerning their brother (John 11:19), some of them said also with limited faith, “could not this man who opened the eyes of the blind...”
Disciples and Friends: Fruit that Remains

-recall the progression of miracles was the also difficult before Lazarus of the man blind from birth (John 9:1)--"...also have kept this man from dying?" (John 11:37)

8-2: Learning from the Bible Classics.

“Be not such a wiseacre as to think that you have nothing to learn from the past” {Charles Haddeon Spurgeon}

And here on the miracles I must give some scholarship credit to Merrill C. Tenney, former Dean of the Graduate School at Wheaton, for his almost classical book {at least classical to me as it made a contribution to my studies on John over 40 years ago} JOHN: The Gospel of Belief", which assisted me in background study when I wrote evangelistic sermons on the Gospel of John, “Come and See”, and later a book by the same title; when I harmonized the Apostle Paul in a couple of books with the Apostle John--two Apostles who perhaps never met and yet harmonize in agreement at every point of doctrine and teaching--proofs of their contacts with Christ and breathing on by the Holy Spirit as well as the unity and consistency of the Bible as the Word of God--and even the more recent “Christ for Individuals” {volume 3 of the five volume LEARN CHRIST COMMENTARIES} from the 5 books from John where among other harmonizings between John and Paul, the three epistles of John are harmonized with the last of the 14 New Testament books written by the Apostle Paul. Before we progress rapidly, required to go quickly from John 9 to John 14 in one chapter like this, I would like to illustrate three large contributions of Tenney.

(1). That the life of Christ by the Apostle John is the Gospel of Belief, not only because John says so in his stated purpose of John 20:30,31, but also because the word “believe” is mentioned 98 times in the Gospel of John. It is a word almost unique to John among the 66 books of the Bible. Believe comes from the Greek word “pisteuo”, most often translated into English as “believe”, but also sometimes as “trust or committ” {examples in John 2:24, Romans 3:2, I Corinthians 9:17, and Galatians 2:7}.

(2). While I generally chose to stay on the internal evidence only of John where the signs flow naturally from an introductory acceptance of Jesus as the Word and Co-Creator of the Universe, Tenney finds also that the Signs show Jesus to be the Master of: (1) Quality in the changing of water into wine; (2) Distance and space in the healing of the nobleman’s Son; (3) Master of Time in the healing of the impotent man of 38 years; (4) Master of Quantity in the feeding of the five thousand; (5) Mastery over Natural Laws in the walking on water;
(6) **Master over Misfortune** in the healing of the man born blind; and (7) **Master over Death** in the raising of Lazarus.

(3). In a moment we will come to the four key words of the stated purpose of John--the reason he says that he wrote this life of Christ--yes, to the previously discussed three key words--“signs”, “believe and believing”, and “life and everlasting life”--of the other chapters on Believing in John, we will add a fourth of “disciples”, also in John 20:30,31. All of these things or signs, John states in his purpose, were done “in the presence of His disciples”; and even as disciples does not refer to just the 12 Apostles which were most often called Apostles, it refers also to seventy other disciples that Jesus sent out to heal and cast out devils {Luke 10:1} as well as some Jews that believed, and others like Mary, Martha, and Lazarus of Bethany. {You will remember also Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, leaders among the Jews, took the body of Jesus to prep it for burial (John 19:38-42, and that Joseph is specially named as “a secret disciple of Jesus” (John 19:38) in the same category as Nicodemus, although obviously born again, who came to Jesus by night.) Above all in this chapter we would desire to exegete on “disciples” in John 9-14, and come to see degrees of disciplship much like in churches today, the highest degree of disciplship identified by Jesus in John 15:15 where the remaining 11 Apostels are called “Friends” more than servants and disciples because they know what Jesus is doing in the world {John 15:15 also}. It is hoped that these four key words of the purpose will rapidly guide us through John 9 thru John 14, actually with a little from John 15 on Disciples that Become Friends, even though we anticipate 14 clusters of “signs”, “life”, and “believe” in those chapters.

1. The four key words.
   (1). **Sign**;
   (2). **Believe**;
   (3). **Life**; and
   (4). **Disciple**.

2. The 14 clusters from the chapters of 9-14 on the four key words.
(1). John 9:13-18 where the Pharisees, “Jews that did not believe” (John 9:18) excommunicate, cast him out of the Temple much like some church leaders do today encouraged by the false teachings of Warren on the unity of the Spirit, the man born blind that Jesus healed.

**NOTE:** The two miracle signs of John 9--Jesus' healing of the man blind from birth when the disciples asked the difficult question “who sinned, this man or his parents,that he was born blind”--an equivalent question still asked today, and the raising of Lazarus from the dead, definitely the pinnacle of difficulty of the healing performed by Jesus, and as Co-Creator showed Jesus' power over the making of man--are startling in their magnitude and implications; however not nearly as startling as the statement Jesus made clear to the 11 Apostles (Judas had already betrayed Him and left to get the captors of Jesus) that “no longer do I call you disciples but friends”. (John 15:15) It is the same section, but in chapter 15 where He makes the famous teachings on Himself as the vine for disciples and God as the vine-dresser. God either prunes disciples, or where there is no fruit “casts them out”. So that what we see here, as Jesus and the rest of the 11 smart over the departure of Judas Iscariot, is disciples that either mature and grow with fruit that remains or disciples like Judas who are cast out. Also we see the vast potential in a challenge for the Falling Away that some disciples can actually become “Friends of Jesus”

(2). The keyword cluster of John 9:35 with “believe” mentioned three times, and where Jesus presents Himself clearly to the man as “Son of God”--something the Jesus Seminar tries to deny that Jesus ever did, and they deny an acceptance of John as Word of God (in reality these PhD's and ThD's deny the very fundamental doctrine of the Bible as the inspired Word of God, they can not really understand the Bible since they are still natural men or do not understand the things of the Spirit of God which are spiritually discerned (I Corinthians 2:14) where Jesus sought out and found the former blind man after the Pharisees cast him out, led him to faith and the man “worshipped” Jesus (John 9:38).

(3). The life and abundant life of John 10:10 and the cluster of John 10:9-12 where Jesus explains how He is the door of the sheepfold of God after the Pharisees after the blind Pharisees (John 9:40,41) heard what Jesus said to the man born blind (I would think that they are still in the Temple or just outside for Jesus to find the man close to the Pharisees), and after these blind Pharisees-"if you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see'”. Therefore
Disciples and Friends: Fruit That Remains

your sin remains." (John 9:41)--could not understand the illustration of how He Himself was the only door into the sheepfold of God; and Jesus in desperation, perhaps more for the formerly blind man and the other disciples present, stives to state and teach again that "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep" (John 10:7).

NOTE: By the way right here would be another appropriate place to mention a contribution on Tenney on the "life and abundant life".

"Life, so defined, possesses various elements. It implies consciousness; for there is no knowledge without conscious existence. Further, it signifies contact, for one cannot apprehend those things with which one has neither direct nor indirect contact. Again, it involved continuity (yes Tenney is quite alliterative and must have also preached on this subject of abundant life), or duration, because knowledge of God presupposes coexistence with Him. And finally, it assumes development (opps, the Cs slipped in favor of progress in the alphabet), since the knowledge of God must be a growing, not a static thing. Eternal life, man's full destiny, is the objective of the teaching of this Gospel. (And of course an original objective, learned by all the disciples, from Jesus.)"

(4). The Shepherd Know His Disciples that are really His, His real sheep as contrasted to the Goats, of John 10:25-30, with beginnings of the teaching of Oneness with God that culminates in the extended teachings of John 13-17.

(5). The Believers (and disciples) beyond Jordan, where John was baptized, cluster of John 10:37-42. "Sign" is here too: "Then many came to Him and said, 'John performed no sign (looks like the Apostle got this from believers beyond Jordan as well as from Jesus as we saw earlier in John 6:26), but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true. And many (on the other side of Jordan) believed in Him there." (John 10:41,42)

(6). The "believe", "live" and "disciple" Cluster of John 11:15-27 with pre-Lazarus resurrection discussions with disciples like the 12 and no doubt some of the 500, Thomas, Martha and Mary.

NOTE: After reading this chapter of "Den of Thieves" it is prayed that you will read for yourself John chapters 9 through chapter 15, especially if you are interested in the work of the Holy Spirit here on earth until withdrawn during the Falling Away, a subject that is beyond the immediate scope of these chapters on Believing from John. There is just too much here to be fair and intellectually honest with! That is what Lew Wallace
did in preparation to write “Ben Hur”, and after a research reading of the four Gospels came to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

8-3: The Last “Believing” Clusters of John 9-15 Around the key words.

For the sake of brevity and thoroughness on John 9-15, we will briefly wrap up the last 8 of the 14 believing Clusters centered around those key words of “believe and believing”, “life”, “signs”, and “disciples”. {You will find in these 7 chapters of the book of John many more of these keywords than we are able to discuss, also many many more as you read for yourself the book of John. Who knows, if not a believer already, like Lew Wallace, the former governor of New Mexico, you may also come to believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. It might even take just one of these clusters, where the light of truth finally dawns on you, and the Holy Spirit uses the words and teachings of Jesus so often as He has done in the past to make A Report personal for Believing and for you.}

NOTE: By the way a specific harmony between Paul and John that I did not mention which shows the consistency of the Bible and of faithfulness of New Testament writers to the teachings from God—“every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4), from Christ, and from the Holy Spirit, an obvious agreement and consistency that demands acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God, is that both Paul in Romans and John in John 12:38-40 quote form Isaiah on Reports.

(1). From John, where although Jesus had done “so many signs before them” (John 12:37), the “them” surely including the “certain Greeks” of John 12:20 that asked the disciples Philip and Andrew about Jesus, the disciples you know who were always with Jesus—the Apostles that we would call professionals today and those from among the 500 who we would today call more the secular or lay disciples—and the large group of people” (John 12:34) that always flocked around Him especially after the word about the raising of Lazarus got out in the little country of Palestine, this same “people” who debated with Jesus about this lifting up of the Son of Man, and “who is this Son of Man”. (To a certain extent they were either ignorant of Isaiah where “Son of Man” is the Messiah, or they pretended ignorance for argumentative sake because of a non-commitment to faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Certainly in spite of the many chaptered teachings on His crucifixion to come that started back in John 8:21, many of the people and even the disciples and Apostles had not come to accept it as a God-ordained fact and reality.) Anyway the Report from Isaiah of John 12:38-40. It is in two parts:
a. Who among the Jews and Gentiles, the world, is willing to believe the report of John and from the teachings of Jesus in order that they might have salvation?

“Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?”

{You begin to get the impression as you should, long before I hope you come to the “many are called but few are chosen” of the last chapter of “Den of Thieves”, that the believing of any such Report from an Apostles or disciple, from Jesus or John, and originally in the Old Testament from God through Prophets is first contingent on God doing something in the individual human heart, here by Isaiah and which John quotes, it is called “been revealed” to the individual.}

b. The Jews “could not believe” John writes in his own words in John 12:39, and then quotes for the second part of why the Jews could not believe, still a phenomena that is hard to wrap the mind around since most Jews today and in the time past Christ did not accept Him as the Messiah, the Son of God in spite of Jesus, the Apostles, and hundreds of other first century believing disciples were of the Jewish nation. Isaiah says: (1) God blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts {it is a work of God in the hearts and nation of Israel after so long a time of God’s striving and crying for them to return to Him}, so that there is no way most of the Jews can “understand” or be “healed”. {Healing here in the second half of Isaiah 53:1 is salvation, as you can see in the miracle-signs of healing from Jesus comes also with physical healing. In fact if you would desire to distinguish Jesus and the work of healing God has done in history from the beginning from that of so-called “faith-healers”, it can be helpful to look for the salvation as well as physical healing!}

“He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, lest they should see with their eyes, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.” (Isaiah 53:1b)

The Jews just can no longer understand because God will not let them! After so many thousands of years, from rescue in Egypt to the Crucifixion of Christ and the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem (70 A.D. by Titus and the Roman army), where Prophets and then His own Son were sent to plead with them, God only receiving the response from the nation of His chosen people of
Disciples and Friends: Fruit that Remains

“an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God”, then God gave up on the majority of the Jews. He chose for His people, good and bad, from among the Gentiles to be part of His kingdom and His local churches until the Fulness of Gentiles is complete that Paul wrote about in Romans 11:25 in efforts to thoroughly define “the people of God”, or God’s people; and then it would seem that after this time is complete, and perhaps even as the army of the Muslim man of sin, backed by Satan, comes against Jerusalem and the camp of the saints, just before the last day of the Second Coming with Gathering and Separation, some more Jews may be saved. {I would hardly go so far as Carroll in “The Interpretation of the English Bible, and on eschatology that the whole nation of 144,000 will be saved in one day; however it is possible!}

(2). From Paul in {recall this is where we started in Den of Thieves, and preliminary to specific chapters in John on the miracle signs}, with chapters like “Reports for Unbelievers” (chapter 3 of “Den”), “Who Believes?” (chapter 4 of “Den” and chapter 2 of John), “Reports to Make Believers” (chapter of of “Den” and chapter 4 of John), “Believers or Disciples”, {or both respectively of Den and chapter 4 of John}, “Believers and Disciples”, “My Church” and Disciples”, and lastly this chapter} in Romans 10:16, and the larger context of Romans 10, is the quote from Isaiah 53:1 the same as in John 12:38-40?

a. Although also from Isaiah 53:1, it is much shorter in the Romans from Paul and the Holy Spirit.

“Who has believed our report?” (Romans 10:16 and Isaiah 53:1)

NOTE: John also had the book of Romans for reading and research as he preached near the end of the first century. And even as Paul was attempting in Romans with Reports from the Prophets, Jesus, and the Spirit to identify the Gentiles as now the majority people of the people of God, so John in teaching for most of his life in the Gentile Ephesus would also sympathetically, and consistent with Jesus and the Old Testament from God, also indentify God’s people, in the book of Revelation, and before as a few believing Jews and primarily believing Gentiles. {Wish we had time for more; but please read all of Romans 10, and the whole book of Romans, to determine who God has identified as His ultimate people, which Paul and God through the Spirit breathing on Paul as identified as the real Israel and the real Jews, “not one outwardly but inwardly” (Romans 2:28,29).

8-4: Last 8 “Believing” Clusters of John 9-14.
In this section and if possible, we will look at only the Keywords and a Summary of Their Meaning from the last 8 "Believing" Clusters of John 9-14. Time, space, and brevity may get us again as the Gospel of John is so packed with significant verses about “believing”.

7. The Cluster of John 11:41-48 where Jesus Raised Lazarus from the Dead.

   (1). Where Jesus prayed to the "Father" before the miracle of raising, and where Jesus said that "while I know you always hear Me", the public prayer for a miracle was for the benefit of those “who are standing by Me” (John 11:42), primarily the closest of disciples in order that “they may believe that You sent Me.” (also in John 11:42)

   (2). Many of the Jews that came to visit Mary in her sorrow “did believe in Him” (John 11:45), and others, “some”, went back to tattletale to the Pharisees the “things” Jesus did.

   (3). John tells what was happening back in the Jerusalem of the Jews when some tattletaled, no doubt helped in his research for writing by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea or with other secret disciples among the Jews: (1) the Pharisees and chief priests gathered a council, saying, “What shall we do” since this Man works many “signs” (John 11:47); and the Romans will come and take away the place of religious leadership they give us under Roman government, to which Caiphas intervened (1) to express the wisdom of Jesus dying instead of the whole nation, and (2) as high priest he was still given prophetic predictions, this time that (a) Jesus would die for the whole nation, and (b) that Jesus would gather in one the children of God that were gathered abroad.

    NOTE: Again we see the word “signs” used by the Pharisees and chief priests in council as well as the believers and disciples beyond Jordan, as well as Jesus and the Apostle John. And while the word “sign” primarily is of the miracles of Jesus, the 7 in John and more in other Gospels, it would also imply all that Jesus did and said.

8. The Cluster of John 12:4-19 where there was a plot on the part of the Jews to kill Lazarus. It was dangerous in those days to be a recipient of the healing of Jesus, first the blind man was cast out of the Temple and now that there was a plot against the new life of Lazarus.
(1). We start in this cluster and exponentially increasing as we progress from John 12 to the last clusters in John 14 and John 15, that the "disciples" keyword, the disciples in whose presence Jesus performed the miracle-signs of the gist of John in John 20:30-31, and here without the word disciple in John 12:9, it is simply the "Lazarus whom He had raised from the dead."

(2). The chief priests, according to John in John 12:10,11 explained, plotted to kill Lazarus, by the way like earlier they had in John 11:45-57 plotted to kill Jesus, because: "on account of him {Lazarus} many of the Jews (a) went away {from Judaism} and believed in Jesus." (John 12:11).

(3). A Great Multitude in Jerusalem when they heard that Jesus came to the feast in Jerusalem, of John 12:12, where they cried out with Old Testament quotes from Psalm (118:26) and Zechariah (9:9) as they waved branches of palm trees and flocked Him on the streets, and yet we can not tell to what extent they were really disciples in that essentially this is the same "multitude" of Jerusalem that would later cry "Crucify Him, Crucify Him" (John 19:15 and ). Of course, we know that those of the multitude who sought to make Him King, and were rejected by Jesus, wanted another powerful and materialistic kingdom like they had in past history under David and Solomon.

9. The "Sir, we wish to see Jesus" (John 12:21) from the Greeks talking to the disciples of Philip and Andrew, a time that Jesus choses to announce His impending death with an example for other disciples, where it is necessaryfor "a grain of wheat {when} it falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces grain." (John 12:24)

10. And about His impending Crucifixion and implications of discipliship for the Greeks as well as for all, "He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life".

8-5: From the Cross Prediction to the Friends of Jesus (John 12-15).

Actually there were cross predictions from Jesus near the beginning of His Ministry when in John 2, He cleansed the Temple for the first time. When the Jews asked for a sign to justify His authority for the cleansing of the Temple, Jesus told them to destroy this temple and in three days He would raise it back up (John 2:19). They protested that it took 46 years for Herod to build this Temple; and John explains (2:21) that Jesus was speaking of the Temple of His body. A contrast between a physical building and the spiritual building of the body of Christ, My Church, that immediately neither the Jews nor the disciples would
1. After the resurrection of Christ, John explains in John 2:22 remembered and understood that Jesus spoke about His own body.

   a. They then believed the Old Testament Scripture (2:22), among them would be the two Old Testament quotes from the cleansing of the temple.

      (1). Not to make "My Father’s house as house of merchandize" more a rewording of the “Den of Thieves” of Jeremiah 7:11, than a quote; but one that sets up Jesus’s enthusiasm and zeal of the quote of John 2:17 (Palsm 69:9) for the House of God, a zeal that lead Him to the angry behavior of the cleansing of the Temple, because although soon to be destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D with Jerusalem and long determined by God to be cast off along with the giving of daily sacrifices and the holy of holies (Matthew 25:15, Daniel 11:31, and Daniel 12:11), the Temple being yet a meager representation of something bigger than itself, and one which by the way was where the first Christians of Jerusalem met to worship (Acts 2:46); and although a large change was about to take place in God’s decisions and in historical application whereby the Temple would pass from a physical building to the Body of Christ to the “no temple” of Revelation 21:22 where God the Father and the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, are its temple of the New Jerusalem on the new earth. To what extent did Jesus intend that the focus of Christians and Christianity would be more on that everlasting Temple in the New Jerusalem than on any of these physical buildings constructed by the mammon of man, to be destroyed with all the works on the earth as the old world and old heavens are burned up with fire? To what extent did God and Christ ever intend for physical buildings for a portion of the church written in heaven to meet after the bad experiences of man made Houses of God in the Jerusalem of Jeremiah and of Jesus? One can strain through the New Testament without finding any instructions from God or blessings from God on physical buildings like God had grown weary of aborted efforts to place His name on a physical building at any location except on Mount Zion, and here it would be a whole city, the New Jerusalem, that God and Christ with the angels constructed in heaven and lowered down from heaven to Mount Zion with the new earth (Revelation 21:1,3). Could you not consider also, that often such elaborate and comfortable houses of God today
Disciples and Friends: Fruit that Remains

for American churches take away the attention and proper perspective for the Temple of the New Jerusalem, where God and Christ are themselves the temple? For although we may react many times to the men of the world, and less than fruit that remains people of God, as they criticize any focus on the future life as distracting from Christian work here on earth, this just not may be the thoughts and ways of God that are “higher than our thoughts and higher than our ways” (Isaiah 55:9). There is the more than distinct possibility that God desires the focus on that unique Temple of Himself and Christ more than on efforts and admiration of any man created “mammon” here on earth. And yes, many things have grown up in modern American Christianity that can hardly be based on Scripture, or whose existence and maintenance can be justified by Scripture. {For example man-made denominations and the churches that attempt to replace the “My Church” as defined by Jesus, the body of Christ and the church of the firstborn, written in heaven.}

(2). If you study the context, Psalm 69, from which the zeal of God for the House of God quote came of John 2:17, you will clearly see that this is Jesus suffering the rejections of trial and crucifixion: the gall and vinegar of the crucifixion in 69:21, the lack of pity from the Jews and the other people during trial and persecution in 69:20, the reproach and shame of death on a tree and public display like a criminal of 69:19. Also you can see in this prayer from Jesus for rescue and justice the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple that took place in 70 A.D. with Rome and General Titus as the instruments of God. And that they, the rejecting and despising among God’s people of Jerusalem and Palestine, would have their names “blotted out of the book of the living” (Psalm 69:28), not written as a historical record that righteousness was upon them, was definitely predicted by the Prophet Zechariah as God spoke through him (Zechariah 13:7-9), likewise with the Prophet Daniel. The conclusion of the “Who Has Believed our Reports”, much of the focus of the message-chapters on the miracle-signs of John, the “Reports for Believing”, from John 12:38 and Romans 10:16, is how can the old Israel any longer believe since they do not have eyes to see, ears to hear, and understanding. God has taken that away, which I think must mean that the Holy Spirit, in His work of convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, has been instructed by God the Father to stay away from most the Jews.

2. It even got tougher on God’s people in John 15, where Jesus in the larger context of John 13-17, tries to distinguish between disciples like Judas Iscariot and disciples like the remaining 11 Apostles, no longer servants and disciples alone He calls them, but Friends (John 15:15). {You can download the whole book on this
Friends subject, with what it takes to be called a Friend of Jesus, much better than this soft, sentimental, and superficial concept in churches today of where Jesus is my Friend, from the website of www.biblecombridge.com, one of the websites of SunGrist_Bible that publishes this same of “Den of Thieves” and also separate the chapter-messages on “Reports for Believing”.

(1). While the great difference in Christ between the Old Testament and the New is that God provides a means through faith and the inward presence of the Holy Spirit to live up to the righteousness of God, lesser at first but growing with years and complete at the Second Coming, still the requirements for Christian church members is much more difficult than expected or than preached by the contemporary Gospel of Prosperity and Health.

a. With God as the vinedresser today as in John 15:1 and each member of the kingdom as the “branch” (this kingdom cuts across every church and denomination to include all of God’s people, good or bad), God takes away from His presence and blessings “every branch in Christ that does not bear fruit” (John 15:2).

b. Furthermore God prunes, a less than pleasant aspect of the Christian walk and church membership, every branch that remains and bears fruit in order that it might bear more fruit. You might call this pruning on the milder side the reproof and correction of the instructions in righteousness and doctrine that come from the ALL SCRIPTURES; and the tougher pruning as an absence of the gospel of prosperity and health which in reality is a perversion of the sound doctrine of the Gospel Paul delivered, part of “the faith once for all delivered to the saints”. Bottom line, as made make clear in a companion book of “Den of Thieves”, is that sound living comes from sound doctrine; and if there is to be any progress and “overcoming” to use the words of Jesus to the seven churches of Asia Minor in Revelation, it must come with a reversal of intolerance toward sound doctrine (II Timothy 4:3,4) by way of the revival of the profit of Scriptures of II Timothy 3:16,17 to get rid of the bad habits of certain church members of II Timothy 3:1-8, that is by way of seriousness on the Bible where it is more than a religious and revered book, it is a book of profit for sound living with reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness.

c. “God casts off” some Christians and church members (John 15:2). You cannot get away from God’s casting away of some of God’s people, some of the
Disciples and Friends: Fruit that Remains

Christians and church members. It is clearly there in John 15 and well as in the messages to the seven churches of Asia Minor of Revelation 2 and 3. While you may want to ignore the God and Christ of anger and chastisement as shown on the cover in that obvious righteous indignation from Jesus in the cleansing of the Temple, in favor of a santa claus only type personality, unless you overlook and ignore much of the Scriptures you can not do it! {To learn more about chastisement of God for His own children, not bastard children, please read Hebrews 12:3-11.}

9. The Cluster of Keywords where Jesus Predicts His Death in John 12:27-41.

(1). In front of many people, Jesus as the weight on the cross to come pressed down on Him prayed for God the Father to glorify His name through these events; and although as God spoke with a voice from heaven (John 12:28) that He had both gloried His name and would glorify it again in the events to come, some of the people thought it thundered and others thought an angel spoke to Jesus.

(2). Jesus said (12:30) this voice from God was for the sake of the people present, and used this assurance from God the Father to make two doctrinal statements.

a. With the judgment on the world of the cross to follow, would come in due time the casting out of Satan from the world. While the ultimate and final casting out of Satan is at the Second Coming of Christ, when Satan and all his angels are cast into the lake of fire and brimstone with the unbelievers, the whole judgement thing on Satan--"you shall bruise His head and he shall bruise your heel" (Genesis 3:15)--was made possible by the death of Jesus on the cross and His subsequent Resurrection, and then greatly and partially implemented as the Holy Spirit came in great power and glory on the first day of Pentecost after the Ascension, then the Holy Spirit by His work (John 16:7-11) with the world to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, hampered or bound Satan to a certain extent for his evil work and ways.

b. Jesus spoke of the Crucifixion to come as being "lifted up" with another prediction of such, and the assurance that he would "draw all peoples to Myself." (John 12:32)

(2). To these same peoples Jesus with a previous and brief lesson about Himself as the "light", then urges the people to "believe in the light, that you may
become sons of light” (John 12:36); then departed and was hidden from them, but John records more teaching on the light and to walk in the light in John 12:42-50, and in a cluster below.

(3). Yet John does not leave these "peoples" without parenthetically to the teachings of Jesus, also adding an additional note in John 12:37-41. Here is the emphasis of “Reports for Believing” from John and Paul that have become the title of these message-chapters on the seven signs of John.

a. John has to add a conclusion about these people, that although Jesus had done so many “signs” before them, they still “did not believe in Him” (John 12:37)

b. It was not unexpected since this response of the majority of the peoples was predicted by the Prophet Isaiah, rather God through the Prophet Isaiah, and recorded in Isaiah 53:1.

c. So few among Israel would believe the Reports of Jesus for salvation, that the cry would come from Prophets, Apostles, and even Jesus and John, “Who has believed our report?”

d. But primarily it was a cry to explain, why according to God, so few of Israel would believe the Jesus of Salvation. And the reason comes back from the second half of the Isaiah 53:1 verse that they can not: their hearts are hardened, their eyes blinded, and they can not understand.


(1). We have in John 12:42 an unexpected source of Disciples without a use of the word disciple, among the rulers {these were Jews of the Jews} "many believed in him.” However they were Secret Disciples, like Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus {they assisted in the burial of Jesus after crucifixion as recorded in John 19:38,39}, because they were afraid of how the authorities had said that any disciples or believers would be put “out of the synagogue”.

(2). John can not resist about these secret disciples how “they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God”.

(3). Yet John is bent on a positive presentation of more of the teachings of Jesus around "light". (John 12:44-50)
Disciples and Friends: Fruit that Remains

a. Jesus taught that He who believes in Him, believes in more than Him in that He believes in the God the Father that sent Him. (12:44)

b. The person who has spiritual eyes to see Jesus, also sees God the Father. (12:45). You see how this turns the somewhat negative of the failure to see and understand to a more positive even as if for a few, and to emphasize like Paul does often in Romans that the decision of the majority can not hamper the blessings to the believing minority.

c. Jesus taught that He came as a light into the world, that “whoever believes” in Him should no longer abide in darkness. (12:46)

d. However on the other hand, Jesus taught in 12:47, when anyone hears the words of Jesus and does not believe, Jesus does not judge that person as He came to save not judge. {Of course Jesus is pointing out how God the Father is the judge; and also how as declared in John 3:16,17 that the unbeliever is automatically condemned already by the Word of God when he fails to believe.}

e. Even as the God the Father that sent Jesus, He taught, gave commands to Jesus about what He should say and speak {teach}, so this command of God is also for “everlasting life”. (John 12:49,50)

11. The Cluster of Jesus Washing the Feet of the Disciples, teaching a new commandment with the identification also in the upper room with special disciples, of which one was a traitor, of Judas Iscariot as that traitor of John 13:1-35.


13. The Big D, as Disciples become Friends in the Cluster of John 15.

14. The Big H for Holy Spirit, but which Jesus most of the time here calls “the Helper” of the John 16 cluster.
Matthew 20:16 is a pivotal verse for 4 chapters that surround it, running from Matthew 19 through Matthew 22. You can see this in the mechanics of the construction in Matthew as well, of course, as in the teaching method of Jesus which brings together in this one single verse of Matthew 20:16 four separate teachings of Jesus, 2 in separate parables (parable of the workers in the vineyard of Matthew 20:1-15 and parable of the wedding feast of Matthew 22:1-13) and two in distinct teachings about the kingdom: (1) who can be saved, or get into the kingdom of heaven in the first place (Matthew 19:23-26); and (2) who gets the most rewards in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 19:27-30). Whatever you might call these truths from God through Jesus about the kingdom of heaven, whether you would call them rules for entrance and reward or characteristics or status in the kingdom, it just basically tells us who gets there and what kind of position they will have when they get there. First in order to progress, we must start with the pivotal verse of Matthew 20:16.

“So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few are chosen.” (Matthew 20:16)


You read the parable immediately before it on the workers in the vineyard, the basic gist of which is that those called to labor in the kingdom of God at the last
hour receive just as much reward as those called at the beginning hour of the
day; and immediately you see the meaning in the first part of the parable con-
cclusion of the verse above, that is, okay, Jesus is concluding that the first
laborer in many cases will be last and the last laborer will be first. But then as
we get into the second sentence of the same verse--"For many are called, but
few are chosen", we are left hanging if we do not: (1) find this same second
sentence quoted alone from Jesus by Matthew in Matthew 22:14 where we
read the same words "For many are called, but few are chosen"; and (2) realize
that both sentences of Matthew 20:16--the first and last part and the called
and chosen part--is a conclusion for far more than just the single parable of
the laborers and the vineyard in the verses immediately preceding it, that is of
Matthew 20:1-15--are a conclusion for most of Matthew chapters 19-22. More
appropriately stated Matthew 20:16 is a conclusion in the teachings of Jesus
that Matthew has recorded all the way from Matthew 19 to Matthew 22. {Of
course, we might say this group of teachings from Jesus, two parables and
two discussions with His select disciples, since we know that the King
James translators added the numbering system for the chapters and
verses.}

The Bible teachers and preachers among us might be inclined to think that
Jesus had a four point outline in mind with these two parables and the two dis-
cussions with the disciples with the conclusion for all four in the middle, that is
in Matthew 20:16; but we know that Matthew simply recorded the narrative as
it really happened in the life and teachings of Christ. However we will use this
conclusion and four point outline in order to do a context centered exegesis of
what Jesus meant when He said in Matthew 20:16 both "that the first will be
last" and vice versa, and "many are called but few are chosen". {Also we must
find in the second part conclusion some of the first part. Among the many
called and few chosen, there is the process also of the first becoming last
and the last first.}


The first two points of our outline came out of narratives between Jesus and
the disciples. When Jesus told them how hard it was for a rich man to enter
into the kingdom of heaven, after the rich young ruler walked away from the
invitation by Jesus to follow because he had great possessions, this provoked a
puzzling question from the disciples, "Who then can be saved?" It was sincere
and it came from the heart, if a rich and good and moral young religious leader
like the young man who walked away, and who kept all the commandments of
God--also one who obviously has been blessed by God with many possessions and
status—then who in the world could be saved? You see, these disciples had the same problem that God’s people have today with the Gospel of Prosperity. If any life is being blessed with status, and health, and material blessings it must be from God, and such blessings are a sign that this person has faith in God that God is rewarding. My, how fallacious is this Gospel of Prosperity and an unsound doctrinal substitute for the real Gospel of Christ which Jesus primarily delivered to the poor {for example, you do not see one rich man among the 12 Apostles Jesus called and chose, with primarily fisherman and a tax collector, the only one with money, Judas, was the treasurer and stole from the bag}; and Jesus counters first with the difference between what is possible with men and what is possible with God. That is, God’s method and plan of salvation where the chosen and happy are contrary to what man considers and thinks possible: with a preference for the poor, no expectations from those of status and possessions even among the moral majority; and with an unusual kind of happiness as expressed in the beatitudes where the happiness is contingent on poverty of spirit, mourning, meekness, hunger and thirst, the merciful, purity, peacemaking, and persecution for righteousness. With these essentials of life for kingdom subjects, then comes: possession of the kingdom of heaven while still here on earth and then full participation later, lasting comfort, inheritance of the new earth when it replaces the old earth after the Second Coming, internal fullness and satisfaction with righteousness, mercy from God the Father who of course is the ultimate source and head of the kingdom after Christ delivers all rule and authority to Him, God is an inheritance of the kingdom--to be with God, to see God, and to dwell with Him eternally on the new earth, and above all to be called “sons of God”. (Matthew 5:3-10) {Okay, I was wrong. It takes more than Matthew 19-22 to justify the Jesus conclusion of Matthew 20:16, for obviously we have added here Matthew 5 from the Sermon on the Mount. And by the way, here in this exegesis and as we complete the bringing together of Matthew chapters 19-22 based on Jesus’ conclusion of Matthew 20:16, I hope you will come to appreciate something emphasized throughout this book on the different between (1) exegesis based on total Bible context, and (2) conclusions based on the proof text method, with hasty generalizations, of the fundamentalists’ method of pick and chose, or hunt and peck.}

The second narrative of Matthew 19 also embedded a question from Peter as spokesman for the other disciples, “Since we have left all to follow you in the kingdom, what are we going to have in the kingdom of heaven.” Another way to say what is our status going to be in the kingdom. And of course you recognize a hint of first and last here in the disciple-Jesus dialogue of Matthew 19:27-30. Jesus gave the disciples two guarantees for heaven: (1) that the 12 apostles
God’s “Called” versus God’s “Chosen”

would sit on twelve thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel, and we know from Revelation 20 that after the New Jerusalem is lowered from heaven onto the new earth then the 12 Apostles will rule in the New Jerusalem while the nations of the Gentiles on the new earth surround the location of New Jerusalem and come periodically to the New Jerusalem for worship; and (2) along with eternal life, all who have lost houses, and relatives, and land for the sake of Christ in this old earth will receive twice as much in the eternal life of the new earth.

9-3: Two Halves to the Conclusions of Matthew 20:16.

Now, it is at this point, after the two narratives of Matthew 19:23-26 (how hard it is for a rich man to be saved) and Matthew 19:27-29 that Jesus concludes half of the conclusion of Matthew 20:16 but first in Matthew 19:30.

“But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first” (Matthew 19:30)

While we are told a little of the ways in which God will implement this in the book of Revelation, especially in Revelation 20, also in Isaiah, there must remain some mystery as to all the details except to say “eye hath not seen nor ear heard nor has it entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those who love Him.” (I Corinthians 2:9 and Isaiah 29:14) Of course, here in this verse as in the first half of the pivotal conclusion of Matthew 20:16, you do see several possibilities, knowing that the teachings of Jesus always have a deep spectrum of meaning (also one reason I think Jesus chose two parables and two disciple questions to explain the conclusions of Matthew 20:16): (1) on earth the rich, wise, and moral are first and then the poor recipients of the Gospel are last; (2) the characteristics of happiness for kingdom recipients as described in the beatitudes are quite different from the happiness of the world and the worldly, another juggling of first and last, pre-eminent and meek, the powerful and the merciful; (3) there must be a warning here to be explained further in the parable of the workers in the vineyard that many in Israel that came before the first Christians and then later the Gentiles would have a juxtaposition of status and history, some of the first of Israel would be last, some of the disciples would rule over the early in Israel history, and then at least one Apostle, the Apostle Paul would come after the 12 with first rewards in the kingdom, and so on; and (4) even that some during the final tribulation of the Falling Away could be first in status in the kingdom of heaven before those first in historical order.

Lest we get lost in the exegetical details of Jesus' teachings on the “called versus the chosen” we need to look at our 4 point outline. Of course Matthew 20:16 with the two part of (1) first and last, and (2) called and chosen, as the focus and pivotal point.

1. Who can get into the kingdom of heaven, where the poor become first and the prosperous, men of status, and moral become last. In most cases, since it is so hard for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, that they do not get into the kingdom of heaven at all. (Matthew 19:23-26)

2. Who will be first and last in the kingdom: (1) in leadership status, and (2) in possessions on the new earth. (Matthew 19:27-29)

3. The Pivotal focus and conclusion of Matthew 20:16 about both the last and the first and the many called but few chosen. (Matthew 20:16)
   a. “So the last will be first, and the first last.” is pivotally quoted as half of the conclusion in Matthew 20:16 and before that in Matthew 19:30.
   b. “For many are called, but few are chosen” is pivotally quoted as the second part of the conclusion in Matthew 20:16 and after that in Matthew 22:14.

4. The parable of the workers in the vineyard where those working 1 hour receive as much pay {the payer being God in the kingdom of heaven} as those working 8 hours, represents a first and last based on time and history to add to the first and last based on possessions and status of Matthew 19. (Matthew 20:1-15)

5. Another element is added in the parable of Matthew 22:1-13 before the conclusion of “many are called but few are chosen”, that puts both a lot of history of Israel in it--where the in the first category of the parable it is obviously a summary of judgment on the first God’s people of Israel where the King after the rejection of His own son by those previously invited to the wedding feast, then destroys those murderers and burns up their city--then in the second category we can recognize this as the early Christians and Gentiles where God democratically opens the doors to call all, “both good and bad” (Matthew 22:10) in order to fill up the house of God, or the wedding feast; and lastly in the third category the called are weeded out based on only those who have the proper wedding garments {these are the wheat at the final Separation as those who through lasting faith in the Lord Jesus Christ have on the proper wedding
attire}, being the “called” but not chosen of the conclusion of both Matthew 22:14 and half of the conclusion of Matthew 20:16.

9-5: The “Good and the Bad” Called to the Wedding Feast.

And it is prayed that in all of this exegesis of the teachings of Jesus, you will find an obvious explanation of how so many people in the wilderness, rescued from Egypt by God and called by God Himself “God’s people” could be called out of Egypt and called to receive for 40 years the guidance of God in a cloud and pillar, called for 40 years to be fed and clothed by God and watered by God; yet finally after seeing the works of God for over 40 years and all above 20 except Caleb and Joshua developed “an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God” (Hebrews 3:12), then God chose only Caleb, Joshua, Moses, Aaron, and all the youth 20 years of age and under. Now which comes first, the egg or the chicken, the “evil heart of unbelief” or God’s choosing; and here we get into freedom of choice versus predestination, or Arminianism versus Calvinism—which by the way are both true in the Bible, but our problem is to understand this duality even as we can not understand the duality of something as common as light where sometimes it acts like waves and sometimes like particles, both are true but we can not fully understand just this one little act of God, neither will be understood except in eternity how both predestination and freedom of choice are true. And whether we understand this or not, the biblical fact remains that God has historically and now called a large body of people to be “God’s people”, sometimes in the congregation in the wilderness, sometimes from the Gentiles more than the Jews, sometimes in the churches in order to fill the church pews with both “good and bad” so that the churches are full; but at the Great Gathering and Separation of tares and wheat, of goats and sheep, at the very last day of this old earth when Christ Comes Again, then the final choosing of God will be made for the chosen.

“So those servants {evangelists and disciples} went out into the highways and gathered {evangelism and the great commission} together all whom they found both good and bad {the wheat and sheep are the good of the kingdom and churches and the tares and the goats are the bad of the kingdom and churches—no bad are in the church of the firstborn written in heaven as this is a perfect record}. And the wedding hall {churches} was filled with guests.” (Matthew 22:10)

NOTE: This filled with good and bad guests remind us of the saying from a Southern Baptist leader of the past that “you can fill a church with empty people”, and we might add also you can fill any church, most
churches with both good and bad people. And even as Jesus said leave the bad tares alone until the last day, so today in churches those bad people of bad habits continue to function just like they belong, often exerted more aggressive influence, since they are unhampered by the restraints of graciousness and grace, than the good members. Remember, while we can not attempt to separate them from membership, we are advised not to associate with the bad people of the bad habits; and we can ID them, a certain revelation of follies, while any single church is still in the perilous times before the intolerance of the unsound doctrine of the Falling Away. The window that we presently have left is hard to tell since it is so difficult to know when the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from earth. That will be the final phase of the Falling Away as there is no longer any restraint in the world to Satan, Satan is released as the Holy Spirit is withdrawn after 1000 (actually a variable for more than two thousand years) years of being bound by the Holy Spirit, and we will immediately see a peak in the rising tide of the mystery of lawlessness that already operated in the days of Paul (II Thessalonians).

When in the last words of the parable of the wedding feast, Matthew 22:13, of the “weeping and gnashing of teeth”, of the outer darkness where those without the proper wedding garment on are cast; then you should fully come to understand the “bad” in churches as the tares, those who do not believe in Christ and who at the Gathering and Separation are cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.

Do I need to remind you that it was Jesus, our Master and Lord and founder of the church of the firstborn of which local churches are to reflect and be representative...Jesus Himself Who said “Many are called, but few are chosen”. Perhaps you have wondered many times throughout the Scriptural studies of this book how often an assembly of people are called “God’s People”, often by God Himself and by God’s leaders like Moses and Paul, who turn out to be the called by God to be His people and assembly, but after 40 years or so turn out not to be His fully committed people, more called than chosen. Or even how a few like Joshua, Caleb, Moses, and Aaron turn out to be the few chosen as well as called. Today, also in our churches we must come to realize that while God has called many to come into that local assembly, they have come to know themselves as the people of God, through the years--40 or more or less-they show themselves by their works and lack of faith and bad habits that they are more a “Den of Thieves” than of the “chosen” people of God.
God’s “Called” versus God’s “Chosen”

After the Temple at Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D., according to the plan of God and the prediction of Jesus in Matthew 24, there is no record in the New Testament that God has ever again selected a place or a house on which to place His name, except the somewhat Temple structure in New Jerusalem where He promises on the new Earth to dwell again among men forever. Contrary to the oft objections of the fundamentalists, even of the former late and great Dr. R. G. Lee who reacted strongly to the invisible church, the “My Church” that Jesus established and make public after the testimony of faith by Peter for the Apostles became definitely extra-building and extra-location. And contrary to the dominant American concept of churches and denominations today in America, a perspective most generally taken for granted, members of the church of the firstborn, written in heaven, became more important in themselves than the buildings where they worship. The dominant thought pattern from God where it is ultimately impossible for men to build any place for God to dwell, in the Old Testament and New Testament times, became a settled reality as God made clear that the only place where He would finally dwell and live with men would be in the New Jerusalem; however, it is made by God and Christ in heaven, of course the constructors are the angels and that vast number “of just men made perfect” (Hebrews 12:23), not a man-made creation or architectural structure. In fact in many ways, you can trace and correlate the extent of the Falling Away, first in Europe and then in the United States and all America, as men started to worship the creations of their own hands, taking their awareness and focus off the total body of Christ written in heaven. Of course, this is a natural result of human nature, even in the case of the born again person who, like the Apostle Paul in Romans 7:19, has come to internally struggle with both the old nature and new nature. when the visible realities of this world such as buildings and status take the place of the invisible realities of faith such as the new world, the church of the firstborn written in heaven, God and Christ.

Even as Paul in Romans 1 traces the de-evolution of national and Gentile civilizations as a failure “to retain God in their thought patterns” (Romans 1:28) so the falling of churches into the last Apostasy of the Falling Away can be traced where man's own concept of a church as the building has been allowed to blind out God’s Bible blessed concept of no more place for His name until the new earth. Now, this is not to say that God and Christ have not simultaneously with the spread of the evangelism with the Gospel of Christ, also blessed certain buildings as meeting places of pieces of the church {a local church can only be
God’s “Called” versus God’s “Chosen”

None of these church buildings that you worship and admire so much today, these creations of man that you might also call part of the “mammon” that cannot be put before God and Christ (Matthew 6:24) will survive the destruction by God of this old earth and the old heavens.

“But the day of the Lord will come as thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise (that is going to be some noise on that single day that Jesus calls the “last day” when He comes and the heavens pass away just before the old earth also passes away by fire), and the elements (all of the Periodic Table of God created elements) will melt with fervent heat, both the earth and the works (these works are the man-made creations, or mammon) that are in it (that includes church buildings, and already we are seeing with the series of calamities God has brought on American since 9/11 the destruction of church buildings) will be burned up.” (II Peter 3:10)

I would think and recommend that as church members more and more see “the hastening of the day of God” (II Peter 3:12)—that day when the heavens will be dissolved since the heavens are burning up with a fervent heat just like the elements of the earth, the focus get more on the “new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (II Peter 3:13) than on new buildings unless they absolutely do not have sufficient space for the assemblers that already come. These assemblers that strive to fill the building may or may not be God’s chosen people, only God’s called people, both good and bad like in the wedding feast invitation of Jesus and Matthew 22. God destroyed the old Jerusalem and the old Temple, as Jesus predicted in Matthew 24, in A.D. 75 because those invited to the wedding feast of Christ and God killed the Son of the King; and then with the subsequent evangelism of the Fullness of the Gentiles, where God determined a method, also according to the Jesus parable of Matthew 22:1-14, that mainly Gentiles of all nations and a few Jews would be invited whether they were good or bad among God’s people; and then as Jesus at the Second Coming check for

---

Bible Reports for Believing 134
the proper garments of the wedding feast, those whose true clothing was either that of a sheep or a goat, then those goats without proper clothing were cast out in the outer darkness of eternal punishment where the worm \{(perhaps DNA)\} never dies and the thirst is not quenched.

9-7: Focus More on House of God of the New Jerusalem of the New Earth.

Even as we have given too much exclusive focus on heaven in our bible theology on eschatology over the new earth, just like our efforts and emphasis has been on these church buildings that can not be permanent, so have we as Gentiles neglected to realize that while God, Christ, the 12 Apostles and the saved Jews will dwell in the New Jerusalem on the new earth, we Gentiles nations will be scattered all over the new earth with the New Jerusalem as the center, and all of us Gentiles will periodically come to the New Jerusalem, at the location of the present Mount Zion in Palestine, to worship God and Christ. \{You see this is one reason the fundamentalists, many of them with money and other material possessions, like to falsely teach, based on Scofield Notes, a very material kingdom of Christ for one thousand years on this old earth: they don’t want to lose what they have now, including those beautiful church buildings in which they have invested much time and money, those creations of their own hands.\}

It is the forbidden “mammon”--the creations of men’s hands--of Matthew 6:24 that get us into so much trouble as church members, often tilting the 40 year scale in favor of the bad over the good of the wedding feast, primarily because we just will not face up to what “mammon” is; anything made by man in this world, and to what this preoccupation with what mammon can do to a church member, especially as believed and practiced by the disciple of the “good life now” in the church of Joel Osteen, in spite of Jesus clearly saying:

“\textit{You cannot serve God and mammon\textsuperscript{.}} (Matthew 6:24)"

What ultimately happens to the church member, perhaps even unknown or unrecognized by him, is that he serves one or the other; and while his desire and even his profession and worship in his church is in favor of God, the subtle commitment over a 40 of so year period of time, is in favor of mammon over God. The same Jesus with the words and teachings from God that said in Matthew 6:24, “\textit{you cannot serve God and mammon\textsuperscript{,}} also said that you will either serve and love one or the other. You can not have your cake and eat it in the sense of God versus mammon.
God’s “Called” versus God’s “Chosen”

The idols of Jeremiah were creations of man's hands of the people of God; yet they bowed down to worship and serve them, with all the unsound doctrines and implications of Baal, Astarte, and the Queen of Heaven, as if they were God and as if they were cisterns that could really hold water by helping and saving them! Can a church building be an idol today, a substitute for the real worship and service of God? Yes, it was among God’s people of Jeremiah. They actually worship the buildings of the Temples, saying “The Temple of God, the temple of God, the temple of God are these”, knowing full well the next week as in the previous week they would also worship and serve the Queen of Heaven. What happened to them can easily happen to the churches today where God tells even His Prophet to no longer pray for them: it is all over between the people of God and God!

9-8: What to Do About the Falling Away?

While it is inevitable that the Falling Away, with the rising tide of the mystery of lawlessness, and Satan influence as the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from earth, and manifestations of the man of sin with the final tribulation {the great tribulation, also counter to fundamentalists and Scofield Notes was in the first century, but the final tribulation which is both persecution from Satan, the man of sin, and the influence of the world as well as a physical persecution which is much greater as this old earth shakes apart}, and as church members also inevitably with the influences of the world and sin experience the “love that grows cold as sins abounds”, will get to your church and the members of your church.

1. You can and should resist the inevitability of the Falling Away in your church and among your church members. Beware not so much of what the fundamentalists teach you about the Bible, but what they neglect. With their pick and chose methods of exegesis, you would think that the book of II Thessalonians did not even exist or that it was not part of the Word of God. [I am sure any time one of their church members, whom they can not kick out of the SBC, gets enamored with the doctrinal teachings of II Thessalonians, they cringe, looking like Warren and a few leaders of the FBC to cast aside that member as a sinner on the doctrine of the unity of the Holy Spirit, when it is really a natural opposition to their leadership on eschatology in favor of Scofield.] Such marvelous doctrines from II Thessalonians you do not hear about, and are being ignored, as: the necessity of the Falling Away before the Second Coming {many more are looking for the Second Coming before the Falling Away because of the confusing teaching and preaching of the fundamentalists, all the one thousand year malarkey that ignores the release from bondage of Satan when the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from earth confuses church mem-
bers on eschatology, and just the absence of solid, sound doctrinal teaching on II Thessalonians is confusing also, and even if they decide one time a year like Easter they decide on a little eschatology, you will hear mixed with a little pick and chose proof test method also a few excerpts from Scofield Notes for which you can not and will not hear and find Scriptural justification: to continue on the great and marvelous sound doctrines of II Thessalonians, marvelous because of the results on us and the churches, and as ordained doctrines from God as part of the “ALL Scripture”, there is in that one book of the Word of God, the doctrine of the rising tide of the mystery of lawlessness--it is going to flood your church just like it floods the rest of the world, and there is nothing you can do about it; also in II Thessalonians that besides the Falling Away that must come before the Second Coming is a visual of the man of sin--that is, most of the world and especially the faithful of God, the saints of the good people of God, must establish a visual on the man of sin {may I offer the logic of the world news and the Bible that a Muslim leader like Osma Bin Ladin, a son or a follower, or even a leader in Hisballah, or Iran, or Gaza can be the man of sin who will lead the army of Muslims and perhaps China with them, and North Korea, even Russia, against Jerusalem and the camp of the saints outside Jerusalem {no doubt us and other Western countries among the Gentile Christians}; and also in II Thessalonians on the doctrine of the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit from earth, no more here on earth to convict the world of sin, or righteousness, and of judgement, there will be a peak of sin and lawlessness which you would naturally expect as Satan is released.

2. This is not fatalistic, only realistic; much like you must face up to the inevitability of the pains of child birth before the victory of the birth of a newborn. Even while we fight and labor in the inevitable Falling Away of approximately the last 40 years before the last day and Christ Comes Again, we know though the sufferings and pain of this birth of the new earth suddenly at the end comes the new earth with the new heaven, a new earth where righteousness dwells without sin and pain and sorrow. While heaven is indeed where the spirits now dwell of friends and loved ones in Christ that have passed away, and while heaven is where God and Jesus with the angels are constructing a New Jerusalem where God and Christ can dwell with the new creation forever and on earth, this new earth is the real eternal abode of Gentile believers as the nations of the new earth surround the New Jerusalem. There is little doubt from the Bible that the saved Gentile nations will live on the new earth much like they live today, but perhaps as in the Garden of Eden we can all expect to be more farmers than of any other profession. Also while perhaps we may have an Apostle like Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, and similar lead-
God’s “Called” versus God’s “Chosen”

3. There was a mini-falling away even during the first century of Christianity among 5 out of 7 of the churches of Asia Minor. Christ threatened to cast out their candlestick or church from Christianity, from the kingdom, and from status before God and Christ much like he treats individual church members as branches attached to God the vine when God either prunes or casts out based on the good fruit of the church and the individual Christian. {Always remember for goodness sake and the sake of Scriptures presented in this book, that any claim to be among God’s people can not save you. You know by now, that there are two classes or categories of God’s People: God’s Called People and God’s Chosen People.} Yet read afresh and anew the message of Christ to the seven churches, the same message to our churches today; and at the end of each message you will find a special note for the wheat rather than all of God’s people in the church.

NOTE: The Special Note for a Few in the church at during the Falling Away. This special note to individuals always starts with an address to “He who has an ear” to hear, the last verse or words of the church message: (1) Revelation 2:7 to the church at Ephesus, (2) Revelation 2:11 to the church at Smyrna, (3) Revelation 2:17 to the church at Pergamos, (4) Revelation 2:29 to the church at Thyatira, (5) Revelation 3:6 to the church at Sardis, (6) Revelation 3:13 to the church at Philadelphia, and (7) Revelation 3:20-22 to the church at Laodicea where the individual message for a few members is concluded rather than started by “ears to hear”. Only a few of the members will listen during the Falling Away where “they”, the majority of church members have become intolerance toward sound doctrine, “they will not endure sound doctrine” (II Timothy 4:3,4); heap up teachers with itching ears because of what they want rather than what they need, turn away from the truth and turn into fables like the Southern Baptists and new movement interdenominational churches are now doing as the Mormons and Catholics and others have done before them.

9-9: Bad Habits of the Seven Churches of Asia Minor.

a. If your church during the Falling Away inclines like the church at Ephesus, toward a certain lukewarmness where the original love for Christ and God has
God’s “Called” versus God’s “Chosen”

become dampened, then some of you members can take consolation in the mes-
sage for a few members who will “have the ears to hear” of Revelation 2:7: you
can overcome and to those who overcome they can be among those chosen of
God’s people that eat of the “tree of life” of Revelation 22, the paradise of
God of the New Jerusalem on the new earth. By the way the eating of which
automatically makes them members of the church of the firstborn written in
heaven, no matter what is the confusion and splits, toil and warfare, that is
happening around them!

b. If your church inclines and falls like Smyrna, you are extremely fortu-
nate since: your church works in spite of tribulation and poverty and the oppo-
sition from the world. Christ would call for an individual ear to hear from you
as to all churches. IF...if you overcome you can not be hurt by the Second
Death which unbelievers will experience, in the lake of fire and brimstone and
separation from God and all that is good, after the first death. (Revelation
2:11)

c. Is your church like Pergamos during the Falling Away, where you can be
commended in that (1) you hold fast to the name of Christ and of the sound
doctrine of sound faith, but condemned by Christ in that (2) you have some
members who practice the unsound doctrine of Balaam where you put stumbling
blocks before other members and the unsound doctrine of the Nicolatians.
{And you thought doctrine was no longer important!} Well, that is a bummer;
but the individual word and message of Christ for a few members in this kind
of church (Revelation 2:17) is twofold: (1) the overcomers in the church can
have hidden manna to eat, and (2) receive a stone with a new name, unknown to
all but the receiver. My, how God and Christ know and reward those personally
and individually that will overcome in the face of all unsound doctrine!

d. Is your church at Thyatira in this generation and at this time in American
history? In other words, in spite of all the good things that you know and can
be said about your church--that is, works, love, service, faith, patience, and
works that grow more each year--Christ has some things against you in that (1)
you let a false prophetess teach in your church that promote sexual immorality
and practices of non-Christian Gentiles. Now to the rest at Thyatira (Revela-
tion 2:24) or the equivalent, God does not confuse you with them, judging indi-
vidually and rewarding individually, who do not believe these unsound doctrines
and practice them, all you have to do is hold fast to the sound doctrine of
sound faith that you have now until Christ comes again--and you know about the
new earth then with the New Jerusalem, the eternal dwelling of God with God’s
God’s “Called” versus God’s “Chosen”

new creation, and of course of the no more sorrow, sin, death, and pain. And by the way no more unsound doctrine as all that offends God will not then be allowed through the gates of the New Jerusalem. The attendance and worship will be pure and comfortable!

e. You may be in a church like Sardis during the Falling Away. If so, woe unto you because while your church has a good reputation in the community, in the State Association, and the SBC, your church is dead. Did you read and hear that: your church in God’s sight and in the sight of Christ is dead (Revelation 3:1). And my goodness, if a church in the first century could be dead, that close to the time and life of Christ, what would you think about such a church today with a reputation, yet with remaining works for God that are about to die. The message for your church is “to hold fast and repent”; and for the few names in Sardis who have not defiled their garments {they have on the proper wedding attire of good God’s people not yet too spotted}, those who will overcome and have ears to hear;: (1) they can expect to be clothed in white garments in heaven; (2) His name will not be blotted out of the Lamb’s book of life {this is our first indication that even some members of the church of the firstborn, written in heaven, alias the good God’s people can even have their status lost in the only place that it counts, heaven}; and (3) Christ will confess the names of these few before God the Father and all the angels {this last confession before the angels assists in the angels finding you and your physical body, respectively after death your spirit for heaven and after the Second Coming your body from the four corners of the earth for the new earth.}

f. Are you in the church at Philly? You are fortunate as Christ commends you on: (1) works, (2) opportunity, (3) keeping the Word of God, and (4) confession of the name of Christ. We need to believe that some churches today in the Falling Away exist like this although we have not found them, nor have we heard of them! We can keep seeking. Yet if we do not, we have the individual message of Revelation 3:13 for the overcomers and for those that have an ear to hear that: (1) we will someday have the Temple of God--of course from the details of Revelation 22 we know that this is not a temple building separate from the rest of New Jerusalem, but rather a Temple formed by the presence of God and Christ, and beyond that a pillar in that Temple; (2) Christ will write on individual overcomers the name of God, of the city of God--New Jerusalem {here in chapter 3 we have teachings on the New Jerusalem and the new city lowered down from heaven long before we get to Revelation 22}; and (3) Christ will write upon that individual overcomer of the church at Philly, or anyone like it, the new name of Christ, which we also know from later in Revelation is “the Word”.

Bible Reports for Believing
You are probably in a typical American church like at Laodicea which Christ tells you is lukewarm (Revelation 3:14-16). You can not criticize this church by calling it cold, and you can not compliment this church by calling it hot, just like Christ. And to be spewed out of the mouth of Christ would be in the “cast off” category where there is no fruit of the branch that remains or to have candlestick removal like at the beginning of messages to the churches (Revelation 2:5). But what if you are among the few good of God’s people in that church (Revelation 3:21), the overcomers of the world, they will be given the privilege by Christ of sitting with Him on His throne at the right hand of God the Father.

4. If you seek a reversal of the inevitable consequences in your church of the sin and intolerance toward sound doctrine with itching ears Bible teaching, then you must reverse the sequence of the transition in II Timothy 3 and 4 of the perilous times (II Timothy 3:1-8) where church members practice the bad habits of follies which turns into the intolerance toward sound doctrine, alias the Falling Away (II Timothy 4:4,5).

   a. Start where you are now in the Falling Away; fight the intolerance toward sound doctrine, rescue sound doctrine, vote to oppose any itching ears Bible teachers and preachers in your pulpits and sunday school classes; and guard against fables that come to replace truth when sound doctrine is ignored. {Of course on the more positive side this would necessitate a revival of SOUND BIBLE DOCTRINE, and an in context, full method of Bible exegesis over the pick and chose proof text method of the fundamentalists, also reproof and correction instead of catering to the comfort of itching ears.} 

   b. Turn your sound doctrine into sound living where you practice the sound doctrine of “ALL SCRIPTURE” of the Word of God--divine in origin, absolute in authority, sufficient in message, and high fidelity in communication--along with the sound living where you recognize and practice in your church and individual life “the completeness of the complete man and woman of God, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, obvious sound living from sound doctrine, practice the methods in teaching and preaching of doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. {It is amazing how much Bible is preached and taught each Sunday in church all across the American Land where the Word is recognized as “given by the inspiration of God”, but you never hear the “doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness.” It would offend the intolerant of sound doctrine of God’s people who have learned to separate sound doctrine from sound living, and effectively and efficiently.
God’s “Called” versus God’s “Chosen”

Even as most church members now have grown efficient at the “heaping up” of itching ears Bible teachers and preachers (II Timothy 4:3,4), a process of heaping out sound Bible teachers and preachers and heaping in the unsound itching ears types, so they have learned to mouth sound doctrine, like at the Temples of Jeremiah and Jerusalem, without any applications to sound living.

c. Open again your church to the church discipline, without the “prejudice” and “partiality” of I Timothy and that practiced by a few leaders of the FBC of Alamogordo, only examples of the larger problem in many churches where unity with the leadership methods of certain church leaders is confused with the unity that the Holy Spirit gives; and where the revelation of follies takes your church from the intolerance toward sound doctrine of the Falling Away back to the Perilous up and down times, where you can change the down times back to the revival of up times as the follies of bad habits in your hideout are eliminated. Remember the way of salvation from intolerance to follies to elimination of follies goes via the verse of II Timothy 3:16 in between the perilous times and the Falling Away.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...” (II Timothy 3:16)

With the Bible, and revival on the Bible, do not forget to climb the ladder of difficulty in sound Christian living: from doctrine, to reproof which many church members hate to hear and deeper into the Falling Away with the expansion of intolerance toward sound doctrine of church members, will not hear; to correction which is harder than reproof or doctrine--either they will not take correction for fear of change, or they will not admit the need for correction, maybe for somebody outside the church but not faithful attenders; and for instruction in righteousness. Huh, a righteous church, lots of luck.
These reports of the New Earth have gone out almost from the beginning of the history and content of the Bible; although to listen on eschatology today where the loudspeakers and airways are cluttered with talk of fiction based on fiction, of one thousand years, heaven and hell, you would almost have to say based on the wording of Isaiah, Romans, and John, rather than “who has believed our report”, who is listening to the oft repeated Bible reports on the New Heaven and the New Earth? When the itching ears Bible teachers and writers get through with their reports today, Americans and others are thoroughly confused about how simple the End really is: (1) Christ Comes Again; (2) His Angels gather the sheep and the goats from the four corners of this old earth, rapidly coming to an end; (3) Christ and the Angels carry out the Great Separation for heaven or hell of the tares and wheat, which the power of God, Christ, and the Angels swiftly carry out as men lose all eternal control; (4) and the New Jerusalem is lowered down from heaven to Mount Zion where the 12 Apostles rule over the New Israel, and all the other nations take up residence, building, and growing in the new earth around Jerusalem.

NOTE: Heaven is only the place where God, Christ, the angels and the Living “spirits of just men made perfect” (Hebrews 12:23) now reside, and the place where God and Jesus are making preparation and building of the New Jerusalem. It is a temporal residence for spirits of believers already “asleep in the LORD”--this is from our human perspective as we do not see
the Living spirits with God and Christ even as we do not see heaven—until the Second Coming of Christ when all the sheep or wheat will take on the new bodies from Christ. These are new bodies added to the spirits of heaven to facilitate residence and living on the New Earth. The fortunate few still alive on this old earth when Christ comes again “shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” (I Corinthians 15:51,51)


You were promised in the introduction that we would come to the details of the New Earth under the New Heaven as given in Isaiah 65 from the Prophet Isaiah.

1. As sure and surely as the reality of original Creation “in the beginning” of Genesis 1:1 is also God’s guarantee of the Creation of a New Heaven and a New Earth in Isaiah 65:17.

“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth”. (Isaiah 65:17a)

What part of “create”, “new heavens”, or a “new earth” do you not understand? And don’t let the fundamentalists robe you of the real message of the New Earth with all their gibberish about one thousand years, and their efforts based on Scofield Notes to confuse a temporal one thousand year kingdom with the eternity of the new earth. In short, all that follows from this point, the point of Isaiah 65:17a and on through all of Isaiah 65 and the last chapter of Isaiah 66 is about this New Earth. These Scofield sceptics of a different sort would have you believe that when in Isaiah 65 the wolf and the lamb lie down together, when God rejoices in Jerusalem, when in the city there is no more weeping and crying, where the residents finally build houses and plant vineyards no more to be destroyed, it is a temporal and historical development in the present Israel. Not so, the subject is the NEW EARTH under the NEW HEAVEN; and all the characteristics of that New Creation from God of Jews and Gentiles. {One reason I think the fundamentalists carry out this deception of confusion between the present nation of Israel and the new nation with Gentiles, is because they “have great possessions” and hope for a philosophy that allows for retention of those possessions. Another is that they, like Scofield and Darby before him, and contrary to what Paul criticized in the early church at Corinth, they think “the Word of God came to them only, or came out of them.” (I Corinthians 14:36)}
Reports on the New Earth

And since this is so fundamental to an understanding of ALL SCRIPTURE with implications for church administration and Christian living, we must nail down how John saw in the visions of Revelation the very historical fact of this.

"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea." (Revelation 21:1)

What part of "new heaven", "new earth", "first heaven", "first earth", and "passed away" do you not understand here in some of the last words of the Bible?

NOTE: A personal opinion about the "no more sea" which never in Revelation or in the Bible in general is there extraneous information from God is that the new earth will be created by God where the sea and oceans and other water did exist before the old earth was destroyed with the melting of the elements with a fervent heat. And by the way the concept of "fervent heat" is not new to the epistle of Peter (II Peter 3:12), as Isaiah 66:15-16 speaks of "the LORD (always for God the Father) will come with fire", "His rebuke (of final justice and judgment) with fire", and "For by fire and by His sword" will God judge all flesh.

You, no doubt, have noticed that the PRE fundamentalists, and I guarantee you that this is most of them get very emotional when they hear discussions like this or when they are discussing "the real truth" about last things. It seems that they have so much riding on eschatology, like their real interpretation of the Bible, like their assurances of things on earth, and like salvation; for yes, these people think a man's conviction on one thousand years on earth for Israel before the End is really a conviction that determines salvation. Seem unreal; yes, but it is true. And while many books have been written recently about why the SBC split into three conventions and why all the warfare between fundamentalists and the real southern baptists which they called "moderates", do not be deceived; for history and reality is not mocked, the reason for the split was between the PREs and all others. Take it from one who grew up as a preacher among Southern Baptists, the real ones and the fundamentalists.

2. The Eternal Residents of the New Earth will not remember any more the old earth, even think about it! (Isaiah 65:17b)

3. This new creation is a "forever" or eternal Creation by God (Isaiah 65:18); and all of God's people of all nations are to rejoice and be glad forever about it.
4. God creates a New Jerusalem on the New Earth that can be an eternal reason for rejoicing among God's New People (Isaiah 65:18,19).

5. In the New Jerusalem, there will be no more weeping or crying (Isaiah 65:19).

6. The new residents of New Jerusalem will live forever (Isaiah 65:20).

7. Residents of the New Jerusalem and of the new nations that surrounds it will (1) build permanent houses and (2) plant eternal vineyards (Isaiah 65:20-22).

8. These new residents will raise eternal families. (Isaiah 65:23)

9. Since God Himself and Christ will eternally dwell among men and in the New Jerusalem, before His New people “call” or speak, God will hear and answer. Communications and response will be instantaneous! (Isaiah 65:24)

10-2: From Reports of the Prophet Isaiah to New Testament Reports.

1. God controlled the history of the world through the Greek and Roman Empires to bring all nations and languages to Jerusalem to see the “Sign”.

   a. The Sign God sets among the nations becomes the Christ of the Gospel of John. (Isaiah 66:19)


2. You can certainly tell that the Apostles John and Paul, as well as all the Writing Apostles, read the book of Isaiah.

   a. Both John and Paul quote the same Isaiah 53:1 on Reports: the total context of Isaiah 53 is on the Promised Messiah.

   b. You would think that John on the Isle of Patmos and on the Lord’s day was reading from Isaiah 65 and 66 as he wrote the book of Revelation from the obvious similarities between Revelation 20 and 21 and Isaiah 65 and 66.

3. The Obvious and Internal Consistencies of John, Paul, and Isaiah demand a common source.
Reports on the New Earth

a. According to Paul in Galatians, and since he met with only two Apostles before him—Peter and James—then Paul and John never met; and in spite of that lack of personal collaboration in the content and context of what they wrote, for example in the books of John and Romans, the consistency should be obvious.

b. Of course, much of that consistency can be traced by to a common acquaintance with Jesus, John for the 3 and 1/2 year ministry of Jesus and Paul after conversation met with the Ascended Jesus in Saudi Arabia.

c. However, we know that Isaiah, at least hundreds of years earlier, had no direct association with Paul and John, yet the internal evidence of agreement like that between Revelation 20 and Isaiah 65 is overwhelming, as is the agreement between Romans 10 from Paul and Isaiah. And it goes in agreement far beyond the simple statement that both John and Paul read the book of Isaiah. Certainly, they did that; and the internal evidence is obvious with the number of quotes from Isaiah that Paul included in both Hebrews and Romans.

d. Of course, the Apostle Peter (I Peter 1:11) helps us out here by telling how active the “Spirit of Christ” was in the writing of the books from the Old Testament Prophets. What was the Holy Spirit in the New Testament (II Peter 1:21) and (John 14:26) and Paul in II Timothy 3:16,17 was the Spirit of Christ in the Old Testament.

10-3: The word “Word” from Revelation 19:11-16 to write the Gospel of John.

1. Christ as the Word of John 1 is the Co-Creator of the Universe.

Once you have bought the introduction to the life and times of Jesus of Nazareth as recorded by John in the preface of John 1, realizing that this second member of the Trinity created the universe of planets and stars and mountains and seas, then it becomes consistent and easy for you when you then read about the 7 miracle signs of John, performed by Jesus, to comprehend how simple this was for the pre-existent Son of God.

2. The secret name and other revelations of Revelation 19:11-16 revealed to the Apostle John and hence to us on Jesus of Nazareth as the Word of God.

2. Christ as the Word is the Son of God, God made into human flesh of John 1.
Reports on the New Earth

This eternal and pre-existent, co-creating Christ, the Word, was made flesh {the virgin birth of Christ}, the Apostle John writes in the Preface of John after receiving more info in Revelation on Christ, and inspiration; and the seeing of this Christ by the apostles, disciples, and through them the rest of the world as written in the Bible, could fully see what God is really like.

“And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth”. (John 1:14)

(1) Dwelt among us. All these signs, John says in John 20:30,31 were done in the “presence of the disciples”, for the whole world to see as some of those disciples spread the word verbally throughout the Roman Empire and beyond and others, the Writing Apostles, recorded the events in the four Gospels for the whole world to read.

(2). The world thus beheld the glory of the Son and the Father.

(3). Full of “grace and truth”. And again you see as in the introduction to this book how the truth of God, centered in the character of God and in the personality of the Lord Jesus Christ, travels in circles about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

10-4: The One Thousand Years of Revelation 20 is the “Last Days” of the Bible.

1. Beginning and end of the last days (1000 years) from Acts, Joel, and Peter.

   a. Started on the first day of Pentecost after the Ascension of Christ back to heaven with the Coming of the Holy Spirit in great power and glory.

   b. Ends immediately after the light of the sun, moon, and stars diminished as Christ comes the Second Time.

2. The famous 1000 years {millennium} of Revelation 20.

Two categories of the dead are mentioned in Revelation 20:4-6: (1) the Christian dead that died as martyrs, who “live and reign with Christ for a thousand years” (Revelation 20:4,6), called the first resurrection since they have the opportunity just like Moses, Elijah and the Apostles to immediately have a resurrection body as they live and reign with Christ, which by the way indicates
that the one thousand years simply represents a very long period of time since all the Christian martyrs did not die at the same time—see NOTE below; and (2) “the rest of the dead”, Christian and otherwise, who go to the intermediate place of “Hades” and who have to wait in soul state without bodies in one of the two divisions of Hades, Paradise or Hell.

a. Satan bound for one thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3).

b. Actually it is a little more than 1000 years as the “little while” is also included in the “last days”, that time when Satan is released because the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from earth as more fully described in II Thessalonians.

c. Spirits live with God and Christ in heaven during this 1000 years {last days} in Revelation 20:5

d. The First Resurrection of Revelation 20:5,6. Actually the verse of 20:4 must be read with 5 and 6


5. Destruction of the old earth by fire is synchronized by God with the destruction of this gigantic army by fire, that army no doubt of Muslims, and led by the man of sin and Satan, which surrounds the old Jerusalem and the camp of the saints. (Revelation 20:9)


1. Hell or Hades is not the same as the lake of fire and brimstone that is reserved for unbelievers and Satan and his angels as a place of eternal torment, because according to Revelation 20:14 one of the final acts of the Returned Christ and God is to cast “death and hades” into the lake of fire and brimstone. (The King James Version translates the Greek word for “unseen world” as hell instead of Hades.) While many are heard to complain that hell is so awful that a God of love would not think of such a place, and it does not exist, the real awful place which God has thought of and provided is the “lake of fire and brim-
“Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20:14)

a. Starts to make sense right since this is the second mention of the “second death” in Revelation 20, the first mention was in Revelation 20:6 where those recipients of the first resurrection have not part in the second death. Instead they shall be “priests of God and of Christ” and “shall reign with Him a thousand years”. Thus the guarantee based on this Word of God is that those martyred souls of the first resurrection will not be in this second death--fire and brimstone of the lake of eternal fire. {And in general we are taught that when there is a first death, not mentioned as the first day per se, then there is a second, so that when we read of the first resurrection then we should also look for a second resurrection, which also may not and is not mentioned as second per se. In short, we surely must think of the resurrection of part of the “rest of the dead”, those mentioned beforehand in those two categories of Revelation 20:4,5--those who do not live and reign like martyrs--are at the end of the one thousand years participants in the second resurrection. Paul writes of this second resurrection in I Corinthians 15:51.

“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep (see here how Paul uses the same word for death as used by Jesus as applied to Lazarus), but we shall all be changed (the change of the new bodies of the second resurrection at the Second Coming of Christ, and while Paul does not call it here specifically the second resurrection the progression of the proceeding parts of I Corinthians 15 is about firsts and seconds as you will recall by what we looked at one first and second bodies, glory, and etc)--in a
moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet (more about this last trumpet to follow). For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. {Here is the real change that we should be looking forward to!} (I Corinthians 15:51,52)

(1). Paul also writes with more about this final trumpet in I Thessalonians 4:13-18 as well as this Second Resurrection, also without calling it the second resurrection here. However, we are told “God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus” (I Thessalonians 4:14), the same sleep word previously used by Paul in I Corinthians and by Jesus about Lazarus.

NOTE: There is so much about this important last day event of I Thessalonians 4:13-18 which happens as “the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God”, that a brief exegesis should be given in this note. (1) It has already been mentioned that God will bring with Him to the Return of Christ, those who have died before this Second Coming (4:14); (2) We are fascinated that the dead or sleeping are effectively separated into two categories here as the phrase “sleep in Jesus” is used, of course meaning that some do of the dead do soul sleep but not in Jesus; (3) Those believers who are alive and remain at the Coming of the Lord (this is another assumed second that is not mentioned although obvious as there was a first coming of Christ to earth and then there will be a Second Coming) will not get ahead of those who are asleep (4:15); (4) No less than Jesus Christ, “the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and the trumpet of God” (4:16a); (5) “And the dead in Christ will rise first” (4:16b) {obviously the dead in Christ correlates directly with “those who are asleep”, so that also there are once again the two categories of the dead, the dead in Christ and those who have not believed in Christ, and actually three categories if you accept if you accept among these “dead in Christ” those martyrs that have lived and reigned with Christ for the one thousand years previous to the Second Coming}; (6) Those who are “alive and remain” (4:17a) will fly up {actually words are “will be caught up” as if by some gravitational attraction from God, and which is so marvelous in that the indication is that the body is still intact with the soul—we can see without any weight or mass the soul or spirit can easily pass up into the unseen world, but this implied presence of the body of those still living at the Second Coming implies that much of the unseen world is already becoming seen just like every “eye shall see Him”}; (7) this place where we met the Returned Christ is (a) in the clouds and (b) in the atmosphere of “air” (14:17a); (8) We get permanently
attached to Christ and the location where He goes, for “we shall always 
(etrnally) be with the Lord which necessitates that it be on the New 
Earth because that is where God and Christ will dwell eternally in the new 
Age (Revelation 21:3).

(2). The Apostle John mentions this final trumpet at the Second Coming as the “seventh trumpet” in Revelation 11:15 as sounded by the seventh angel; and while Paul only mentions in I Thessalonians 4 above the voice of an archangel, John in his vision of the future hears “loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!’” (Revelation 11:15)

b. We must assume that somewhere up there in the clouds is a giant platform, also part of the “hidden world” of Hades which becomes visible like God and Christ at the Second Coming (the Bible tells us in the OT that God’s feet are in the clouds as He sits on the great white throne over the universe); and must also be the place of the Judgment process where “anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15)

(1). We also read of finalized judgement based on this Book of Life in Revelation 21:27 where only those “who are written in the Lamb’s book of Life” can enter into the New Jerusalem, where the glory and honor of “the nations” is brought through the gates, where through those gates none can enter or will enter that “defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie” (21:27).

(2). The Book of Life as the criterion for those who live eternally has previously been mentioned in Revelation 20:12, along with other books that are opened to describe the final Judgement process.

“And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.” (Revelation 20:12)

NOTE: Once again it is necessary for continuity and thoroughness about this after life of the previous unseen to do a little exegesis of exactly what Revelation 20:12 above is saying. (1) We know the location of this Judgment to be in the presently unseen world of God’s great white throne just above the clouds, based on the previous verse of 20:11; (2) we know the time of this Judgement as immediately after the destruction of heaven.
and earth by fire since also in the previous verse “the earth and the heaven fled away” from the face of God (20:11b); (3) While a further description of what happens to the dead in Christ is given later in Revelation 21:27 where those who are written in the Book of Life are allowed to enter the gates of New Jerusalem, the focus of Revelation 20:11-15 is on “anyone not written in the Book of Life” and cast into the lake of fire, and on that Judgment of them according to the other books {it is clear however that those already written in the Book of Life pass on to the New Earth without any other Judgment except the appearance of his name in the book of life that has been written ever since he first believed, and that the other books based on works are for the Judgment of all the rest of the dead, not the dead in Christ}...

(a). The dead in Christ are not judged by works, only by the existence or absence of their names written indelibly in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

(b). The dead not in Christ are judged by their works based on what has been recorded in all the other books during observation of their lives by the angels and by God the Father and Christ. {I would think that all those who are living and reigning with Christ during the thousand years have all observed and recorded along with the thousands and thousands of angels, also of the unseen world.}

... {numbering of exegesis NOTE continued}...(4) we are given a clue that “Death” and “Hades” like the dead in the sea are two ways of explaining the same people in Revelation 20:13 since only in 20:14 “Death and Hades” are cast into the lake of fire which is the second death, not the sea and surely we must believe that the sea also claimed some that were worthy of the lake of fire. {Can we not then describe Hades as the temporary, until the Second Coming of Christ, abode of the dead?}

10-6: The Unseen World in an Unseen Dimension of Space.

NOTE: “The Life Beyond”, to borrow words from Ray Summers’s book on last things or eschatology, is more complicated than often considered in that Christian martyr go immediately and with resurrection bodies to be with Christ and to reign with Christ until the Second Coming of Christ. After the Second Coming, the new earth, new heavens and the New Jerusalem where God and Christ dwell with the new humanity forever, these “souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God” (Revelation 20:4) will either live in New Jerusalem, where primarily the
Apostles reign, or if Gentile martyrs will live in the nations that surround New Jerusalem. It is suspected that Gentile martyrs will also be part of the government in the Gentile nations of Christian new humanity.

Now since what John saw was “souls” of those martyred for their witness to Jesus and the Word of God, the bodies that the souls they inhabit during that one thousand years (last days) in heaven may be different from the final resurrection body that most Christians will receive when Christ comes again. Remember even as the resurrection body of Christ was difficult to recognize after resurrection by His disciples, so on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:2) Jesus’ body then was transfigured before them in a different form, and somehow Moses and Elijah had bodily recognizable by the Apostles who had never seen either Moses or Elijah in person, nor had photos in those days. As Paul points out in I Corinthians 15, there are many kinds of flesh bodies, and glory—celestial and terrestrial (15:39,40), and there is first the natural body, made of dust and the second body is spiritual, from heaven, and in the image of the resurrected Christ.

Even as Hades is called the “invisible world”, obviously like heaven now in a dimension with God and Christ and the angels that we can not detect with our human sensors, those who inhabit the two divisions of Hades have only “souls”. This state of the soul until the Second Coming while called “death” by most is called “sleep” in the Bible by Jesus and other Bible writers. That there is a division of Hades {literally the unseen world} where Jesus went to preach “to the spirits in prison” (I Peter 3:19), where those unbelievers destroyed in the Flood had an opportunity listen to the preaching of Jesus and make a final decision, also a division of which is “paradise” where Jesus told the thief of the cross that they would accompany each other that same day of death on the cross (Luke 23:43), and a paradise where Paul was caught up in a vision to a “third heaven” (II Corinthians 12:1-4) to see things that no man is allowed to utter. {And this could be part of why we do not know or understand more about heaven and the unseen world, God has neither allowed man to know by revelation or the few like Paul who have seen something in a vision have not been allowed to talk about it. Regardless, even though often the after life and even the unseen world where the dead now live in soul state is beyond our ability to grasp, we do not of a certainly that what God has prepared for those who love him is far beyond our ability to comprehend (I Corinthians 2:9). And death and eternity is so unknown to us, even after we read all that is in the Bible, that the transition is so much like a trip to a foreign land that we do not know and can not see photos of, it is dreaded or even feared. Of course, this is where faith
or confidence in God comes in, and what God has told us about the wonderful place that He has prepared for those who love him.}

Surely we would have to say that there is no such thing as “soul sleep” for the believer since often in the Bible, even in the Old Testament, it is emphasized that God is a God of the living, dead believers like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob included. Jesus told the disciples, who were calling the passing of Lazarus “death”, that Lazarus was sleeping. This we primarily interpret to mean that while the body was decaying, the soul was in the unseen world; and that since Lazarus obviously believed in Jesus, was somehow with God and the angels although he would not be among the martyrs who went immediately to live and reign with Christ for one thousand years.

It would be simple if heaven were the unseen world of different levels, for example had at least three levels, the third of which was mentioned by Paul as Paradise: hell, paradise, and the part of heaven where God dwells. We might even visualize these three parts of the unseen world as existing in the unseen space of the universe in parallel.

10-7: Hades in the New King James Version is Translated Hell in the King James.

All those Scriptures previously viewed on “Hades” are from the New King James Version, and the same Greek word “hades” is translated “Hell” in the King James Version. (Here we go, those fundamentalists who think that if the King James 1611 Bible was good enough for Paul, it is good enough for them; and some will view as even a heresy of the unsaved to translate Hades as Hades, even more sinful to try to take hell out of the Bible when they have preached it for years in spite of the clear Bible teachings previously viewed where hell or hades is cast into the lake of fire. Clearly the eternal abode of unbelievers is the lake of fire, not hell or hades.) Surely we can get past such immaturity in Bible by a consideration that one Hebrew word is used in the Old Testament for Hell or Hades, and three Greek words in the New Testament: (1) The Hebrew word in the OT of “sheol” is translated “hell” and literally means “the unseen state”; (2) The Greek word “hades” in the New Testament--two references in Matthew, two in Luke, two in Acts, and four in Revelation most of which we have looked at from the NJKV and therefore where the word “hades” is used instead of “hell”, literally the Greek word means “the unseen world”; (3) The Greek words “Gehenna” or “geenna” mean literally the “Valley of Ghenna” but is translated “hell”, found 11 times in the KJV NT; and lastly (4) another word translated “hell” in the KJV NT is the Greek word “tartaroo” which literally means “to cast down to hell”. This
last teaches us a great deal about this intermediate state of Hades. (And we continue with the verses on Hades or Hell where we can know of the Bible in certainty.)

2. Hell or Hades, equivalents in Scripture and in different translations, is the temporary abode of Satan and the fallen angels until Judgement and until they with unbelievers, by the way also the false prophet and the man of sin, are cast into the lake of fire. {We might easily speculate also that the lake of fire is part of that vast now unseen space called Hades, very likely to be seeable since Jesus told in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus how there was “a great gulf fixed between where Lazarus was in the “bosom of Abraham” and where the rich man was in torment by fire in Hades. This is in Luke 16:19-31. We will consider it next.}

“For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgement…” (II Peter 2:4)

(1) Of course we already knew that Satan and other angels were cast out of the level in heaven where God dwells; (2) this was a part of hades that was in darkness, without light; (3) you would naturally think that this would also be the part of Hades where Flood citizens of the world were being held “prisoners” (it is starting to make more sense if we think of heaven and the rest of the unseen world as occupying the vast dimensions of space but in another dimension) with God, Christ, and other spiritual beings having access--remember it is also the Apostle Peter who tells us about Jesus preaching to the Flood prisoners in Hell or Hades; (4) Satan and the fallen angels are reserved for the Judgment we read about in Revelation previously in part of Hades or Hell.


“And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.” (Luke 16:23 NKJV)

(1) the certain rich man, no name used by Jesus--who lived high in that he “was clothed in purple and fine linen” and ate “sumptuously every day”--was in Hades or Hell (yes the same Greek word in the KJV is translated “hell”, see NOTE below on the Greek word Hades); (2) Lazarus was a beggar--who was placed at the home gate of the rich man where he begged for crumbs from the table of the rich man, who was full of sores, and the dogs licked his sores {surely God
Reports on the New Earth

and Jesus saw all this from heaven)--was in the Abraham's bosom part of Hades; (3) Lazarus had to look up into outer space {of course both of these are now in the unseen and vast spiritual world} to see the rich man so that we would conclude that the level of Hades where the rich man was in torment was higher than the level in Hades of Abraham's bosom {the NOTES of the Scofield reference Bible push it a little but like to say that the location of Abraham's bosom was changed to paradise after the Ascension of Christ}; (4) the rich man asked “Father Abraham” to have mercy on him, to send Lazarus that he might dip his finger in water to cool his tongue since he was in torment “in the flame”; (5) Abraham did talk back to the rich man across the great gulf that was fixed between them (Luke 16:25-26), saying to the rich man how he during his lifetime received “good things” while Lazarus “evil things”, however now he is comforted and you are in torment; also that the great gulf between them made it impossible for passage between the two locations by those who wanted to.

To be literal on this parable from Jesus, and many chose not to although I have a preference for just letting it say what it wants to say like any other part of the Word of God, we would have to say that Abraham was either also in Hades or in heaven; and Hades is that vast unseen space which includes heaven and many other locations, hell being at the bottom of the evil chain where Satan and the angels reside until Judgement as well as the Flood victims to whom Jesus preached. You know we just plain have a lot of false propaganda about heaven and hell anyway as compared to what is really in Scripture: the eternal abode of the saved is on the New Earth, not in heaven {New Jerusalem is lowered down to Mount Zion from heaven after the Creation of the New Earth according to Revelation 21:1-3}; and the eternal abode of the unsaved, Satan and the other fallen angels is in the lake of fire, not hell or Hades.

And what is important about these different locations in the unseen and spiritual world, the world of spirits and souls, is not there location, but their descriptions, and what they have to do with God, Christ, and the souls and bodies of men. We can be thankful to God and revelations of John and the rest of the Bible, that what was previously unseen by men becomes very visible of: (1) the New Earth and the New Heavens; (2) the New Jerusalem; and (3) the new resurrected bodies of the new creation; (4) God Himself; and (5) Christ Himself; and (6) the Apostles who help govern New Jerusalem and all the Gentile nations around them.

10-8: You can See the Whole Creation Groaning.
Reports on the New Earth

It does not take a rocket scientist, or weather expert, whatever that is, to know that this old earth is really groaning right now. What Paul and other Bible believers with eyes to see and ears to hear saw and heard in the first century has now subtly and naturally, almost undetected except by those in the middle of the recent tornadoes, cyclones, earthquakes, and wildfires, become obvious to all who listen to world news.

“For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.” (Romans 8:22)

This 'ole earth is crumbling, shaking, and groaning, and there is some question as to whether it will ever return to normal. Certainly with enough time, we know it can not for the automatic and long range plan of God is to shake and burn this old earth and old heavens into extinction. What the dinosaurs became long ago, this old earth is inevitably going to become; and while none of us can really predict when this old earth will end, at the Second Coming of Christ, we certainly can be certain about two things: (1) the old heaven and old earth, alias the whole universe will be destroyed with a final great shaking; and (2) we are much closer to that end time than when the Apostle Paul wrote in the first century.

1. Once More, according to the Bible, God is going to shake the whole earth. The “once more” Paul explains in Hebrews 12:26-29 is because the whole world was shaken with a flood during the time of Noah when “only 8 souls were saved through water” (I Peter 3:20). The Bible, as “every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” according to Jesus, believes it; therefore we believe that God destroyed the whole world with a flood except for Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives. This puts you on notice that while God is patient and longsuffering--we are quite fortunate that He does not destroy all of us right now--He will come to a definite time, according to His plan, when final justice and judgment with condemnation and destruction comes on the whole earth.

2. Notice that the Apostle Peter looks at the positive side of the flood destruction of the earth in I Peter 3:20, placing the focus on the 8 that “were saved through water” rather than the millions that were drowned as it rained for 40 days and 40 nights, also as the deep of the oceans gave up the water flow that was in them. (Most secular archeologists and geologists are confused because of their simple assumption that the rocks on top are the newest and so on down through the layers; but during this period of the
whole earth covered by water, not only were the continents shifted and separated by additional bodies of water, but also the layers were intermixed in order to confuse “the wisdom of the wise”. (I Cor 1:19 and Isaiah 29:14)

3. Bottom line, however, is that God could not longer take all the sin, corruption, and disobedience He saw on earth; and in the nature of never doing anything without telling His own people, He has told us in the Bible that He is going to destroy the whole earth again; but this time, the destruction from God, now on automatic control, will destroy both the heavens and the earth. That is what Paul writes about in Hebrews 12:26: “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.”

4. Paul continues, or God through Paul, in Hebrews 12:27 of how the shaking that goes on for many years, and we can not really put a number on it, will inevitably lead to a “removal”--“Yet once more’ indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken”. In short, a little and periodic shaking will groan into a more intense and sooner shaking until the shaking with a final great and gigantic earthquake and fire turns the shaking into a removal.

5. Gravity and gravitational attraction between the planets and other bodies of the heavens will be shaken--“and the powers in the heavens will be shaken”, Jesus taught in Mark 13:25--preceded in reverse order by the falling of the stars out of heaven, with the light of the sun and moon darkened.

6. You can tell when the Bible, even among the oldest of Old Testament Scriptures, is going to talk about this Final Shaking by a mention of the diminished light of the sun, moon, and stars, such as in Ecclesiastics 12:2. In this context, except for a total perspective of the Bible from experience with the total body which always tells you that when the diminished light of the sun, moon, and stars is mentioned it is just before the final destruction of the old universe and the second coming of Christ, when you first read Ecclesiastics above, you do not at first recognized “the difficult days” which come as the final difficult days until you note in the larger context of Ecclesiastics 12 that “a man goes to his eternal home”. (12:5)

7. And the arguments aside that critics make of putting eternal plans into your plans for the future, even allowing these to dominate, is the obvious counter to that of how foolish it would be not to have insurance as we all know the inevitability of death unless Christ comes again first. Why not make preparation for
the difficult days as the shaking, removal, and the widespread fire over the whole universe of a “fervent heat” melts the very old universe. (II Peter 3:10)
Everyone wants to be rich and famous just like for years everyone wanted “To Win Friends and Influence People”. Now this kind of all smiles PR has not only hit the churches of America, but become exceedingly popular. Even as more than 61% of American church members, according to a recent poll, believe in the Gospel of Prosperity--that is, if they have enough faith they will be prosperous and healthy--so popular preachers have found this belief a key to support, popularity, and listeners.

While many churches continue to think they are hiding, the popular preachers and Bible teachers promote this hiding process that was first described by Jeremiah as the “Den of Thieves” and then quoted from Jeremiah by Jesus when He cleansed the temple. “What are they hiding from?” has been asked. What they are hiding from is the eternal realities of their true shape in the sight of God, and what they are hiding behind is the American respect for religion and church. Any time a pastor, evangelist, or teacher--authorized by the Ascended Christ--attempts to practice the church administration of II Timothy 3:16,17--that is, of correction, reproof, and instruction in true righteousness--these church members of bad habits run to a new popular book for comfort, or a new TV evangelist, or in some few extreme cases to a new "jesus" or "messiah" like currently in Northeast New Mexico or in Puerto Rico. And the Falling Away process does not discriminate based on sex as there seems to be as many women that are popular itching ears Bible teachers as there are men.
Popular Preachers of Prosperity

11-1: Correlation Between Hiding and Heaping Up.

In spite of the connection between the bad habits of II Timothy 3:1-9 and the heaping up of II Timothy 4:3,4— that is, one chapter immediately follows the other chapter in the Word of God of II Timothy— you may not be able easily to dot the I's and cross the T's that correlates the cover up in churches of the bad habits with the heaping up of popular and itching ears Bible teachers of the Falling Away. However, such a solid correlation is obvious to this concluding chapter where readers are urged to beware of popular Bible teachers and preachers, no matter what vintage.

So also as we have in the pages of this book become aware from the book of Jeremiah that by “Den of Thieves” God, Jesus, and Jeremiah meant that God’s People were making the House of God a Hideout for Bad Habits, so also as God speaks directly again in Jeremiah 23:14 we see how the heaping up of itching ears Bible teachers and preachers promotes among Christians and in churches these bad habits of hiding. Jeremiah 23:14, and rather God through Jeremiah 23:14 refers to this positive reinforcement of bad behavior and attitudes among church members as “strengthen the hands of evil doers” (Jeremiah 23:14) It starts in 23:11 {and you should read it for yourself in your own Bible to get the full impact} with the prophets and priests accepted by the people, of course this would exclude Jeremiah although the only prophet of this time called and authorized by God, who are: (1) profane; (2) who practice the wickedness of bad habits in God’s House; (3) they commit the adultery of preaching an unknown god; (4) they revel in half-truths and lies; and then given what these prophets and priests are, any time they open their mouth in public or private they encourage of “strengthen the hands of evil doers”. The bad habits of II Timothy 3:1-8 are promoted among the people in word and deed, those bad habits which we have seen in this book to also be duplicated among God’s people of Jeremiah. And the bottom line of heaping up to hide is “that no one turns back from his wickedness” (Jeremiah 23:14).

11-2: Jeremiah was Opposed by the official prophets and priests.

1. Everyone, from the least to the greatest, of God’s people of Jeremiah were given over to covetousness including the prophets and the priests (Jeremiah 8:10,11) who were dealing falsely.

In this context of Jeremiah 8:10,11, the prime accusation of God against the prophets and priests (this is the official prophets and priests, not authorized by God prophets like Jeremiah) might seem trivial to us today in that
they were simply preaching a message of "Peace, peace, when there was no authorized and ordained peace from God. God had determined that the nation of Judah because of their lack of rightness would go into Babylonian Captivity under Nebuchadnezzar. God told Jeremiah this, and in turn Jeremiah had told the King, the princes, and all the people as he daily preached his unpopular message at the Temple gates.

2. Obviously the leadership to trust in the lying words of Jeremiah 7:4--"Do not trust in these lying words, saying, 'The Temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD are these'"--came from the official prophets and priests even as from the princes.

3. Even as Jeremiah was of Anathoth in Judah, and the son of a priest from Anathoth, so the men of Anathoth when they heard the temple message which Jeremiah preached threatened to kill Jeremiah, saying, "Do not prophesy in the name of the LORD, lest you die by our hand" (Jeremiah 11:21). Certainly when Jesus later in NT times told the official religious leaders--the Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, and priests--"which of the prophets did you not persecute", Jesus was referring to only Jeremiah of his day, not the official prophets and priests.

4. God said that both "prophet and priest are profane" (Jeremiah 21:11), and that in the very House of God, God Himself has witnessed their "wickedness". In the same context, God continues that even as He saw "folly in the prophets of Samaria" whereby they prophesied by Baal and caused God's people of Israel to "err" before God sent the northern kingdom of Israel into Assyrian Captivity, so God was seeing "a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem". These latter prophets like the former prophets were: (1) committing adultery (here the adultery was a lack of loyalty toward the only God and in favor of idols); (2) walking in lies, like the message of peace when there was really no more ordained from God peace and likewise a failure to teach the real message of repentance from God; (3) they were "strengthening the hands of the evildoers so that no one turns back from his wickedness" (Jeremiah 23:14). This last folly of the official religious leaders must remind us of what popular, false, and itching ears Bible teachers and preachers do today as they comfort and encourage church members/Christians of bad habits.

5. God said in Jeremiah and had Jeremiah write down His own words that: (1) although these prophets ran, God did not send them; (2) God did not speak to them yet they prophesied; and (3) that if they really had stood in the counsel of God, causing God's people to hear His true words, then these same prophets
would have turned the people from their evil ways, from the evil of their doings (Jeremiah 23:21,22).

6. All the people of that day devised plans against Jeremiah.

   a. They hide behind the heaped up official prophet, priest, and wise man.

   "...for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet." (Jeremiah 18:18a)

   They made it clear about themselves and in the presence of Jeremiah that they would get their law from the heaped up priest, their counsel from the heaped up wise in the land which they would acknowledge to be wise, their word and instructions from God would come from the recognized and heaped up prophets.

   b. They attacked Jeremiah with their tongues. (Jeremiah 18:18b)

   Men, women, and children at the gates, in the Temple, in Anathoth and in Jerusalem verbally abused and attacked this prophet of God. Sometimes we wonder why Jeremiah did not call for an attack of a bear on them like Elijah; but while in the case of Elijah the verbal abuse on that Prophet of God was by a few boys, on Jeremiah and his message it was an attack by all. And truly God made it clear that He had something much worse in mind for the nation of Judah and the city of Jerusalem than a bear attack. Let alone, the calamities to shortly come on the people, there was the horror that the only Prophet of God was told not to pray for these people any more, just one indication that, except for a warning, God had turned His back on them.

7. All the people, the prophets and the priests sought to kill Jeremiah. (Jeremiah 26:7-9)

   "So the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking {his famous Temple Message} these words in the house of the LORD. Now it happened, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded him to speak to all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, saying, ‘You will surely die’." (Jeremiah 26:7,8)

   However, some of the princes {the government} of Judah intervened.
11-3: *God’s People Worse in Jeremiah’s Day than the Falling Away.*

Most serious Bible students aware of the obvious extensive warnings against a similar Falling Away in the book of Hebrews based on the bad example of God’s people in the wilderness where all adults fell away from God and eternity except about 4 and the youth under 21 years of age. Indeed we come to know about the Falling Away in the wilderness as a Falling Away, and as a warning of the a bad example of bad behavior and attitudes of the original God’s people from the book of Hebrews. Well, while we do not have any description from God about God’s people of Jeremiah using the word “Falling Away”, nor do we have any such description from Jesus when He quotes the “Den of Thieves” from Jeremiah during the cleansing of the temple, God does definitely tell us in Jeremiah and in His own words that God’s people of Jeremiah were worse than God’s people in the wilderness.

“Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have even sent to you all My servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them. Yet they did not obey Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers.” (Jeremiah 7:25,26)

Clearly “worse than their fathers” would be worse than the Falling Away in the wilderness as described in Hebrews.

1. The book of Hebrews is by far not the only good description based on the authority of God and His Word in the Bible. It was explained by God and Moses as it was happening in the books of Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy; you find it in the Psalms and many other passages of the Bible; and you see another good description of it here in this same seventh chapter of Jeremiah, in the words of Jeremiah 7:23,24 just before the “worse than their fathers” scripture quoted above.

   a. With a short form of the often broken covenant with God, God reminds the people of Jeremiah, and by the way also our generation, that what He really commanded was to “Obey my voice”, so that then God would be “your God” and “you shall be My People”. (Jeremiah 7:23a)

   b. Also God commanded to “walk in all the ways”, commanded in order that it might be well with the people (“well” or a living is what God guarantees rather than prosperity). (Jeremiah 7:23b)
c. God's people in the wilderness, and "in spite of" might be added to all the works of God they saw in the wilderness, they (1) "did not obey" or (2) "incline their ear".

NOTE: By the way since we are now in this last chapter as in the last two previous chapters down to the nitty gritty of the message of the book, with efforts to clarify the distinctions between false gods and idols and the real God and worship, between seeking first the rightness of God and God Himself over the lustimg first after other things, you must be asked personally then (1) do you obey God, and (2) do you incline your ear to God. Granted it is your own solution as to how you will obey and how you will listen to God.

d. They "followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts" (7:24a); and does that not remind you of that Falling Away process in II Timothy 4:3,4 which begins with intolerance toward sound doctrine--what you might call the not obeying and listening process of c.; then continues with the motivation of "wants" to determine the kind of itching ears Bible teachers that they heap up. About the only concept and word that Paul does not use is "their evil hearts", but he has done a good job of describing that in the bad habits and attitudes of II Timothy 3:1-8 before it.

e. They "went backwards and not forward". (7:24b) Here and in similar scriptures is where the famous concept and word "backsliders" has come from, although unfortunately the thoroughness of the ALL SCRIPTURE, partly for reasons of popularity, has not been clarified to the extent of the awesome possibility of a majority of God's people can and will actually be lost.

2. Again after the Falling Away description of the original God's people, God comes back in Jeremiah 7:26,27 to how Jeremiah's people (those of Jerusalem and Judah just before Babylonian Captivity) were like and worse God's people.

a. They also did not obey God or incline their ear to God. {You know it is not nearly so bad to disobey God out of ignorance if you are really trying hard to listen to God.}

b. God's people of Jeremiah "stiffened their neck".

c. They did worse than their forefathers of God's people in the wilderness. And since you know clearly from Hebrews that "none of these will enter into
Popular Preachers

the rest of God"--in other words they can not, will not be saved--what do you think is the fate of God's people in the day of Jeremiah except eternal wrath and destruction. {Yes, like in the time of Elijah and King Ahab, surely there were at least 7000 in the whole nation of Judah who had not bowed the knee to Baal. In fact we know from Daniel and Ezekiel, prophets of the actual Babylonian Captivity under Nebuchadnezzar, that Daniel and others of the carried away from Jerusalem continued to listen to and obey God. And it would seem as advocated in the commentary on Revelation in the LEARN CHRIST commentary, “Christ for Individuals”, that God has in every generation His own seven thousand; yet it is scary to most individuals to think that of all the Christians and church members in America, that there might be only 7000 that survive.)

d. "Jeremiah, when you speak all these words from Me," God says in Jeremiah 7:27, "they will not obey you".

e. "You will call to them", also, "but they will not answer you." Pertinent to the prime content of this chapter, the people also like people today and in the Falling Away were listening to the official prophets and priests, and they were heaping up in their own minds and organizations those itching ears Bible teachers. Turning their backs on the real Bible teachers and preachers, then and now, is and was part of the "heaping up" process; also answering only the itching ears and popular and official teachers, refusing simultaneously or before to answer the call from sound Bible teachers and preachers.

NOTE: By the way, while there are only a few Writing Prophets of the Bible, there were many other Prophet, good and bad. “prophet” in the Old Testament was simply a man called and sent by God to His people and others to present the current message from God. By far most of the references to prophets in the New Testament are only to the Writing Prophets that God authorized to record revelations for the Bible. And you can easily see one reason for this as you come to see how often as here in Jeremiah that the prophets and priests got out of sync with God the same time as the people. They actually preached the opposite message that God was delivering to men like Jeremiah, Amos, and Joel; and to keep their own status and official position among the people, they naturally opposed and sought to destroy the real Prophet of God.

11-4: No Authorized Popular Preacher during the Falling Away.
And here “preacher” is being used for Bible teacher also as Bible teaching and preaching can hardly be separated. And even as when Christ did authorize, after His Ascension, certain men to be pastors and teachers, so, man-made teachers and preachers of the unauthorized vintage have come out of like-minded itching ears Bible teachers, pastors, and evangelists since the end of the Billy Graham popularity. \{One way to mark the beginning of the Falling Away is to remember when Billy Graham because much less popular, say about the 60’s.\}

The very nature of the Falling Away as a majority movement among Christians/church members prohibits popular preachers and popular teachers that are authorized by Christ. Even as we are told in Ephesians 4:8-11 that the Ascended Christ gave only authorized pastors, teachers, and evangelists, so He does not chose and authorize popular pastors, teachers, and evangelists during the Falling Away when He Himself as identified that period of history as when “because sin will abound the love of many will wax cold”. (Matthew 24:12) Now unauthorized by Christ preachers and teachers can be popular among this “many” who have waxed cold; but not wholesale popular among all church members during the Falling Away, and definitely not among those church member/Christians who did not wax cold and fall away.

1. Like the official prophets and priests of Jeremiah, you can not listen to these popular preachers and teachers during this time of the Falling Away, for they like those of Jeremiah prophesy \{I Corinthians 14 word for preaching and teaching\}: (1) such as to make you worthless; (2) speak a vision of their own heart (Jeremiah 23:16); and (3) the vision as they falsely claim is not “from the mouth of the LORD”.

2. The religious officials say “no evil shall come upon you.” (Jeremiah 23:17)

These officials of Jeremiah were continually saying to God’s people that “despised me” (Jeremiah 23:17), God says, “You shall have peace.”

3. About the only difference between the official and unauthorized prophets of Jeremiah and those today is that while the prophets of Jeremiah, according to God in Jeremiah 23:25 prophesied with “I have dreamed, I have dreamed”, the popular prophesies today start with an announcement of such special revelations with words like “God told me” or “God said to me” or “God gave me a word”.

169 Bible Reports For Believing
Popular Preachers

a. “How Long” God pleads (Jeremiah 23:26-40) will these dreams be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies.

b. They are “prophets of the deceit of their own heart” (23:26).

c. These prophets try to get God’s people to forget the name of God when they tell their neighbors these dreams.

4. These popular and extra-biblical special revelations of prophecy today are more like the dreams of the official prophets and priests of Jeremiah than of the Word of God. (Jeremiah 23:28-40)

a. Let these that prophesy either tell a dream that they had or speak “My Word” already recorded in the Bible. (23:28)

b. These dreams and dreamers are like the “chaff to the wheat” (23:28,29), where the wheat is the from the Word of God like a fire and like a hammer.

c. God says He is against every prophet who steals God’s words from his neighbor. (23:30).

d. God says He is against the prophets “who use their tongues and say, ‘He says”. (23:31). Alas, alas be careful when you say God says, God says, God told me when you can not back it up with what is already recorded in the Word of God of 66 books.

e. God says that even as He is against those who prophesy these false dreams, causing His own people to err by their lies and recklessness (a good Bible description of many messages we hear today on TV, reckless); that God did not send them nor did God command them to prophesy; and furthermore there is no way that they or their messages from dreams can “profit this people at all”. (Jeremiah 23:32)

11-5: To Unchurched and Churched About the Churched.

While most popular preaching and books today are about the unchurched and addressed to the churched, this book is about the churched. The way of popular preachers to get an “Amen” is to talk about the unchurched and lost, since only churched and supposed Christians are in their congregation. It is always easier to preach and teach about those not present, and receive congregational support, than to preach and teach about those already present in the church. As you sus-
expected this book largely about the unchurched is addressed TO both the.church and unchurched. It is only fair play that preachers can now talk about the human frailties and bad habits of their church members, and in fact must in order to do the church administration work of reproof and correction; since for years at Southwestern Seminary books like “The Human Frailties of the Pastor” have been studied.

1. Such attempts at this church administration of correction and reproof, much less sound doctrine and instruction in true righteousness, as well as to fill the “ALL SCRIPTURE” sink hole, is seldom practiced by the popular because it is not profitable.

2. If you are going to Biblical identify the “false” in false prophets and false and itching ears Bible teachers and preachers today, you must face up to who is making a profit out of you and how large is that profit.

3. You must be able to recognize where the dreams of these itching and false prophesies are serving, like in Jeremiah’s day of detrimental official prophets and priests, to subtly “strengthen the hands of the evil doers” (Jeremiah 23:14) by positive reinforcement of the bad habits and follies of “wickedness”.

11-6: Profit Correction on Prophesy (Speaking in the Assembly) in I Cor 14.

Few places in Scripture have we during the last 20 years seen the need for “reproof” and “correction” on ALL SCRIPTURE like we now see in the status quo as I Corinthians 14 is understood and practiced. While many give lip service and some honor to I Corinthians 14, as the charismatic and special revelations movement in American Christianity has come to dominate, the real meaning and message of this famous chapter has been ignored. Sometimes one would think that the charismatic movement with the rising tide of the mystery of lawlessness that started in Paul’s day, was the twin movement that would dominate American churches and religion in favor of the Falling Away. Although at first to be considered strange, it should also be recalled that even Satan was transformed into an angel of light; should it therefore be considered strange that this charismatic movement, so anti-Scripture to I Corinthians 14, should be a prime instrument in the ushering in of the inevitable Falling Away.

The meaning of “prophesy” in Jeremiah and I Corinthians is to “publicly expound”. Somehow prophesy and prophet has become confused with predictions of the future; and while all the Prophets like Jeremiah, and we should be
aware of that by now, had predictions of the future on what God was going to do, the primary message of the Prophet was on contemporary problems and issues. For example, Jeremiah primarily preached on the bad habits of God's people.

1. I Corinthians 14:3 has forever established the purpose of "prophesy" in a local church or in part of the total assembly of Christ. {Some of these TV and conference speakers think they can ignore I Corinthians 14 as they are not speaking in a local church, but even as “where two or three or gathered together in the name of Christ” as Jesus taught, so also it is an Assembly in the nature of “My Assembly” when Christians gather for such Bible studies.}

   a. The purpose of public expounding in any assembly of Christ is to: (1) edify, (2) exhort, and (3) comfort. (I Corinthians 14:3) Any time or place of an assembly in the name of Christ, that you find public speaking not to be consistent with the building up of Christians according to the Word of God, any time you find it inconsistent with the exhortations of the Word of God no matter what special revelations are claimed, and any time you find it to be a false comfort and false security as compared to what the Word of God as it exists now, that is as the substance of “the faith once for all delivered to the saints”, it is NOT PROPHESY! If the prophesy is obvious for personal status and profit; if it smells like self-edification, if it sounds like self-edification for profit and status, and if it looks like self-edification for status and profit, no matter how large the crowd--they could not be larger than all of God's people in Jeremiah nor larger than all God's people in the Falling Away in the wilderness--then it is self-edification.

   b. The opposite of this kind of speaking in the church (prophesy), according to I Corinthians 14:4, is to edify self. This applies to an individual worshipper who gets all involved in arm waving and self-expressions of joy as well as to the public speaker. Speaking in a tongue, like an unknown tongue or another language, is just one way that a worshipper or speaker can disrupt worship by favoring self-edification over edification of the assembly. That is the real subject of I Corinthians 14 even though it has been perverted and misused, sorely in need of reproof and correction. And here is a stark example of where a little scripture, say one or two verses are utilized out of the sink hole of ALL SCRIPTURE, to use and pervert the total gist. The gist is described in I Corinthians 14:1: (1) Your prophesy or speaking publicly in the church should first come from a pursuit of love, the love Christ and God without the waxing cold of the sin and Falling Away, not from the self-love of the bad habits of church members; (2) Save your speaking to God, like in tongue speaking, for private prayers and remember that in public prophesy your audience is other men {granted God hears if you really
have something to say, but prophesy is TO listeners, not God; and (3) while your spirit can communicate to God in any known or unknown God in private prayer, it is not a matter for speaking in public exposition, in short not prophesy. [Why not allow God to define like He does in I Corinthians 14 what kind of speaking that He desires publicly in His own House.]

NOTE: Perhaps one of the previously unmentioned ways that we make Houses of God a “Hideout for Bad Habits” is by disguising our prophesies under the bad habit of self-edification. However, we do recall that this was also the problem of the “Den of Thieves” of Jeremiah, they sought to build up themselves as secure, right, and comfortable by shouting charismatically “The temple of God, the temple of God, the temple of God are these”. Also by speaking publicly the big lie.

2. The bottom line of I Corinthians 14, and many never make the connection or allow themselves to be reproved or corrected on the matter, at the same time deceiving themselves that they have the profitability of doctrine and instruction in righteousness on this portion of ALL SCRIPTURE, is to be found in a proper attitude toward the Word of God as given in I Corinthians 14:36, the gist of which is “did the Word of God come to you only, or did the Word of God come out of you?” You see this kind of forbidden by ALL SCRIPTURE attitude is what creates for self-edification, profit, and status all these special revelations where God told such a public expounder something that He did not tell others.

a. If someone thinks himself “to be prophet or spiritual”, let him or her first acknowledge that the things which Paul spoke and wrote are words from God. Paul was among the Apostles chosen, like the Prophets of the Old Testament, to write Scriptures; Peter testified to Paul that He wrote in his epistles scriptures in the same category as the “prophesies” of the Prophets, and that some of them were both hard to understand, and how some in that day, and by the way in this day and time, would wrest them to their own destruction. (I Corinthians 14:37,38) You have two choices when you read I Corinthians 14 and you practice public exposition: (1) to remain ignorant with reproof and correction, and perhaps also without any real sound doctrine and sound instruction in righteousness; or (2) to acknowledge the clear teachings, attitude, and practices of I Corinthians 14 as Word of God, unchanged and unaltered by modern times and by any claims at special revelation.
b. “Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak in the church.” (or any assembly in the name of Christ) (I Corinthians 14:34) I would not even try to explain why so many confusions in Christ related assembly are caused by women; however since the whole gist of this chapter is to deal with confusions in assembly and worship, then we must just accept it as so. For example, above, we saw another confusion in worship and assembly caused by special revelations which ignore the Christian community understanding and history of the faith once for all delivered to the saints in the Word of God.

3. Sorry Joyce, Paula, Beth, and other “women of faith”, the Word of God did not come out of you nor was it delivered to you only; and your public silence is required in any assembly of Christ just as is the same Word of God requirement on any member that enters any church for worship. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS. And what you will generally find in such conferences that there is much personal profit making, much self-edification of profit and status, and a lot of subtle special revelations. And generally the conference attendees have gone in order to secure some additional Christian status in their own family, church, or the community at large. It is that same old story of popularity, heaping up, and hiding. Look closely and you will find that these forbidden women public speakers, just like Osteen and Warren “strengthen” listeners in their evil way, like in Jeremiah, most generally by providing substitutes for the real God, real Christ, and real Christian way of life, which in reality are the creation of idols.

NOTE: By the way on the popularity surface, you may doubt that these ladies have done anything wrong, especially on the forbidden habits of II Timothy 3:1-9; but think again! Their pride, boasting, self-love, arrogance, love of money, without self-control, headstrong, haughty--especially when you consider that they have made the deliberate choice in the name of the American feminist movement to ignore the ALL SCRIPTURE of I Corinthians 14:34--that is all; and perhaps even the slanderers, despiser of good, and lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

4. Greater in the eyes of God is the Prophet who prophesies than the Prophet who speaks in a tongue. (I Corinthians 14:5) And never forget that while it is possible to speak to God so emotionally, and dominated by the spirit, that language can lose meaning, and that this is an “unknown tongue”, what the Apostles spoke on the first day of Pentecost after the Ascension was known languages. Really, if you want to be more New Testament then invite a missionary to speak to your church or conference in the language of the people where he is a missionary! You might say, well most of us would not understand it, so how would we
Popular Preachers of Prosperity

profit from the message? Yes, exactly, all which is done in the church or other assembly of Christ is to be done with “understanding” whether it is prophesy, music, praise, or prayer. Otherwise it is not public, it is private and a violation of I Corinthians 14 in spirit and in truth!

5. Along with this charismatic movement which has confused worship, has between within worship services a new Babel, which confused and scattered all the people of the world, of many sounds and languages. Like taught in I Corinthians 14:7-11, this is a confusion in worship and assembly of (1) lack of distinction, and (2) lack of understanding. You see it in the praise music, you see in the self-expressions and edifications of Attenders and speaker, and you see in the simplicity (without distinction) and lack of understanding of those who claim to prophesy. And we have let them get away with it out of the American respect for religion and churches and religious conferences supposedly in the name of Christ, although much of that comes from not even choosing to think about it or acknowledge it like the respect given to some men and women after their death that was not afforded them previously.

6. Clearly by I Corinthians 14:6 the prophesy that edifies, exhorts, and comforts is by: (1) revelation from an Apostle or Prophet and therefore only as written in the Bible of the authorized Apostles and Prophets; (2) by knowledge based on that Bible, not special revelations; (3) by real prophesying that edifies, exhorts, and comforts with distinct sounds and understanding; and (4) by the teaching of sound doctrine, instruction in righteousness based on the ALL SCRIPTURE which we already have as well as reproof and correction which closes the two gaps, church administration and Christian living, of II Timothy 3:16,17 and the sink hole where much of the ALL has been lost or ignored, even as has I Corinthians 14.

7. Sing with the spirit and understanding; pray with the spirit and understanding; and speak (prophesy) in any church or assembly of Christ with spirit and understanding. (I Corinthians 14:15) If you give some Attenders a blessing that they do not understand, it will have trouble being a blessing to them; although you may profit for feeding your own ego. Obviously this promotion of edification of the congregation over confusion of the congregation applies to music of distinct, beautiful, and quite sound as well as of praise, prophesy, and prayer. Yet what do we find in our contemporary churches and conferences: instead of correction and reproof in the direction of a lack of confusion, we find correction and reproof in the direction of noise in worship, a lack of
understanding with the emotion of spirit, and confusing preaching and teaching to be consistent with the rest.

11-7: Popularity of the “Peace” Message.

It is foolish to prophesy “Peace, peace” today, even as in Jeremiah, when your world is about to be destroyed. All the official prophets and priests of Jeremiah were preaching a Gospel of Peace and Prosperity to the extent that God said, “Don’t talk about an oracle of God anymore”. You prophets and priests the only way an oracle of God should come from your lips is when you ask one another, “What did Yahweh say?” or “What did Yahweh answer?” (Jeremiah 23:34-37) The equivalent message today to popular preachers would be: Don’t talk about special revelations, for they are like dreams, just say between yourselves “What is already written in the complete Bible of revelations”, or “What does the existing Word of God say”. Even a popular preacher as good as J.D. Jakes said last Sunday that Martha has a “revelation”. No, Martha had an illumination of existing revelations from Jesus and the Apostles; and this is not trivia, for to claim revelations by and from anyone beside Jesus, the Apostles, and Prophets is heresy against the faith once for all delivered to the saints and against the written Word of God. Like the Mormons who boast of 4 Bibles and the Catholics who establish a Vatican document in authority over the Bible, it is adding to and taking away from the Bible. Or as in the recent history of the Pentecostals, once let loose by Oral Roberts, then like the prophets and priests of Jeremiah live off the messages of fellow popular preachers, generating based on this popular and recent evolution new terminology, new concepts, and new special revelations. (Most often the purpose of these special oracles or revelations, like the teachings of Paul and other Apostles on false prophets, are: (1) for personal profit; and (2) for the status of making disciples to themselves, alias popularity.

“‘Therefore behold, I am against the prophets,’ says the LORD, ‘who steal My words every one from his neighbor.’” (Jeremiah 23:30)

And here I must give some credit to the author of the New International Commentary on Jeremiah, J.A. Thompson, who translates Jeremiah 23:31 as “they oracle an oracle.”

“The meaning is that the message of the false prophets originated from themselves and was presented in their own words with something of a flourish as though it were a word from Yahweh.”

1. The ultimate false message of the popular prophets and priests of Jeremiah was that they were preaching a message of peace and security when God had
already told Judah and Israel that they would go into Captivity. How are popu-
lar preachers today like the prophets and priests of Jeremiah?

(1). They promote a Gospel of Prosperity, Health, and Peace which enforces
{strengthens the wicked, to use some words from Jeremiah} the loyalty of
Americans to give a priority to things and status over God and righteousness.
What truly made God mad in the messages of Jeremiah is split loyalty. And
while many Christians and church members today enamored with the Gospel of
Prosperity and idols of material things and seeking have not seen the real mes-
sage of Jesus in “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and
all these things will be added unto you”, any time the priority is reversed by a
loyalty for any of these things of living and prosperity, it is an idol of split loy-
alty for God.

(2). They strengthen the wicked of bad habits in their bad ways with this
Gospel of Prosperity (by the way, believed by over 60% of American Chris-
tians), to ignore that God chastises those that really belong to him. What hap-
pens with the Gospel of Prosperity is that the 10% of Americans who spend
over 50% of the money are promoted as the good examples of God’s children
when in reality, according to Hebrews 11 on the chastisement of God, they are
bastard children; and whatever you read from the chastisement of Hebrews 11
and the rest of the Bible, you must see among the ways God’s has chastised is
related to health, prosperity, things, and status, also weather and comfort.

(3). They provide a comfort zone in Christian lives and in the house of God
which tends to overlook that the world is rapidly coming to an end. Like the
man who built his house on the sand, in the parable from Jesus, they provide an
emphasis on things and status and comfort of this world, building semi-perma-
nent social, materialistic, and routine structures that can not survive as this
old earth and old heavens become the new earth and new heavens. Often today
rather than the non-believers promoting the “status-quo” of Peter where “all
things continue the same from the beginning”, it is the popular preachers with
their itching ears listeners that are promoting the security and assumption
that Peace will go on forever; while God has foretold and designed this old
world for ultimate destruction.

2. Seldom do you hear the popular preachers speak of an imminence of the
falling away, of increased calamities from God, and of Peters “both the earth
and the works that are in it will be burned up.” (I Peter 3:10) Granted that
even in the days of Paul, he could write “the whole Creation groaneth until now”:
and that like a woman in childbirth there will be increased travail up to the point of delivery from the old earth and Age to the new earth and Age, it should be apparent from the increased calamities in the U.S. since 9/11 or tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, drought, etc that the groaning and travail of this old earth is about to usher in a New Earth and a New Age.

Like in Jeremiah, these are evil times not good times; and although we tend to ignore it, also like God's people of Jeremiah, history is not the same as it use to be. America is not the same; the world is not the same; the SBC is not the same; the good old gospel is not the same; and our churches are not the same. There are several ways that God through Jeremiah tries to describe how the status quo of the nation and the world had changed so that Peace was no longer to be held onto or preached by popular prophets. Certainly God's people could no longer find peace, security, and comfort in the House of God as they tried to hide there!

(1). Now history is different from the history of the past in that a repeated sequence of calamities in the place of blesses have come upon the land.

"Why does the land perish and burn up like a wilderness, so that no one can pass through?" (Jeremiah 9:12b)

Nothing new, the optimistic of misty optics and the popular prophets and priests say: we have been there and done this before. However, look closely and you will find that there is something much more different in intensity and lack of blessing than it has ever been in history. Even as now our scientists and politicians are starting to face up to our destruction of planet earth, so we are increasingly becoming aware that the entropy predicted by physicists, where the order of the universe runs down, is much closer than predicted. Also that God holds His own people in the land responsible for the condition of the people in the land and for the calamities. Prayers are not effective and not being heard. The primary reason is because the giant shadow over the many prayers of churches and church people blocks the effectiveness of these prayers, and that giant shadow is the bad habits of God's people that they are hiding in the churches, bad habits that are quickly without adequate sink hole filling of ALL SCRIPTURE and the two gaps of church administration and Christian living are about to pass into a complete fulfillment of the Falling Away.

(2). God's people of the Houses of God look for and seek after peace, security, and comfort in the House of God and in the land; and the popular preachers
encourage them with false message of a Gospel of Peace, Prosperity, and Health, but “no good came and for a time of health, and there was trouble" (Jeremiah 8:15) While many of these false and official and popular prophets try to make over what is in reality happening with words to tell you what is happening quite different from what you see, America is starting to get the real picture. It is much like the lady who told us she was a worship leader and continued in our presence to take the name of God in vain. There is an obvious contradiction there between what is professed or claimed and what is real, between image and reality, between the dreams of prophesy and the truth.

(3). What God sees in these churches of hideouts and in the land where all the official prophets and priests are touting peace and prosperity is a “conspiracy of popularity”: “And the LORD said to me, ‘A conspiracy has been found among the men of Judah and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem’”. (Jeremiah 11:9-11)

The people of the land have changed for the worse, “they have turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers” (of the Falling Away in the wilderness) in that they refuse to listen and heed the words of God. The people have gone after other gods and idols to serve them. God’s people have broken the agreement of the covenant that has existed between God and the people, and that is a drastic change in history.

(4). God will bring calamity on the land, that is another change in history; and God will not listen to their prayers, that is definitely a change in the good old religion that Americans have known or think they have known.

“Therefore thus says the LORD, ‘Behold, I will surely bring calamity on them which they will not be able to escape (no more hiding in the House of God); and though they cry out to Me, I will not listen to them.’” (Jeremiah 11:11)

Really, how long before you wake up Christians and church members, for last night on 60 minutes in the program about Joel Osteen, you witnessed the “Perfect Popular Preacher” for the Falling Away, also the perfect congregation of 10,000 people with a TV audience of 70 million viewers. Brother and sister, that is about as worldly as you can get, and the ministry of the Lakewood Church and Osteen has drawn recognition from even some Seminary professors as devoid of Bible and theology. What you are witnessing in this church and ministry is a complete fulfillment of what some said 40 years ago, “if you stand
for nothing, you fall for anything”. On the positive side as the interviewer for 60 minutes graciously referenced other ministers and teachers as saying, a no doctrine message of “God is nice, you are nice, I am nice, and you should go out and be nice.” Well, wake up and contrast this with People Profitability (II Timothy 3:16,17) from the Scripture, where people hear sound doctrine rescued, where there is “reproof, correction, and instruction in rightness”, compare this message of niceness preached while members and viewer struggle and die striving to live with a gospel of prosperity, that if you show enough faith you will be prosperous and healthy--what a wrong to do to many members as has been witnessed by others in Houston--this niceness which ignored that Preaching according to the Bible (II Timothy 4:2) is to include “reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine”. “For the time” has actually come for this 10 thousand and 70 million “when they will not endure sound doctrine”; in fact they are getting exactly what they want like II Timothy 4:3 says, intolerance toward sound doctrine “according to their own desires”, since this support and encouragement, yes wholesale buying of the message, is a grassroots movement of “itching ears”, itching ears preacher and itching ears people. It is the people of Houston, Lakewood in particular, that did this “heaping up” of niceness and a lack of sound doctrine, this grassroots movement where “their ears (have) turned away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables” {of niceness, prosperity, things, and health}; and the sad fact is that neither the preacher nor the people recognize that they have fulfilled the ultimate description of the Falling Away of II Timothy 4:3,4. The sins and bad habits that brought this 10 thousand and 70 million to this ultimate of nice fables has not been and is not apparent, covered up by the more obvious popular reality that 70.1 million believe it and participate {you know, millions of Frenchman could not be wrong as the old saying goes}. It is much like we in the kingdom have known for over 50 years and in faith healing meetings, where what you see and hear about is a few that seemed to be miraculously healed, hardly once hearing of the many lives destroyed in the meetings because of their lack of faith, or destroyed later. The cover up process that started and developed then has been perfected at Lakewood Church. And if you do not see in this, the ultimate of the Falling Away, and the need to rescue the sound doctrine of the Bible, from this vast number of Americans who have made Lakewood a hideout for ignoring the Bible, then you also must be too far gone to tell the difference between sound doctrine and fables.
CHAPTER 12

A Bible Message on the Gospel of Prosperity

NOTE: It is hoped you know what is meant when it is said that there is the critical and current need for churches to hear: (1) Filling of the sinkhole of ALL SCRIPTURE with that which is not being heard or heeded; and (2) Church administration through the “reproof, correction, doctrine, and instruction in righteousness” that will also present a barrier between the perilous times of bad habits and the intolerance toward sound doctrine with church members motivated by what they want and therefore heaping up itching ears Bible teachers--they make these popular preachers popular--and it is a watchman on the tower for the rescue of sound doctrine. And yes, as on the cover of this book we do “go out to a wayfaring and gainsaying” people of God; and who will believe our report, definitely not just the called but the chosen among the called!

12-1: Introduction.

1. The Gospel of Prosperity is the Gospel of this world.

Recent surveys of American Christians indicate that over 61% believe in the Gospel of Prosperity. How hideous this is when you realize what it really means. The Gospel of Prosperity means that if you really believe you will prosper in material gain and health, and that when you do not prosper materially and in health it is because you do not have enough faith.
2. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Gospel of a kingdom established by Jesus during His life, which is quite different from this world; and which then as now was rejected by a majority of Israel and the rest of the world. It has continued to grow although always in the minority; however it will take over the new heaven and the new earth after Christ comes again to establish on earth the dominance of His kingdom. There are many indications from the Bible and other history that God has delayed the sending of Jesus back to earth a second time in order that enough citizens of the new kingdom can be enlisted from each generation in order to re-populate the new earth.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is called by the Bible the Gospel of the Kingdom. Of course this is the kingdom of Christ and God. What Jesus did on earth is described in Matthew 4:23.

“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease among the people.” (Matthew 4:23)

According to this verse of the Word of God Jesus (1) traveled like an evangelist going about all Galilee teaching, preaching, and healing, (2) more specifically Jesus preached which gospel, the gospel of the kingdom (you see it is the gospel of a unique kingdom, not the kingdom of this world, the gospel of prosperity); (3) specifically Jesus taught in their places of public worship, the synagogues; and more specifically Jesus healed all manner of diseases among the people. And without saying much about these popular and famous faith healers today, Jesus and God are still in the healing business; although we must cast some doubt on the ministry of those faith healers today who have slipped into a Gospel of Prosperity instead of the Gospel of the Kingdom. If their ministry is shoddy on two-thirds of the ministry of Jesus—that is if their teaching and preaching of the Gospel of Prosperity makes the ministry a false and shoddy work—then we must also question the validity of their call to “heal all manner of disease among the people.” We must, bottom line, come to see their faith healing as shoddy efforts for personal gain, money and fame, while we still know that God and Christ as before the life of Christ and after the life of Christ, were and still are in the healing business. We are not knocking the faith that God can heal and does heal: we are knocking those who would with it preach a false gospel of Prosperity while getting from that personal gain and fame.
NOTE: There are those among us in America, and among the more famous among us, who have rapidly ridden up on the back of popularity in books, TV, and evangelism by establishing a new kind of kingdom that has become extremely popular; however which has also ridden on the also popular among the people: (1) a grassroots movement of the Falling Away; (2) an intolerance toward sound doctrine; (3) an attraction by the people of itching ears Bible teachers based on what they want; and (4) a subsequent heaping up of these popular preachers of the gospel of prosperity. Much of it started several years ago when more authority was given to the special revelations of charismatics over the “once for all delivered faith to the saints” of the truly revealed Word of God.

I. Matthew 4:23 with a mention of the Gospel of the Kingdom, at least one third of the total ministry of Jesus, is an introduction to the Kingdom of Christ of the famous sermon on the Mount of Matthew 4-6. If you have missed that the Sermon on the Mount defines the characteristics of kingdom members or citizens then read again Matthew 4-6.

1. You will see that the word “kingdom” looms large in these famous teachings from Jesus. In 5:3 it identifies those who are and will be in the kingdom of heaven as the poor in spirit. Isn’t it rather ironical that the very first specific statement about the kingdom of Christ uses the word “poor”, setting up the poor as the unique recipients of the Gospel, not the prosperous. There is more about the uniqueness of members of the kingdom in Matthew 5:10 as those “who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.” How can you think that such persecuted for righteousness are the same as the believers in the Gospel of Prosperity; for they have become so one with the world and the things of the world that persecution for them is unthinkable, and they know it? If, according to Matthew 5:19, any of these famous and popular preachers of the Gospel of Prosperity truly would desire to be great in the kingdom of God as contrasted to famous in this world, then they must do and teach the real teachings of Jesus about the Gospel and the kingdom in the Sermon on the Mount; and they though great in their own eyes and in the eyes of this world are least in the kingdom as they substitute a Gospel of this world and of prosperity for the real Gospel of Jesus and of the kingdom of Jesus.

2. The very basic teachings of Christians as the salt of the earth and of the light of the world, fundamental to the Gospel of the Kingdom, is a challenge to separate from the Gospel of this world and of prosperity. (Matthew 5:13-16) What
do you think the salt means except there has to be a difference between the Christian and the rest of the world in which he lives. That there has to be difference in the light of the life of the Christian and those of the world in which he lives.

3. Most of the preachers and practitioners are believers in the Gospel of Prosperity in order that they may fit in with American fellow citizens, and hide any differences between them and Christ which is quite the opposite of Jesus to let the candle shine, not putting it under a bushel in order to hide it. (Matthew 5:15,16)

4. The majority of the religious leaders during the life of Christ, alias the Pharisees and Sadducees, were believers in the Gospel of Prosperity; and at the very heart of their rejection of Jesus was that His kingdom of health and prosperity, unlike in the kingdom of David, did not sit well with them; and Jesus set them up as a bad example for righteousness. (Matthew 5:20) Jesus said in effect that unless your righteousness and rightness in the Gospel exceeds that rightness of the Gospel of Prosperity of the scribes and Pharisees, you just will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

5. Which would you say happens on the contemporary scene among these famous and wealthy advocates of the Gospel of Prosperity. In the two categories of Matthew 6:1-4 of those who wrongfully do their alms before men to be seen of men, sounding trumpets and loud instruments of music, in the places of worship and on the streets; or would you say these famous preachers are doing their alms in secret so that the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing. What they do is advertise their alms in order to recruit more fame, popularity, and money!

6. These long prayers that TV evangelists make in public do you think they are in the category of the hypocrites that pray in order to be seen by men, or in the category of those that pray in secret to God. (Matthew 6:5,6)

7. By the way these teachings of Jesus do not excuse the rest of the 61% of American church members who believe in the Gospel of Prosperity if they rattle in church worship with vain repetitions and music, thinking that they will be heard for their much speaking and much singing. How many songs today, and how much of the worship, is the vain repetition of two to five words as if Paul never wrote as part of the Word of God first and second Corinthians where
anyone who speaks or sings in the church is to do it with understanding for the benefit of the listeners. (Matthew 6:5-7)

8. Did you notice that before the correct way to pray is given in Matthew 6:9-13, in the preceding verse of Matthew 6:8 the clear teaching is made by Jesus that “God knows what you need before you ask”. And this is the key to understanding so much of the Gospel of the Kingdom, so much on the place of things in the life of the Christian. It doesn’t say God knows how much prosperity you want, but it says God knows what you need. The only Biblical way to use the word “prosperity” in the Bible is in terms of daily needs.

9. Indeed, Jesus taught that the proper way to pray is “Give us this day our daily needs”: not give us security and comfort for the rest of our lives, not give us prosperity and health beyond what we need. (Matthew 6:11)

10. The Gospel of Prosperity reverses the Gospel of Christ in that it promotes the storing up of treasures on earth instead of in heaven, (Matthew 6:19,20)

11. The Gospel of Prosperity focus the treasure and the heart of the believer on this world instead on heaven. (Matthew 6:21) The Gospel of Christ focus the heart and treasure more on heaven and a kingdom to come.

12. Since the human eye is the passage of light for the earth, if the eye becomes cluttered by prosperous things, then the whole body becomes dark with the Gospel of Prosperity. (Matthew 6:22:23) If the only light that gets into your heart is darkness, then the darkness is total, the Gospel of Prosperity becomes a curse, another Gospel not preached by Paul and Christ.

13. Those who love the Gospel of Prosperity serve a different master than Jesus as they try to straddle the fence between the true Gospel of the kingdom and of Jesus Christ and of the Gospel of the world and of prosperity. You just can not serve the Gospel of Christ and the Gospel of Prosperity. If you love one you will despise the other; and if you cling to one you will despise the other. (Matthew 6:24)

14. Contrary to the teachings and commands of Jesus, the Gospel of Prosperity by a clear focus on the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of sins, and other things clearly places the life focus on thoughts for this life. Food, clothing, houses, cars, stocks and bonds, et cetera takes precedence in life. (Matthew 6:25). There is a lot more to life than food and raiment, than bread and material
things and status. Jesus told Satan “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” The Gospel of Prosperity tries to change this focus on the words of God to bread.

15. You can hardly say that the birds of the air are practitioners of Prosperity. They do not toil and spin and worry, but your heavenly Father takes care of them. (Matthew 6:26-31)

16. If you seek after the things of the Gospel of Prosperity you start to seek like other Gentile Americans seek. (Matthew 6:32)

17. If you pursue the Gospel of Prosperity you start to seek first the other things of life instead of the kingdom of God and His righteousness. (Matthew 6:33)

12-3: The Real New Birth is the One Baptism or Salvation.

II. While the Gospel of Jesus and the Kingdom creates in the life a 9 month baptism that comes with real believing, the Gospel of Prosperity and the World creates an instantaneous new birth like the seed planted among the thorns of the world. The new birth based on this false Gospel is received with joy, like seed on hard and thorny ground, with the deception of conversion but with persecutions of time, cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, this false instantaneous new birth brings only the fruit of stumbling, choking, and the falling away. (Mark 16:15)

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark 16:15)

1. The Gospel of Christ and the Kingdom when believed creates the one new and 9 month baptism that brings real salvation.

2. The Gospel of Prosperity and the World when believed creates the instantaneous new birth spoken of in the parable of the seed and the sower where the seed is sown among thorns and on stony ground, yet received with joy until choked out by difficulties, stumbling, cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and other things.
III. While the Gospel of Christ and of Christ's kingdom causes the losing of the life with the real gain of eternal life, the Gospel of Prosperity and of the world causes the gain of the present life to the loss of eternal life. (Mark 8:35)

“For whoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it.” (Mark 8:35)

1. The Gospel of Christ and His Kingdom shuns the making of life according to the standards of this world; it loses life for the sake of Christ and the Gospel, and therefore promotes real salvation.

2. The Gospel of Prosperity and the World attempts to save life in terms of worldly standards; it fails to lose life for the sake of Christ and the Gospel; and therefore there is no salvation in the Gospel of Prosperity.

3. Also while the Gospel of Christ leads individuals to (1) “deny himself”, (2) to take up a cross of difficulty daily like Christ instead of comfort and security; and (3) follows like Jesus lived and taught, in contrast the Gospel of Prosperity lead to self-fulfillment more than self-denial, to go the way of comfort and ease over a daily cross, and to follow Satan and the ways of the world over Jesus.

“Whoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” (Mark 8:34b)

4. Also while the Gospel of Christ leads to the saving of a man's own soul, the Gospel of Prosperity and of the World leads to the profit even to the extent of the whole world. Will you sell out your soul for a morsel of prosperity or of health?

“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul.” (Mark 8:36,37)

12-4: Who Called and Authorized These Popular Preachers of Prosperity.

IV. While they that preach the Gospel of Peace of Christ and His Kingdom make it obvious that they have been authorized and sent to preach, those who preach the Gospel of Prosperity and the World lead one to question who called them and who sent them. (Romans 10:15)
“And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things.’” (Romans 10:15)

1. The preachers of the Gospel of Peace and of Christ are sent by God and Christ, and the evidence that they are so sent is in the substance of the Gospel which they preach, how consistent it is with the Gospel of the Sermon on the Mount from Jesus, the Gospel from the Apostle Paul, and the many teachings in the Bible about the Gospel.

2. The preachers of the Gospel of Prosperity are either self called or selected by another false or itching ears Bible teacher.

3. When you find everybody and thousands, especially in one church during this time of the Falling Away, like in the time of Isaiah, believing the report of these false and itching ears teachers, you know it is not like in Isaiah’s time and in the time of Romans 10:16.

“But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah saith, LORD, who hath believed our report?” (Romans 10:16)

4. The faith that cometh by hearing is only when the hearing is of the Gospel of Christ and His Kingdom: that faith does not come with the hearing of the Gospel of Prosperity and of the World.

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” (Romans 10:17)

12-5: The Treasure of the Real Gospel is in Earthen Vessels.

V. The Gospel of Christ and His Kingdom are hid to those who are lost in the Gospel of Prosperity: Satan, the god of this world has blinded those who do not believe; the Gospel of Prosperity is substituted for the “glorious gospel of Christ”; the preachers and teachers of the Gospel of Prosperity leads to the preaching of self unlike Paul who said we do not preach “ourselves”, also preaches such preachers and teachers as other than servants. They also lose sight like Paul retained of the fact that they have the treasure in earthen vessels, forgetting that the real power of the Gospel is of God. Instead with the Gospel of Prosperity they think of their vessels as more than earthen, and often fail to give God the credit for the power. (Second Corinthians 4:3-7)
"Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestations of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake...but we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the Excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” (Second Corinthians 4:1-7)

1. The Gospel of Christ is hid to those lost in the Gospel of Prosperity.

2. The Gospel of Prosperity is obvious to those lost in this world.

3. It is the God who in the first place created light out of the darkness of a universe, who also shines in the human heart of the real believer in the Gospel of Christ and of Christ's Kingdom.

“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (Second Corinthians 4:6)

4. Admit it, you can see the face of Jesus in the Gospel of the Bible, the Gospel of Christ and of Christ's Kingdom: you do not see the face of Jesus in the things of the Gospel of Prosperity.

12-6: Popular Preachers Practice Forbidden Deceit with the Bible.

VI. Preachers and teachers of the Gospel of Prosperity, contrary to Second Corinthians 4:1,2, are (1) dishonest with the Bible and the Gospel; (2) they show a lot of craftiness and ingenuity in the way they handle the Word of God, quickly developed words and admonitions in the itching ears category of Second Timothy 4:3,4; (3) in short, they handle the Word of God deceitfully, for their own purpose and profit more than for the benefit of Christ and the listener.

“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of
the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." (Second Corinthians 4:1,2)

1. The Gospel of Christ renounces the hidden things of dishonesty, does not live and work in craftiness, does not handle the word of God deceitfully, and shows in manifestations of truth, commends itself to the conscience of man, and does things under the sight of God.

2. The Gospel of Prosperity remains dishonest in preaching and teaching, promotes the itching ears teachings of human creativity and craftiness, manifest other than truth, does not commend itself to the conscience of men but rather to their base desires for material gain, and makes attempts to hide it from the sight of God.

12-7: Any Other Gospel of Another Kind Brings a Curse.

VII. Although these promoters of the Gospel of Prosperity appear to be angels or appear like the Apostle Paul, if they preach a Gospel unlike that which Paul and the other Apostles, and Jesus, delivered, he is accursed. Paul repeats it again in Galatians 1:8: "As we said before, so say I now again, If any man (and I might add woman) preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Think of all this vast heaping up of teachers on TV and otherwise today, with new and novel sayings and words and teachings; and think of how good they appear, like angels, like apostles and prophets; but if their Gospel sounds different and looks different as is different from the Gospel of Christ then they are cursed by the Bible of the Apostles and Prophets, by the Bible of Jesus.

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said, before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:8,9)


2. The Gospel of Prosperity preaches the Gospel of Wealth, the Cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, the Gospel of this world and of Satan, the prince of this world.
3. Due to American extremism on religious toleration, you no doubt have come to accept these evangelists of the Gospel of Prosperity as if they were an angel; but they like any Bible teachers or preachers that preach and practice unsound doctrine are not angels, rather false prophets, false teachers, and itching ears Bible teachers. How could anybody mention “God” and “Christ” and “Bible” so much and still be false? (Don’t forget Satan quoted the Bible to Jesus during the wilderness temptation!) Well, that is the very nature of savage and grievous wolves that scatter the flock, not sparing them in order to make disciples for themselves and to gain the profit of prosperity. In other words, they do it for the money and the status.

12-8: The Gospel of Prosperity is Just Plain BAD!

VIII. Other Bad Things about the Gospel of Prosperity.

1. It is contrary to the way of God to feed and clothe His own people. Remember how in the wilderness they that gathered much food had nothing left over for prosperity, and they that gathered little had enough to eat. That is God’s own plan for prosperity. The same as in the model prayer of Jesus, “give us this day our daily needs”. Anything beyond this exercise of the plan of God leads to evil, to the placing of material needs before God and the kingdom, and to the loving of the world more than of the Father.

2. The Gospel of Prosperity promotes the love of this world condemned by the Apostle John in the Word of God of I John.

“Love not the world neither the things that are in the world. All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the Father but of the world. The world passes away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.” (I John 2:15-17)

3. The Gospel of Prosperity prevents disciples from becoming friends of Jesus as did 11 of the Apostles and stated in John 14, because the disciple can not keep the priority of God over things as given in the Sermon on the Mount.

4. The practitioner of the Gospel of Prosperity as far as motivations places himself, albeit on a smaller and poorer scale, with the rich man who has one chance in a million of salvation even as a camel has one chance in a million of going through the eye of a needle. Those are not very good odds for a Christian who may neither achieve wealth or salvation.
5. The Gospel of Prosperity is used by evangelists of wealth and other people of wealth and status to justify the accumulation of things which they obviously have. It is a matter of their saying, "join me in placing a priority for things over Christ."

6. Prosperity, like money, while not evil within itself, is a root of evil in that it takes the focus of life for a Christian off Christ and puts it on the evidences of faith in the things which they have.

7. Those dedicated practitioners of the Gospel of Prosperity have their rewards and comforts only in this life, like the rich man did as compared to Lazarus, as a substitute for eternal life.

8. Putting so much emphasis on prosperity and things and status encourages, contrary to the teachings of Jesus, the living by bread alone instead of the living by every Word that comes out of the mouth of God.

9. Satan as the prince of this world has far more control over the things of this world than He does over Christ's kingdom. In fact, Christ's kingdom is the only part of this world where Satan has no control at all!

10. The Gospel of Prosperity is more consistent with the American Democratic Faith, which many Americans have substituted for the Gospel of Christ, than it is the Gospel of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. The American Democratic Faith is characterized by (1) emphasis on the majority while the Bible is on the minority, (2) toleration to the extent like the Presbyterians recently voted whether to preach Christ as the only way of salvation since it seemed intolerant, and (3) "life, liberty, and the pursuit of things" of the American dream as if they can provide lasting happiness.

11. The Gospel of Prosperity stores up more treasures on earth than in heaven, and makes the heart trust more in those earthly treasures than in any treasures in heaven.

12. The Gospel of Prosperity makes the world's millionaires the biggest believers and models for believers while in reality we know that only one in a million of them that can pass through the eye of a needle can be saved.

13. The Gospel of Prosperity makes a farce out of the teaching of Jesus to the rich young man to whom He said, "You lack one thing in your religion. Go, give up
all that you have to the poor, then come follow me." He could not follow Jesus and the Gospel of Jesus because of the obstruction of priority for his possess-
sions. He went away from Jesus sorrowful, the Bible says, because he had great possessions.

14. The Gospel of Prosperity is a bad example for poor believers who will never have prosperity, both deceiving them and leading them to think that they have no faith because they have no prosperity. Job would not put up with such an accusa-
tion of no faith in Jesus when he lost his prosperity, neither should poor believ-
ers have to put up with such a distortion of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ and of the kingdom of Christ. If just one poor Christian believing child of God is caused to stumble by such false Bible teaching and preaching, then woe be it unto the preacher or teacher who causes such a child of God to stumble. Not only do they have on themselves the curse of preaching another Gospel, which is not another Gospel of the same kind as the Gospel of Christ and the kingdom, but they also have on themselves the curse that it would be better for them to be cast into the sea than to cause just one little poor child of God to stumble, much less the thousands they reach with such a popular Gospel of this world.
While the Bible is full of Reports that teach the real Gospel of Christ and all the implications for living and life, over this very popular and present Gospel of Prosperity and Health, exegesis in this chapter will be done on just one chapter of the Psalms, Psalm 37. Just like the rest of the Bible, and more pointedly in this chapter, the whole perspective of an other than Gospel of Prosperity permeates this whole chapter, verse by verse. However in one section before we get into the verse by verse details of Psalm 37, let SunGrist_Bible provide the same answer given to the Bible Question on the websites of www.biblecombible-man.com and www.SunGristBible.com, of “Why Are We So Poor”?

13-1: The Dangers, Unwise Wisdom if you Would, of the Gospel of Prosperity.

While the Gospel of Prosperity profits the Popular Preachers, especially in money and status and listeners, it is a high risk philosophy for Christians and other church members.

1. It ignores and perverts the “chatisement of God”.

While almost all are aware of how God chastises His own children and does not do so for bastard children, we all need to be reminded from the Bible exactly how God chastises. In other words, while all would recognize immediately that (1) God does chastise, and (2) That the chastisement is for real children, not the
A Real Report on the Gospel of Prosperity

tares or those without the proper wedding garments, the issue comes in recognizing what happens daily and yearly in our lives that is chastisement from God. Could it be that a lack of material gain, even a temporary illness or a more permanent one is also chastisement from God; and therefore by praying for and working for and believing in the Gospel of Prosperity we are trying to thwart the very will of God for our lives.

2. It creates false hopes and false expectations that can have deadly consequences in the lives of church members.

Literally, popular preachers can destroy their own members with this false gospel! Granted this may not happen to most of the church members at any given time, and may require 40 or more years to see the consequences, but certain for some it will have immediate and disastrous results, especially among those who are going to die no matter what this Gospel says, who therefore will ignore the need for current treatment and care. So many are those who sit at the feet of popular preachers, who in order to look like a person of faith and one who believes and practices the Gospel of Prosperity, will LIVE A LIE! After all, a community of church believers must care about the opinions of fellow church members; however if the popular preacher and the members who have heaped him up believe like over 61% of the Americans in the Gospel of Prosperity, then that care for the opinion of fellow church members and the respected pastor can have deadly consequences; and believe me, it does!

13-2: Reports of the Bible, Oracles, and Bad Reports of Special Revelations.

Surely by now you know that the specific "Reports", as in "Who Has Believed our Reports" from the Prophet Isaiah, and as quoted by Paul and Jesus in John, were essentially the real Gospel Message with implications, and how although sounded and heard throughout the world, then and now, were not listend to or heeded by the majority of people, not even of God's own people. In fact, the primary non-listening culprits then and now are among the called of God's people who may or may not necessarily be among the "chosen" of God's people. And although the popular mentality can not conceive of this Bible concept, in spite of the world and the world opinion of the majority, the Gospel Reports with implications of the Bible are TRUE! They are real and they are Biblical, from the only Book that God the Father has written through Christ and the Holy Spirit in order to communicate to the world essential messages.

Perhaps you recall from Jeremiah, that God became so infuriated with the usage and mention of "oracle of God" from the official Prophets, that He said I
don’t want to hear the word “oracle” any more, unless it refers to specially what is in the Bible. Yet today on the part of popular preachers, we hear so much of special revelations with words like “God told me” or “God gave me a word”--messages which these false prophets like have supplemented or complemented the Word of God of 66 books, the most frequently heard of which is about the Good Life Now, the Gospel of Prosperity and Health, and a forbidden first seeking of things. These are also Reports; but false reports, and not from the Bible. Oh yes, these heaped up popular and false teachers and prophets of prosperity will take every now and then, in their weaker moments, some scripture out of context, especially out of the total context and perspective of the total Bible. This is the main reason we take just a typical chapter of the Bible, Psalm 37, and look at God’s real perspective from one of God’s real reports to determine if there is really anything at all real about the Gospel of Prosperity!

13-3: Psalm 37.

You know about the Psalms from David, and perhaps how often the “Spirit of Christ” spoke through the psalmist to speak of a future event or happening, like for example in the very words the Crucified Christ would later speak on the cross, “My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me” of Psalm 22:1, or the “thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades” of Psalm 16:8-11 and Acts 2:25-28; and how David, like us today, had a personal experience which invoked the original prayer and the answer in the same psalm also met his need, say for examples as in Psalm 110:1 and Acts 2:34,35, it was not David as the Apostle Peter explained that Ascended in heaven, it was Christ. Therefore it was the Spirit of Christ on a second and higher level in these Psalms and as in Psalm 37, a reality of revelations in the Old Testament through Prophets as the Apostle Peter also made clear to us in one of his little epistles. (I Peter 1:11)

What is true of all the Prophets and the books from the Prophets is that there is a message for the Prophet like David, a contemporary message for the people, and a predictive message for the future, sometimes for the future here on earth and sometimes for the future of the New Earth.


1. The first verse of Psalms 37, Psalm 37:1, begins with David’s own encouragement as an example also for those of us who later would “fret”, yes the Bible word is to fret just like Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount not to fret about things and tomorrow...specifically not to fret about the prosperity and health of “the workers of iniquity".
A Real Report on the Gospel of Prosperity

a. Specifically you are not to “envy” the workers of iniquity. Like Pastor James said, and it is amazing how similar in content and message is the whole Bible, wars and rumors and wars and so many conflicts in our churches come from “the spirit in us that lusteth (covets) to envy.” Further we have not because we ask not, or because we ask unrighteously in order to satisfy our own personal lusts for “the things of the world, the lust (covetousness) of the flesh, the lust (covetousness) of the eyes, and the pride of life”.

b. These workers of iniquity are just passing through this life without any eternal future on the New Earth, between believers and then there is a great gulf fixed and you will be able to remember them no more. Like Jesus taught in the parable about Lazarus and the rich man, while workers of iniquity like the rich man without even a cup of water for Lazarus who begged every day for years at the gate of his mansion, these workers of iniquity (“he that knoweth to do good and do it not”, it is sin or work of iniquity (James 4:17)) have all their security and comfort and pleasure during this life, but the non-workers of iniquity, today’s real believers, have only the comfort of eternity on the New Earth. Of course, which is better and lasts longer!

2. The real Gospel with implications, whether in Peter or Psalm 37, is always the same, not Prosper and Be Healthy as your primary goals, but rather “Trust in the LORD, and do good.” (Psalm 37:3) The Apostle Peter in describing the good and long life, not at all the things of the GOOD LIFE NOW popularity from Osteen from the most popular preacher of the Gospel of Prosperity of these days, and the most prosperous with millions from his books, quotes from another Psalm, Psalm 34:12-16.

3. That the reference in Psalm 34:12-16 and I Peter 3:10-12 is for the present “good life” on this earth and now, is obvious in the “see good days” (3:10). You might call it the good life in learning to live the wisdom of God like the “Numbe- ing of Your Days” chapter of HIDEOUT FOR BAD HABITS. Of course here in Psalm 37:2 it is “dwell in the land”. As long as God’s people were obedient to the covenant with God, a covenant that promised either blessings or curses, they were allowed to dwell with a real good life in the Promised Land; however as they disobeyed and whored after other false gods, they were punished with Captivity from the Land, the majority story of the Old Testament. And will this be repeated in the New Testament age of “last days” or the 1000 years for the Gentiles. Yes, with a Falling Away near the end of the last days that is very similar to the Falling Away of almost all the people of God in the wilder-
ness, the many who were called but not chosen, and the disobedient for over 40 years.

13-5: First Command or Teaching and then Blessing.

If you are going to get a blessing or blessings from this Gospel of Prosperity that these popular Evangelists offer you, what most generally is the necessary and pre-requisite command from God that they also present to you. You know what it is, give money to us and support to us; and God will bless you, but you know that is not Bible. Their special revelations which they falsely claim as from God, and expect you to believe them like they are Word of God, like in Jeremiah are just personal dreams and oracles which God has not really spoken.

1. What is called “seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, or called the “wisdom of God” for which we matter of so living by habit as to “delight yourself alos in the LORD”; and when many read that God “shall give you the desires of your heart” in the second part of the same verse, they tend to forget or ignore the prerequisite of the first part, like with so many of the blessings of God which are preceeded by a commandment of teaching of Jesus and the Bible.

2. Also with the next verse, Psalm 37:5, there is a command followed by a promise of blessing: (1) the promise of blessing is a promise of the good life with the words of “He shall being it to past”, of course which you know to be the wisdom of God for your life, the real good life; and the previously required command for obedience is “commit your way to the LORD”, further amplified as the Bible often does with different words, two ways for saying the say thing, is “Trust also in Him”.

3. Now, the real long-range blessing of the good life, not prosperity or health necessarily like in the Gospel of Prosperity, just like in the “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” is RIGHTEOUSNESS: “He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.” (Psalm 37:6)

   a. Don’t fret over the prosperity and health of the workers of inquity as JUSTICE will come for you with Righteousness, if not all now, and more than likely, in the New Earth of Eternity.

   b. Leave your justice, righteousness, and rightness in the hands of God!
A Real Report on the Gospel of Prosperity

4. Well, this Psalm 37 is just full of ways to say the same thing about the good and long life; for here in 37:7, the TRUST and COMMITMENT and SEEKING is described as “rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him.”

   a. Again “do not fret” (37:7), Psalm 37 continues, because of “him who prospers in his way”, do not fret and design your life and Christian testimony and witness around the Gospel of Prosperity. Is that clear? And can you not see that in this perspective of Psalm 37?

   b. There are a lot of men, popular preachers and itching ears church members that heap up these popular preachers as part of a grassroots movement, who “bring their wicked schemes to pass”. Yes, they are successful, and God allows it even among those who claim to be God’s own people. They with their Gospel of Prosperity and Fitness have their comfort like the rich man in this life, while often God’s real chosen people like Lazarus may experience some suffering in this life. Yet the suffering or chastisement is intended by God to be your gain, that you may be more righteous and more like Christ and receive greater rewards on the New Earth to come.

13-6: Contrasts of Wicked and Those that Wait Upon God.

1. Cease from anger, forsake wrath, and do not fret: it only causes harm. Don’t damage yourself, your faith, and your testimony and walk with Christ by such adverse reactions to the workers of iniquity and their prosperity (Psalm 37:8)

2. The ordained fate by God of the two groups: (1) those that wait upon the LORD, again those of the wisdom of God and of the real good life from God; and (2) the “evildoers”.

   a. Fate of the evildoers: they “shall be cut off” with the exact meaning of cut off to be defined later in this chapter and later in the Bible, however you see that the definite implication is from God, from God’s people, and from eternal blessings.

   b. Fate of those who wait on God: “they shall inherit the earth”. (Psalm 37:9)

NOTE: Now at this very point is where the Psalm slides from the present to eternity, and from the inheritance of things on this Old Earth as compared to things on the New Earth. It is here that so many falsely look for
blessings of God and prosperity here in this life and on this earth while it is obviously primary for the life of the New Earth. It is here that the PREs are deceived with their desires for a thousand years of peace and prosperity on this Old Earth before Christ wraps up this old earth and universe with complete destruction. It is here that the fundamentalists and others deceive themselves on a New Jerusalem of this earth where the Jews are materially blessed, since the promise here and so many of the prophetic Scriptures is for the New Jerusalem of the New Age and New Earth.

Lest you doubt this “inherit the earth” is the new earth, look again at the Beatitudes of Jesus which are especially for God’s own people that are suffering and will suffer in this life as compared to the blessings that they will have in the New Earth.

NOW:                                             ON THE NEW EARTH:

“Blessed are those considered the poor and humble in this life...”
(Matthew 5:5)

Another NOTE: Why is that the Bible in both cases, the beatitudes and Psalm 37:9 above, does not say “NEW EARTH” instead of inherit the earth. For two reasons: (1) there is a minor aspect to the Scriptures here in that there can be, or not, an inheritance of something of prosperity (more of a provision of daily needs which God promises in the Sermon on the Mount and in the real Reports of the Bible) here with the real good and long life on earth; and (2) you have to keep tuned to the rest of the Psalm and the Bible for the rest of the story, the real and eternal story.

Well lets summarize the NOW of the present life, the real gospel of prosperity and health of this life, with the blessings of prosperity in the NEW AGE on the NEW EARTH in a Table of the Beatitudes.

NOTE AGAIN: It should be obvious that here in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is first of all trying to distinguish between the real children of God and the false, between real blessings and prosperity now and then, and between what you can expect as a child of God now as compared to what you can expect eternally!
### TABLE 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What to Expect NOW in this life on earth?</th>
<th>What to expect on the New Earth of the New Age?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mourning and Chastisement.</td>
<td>1. Comfort of no pain, no sorrow, no death, and no eternal judgement, alias long lasting comfort!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The average, humble, and meek citizen.</td>
<td>2. Unlike the great and workers of iniquity these meek shall “inherit the earth”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The hungry and thirsting right now. {You see God expects, and Jesus predicts that there will be some that hunger and thirst, although later in chapter 6 he will guarantee for those who “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” that their daily needs will be provided, no more.</td>
<td>3. “They shall be filled”. Here again although consistent with the rest of the teachings and thrust of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, the emphasis is on eternity, Jesus knows that shortly in the next chapter He will talk of the guarantees of daily necessities. And if you are not getting these, then you and your community either and or are not praying to God with righteous fervent prayer or you are not seeking first what you know you should be seeking first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The people of mercy and graciousness right now, often thought weak.</td>
<td>4. These, and none others, will obtain eternal grace and mercy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The pure in heart now.</td>
<td>5. The only ones who see God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The real peacemakers of evangelism.</td>
<td>6. Shall eternally be called the sons of God, like Jesus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Those persecuted for the sake of right and righteousness, for Christ and the Word of God.</td>
<td>7. SURPRISE, they get the “kingdom of heaven”, the kingdom with the New Jerusalem lowered down from heaven for Christians, Jesus and Apostles with the Nations of Gentiles surrounding the City and to which the river of life flows outward for healing of the nations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
And I pity you, for you are in trouble with the Bible, if you can not see that Jesus presents a contrast between the dominant thought patterns of the world, alias the way the majority in the world think, and the true perspective of God Himself, alias the way of Christ, the way of the minority “few chosen”.

3. {Psalm 37 continued with 37:10} A further description of the fate of wicked, amplification of the “cut off” as: (1) shortly to come to pass, and (2) the “no more” existence of the wicked.

The No More existence of the wicked lacks in clarity the second death of the wicked and unbelievers, as presented in the last chapter, yet you begin to suspect at even this point in the Bible that is very bad. Even in eternity “you will look carefully for his place, but it shall be no more” (Psalm 37:10).

4. Well, well, look what is here in Psalm 37:11 just like in the beatitude of Matthew 5,5, “But the meek shall inherit the earth...”. In fact, if you look carefully you will find all the beatitudes in the book of Psalms as they are not all new teachings from God like most of the Sermon on the Mount. And to see that an “abundance of peace”, not on this earth but for the next, is an adequate description of the New Earth is an under statement!

13-7: God Laughs at the Unjust and Patiently Waits While He Tabulates.

1. Verse 12 of Psalm 37 provides us more details on the previously introduced "schemes of the wicked": (1) “the wicked plot against the just”, and (2) the wicked “gnashes at him with his teeth”.

a. This is the first mention in this chapter of “the just", previously described as those “who wait upon the LORD”. We know from the rest of Scripture the just to be “the just who live by faith” {Hab 2:4 and Romans 1:17}, those who are justified according to Romans and Galatians by faith, not works, and of those in heaven with the church of the firstborn, God and Christ, “the spirits of the just” (Hebrews 11:23).

b. The gnashing of the wicked at the just reminds us of those church members who have the bad habit of despising the good of the bad habits of church members as recorded in II Timothy 3:1-8.

2. The Perspective of God while all this warfare between the just and the unjust is going on on this old earth, it is a long range and eternal perspective, the per-
A Real Report on the Gospel of Prosperity

spective that dominates the Bible and permeates through almost all its pages, books, and chapters: that God LAUGHS at the unjust. (37:13)

a. You only have a glimmer here of the famous Day of the LORD and Lord so often taught in the Bible, Old and New Testament and by Jesus and the Apostles and Prophets; yet if you read the Bible in the total context of expressing the mind and heart of God to humanity, you can see in this “He sees that his day is coming” of 37:13 this same inevitable, near the end of time and this Age, that final Day of the Lord. You see, but so many of these unjust of now and Old Testament days will be gone! Yes, but not beyond the justice and judgment of God as you know from the previous chapter about the NEW EARTH and the fate of those now in Hades.

b. “Why do the heathen rage and the people of God imagine a vain thing” (Psalm 2:1), David and the Spirit of Christ will record in another Psalm. And Paul will later write how “the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God” (I Corinthians 3:19). Also how God takes in many ways “the wise in their own craftiness”. In the evolution and progression of this world as the wise get wiser and the intellectual and scholarly and scientific get smarter in the things of this world and universe, God in turn, always one step ahead of them, gets more crafty and subtle in the way He catches them in their own wisdom. I think one obvious way is through their ignorance of the way He created the universe from a gigantic body of water with evidences of that water on all the planets, “the spirit breathed on the face of the deep” according to Genesis; also their deception about age of the earth and universe, most generally based on the false assumption that the newest rocks are on the top and so on down in levels until the oldest rocks, which ignores how the Flood operated to mix the balance of rock levels, and so on and on.

3. War, turmoil, fightings, and “taking advantage of the people in the land”, just as prevalent today with the greed of Oil Companies, stock holders, and other CEOs of large companies who destroy even the 401Ks of their own employees, and this so defined 10% of Americans who spend over 50% of the money, sureley among the rich men who receive all their comfort in this life and ignore the needs of men like Lazarus: these have the ultimate goal and motivation and outcome “to cast down the poor and needy, to slay those who are of upright conduct” (37:14).
4. What has been used as weapons or means against the just people in the land will be used by God to balance the scales of justice after the Second Coming of Christ: “their sword shall enter their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.”

13-8: Consider some final Bible Reports on the Prosperity of God’s Salvation.

1. Now does this sound like the Gospel of Prosperity of the Popular Preachers, when it describes what the righteous man has in this life of material possessions as "a little". (37:16) Boy, you really have to press Scripture here as in almost all the Bible in order to describe this as what we are currently hearing on Prosperity and the "good life now". “A little...”, “a little”, “a little”, did you hear that Joel and Lakewood Church and the 61% of American church members who believe in the Gospel of Prosperity, like it was the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ originally delivered to the Apostle Paul and of which he wrote in Galatians. A gospel not to be replaced by another gospel of a different kind, for it could not be a gospel of the same kind; and a gospel replacement, say like the so called Reformed Gospel of the Mormons, putting works back in as necessary for salvation, that brings a curse on the listener and the preacher.

a. What we are dealing with in this verse is; why is the little prosperity or material gain that the righteous have better than all the riches of the wicked?

b. Because the arms or power and wealth of the wicked will be broken when they die and suffer the second death in the lake of fire and brimstone or when Christ comes again. Actually both, as you saw in the last chapter, the temporary abode of the wicked in Hades is nothing compared to the lake of fire and brimstone and punishment into which “death and Hades” and Satan and the son of perdition are cast.

c. God upholds the righteous. God’s support and comfort and plans are for the benefit of the right and righteous, the just men and women and youth.


a. Since as stated in verse 18, God knows the “days” the days of the upright, it is so easy to pray the prayer, “Teach us to Number our days to apply our heart to wisdom”; and to receive an answer to this prayer as it is a prayer that God likes to hear and honors. {If you want to see more on this subject, please go to the chapter, “Numbers for Life” in HIDEOUT FOR BAD HABITS. On the index page of www.biblecombibleman.com you can find more info on this book, or you can order it from SunGrist_Bible@netscape.com, pdf soft copy for $7 and hard}
b. While the knowledge of God of your “upright life” and the ability to have God personally through the Holy Spirit number your days according to a tailor made plan for you, beyond these two benefits of this abundant Christian life on earth is the further benefit of an inheritance that “shall be forever”. (Psalm 37:18b) You can read more about this in Ephesians, which by the way is also an answer to prayer, that all Christians might know among other things, “His riches of inheritance in the saints”.

c. To not be ashamed is sort of another way in which the Bible states how God honors faith, like in Romans 10:11, where “he that believeth in Him shall not be ashamed.” You will recall that here in Romans 10 is a little mini-layout on how to be saved through faith.

(1). You do not see more Jews saved because “they being ignorant of God's righteousness and go about to establish their own righteousness”, Paul writes in Romans 10:3, “have not submitted to the righteousness of God.”

(2). Many today, wanting to find salvation by works or a work, do not get to the “righteousness by faith” of Bible Reports such as here in Romans 10: (2) they seek to reach up into heaven by different means to bring Christ down to earth, or (2) to descend down into Hades to bring Christ back from the dead; (3) but the Reports of the Apostles, Jesus, and the Prophets, the Reports of the Bible are the “word of faith” (10:8). No doubt you can find that word somewhere lodged near you, “in your mouth and in your heart”. The word of faith of true righteousness and true faith preached by Paul and others since!

(3). What you need to do, and can do right now, anytime unless you have passed the point of no return, or you are among the called but not chosen of God’s people, the ones in the feasts of the churches without the wedding garment, as simply: “Confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus” (10:9); and “Believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead” (10:9b).

(4). No maybes, doubts, or IFs, “YOU WILL BE SAVED”. (Romans 10:9c)

(5). Why is the mouth involved in salvation, and the heart involved in salvation?
“For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:10)

(6). And then with the universal invitation of “whoever” comes the guaranteed promise of Psalm 37 and Romans 10 that:

“For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame’” (Romans 10:11 and Isaiah 28:16)

(7). There is no distinction between Jew and Greek, between God’s called people and Gentiles.

“For whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” (Romans 10:13 and Joel 2:32)
A Real Report on the Gospel of Prosperity
CHAPTER 14

God’s Reports Accomplish.

Most just do not get it! God choses approximately 7,000 each generation for salvation until He has the prescribed number for the multitude of Gentiles which the Apostle John saw in Revelation that no man could number. That takes quite a few generations, but while God does lower the standards on the "called" into churches, He does not lower the standards on the "chosen". That is, yes, according to the Word of God, "Many are called but few are chosen". It is a shame that called church members, in spite of the clear teachings of the Bible that churches like the kingdom are full of "tares" or "goats", do not comprehend this Bible difference between "called" and "chosen", thinking that since they are at the wedding feast, even though without the proper clothing, that all will be well with their soul.

We think we are in control of our own salvation and God’s plan; however, God does use His words and Word to accomplish His purpose and plan in the lives of a few, and this watering and snowing process of the Word continues to work generation by generation and year by year to get accomplished the eternal will of God. That God’s intention is to destroy this old earth, and some indications are that this may not be very long, clearly is taught in the Bible in order that God may bring in a new earth and new heavens for His newly created through Jesus Christ people.

For more Bible go to the following:
The prime theme of this book about “Reports”, taken from Isaiah 53:1 and quoted by Jesus in John 12:38, also by the Apostle Paul in Romans 10:16, sounds on the surface and with a superficial reading pathetic as if the Prophet Isaiah is hurting personally because his whole nation of Israel does not believe the honest reports that are given. Any preacher or honest testifier to Jesus is somewhat hurt when there is an obvious lack of confidence in his honesty or credibility; however, when we come to Bible reports such as this one made by the Prophet Isaiah and quoted by both Jesus and Paul, we are talking about a whole higher level in that we are dealing with revelations by God through Apostles and Prophets, alias the way the Bible of 66 books was written.

The Hebrew of Isaiah 53:1, “shemuah”, which is translated “report” literally means: “what is heard”. So that the emphasis in context is on more the reaction of most of the people to the message of salvation about Jesus, in the day of Isaiah, then later in the day of Jesus, and lastly in the missionary journeys of Paul. Likewise the Greek of John 12:38 from Jesus and from Paul in Romans 10:16, “akoe”, is literally translated “hearing or a rumor”. Even today, almost two thousand years after the Bible came together as the Word of God of 66 books, it is treated by many unbelievers or casual listeners as RUMOR. To some, in fact the majority of world citizens, while the words of the Bible about Jesus and salvation to be believed and heeded are rather rumors, to the few who listen and learn salvation through Christ they are the dynamic words of life, REPORTS to be heard and heard so deeply as to be believed.

14-1: God Turns Rumors into Reports to Accomplish His Purpose.

Each year and each day, every hour of the day, the words and Word of God like rain falls on people, Jews and Gentiles, all over the world, and also like rain falls on some more than others. It is rather ironic that the Bible teachings on how
God’s Reports Accomplish

God blesses with rain and other weather, or curses when His own people are not listening and heeding the Word, is just about as little comprehended as the assurance that God will use His Word to accomplish the purpose that He intended. Popular today are “purpose driven” churches and Christian lives, places where God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are replaced as controllers of Bible purpose by almost anything that a listener of reports from Rick Warren can imagine; but how about some PURPOSE from God and the words which He has already spoken. Hardly recognized among fundamentalists and other Baptists and so called Evangelicals, not at all in the dominant and current trend among charismatics with their daily special revelations, is how this new and subtle philosophical “purpose driven” movement has encouraged among thousands a special revelation, or extra-biblical, purpose to be adopted for their own lives. {This is not the same as an answer from God to the prayer, “Teach us to number our days to apply our hearts to wisdom”.

1. There is not time nor space in this last chapter to adequately introduce the reader to Christian Evidences on the Bible as the Word of God.

Even today and online from Yahoo Answers, it was recorded in an aggressive and desperate statement by one young man who said, “Since men wrote the Bible and not God, how do we know the source is reliable.”

a. First of all, ordinary men did not write the Bible, only Apostles and Prophets wrote the Bible. These were special called of God men chosen uniquely by God to be conduits for His communications; they were holy and dedicated men that stood out in their own generation; and men uniquely commissioned by God Himself, through the Spirit of Christ in the OT and the Holy Spirit in the New Testament to write Scriptures. One such dedicated and holy person was the Apostle Peter, who wrote of how Scriptures were written.

“...for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit”. (II Peter 1:21)

Or another such holy and called to write Scriptures man of God was the Apostle Paul who personally wrote 14 of the 27 books of the New Testament, and sponsored Dr. Luke and John Mark to write 3 others. Paul also described how Scripture, Old and New Testament, was written.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable...” (II Timothy 3:16,17)
b. Secondly it is the prima facie argument to reasonable and unbiased men \{Jesus Seminar for example shows a strong bias in favor of unbelief controlled by sin\} that, like Simon Greenleaf wrote in THE TESTIMONY OF THE EVANGELISTS, "The testimony of the Apostles would reliably stand up in any court of law for consistency, honesty, and integrity about what they told of Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John." And Irwin Linton, who practiced law years ago before the Supreme Court, and in the days when the words of lawyers were more honored and respected, like Simon Greenleaf this former Dean of the Harvard Law School and authority on Evidence, believed strongly that unbelievers in the rumor stage had never read for themselves the story of Jesus from the four gospels; also that when they did, they unanimously believed, the reports passing from the rumor stage to belief. AND SO ON AND ON GO THE EVIDENCES AND TESTIMONIES OF THE CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES TO: (1) the Bible as the Word of God; and (2) Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

c. Here is the crux of Christian Evidences about the Bible: Here is a book of 66 books claiming to be the Word of God--"thus saith the Lord" or "God spoke saying" is throughout the pages of these 66 books. This book exists and floats around in the world, and from generation to generation, read and respected and preached and taught and studied by man and some of the best of humanity with the largest and most outstanding claim of that Book to be a message or messages from God. "Reports to be believed" if you would. You will, and you must, accept that claim to be a broadcast or series of broadcasts from your Maker, or not! This book and its claims is something you can see for yourself; it is an evidence rather than philosophical; and is in the pragmatic category of things Americans love to see. That it has survived and continues to be a best-seller in spite of the sometimes unpopular messages is a social and religious phenomenon of evidence; and while we do not have time, nor is Classical Christian Evidences a prime subject of this REPORTS book, to cover all the arguments for accepting the claim of the Bible to be Word of God, you can read them in McClendon Day's book, WONDER OF THE WORD, such as: testimony of great men and relatives to the Bible, survival through history, prophetic predictions in the Old Testament fulfilled in the New Testament, especially in the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. It is this Word of God, or words from God, from over 40 holy men over a period of thousands of years, which also tells of a lack of futility in the spreading of the Word and words of God.
Not long ago a relative said, “Why do you write, distribute, and put these ebooks on the line on such subjects as DEN OF THIEVES, or HIDEOUT FOR BAD HABITS, or REPORTS FOR BELIEVING since people are not going to listen and are will just keep on doing what they have always done.

The answers is: God’s Word will accomplish, as the reports are made, what God intended those words to accomplish.

A former Navy friend recently emailed me as we had discussed our careers since the Navy in Aerospace work, saying, "I am surprised with the effort that you put into the website and Bible books".

The answer is: God’s Word will accomplish, as reports are made, what God intended His Words to accomplish.

14-2: Well, Here God’s Purpose is From One of God’s Reports in the Bible.

Granted that a Bible Report like this in Isaiah 55:11 is more for those with confidence in the Bible as the Word of God; but even as “The Word of God is alive and dynamic, sharper than a two-edged sword”, so also the Bible can and will speak to those of lesser confidence in the very words.

“So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:11)

1. Just typical of all of Isaiah, and Jeremiah which we have looked at a great deal in the previous chapters of this book, in fact of the total body are the words which indicate that the reports or messages came from God Himself: “My word” God says; “forth from My mouth”, God has recorded by the Prophet; “not return TO ME void”, God continues; “accomplish what I PLEASE”, He above states; and a prosperity for which “I SENT IT”, God proclaims with the words of His own mouth. As surely as Jesus told Satan and us as it was recorded about His temptation in the wilderness, “every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” as a way to live instead of only by bread, so also here you again and again see, as in all the Bible, more words that proceed directly out of God’s own mouth.

2. God had Prophets and Apostles record the reports of His own mouth, through the Spirit of Christ in the OT and the Holy Spirit in NT times; then God preserved and promoted by many means in history this book of 66 books, having it rain from generation to generation down on all peoples of this earth. The words...
God’s Reports Accomplish

of the verse before Isaiah 55:11, that of 55:10 speaks of this raining down on humanity process.

“For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven (not only rain but also snow), and do not return there {it is a one way passage from heaven to earth}, but waters the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater.” (Isaiah 55:10)

a. From heaven to you, one way, is rain and snow and the Word of God.

b. The Reports of the Word of God, the Bible, water your life even as they have all the days of the earth since the Prophets and Apostles.

c. These words and reports “bring forth and bud” results in your lives.

d. These Reports provide seed to preachers and listeners which in turn grow and bud.

With Isaiah 55:10 as the foundation, listen to 55:11 again!

14-3: The Purpose of God’s Words: to ACCOMPLISH and PROSPER.

“So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:11)

1. God sent the 66 books of the Bible in order to communicate to all humanity, “I sent it”. What we mean when we say that the Bible is the Word of God is that: (1) It is divine in origin, that is when you read or listen to the Bible it is like having a radio tuned to the outer space of heaven and to God as He speaks to you; (2) Absolute in authority, where we get into interpretations and the “no private interpretation” of II Peter 1:20, where Jesus and the Apostles in the NT interpret the only public and authorized interpretation of what the Prophets wrote and prophesied; (3) Sufficient in message in that God promises not to do anything without first telling His own people, and where also “God is not willing that any should perish”, thus “all day long reaching out to a wayfaring and gainsaying people” of the world ; (4) high fidelity in communication in that the Bible speaks clearly, dynamically, and faithfully to those who listen and with the proper attitude; and (5) it is self-interpretative in that Jesus and the Apostles in the New Testament explain the quotes of the Prophets from the Old Testament. This last is the ASPI for Authorized Semi-Public Interpreta-
God’s Reports Achieve

1. Authorization of the Bible: (1) Authorized in that it came from God through the Spirit of Christ and Holy Spirit; (2) Public in that it is the same for all denominations and cultures with the same message for all; and (3) Semi-Public in that the public interpretation of all time and for all can only be known by those who have gone beyond the pure natural of the “many” to the spiritual mind and heart of the “few”.

2. It is “My word”, My Book God says, and as such it is alive, dynamic, and piercing into the heart and spirit of the human soul that God created.

“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit (that is fine tuning), and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.” (Hebrews 4:12,13)

3. Not hidden from the sight of God are the accomplishments of His Word for your life, and the ways in which the Word of God will be profitable in your life.

4. Naked and open to the eyes of God is what He would please for your life and what He would profit for your life.

5. And you will inevitably and in time “give account” to Him of that purpose in Christ that He desires to accomplish and profit in your own life. The concept of a complete loss of control over your soul, spirit, and freedom of choice at death or when Christ comes again, which ever is first, has not dawned on many. Even as you have no control over a balloon filled with gas after you release it, so also you have no control of your lighter-than-air and space soul when God releases it from your body. Your last decision is to acquiesce to death, then God and His books of record about your life determine your fate from then on. Such a drastic change, from complete freedom and decision making capability, to complete lack of control is so dramatic that the concept often alludes human beings, especially unbelievers.

14-4: As you pray “thy will be done”, you are praying for this Purpose in Christ.

Like written in the reports of Ephesians, the purpose of God for the universe was “to bring into one unity all things in Christ, both in heaven and on earth”. (Ephesians 1:10) You have prayed it many times in church from the Model Prayer, often called the Lord’s Prayer, “thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it
is in heaven.” You can count on the fact that God’s will is fully done in heaven where God, Christ, and all those legions of angels dwell to enforce and inspire the will of God, also by the “just men made perfect” in the assembly of the firstborn in heaven, just because justified by faith and those who have learned to do the will of God. Well, when you pray and mean for the will of God to be done on earth as in heaven, you are further praying that all things may be united in and under the Lord Jesus Christ.

**14-5: What is left after the “kingdom of God” on earth is “the World”**.

There is no need for confusion on the concept and reality of the “world” in the Bible as when you read of “love not the world”, or read “whoever is the friend of the world is the enemy of God”, or likewise “you can not serve God and mammon (of the world). Here is how simple the contrast is between “world” and the kingdom of God on earth. All presently in the world that is not the “kingdom of God and His righteousness”, and the minority of “few”, by the way which is also to be first sought, all that is left and the majority of “many”, IS THE WORLD. The world is all not under the will and control of God; all that is not under the dominance of the rightness and righteousness of God. Therefore...

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:33)
An apology is made right now for the frankness of this discussion to follow, for the current times are far too serious to allow for timidity, popularity, and even book sales. What with the continued, tremendous and destructive calamities of “acts of God” in America since 9/11, and the larger world, the evidences in contemporary news that Christians and church members have gone far beyond the “perilous times” of II Timothy 3:1-9 into an accepted as norm intolerance toward sound, obviously from the context of II Timothy 4:3,4, the same last great Falling Away before the Second Coming that the Apostle Paul stated in II Thessalonians must come before the Second Coming and about which Jesus said, “because sin shall abound the love of many will wax cold.”

Really, how far is it anyway between (1) when men cry out because of the calamities of nature for the rocks to fall on them, and (2) the severe calamities on American cities, lands, and churches caused by these acts of God in floods, fires, droughts, economic hard times, hurricanes, and tornadoes. As if these are not enough we have learned recently in our near future of how increased sickness, especially among the young and elderly, will come with the Global Warming we are just now facing up to as part of our inevitable and immediate future.

Granted, and according to the Bible, it is questionable as to whether these calamities of God and nature are temporal ones as blessings withheld from our nation and nations because we have not prayed and turned to God in righteous-
ness, or because the total groaning of all Creation that Paul recognized even long ago in Romans 8:22 has progressed so far that there will be no turning back of the automatic destruction of this old earth and old heavens in order to usher in the final New Age of the New Heavens and New Earth. Of course, the possibility exists that it is both: (1) that because God’s people of the churches are not praying and meeting the righteous conditions in the sight of God, curses are coming from God instead of the blessings of our past history; and (2) the automatic destruction of the world as “the whole creation groans” has progressed to the point of shaking and convulsing so that total destruction is just around the corner.

We have even come to the point of history in the world, when we can expect at any minute a severe peak of sin and lawlessness which will inevitably come as the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from this earth. Recall, please, that when God and Christ sent the Holy Spirit to take the place of Jesus on earth and in order to “convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8), this was what bound Satan for the long period of history figuratively called 1000 years, so that when the Holy Spirit with His influence on the whole world against sin, for righteousness, and as a reminder of the accountability of judgment, is withdrawn this in turn releases Satan from the bondage, or restriction in activity and effectiveness, that he was placed under as long as the Holy Spirit was in the world and at work doing His job. In terrorism, in greed, in speculation, in the taking advantage of the people in the land by government and by the 10% who control over 50% of the American wealth, in crime sprees, and many other ways you would suspect that we are already seeing the great pertubations in sin and lawlessness that must come as the Holy Spirit is withdrawn and Satan is released from restrictions. {Satan will be free to promote sin, unrighteousness, and lack of accountability without any restrictions from God the Holy Spirit.}

The same seriousness of the times that have lead men like T. Boone Pickens and Al Gore to offer drastic solutions to the problems of the times, have prompted descriptions and solutions for the more dire spiritual problems that are somewhat obvious currently in America: three very serious and very frank ebooks have been simultaneously written and distributed to deal with the seriousness of the contemporary problems: (1) REPORTS FOR BELIEVING, (2) HIDEOUT FOR BAD HABITS, and (3) “DEN OF THIEVES”.

15-1: Shoestring Reasons for Tragic Decisions.
You notice that the dedication of this book in the title page was to a fellow Navy Air shipmate of VW-15 of Argentia Newfoundland Air Early Warning (AEW) and Patuxent River Naval Air Station in Maryland; well, another shipmate in training with me at Naval Air electronics school of Memphis, Tennessee {by the way not John Quinn as John as far as I can remember did not go through NATTC with my class, and as far as I know John did not also have a drinking problem}...but this shipmate one class day as we were on the way to class and after some of our discussions on Bible requirements for salvation, which we discussed often, bent over to tie a shoelace, broke the shoelace, and said for my benefit and the others around him, "I have a good reason to get drunk tonight: I broke a shoelace." He said it in a joking manner, but he meant it; and he did go out to get drunk that same night as he did quite often other nights. (If you are reading this as part of an email to all WV-2 shipmates, I think this story will help you appreciate why I have the boldness to send you the email.)

Right then in Bible and Christ discussions with fellow shipmates and later in messages as a lay preacher {licensed by Bellevue Baptist Church}, stress would be placed on how so many reasons and excuses to ignore Christ, the Bible, and the salvation provided by God were "shoestring reasons for tragic decisions". The results of the decisions made were just too large and of life and everlasting life consequences to be justified and rationalized by such shoestring reasons. Later in the message on the subject, I would include my standard illustration of two people in a boat that were rowing in the direction of Niagara Falls in spite of the rapid current already taking them there; and would as a Bible basis tell the parable from Jesus of the men when invited to a wedding feast, “all with one consent began to make excuses” (Luke 14:18). These excuses like my shipmate that went out to get drunk were 'shoestring reasons for tragic decisions'. Look at the nature of them: (1) I have bought a piece of property and I do not have time to come to the wedding feast of eternal salvation; (2) I have bought a yoke of oxen and I must check them, so that monetary considerations were placed in front of God, Christ, and the righteousness of God through the proper wedding garments; and (3) the strongest of all but still flimsy, "I have married a wife and can not come", which reminds of what Jesus said people would be doing at the Second Coming of Christ, “eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage” while they were oblivious and unprepared for the end of time--all things good and proper and necessary aspects of life and living--but which become "shoestring reasons for tragic decisions" when they get in the way and take the place of “seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33).

15-2: "They all with one consent began to make excuse". (Luke 14:18)
At the head of the obvious is that any excuse, is exactly that, any reason that keeps any person, shipmate or associate, male or female, youth or senior, from giving God what is due to Him as Creator and Ruler of this Universe is “an excuse”, a shoestring reason for a tragic decision.

1. REPORTS FOR BELIEVING addresses the excuses of unchurched “unbelievers” and churched practitioners of little faith, if any; and offers the solution of faith in Jesus like engendered by the 7 miracle signs of the Gospel of John, easy to accept as historical when you come to accept likewise the introduction and stated purpose of John where Jesus was the Co-Creator of the Universe. Jesus could do on earth during those 3 and one half years of ministry anything since He also performed in the co-Creation of the heavens and the earth the impossible, and does do the impossibilities daily of salvation for some.

2. HIDEOUT FOR BAD HABITS addresses thousands of church members, Christians, and churches where bad habits practiced every Sunday and all Sundays and during the week, like the worship leader who takes God’s name in vain, made it realistically obvious that thousands have “a form of godliness that denies the power thereof”; and offers the solution with a fresh look at II Timothy 3:16,17 as a roadblock between “perilous times” and the Falling Away, with a filling of the gap of ALL SCRIPTURE, with the church administration application where “reproof” and “correction” actually comes from the pulpit with a church profitability of “doctrine and instruction in righteousness”, and with the application to proper Christian living as church members actually become men and women of God “mature, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

3. “Den of Thieves” is a larger version of HIDEOUT with the inclusion of much of REPORTS in order to reach both the churched and unchurched unbelievers, or less the lack of practitioners in the “faith once for all delivered to the saints”.

15-3: In the Same Boat.

Back in the early days of preaching in the Navy, both one on one and in church pulpits, a favorite illustration of how human nature rationalizes and excuses itself about Bible, Christ, and salvation was of the two individuals in a row boat headed downstream over the precipice of Niagara Falls. What has changed now is that there are more than two in the boat: there are three, four, or more and those numbers beyond the two are church members. The process is the same, the sailors are rowing hard to get to the drop off in spite of the
Statements of the Obvious

speed at which the natural current is carrying them; and still the little crew is
telling each other over the obvious roar of the upcoming falls, that they are
okay. “You are okay, I am okay”. And humanity in that little boat of isolation
from the realities of the Universe and the God of the Universe, find many ways
to rationalize and justify themselves as being headed in the right direction.
They ignore the lights and the warnings along the shore, and they even ignore
the roar of the falls ahead of them.

The major difference now in this illustration of life is that church members are
right there in the boat with them, telling each other jokes and how they know
that everything is okay with them.

15-4: The American Conscience today like Romans, “Excuses and Accuses”.

The real contribution from the Bible perspective of evolution has been social
evolution for surely you can see in the United States how the American Con-
sience has evolved from generation to generation, first the classical and con-
servative conscience, then that of the in-betweener, and then that of the
boomers. Each generation had developed a shorter and more social conscience,
and yet the trend has been more and more away from the morality and righ-
teousness of the God of the Bible. You might summarize these progressions as
going from: the classical conscience that condemns in order to justify them-
selves, to the in-between that blames in order to promote innocence to the
boomers that “accuse and excuse”.

What really has been happening in the United States is sort of a de-evolution
as described in Romans 1 and 2, originally written to describe the downward pro-
gression of heathen societies like Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome whereby
more and more of the country’s population, with a gigantic downward surge of
unbelievers compared to the total population, with the boomers substituted the
American Conscience for Bible, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. In short, it became
very popular to replace Bible and Christ with the American Conscience as the top
criterion for values and morality. Look at the description of heathen societies
below from Romans 2:14,15, and see if you do not recognize the present and dom-
inant trend of the American Conscience.

“...for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in
the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who
show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bear-
ing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing
them...”  (Romans 2:14,15)
Surely today we must, in order to properly describe righteousness and the American Conscience, look for a luxury liner instead of a row boat headed over the precise, even under nuclear power and with the best of electronics and computer guidance. And with far more passengers on the boat that pat one another on the back, excuse and accuse one another in order to enhance innocence on what is about to inevitably happen to them!

15-5: The American Democratic Faith Replaces the faith of the Bible and Jesus.

What we have evolved in this nation is an American Religion with agreement, excuses, and accusations between the churched and the unchurched. Simultaneously as part of the socially accepted American Religion, an outgrowth of the American Character and the American Mind, we have agreed on an American Conscience and an American Democratic Faith. While it may not be exactly the same as the MAIN CURRENTS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC FAITH described in an American Studies book by Gabriel, the American Democratic Faith of the American Conscience and Mind has departed drastically from the faith of Christ and the Bible. {Wait a minute, do not mistake that all of us are grateful for our nation, the freedom, and the outstanding form of government; however, this American Democratic Faith can never replace the faith of the Bible and of Christ.}

There are several outstanding differences between the American Democratic Faith and the Faith of the Bible, other than the most obvious that salvation can only come through one: (1) While the American Democratic Faith is based on the agreement and vote of the majority, in the Bible and therefore the faith which comes from God, the minority takes precedence over the majority {many go the way to destruction and few the way of eternal life}; (2) while the American Democratic Faith promotes a unique kind of tolerance that recently allowed Presbyterians to vote on whether the preaching of Christ as the only way of salvation should cease in the name of toleration, the Bible demands certain convictions and forbids an “intolerance toward sound doctrine” (II Timothy 4:3,4); and (3) while discrimination is forbidden in the American Democratic Faith, and we love it that way--goodness, we need it that way, based on “race, religion, and creed”, what the Bible and the faith of the Bible prohibits is discrimination based on clothing, status, and money.

Oh, the mistakes that are being made in churches today in the name of the majority vote as members ignore the right, righteous, and the Bible in favor of what they want to do, justifying it in terms of if that is the majority vote, it
must be right. HOW WRONG? How many times in the Bible can you find even among God’s own people that what they decided in the majority was the right, and how many times can you find where God ignored the majority in order to use the minority to achieve His purpose? And how often in churches have we allowed the majority concept of the American Democratic Faith to carry the day in favor of a continued intolerance toward sound doctrine? My, do we not remember how God told Moses to get out of the way while He destroyed all the people of God in the wilderness, then God would make of Moses a whole new generation; because the majority vote of the people to worship the golden calf instead of the God of the Universe was wrong in the sight of God!

15-6: It is Obvious that God’s Perspective on Righteousness is not the same.

From Reports in the Bible, that pepper down on humanity consistently like rain or snow, and always have, several obvious statements can be made. First, briefly it should be obvious from the Bible and what preaching you do hear, that God’s perspective on rightness, or righteousness, is not the same as that of the American Conscience and Faith, nor of humanity as a whole. We can be grateful for the little of Bible and God’s thoughts that have permeated and influenced our society, but surely we recognize the incessant efforts to obliterate those, most often to substitute them with something that looks very similar.

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:8,9)

15-7: It is Obvious that All Have Heard the Reports of the Bible.

What Christ urged of disciples in the great commission to “go into all the world and make disciples” has happened in the history of the last two thousand years since Christ first gave that commandment; and even where disciples have not responded in belief, the word has been preached to all creatures on the earth so that all remain guilty for their sins of unbelief.

“Have they not heard?” Paul asks in Romans 10:18 and the Prophet David in Psalm 19:4: and then God through them answers the rhetorical question with an affirmative, “Yes indeed”, and then summarizes how the sound of faith, salvation, and of God’s own thoughts and words have gone all across the nations of the earth.
Statements of the Obvious

“Their sound has gone out to the all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.” (Romans 10:18 and Psalm 19:4)

15-8: It is Obvious that while the majority will not listen, a few are saved.

“Enter by the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” (Matthew 7:13,14)

Obviously, you can take the easy way of the majority or the more difficult way of the majority; however only one leads to eternal life and the life here on earth that God meant for you. You may say, “Well, my life is almost over and it is too late to change”. Yes, that is a shame; however eternity has not yet started, and it is so much longer than a short life on this earth!

I recall when arriving at NATTC Memphis and while standing in a line for chow, one sailor said to me as he saw me shake hands with another sailor, “We don’t do that here.”

Well, I do and did; and we all chose the row boat or luxury liner that we want to ride in.

“So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few are chosen.” (Matthew 20:16)

Among the first in status on earth and now, there will not be many chosen as it is difficult for the wealthy and well-to-do and self-sufficient to enter the kingdom of God, Jesus said it is as hard as a camel going through the eye of a needle.

15-9: It is Obvious that all of the called of God’s people are not saved.

What do you get out of the simple statement above, “many are called but few are chosen” except that while many of God’s people are called into churches and all the other benefits, there are few of those church members who really are chosen to go all the way to heaven.

15-10: Obviously 3 out of 4 seeds of the Word of God reports fail to save.

The parable of the seed and the sower told by Jesus makes it obvious that most of the Reports that come from God and through preaching and testimo-
nies do not profit in fruitful results in the lives of the hearers. Of the four kinds of soil on which the Word of God, the seed in the parable, falls three out of four of those do not yield fruit: (1) the seed sown by the wayside is immediately snatched out of the human heart by Satan without any opportunity to be fruitful, especially after the time the Spirit is withdrawn from earth; (2) the seed down among thorns immediately springs up, and this is where we get so many church members that are called and not chosen, but is choked out by the thorns of this world which Jesus explains as “cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and other things”; (3) so much seed fails on rocky soil; and then (4) one fourth of preaching and Bible falls on receptive ears and hearts where citizens respond fruitfully.

15-11: Obviously the initiative and final outcome is with God, but not automatic.

As my wife likes to say, “We do not try to put God in a box!”. Yes, “many are called but few are chosen”: and yes, “no man can come to Christ except as drawn by God the Father”. Yes both predestination and freedom of choice, Arminianism and Calvinism, are both true; but God is a free and over 21 Being that can and will chose. God listens to all that pray, and yes, God will change His mind.

15-12: The “Righteousness” of Man and of God from the Bible.

Righteousness while in disrepute today even among church members is still important to God and is such a large word in the Bible as to be impossible to adequately describe in this one chapter. God is right and righteous, that is the very nature of His character, and God therefore demands such right behavior and righteousness from His Creatures, especially among those who name the name of Christ.

There are many ways that you can describe those few among church members who have gotten serious about their proper relationship with Christ and the God of the Universe; however few are any better than the famous saying of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount,

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:33)


Persistence, ignorance and obstinance to describe it in one phrase.
Statements of the Obvious

“For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” (Romans 10:3,4)

God through Paul wrote this of the most religious people that have ever lived. Believe me, if it could have been done any other way besides God’s way, the way of righteousness by faith and by the grace of God, they would have done it. Try as you may, you will not get any smarter than this group of religious people at the time of Christ and of Paul.

15-14: The God of love and wisdom reaches out to wayfaring humanity.

“All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people.” (Isaiah 65:2 and Romans 10:21)

15-15: The Only Way to Rightness is by God's Way of “By Faith”.

“For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:10)
This is Top Topic #2: The Righteousness of God and Man. Perhaps you should be reminded at this beginning of the second lesson that surveys the total Bible under 12 major subjects, and it called the Top 12 Topics of the Bible of the manner in which these topics have been derived from the Bible. These topics with the outline of the sub-topics originated as all the Old Testament quotes in the New Testament, with the proper interpretation of them as given in the New Testament. ("no Scripture is of any private interpretation so that in the explanations of these quotes by Apostles and Jesus in the New Testament you therefore have the ASPI, or Authorized Semi-Public Interpretation of the Bible--you can not beat allowing God through the Holy Spirit in the writing of these Scriptures of the Bible to self-interpret those same Scriptures, alias the Bible is divine in origin, absolute and determinative in authority--that is you can not get any higher or better than God Himself as the ultimate authority; sufficient in message for all of living and eternal life, yes also for the pleasing of God and without faith in the Bible it is impossible to please God; high fidelity in communication, never sell God short as He is able to take these 66 books with the thousands of years of efforts from heaven and in cooperation with dedicated Prophets and Apostles, of course also of His own Son while He was never on earth most fully making known the will of God...and what with taking them has the ability to overcome all obstacles in communicating to man, language or otherwise; and finally the Bible is self-
Righteousness of God and Man

1. Righteousness, you must see, in all ways and always is a major or top topic of the Bible. Not only is a major word of the Bible as you will see by looking it up in any large Concordance of the Bible like YOUNG’S or STRONG’s, but it takes a lot of different words in both the Old Testament and New Testament in order to communicate from God what He has wanted man to know on the subject for years. (A lot of people out of pride and haughtiness try to generate from the wisdom literature of man a Theology that is adequate to communicate as man and woman with the prompting of Satan attempted to replace the will of God with their own opinions.)

(1). For example from YOUNG’S ANALYTICAL CONCORDANCE on “righteous”, the source word of course for righteousness, where YOUNG tries to summarize all the distinctness in meaning under “righteous man” or “righteous cause”, there are 3 Hebrew words used for righteous in the OT and 1 Greek word in the New Testament.

(a). The Hebrew word “yashar” translated as upright or right, and already we are starting to get at the very heart of righteousness as what is RIGHT. What is right and what is wrong has been an infinite searching of man and promotion of God. At heart the word righteousness seeks to describe rightness as contrasted to wrongness, of course based on the character, concepts, opinions, and value system of the God of the Universe Who created us. Typical of the other 8 usages of this Hebrew word for righteous in Job, Psalms, and Proverbs is the first in Numbers 23:10 where Balaam, when requested by King Balak to put a curse on Israel as they began to march victoriously into the Promised Land, stated with a oracle from the very mouth of God of how could Balaam denounce or curse whom God had not cursed, a God that Balaam could see from the top of the rocks and behold in the hills, a God who can count the dust of Jacob or Israel, even number one-fourth of them; rather Balaam is prompted to say to Balak, that he be allowed to “die the death of the righteous”, to have a life and death like that of Jacob himself.

(b). The most predominant Hebrew word used to describe righteous, and a preliminary to the establishment of righteousness on the earth on the part of
God is the Hebrew word “tsaddiq”, literally translated “righteous” or “just”. It runs from Genesis to Malachi in 22 out of 39 books of the Old Testament, perhaps the most famous of which is the many references in Genesis where God and the angels sought for just 50 righteous people in Sodom and Gomorrah before those twin cities were destroyed for their obvious unrighteousness.

(c). As in the nature of all Bible and Bible revelations, where it is a gradual revelation of God Himself and His character and perspective, the concept of right and rightness under the leadership of the Holy Spirit evolves by the time of Psalms {David}, Proverbs {Solomon}, and Isaiah {top among the Writing Prophets} where with the Hebrew word “tsedeq” it takes on a meaning of JUSTICE as well as rightness. By the way with the usage of one such in Isaiah 41:2--”Who in righteousness called him to His feet”--an obvious reference to the hope during dark years for the nation of Israel, who in the chapter before of Isaiah has been crying as they so often did that God did not even see them anymore, is the real beginning of the positive and real hope for Israel and the world in the future as Christ comes from the east, and who with a new kingdom starts to reign over kings.

(d). Then we come to the peak of the revealed Word of God on RIGHT, RIGHTOUS and JUST, of course in the NT and primarily from Jesus as we look at the Greek word “dikaios” found 37 times in the New Testament and in 14 of the 27 books of the NT.

2. Like in so much that Jesus came to earth to teach about God the Father, we learn most from the teachings of Jesus on WHAT IS RIGHT according to God.

(1). We are at first shocked when we read from Jesus in Matthew 9:13 that Jesus came to call sinners to repentance not the righteous already, where Jesus encourages the most religious people that have ever lived, the Pharisees, to go and learn what He meant as He was explaining His quote from Hosea 6:6 about how God “desires mercy not sacrifice” (Hosea 6:6 and Matthew 9:13). There is much depth to understand from these passages alone on right, righteousness, and what God expects from man on righteousness; but surely if nothing else we must see that as Jesus said later that “righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees” (Matthew 5:20); also that salvation is by mercy and grace which eliminates any sacrifice to please God like works of righteousness for salvation.
Righteousness of God and Man

(2). Jesus tells in Matthew 13:17 of how the people during His lifetime and teachings on earth had the benefit of hearing and seeing what “many prophets and righteous men” before them desired to see and hear, the important truth for our current TOP TOPIC of RIGHTEOUSNESS under Bible discussion and study is that like Prophets there were many other righteous men in the OT.

NOTE: One fear we must get over as church members and Christians in our contemporary society is the fear of sainthood, holiness, and righteousness. For whether you come to describe either the essentials of salvation or of Christian life and living, you must face up to the God-given spiritual realities of the necessity of true rightness of RIGHTEOUSNESS.

3. Like RIGHTEOUS, the derivative word of “righteousness” has many fine points of meaning, 3 in the Hebrew of the Old Testament and 4 in the Greek of the New Testament: “tsedeq” for rightness and justice; “tsedaqah” also for rightness and justice; “tsidqah” for rightness and justice; “dikaiosune” for rightness and justice, used in the NT 9 times by Jesus, in Acts 4 times, and of course almost innumerable times in Romans by Paul which some commentators like to describe under the title of “The Righteousness of God”, and certainly one of the major subjects of that book; however Paul also uses it 30 more times in the writing of 9 other NT books--first and second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, first and second Timothy, Titus and Hebrews, also other Apostles like James, Peter, and John use this same word 13 more times: in Romans and Revelation and with the Greek word “dikaioma” there is the fine point of distinction of A JUDICIAL SENTENCE; in “dikaios of I Corinthians 15:34 there is a call to awaken issued to humanity to a righteous distinction where the meaning is more UPRIGHTLY, JUSTLY, and RIGHTLY with “Awake to righteousness and sin not....”; and finally in Hebrews 1:8 and with the Greek word “euthutes” there is a distinction of STRAIGHTFORWARDNESS with the “spectre of righteousness”.

NOTE: As a preliminary concept of the meaning of righteousness beyond defined as the opposite of righteousness, or unrighteousness.

16-1: The Ten Commandments. (Exodus 20-Exodus 32)

As you suspected when you read the title of this second top topic of the Bible, “The Righteousness of God and Man”, the Ten Commandments would be a large
Righteousness of God and Man

part of God’s demand for righteousness. In fact, you can easily say that this section of the Bible from Exodus and Numbers is dominated by the Ten Commandments as well as the failure of God’s own Chosen people, the children of Abraham, Isaac, and of Jacob (Israel) out of Egyptian bondage to keep the covenant with God which the Ten Commandments summarize.


The book of Exodus is dominated by that per se, the Exodus of the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt 400 years after the death of Jacob or Israel; the subsequent 40 years of wandering in the desert after the giving of the Law and the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai; the failure of all of God’s people over the age of 20 to enter the promised land and heaven, and the 40 more years of wandering of Moses, Joshua, and the next generation of God’s people over 20 years of age. (Lest you find it difficult to believe that God went to all the trouble to bring the whole nation of Israel, with some Egyptians, out of bondage with many miracles and signs against Pharaoh and Egypt, then after many times of failed testing of these as the people of God, reject them as His own people—”many are called but few are chosen”—then you should read the summary of this whole historical happening in the book of Hebrews, especially the summary of this Rebellion in the Wilderness of Hebrews 3:7–11 where God “swore in My wrath”, and after 40 years of failed testing in the wilderness that, “they shall not enter My rest, given as an example for us in Hebrews of: (1) how not to harden the heart into rebellion when God brings the inevitable tests of life; (2) how patient God is to test and wait for faith over 40 years; and (3) In the anger of God and after so long a period of testing and lack of faith, there is the inevitable judgment of God on lack of faith; and (4) These first people of God, like many other people of God in this time, according to Hebrews and other NT books, God decides (a) they always go astray in their heart and (b) they have never really learned the Ways of God.)

a. Sampey (HEART OF THE OLD TESTAMENT) on “The Law of Moses”.

“Law of Moses” is what Sampey calls this period of OT history, chapter 5, after respectively chapters of “The Beginnings”, “The Patriarchal Period”, Job, and the “Era of Moses and Joshua”. Of course, our first Top Topic, “The Living God of the Living” introduced Genesis and the first part of Exodus up to the point where this Living God, “the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” as God first introduced Himself to Moses and man at the burning bush, and this second top
topic of “The Righteousness of God and Man” continue with the Pentateuch of
the first five books of the Bible—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and
Deuteronomy, often referred to in the NT by Jesus and the Apostles as “the
law of Moses” or “the law given by Moses” (John 1:17; John 7:19; John 5:45-47;
and Luke 24:27), much of the very summary of the whole Bible of Old and New
Testament, of salvation, and of God’s dealings with man throughout history in
order to achieve and promote righteousness in John 1:17.

“For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through
Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17)

Even as it will help you as you read and study the 14 NT books from the Apostle
Paul, and the 3 which he sponsored through John Mark and Dr. Luke to realize
that previously as a lawyer of the nation of Israel, Paul was practiced in the
national and religious laws of Israel, one and the same; so also you develop more
understanding of the Bible as you comprehend that God all at one time and
through Moses gave the laws of the Ten Commandments and the other rules
and regulations of Exodus and Leviticus as both moral and the legal and reli-
gious laws of the new nation of Israel. And like Sampey writes on page 77 of
HEART these “ten words” spoken by Jehovah from Mount Sinai, engraved on	

We will find out much more about them as both: (1) an expression of the very
heart of the thoughts and character of God; and (2) a summary of the expres-
sion of the righteousness of God, what He expects and what man can achieve
through faith. Please understand: the just or justified of the OT by faith
were able to achieve the righteousness of the law of the 10 commandments,
legally through their faith in God and to only a certain extent actually in lives
of faith and from God. (You may want to read more about these and other
 teachings from Jesus about the total law and 10 commandments from the
books by Charles Allen, former pastor of the First Methodist Church in
Houston, and in his books like “God’s Psychiatry” and “God’s Pattern of
Thinking”.)

Like Sampey in the same chapter points out, Jesus in general and in particular
in the famous Sermon on the Mount of Matthew 5-7 took these 10 command-
ments “as a text” for His own teachings, taking them all the way into (as Allen
also so well re-enforces) thought and feeling, requiring all disciples to see at
the heart the original meanings against anger, lust, and foolish swearing. The
truth was near all along, as a few in Israel of old knew and understood, but it took Jesus and the Apostles to forcefully bring it out. And something you must know about the 10 Commandments and the revelations of God from the Bible is that "love" as the fulfillment of the Law was there along, and from the beginning in the giving of the Law, not something Jesus added to the 10 commandments as a matter of theological evolution when He came on earth. Granted He added more understanding of the original, but God intended that the 10 commandments all along be the fulfillment of love, and God clearly stated it as such in part of what He had Moses write down. (Deuteronomy 6:4,5 and Leviticus 19:18). Many still do not get it that when Jesus answered the question of a scribe about the first and great commandment of the law as recorded in Mark 12:28-34 (by the way also at the very core of this Bible lesson Top Topic of Righteousness) Jesus quoted on (1) love for God out of Deuteronomy 6:4,5 and (2) on love for fellow man out of Leviticus 19:18. This were not new and even different worded summarizes of the 10 commandments and the rest of the law.

"And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength". (Deuteronomy 6:4,5 and Mark 12:30)

"And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Leviticus 19:18)

So many simpleton and superficial Bible teachers today would have you believe that such a summary was never in the Old Testament, only the straightforward statements of the law of the 10 commandments in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 where Moses reviews for Israel these and the other aspects of the covenant with God. (Most of Deuteronomy is a review and rehash of the history of Israel in the wilderness, the covenant and commands of God, with the promises of blessings or curses on Israel for the future, near the end of the life of Moses and just before Joshua took over to lead them into the Promised Land of Canaan. However this is more a subject for Top Topic #3, "The Composite Witness of the Bible" to come in the next installment which takes a whole separate topic to cover the many quotes in the NT from the book of Deuteronomy.)

Key to Bible Understanding # 2-1: Love of God and neighbor were in the 10 commandments of the law from the very beginning, stated but not fully understood by all, even as today; and when Jesus taught in the Sermon on
the Mount and other places that He came to fulfill the law not destroy, it was to fulfil the love of God and fellow man and of righteousness.

b. Hester (also HEART OF THE OLD TESTAMENT) on.

1. The original statement by God of the 10 commandments is given in Exodus 20, and quoted from quite often by Jesus and the Apostles in Luke 18:20, Mark 7:10, Matthew 5:38, Romans 13:8,9, and James 2:11. {You know there certainly are a lot usages of the 10 commandments, and quotes of in the NT, by the Apostles and Jesus for there to be so much ignorance of the deeper meaning of the commandments which were there all along in the original giving. For example, when in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said that He “came not to destroy, but to fulfill the law”, He meant that literally as Jesus came to make full and fulfill the full intention and statements of God about the law which were there all along: (1) on love; (2) on the character of God as an expectation for the character of man; and (2) as the fulfillment of grace, truth, and righteousness.}

2. Granted, as also explained in Hebrews, Romans, and Galatians, the temple, temple worship, the rules and regulations of burnt offerings as well as much of the formality of the law as given in Leviticus was done away with at the Crucifixion of Christ. God through Christ and the Crucifixion “nailed the rules and regulations to the cross”. (Colossians 2:14)

Key to Bible understanding #2-2: Certainly while much of the law like the 10 commandments did not change from the OT to the teachings of Jesus and the NT, many of the rules and regulations, temple worship, etc were nailed to the cross as the temple veil at the Crucifixion of Christ was rent from top to bottom. By the way also the old covenant and the priesthood were replaced by the Priesthood of Christ as the old covenant was obsoleted by God Himself.

3. However the old covenant with God was superseded with the New Covenant along with a means of man achieving actual as well as legal righteousness through the new birth of the Holy Spirit. (Hebrews 8:7-13). God through Christ and the Crucifixion for salvation made the old covenant “obsolete” according to the Word of God. (By the way in Isaiah and Ezekiel, especially at the same time God began through His Word to make it clearer that Christ was the way of salvation and righteousness, giving some future hope to a disheartened and distraught people of God, Israel, He also began to
make clear that the shortcoming of the law and covenant would be overcome, fulfilled if you would, by the addition of a law written in the heart and mind, a new birth from the Holy Spirit.}

Key to Bible Understanding #2-3: Except for a few example lives like Moses, David, Abraham, for the most part the history of God’s people of Israel is a dark and discouraging story of dismal failure, ups and downs with the breaking of the old covenant between God and man; but starting about midway through the Bible with Psalms, Isaiah, and other of the Prophets, God reveals more fully two great rays of hope for the future: (1) Christ as the Messiah Who will die on the cross for the sins of the world, Jews and Gentiles; and (2) a new way of righteousness legally, through faith in the cross, and actually through the new heart and new mind from the Holy Spirit. {By the way another great ray of hope is of with a new people of Jews and Gentiles, also a New Jerusalem with a new earth and a new heaven, and yes that is also at the end of Isaiah, chapter 66.}

4. The quote of Exodus 21:17 by Jesus as recorded in Mark 7:10, where the law of Moses, of course not in the 10 commandments, specified that anyone cursing mother or father would be put to death, illustrates one aspect of the law of Israel that did not remain as a rule or regulation after the Crucifixion of Christ.

(1). After the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20 came (a) the Law of the Altar of earth and for burnt offerings, (b) in Exodus 21 first the Law concerning servants, (c) then concerning violence and (d) animal control laws, and so on and on detailed laws for the country to promote justice; in the middle of the laws on violence--first the striking of a man so that he dies {however for the murderer that did not lie in wait, God provided a city of refuge where he could flee, 21:13}, second the punishment of death for premeditated murder, third the punishment of death for those who strike mother or father, fourth death for a man who kidnaps a man and sells him; then in 21:17 the verse quoted in Mark 7:10 by Jesus where “he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death."

(2). Since this non-ten commandment aspect of the law and regulations did not survive past the Crucifixion of Christ into Christianity, as like in America and other countries similar laws were not like in Israel also the law of the land, we do not worry about it; of course, we realize without the penalty of law how serious this disrespect of parents is to God. Yes, as part of the Ten Commandments which remained part of Christianity was the commandment to “honor father and
mother". (Exodus 20:12) in order, the full commandment states, “that your
days may be long upon the earth.”

(3). What Jesus was dealing with as He used the quote of Exodus 21:17 in
Mark 7:10 was how the religious leaders of His own day and time to: make the
Word of God, like in the original commandment, of no effect by the traditions
of man (Mark 7:13), for through the years since the original giving of the Law
of Moses, the dominant interpretation of this law was any grown man could say
to his parents “Corban”; that is what profit you might have received from me is
given to God as a gift, thus “then”, in the words of Jesus, “you no longer let him
do anything for his father or his mother” (Mark 7:12); and even these state-
ments by Jesus let’s us know that the kind of cursing of mother and father was
one such that allowed the children to escape any responsibility for care of
mother and father.

(4). The whole teaching passage on this law and the incident with Pharsees
and scribes started when they saw some of the disciples eating bread with
unwashed {defiled hands, in their opinion). Notice that there is not a quoting
of any law or regulation at this point, but the explanation of John Mark in Mark
7:3 that the tradition of the elders and therefore of the Pharisees was that
before any meal the Pharisees would wash their hands in a special way. These
Pharisees questioned Jesus not about the Law of Moses, but about the “tradi-
tion of the elders” about bread and unwashed hands. (Mark 7:5) Jesus did
quote from Isaiah, Isaiah 7:7, in response to the question from the Pharisees
how: (1) the people of God honor God with their lips while the heart is far away
from God; (2) they worship God vainly or to no profit; and (3) they teach for
doctrines the commandments of men.

Key to Bible Understanding #2-4: Among the most religious of God’s peo-
ple and leaders, religious customs and traditions had and do come to replace
the commandments and teachings of God, sometimes by interpretations not
of the ASPI type and sometimes just by custom and tradition; today and
then among the religious of God’s people there can be a lot of false and
vain worship of lip service that is considered vanity in the sight of God and
Christ.

(5). Jesus immediately taught the multitude of how it is the things that
come out of a man or women that defile him not the things that come into a man
from the outside (Mark 7:15); and later to His disciples, who puzzled on this
parable, He explained that “out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts,
adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness (and surely in these you see the 10 commandments), wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.” (Mark 7:21, 22)

5. The quote of Exodus 21:24, about an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth”, in Matthew 5:38 is also a quote of the OT from Jesus, of course part of the Sermon on the Mount and a continuation of proper interpretations of the 10 commandments and law for Christians, after discussion of fulfillment of the law, of murder which really starts in the heart with hate, of adultery in the heart, of marriage as sacred and binding, of forbidding of all oaths, and then here as the “second mile” of Christianity. Jesus says do not resist evil with evil, to turn the other cheek, to go the extra mile with the demander, and to give to the person who asks or who would borrow from you. (Matthew 5:39-42) Once again the laws, rules, and regulations of the law beyond the Ten Commandments ceased with the cross to be part of the covenant between God and man. And once again such actions as the second mile, a fulfillment of the love of the law in the 10 commandments fulfills the love and righteousness of God. Yes, the eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth were part of the Law of Moses, and from God for the national laws of the nation of Israel as part of the old covenant; yet not part of the new covenant, Jesus explained that love was part, always in the 10 commandments, as fulfilled in the extra mile and other cheek.

Key to Bible Understanding # 2-5: Acts of love, love being the fulfillment of the law and righteousness of God, like the extra mile, the other cheek, and giving, are to replace the Law of Moses and of the original nation of Israel where the only sense of justice is “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth and a life for a life”. Once again the proper interpretation of the 10 commandments as love for God and love for neighbor, like originally written and intended, takes the place of detailed regulations on eye for eye, since the commandments were not properly carried out and interpreted in the first place. If in doubt, go by what Jesus taught, knowing that it came from God where Jesus lived before His short life on earth. Justice and righteousness, of God and of Christ and for Christians, goes far beyond in challenge and in righteousness that the simple justice of the law that requires one for one, eye for eye and tooth for a tooth or life for a life.

6. Idolatry was wrong not because of the command “to have no other gods before Me” or “thou shalt worship the Lord your God and only Him shall you serve”, but because it is the natural requirement of a Creature for His Creator as well a reflection of what God is like, alias the character of God; and when I
Righteousness of God and Man

Corinthians 10:7 with a quote from Exodus 32:6 describes the play of the people while Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the very commandment against idolatry, in context of Exodus 32 you will see that the creation of the golden calf to worship and around which to play was idolatry.

Key to Bible Understanding 2-6: as Paul explains, the ASPI, the golden calf incident of Exodus 32 we have many understandings of idolatry as committed by the first of God's people and also as by God's people today--(1) Although all of God's people in the wilderness were rescued by way of the sea by God, also lead by the cloud in the wilderness, and ate the same manna from heaven and spiritual food, and drank of the water from God including the spiritual water of Christ, “with most of them God was not pleased” (I Corinthians 10:5) {that is, God’s people who do not please God}; (2) God scattered most of their bodies in the wilderness; (3) in the Bible God gives us these bad examples of His own people as examples not to follow (I Cor 10:6); (4) that we like them “should not lust after evil things” like they lusted, for example when they complained about the manna, quail, and water and coveted those delicacies like watermelon which they had in Egypt; and (5) when they played after eating and drinking the Bible as the Word of God, I Corinthians 10:7, as “idolaters”; (6) some of God’s people in the wilderness committed “sexual immorality” and 23,000 of God’s own were slain in one day in the wilderness; (7) some tempted Christ, being destroyed by serpents; (8) some of them complained and were destroyed. All of these examples of the Falling Away in the wilderness, and of course the violations of all the righteousness of God and of the commandments, and the consequences thereof with judgment from God are written in the Word “for our admonition”; and for the caution that whoever thinks that He stands as a chosen of God could still fall and fell.

16-2: The Laws of a Holy and Righteous God. (Leviticus 4-18)

NOTE: As we have already observed in this study is that the Laws of Moses went beyond the 10 commandments to regulations, civil law which would be the law of the new nation of Israel, and even how to organize. There is no indication that God ever intended for other nations to have the same strict and very holy civil law of Israel, yet on the other hand all the listing of rules and regulations eliminated through Christ and the cross indicate a wiping out of most of them. Yet at heart, we must realize that even as God wanted and demanded a “holy people” like Himself, it never happened not only because of the continued and up and down disobedience toward the old covenant between God and man, but because of the weak-
Righteousness of God and Man

1. Copies of the true, or simulations if you would, should not be confused with true. (Hebrews 9:22-24 and Leviticus 4:18-20) We could concentrate on the copies of the laws and regulations and organizations, but since they are now gone and obsolete, it would be far better to concentrate on the TRUEs of Hebrews 9 and the rest of Hebrews.

(1). These laws and regulations such as blood sacrifices were copies of higher things in heaven. (9:23)

(2). The holy of holy of the temple, made with human hands, was a copy of the TRUE heaven itself, which Christ did in the atonement of the Crucifixion as He appeared in the very presence of God in heaven for us (9:24).

(3). Even as a copy was also the high priest as he entered once every year with other blood, the true was the Crucified Christ who entered once for all with the sacrifice of Himself, putting away "by the sacrifice of Himself" (redemption) has put away sin once for all (9:26).

2. The requirements for holiness, fulfillment of the law and of righteousness, has remained a constant of the law in Leviticus 11:44 and I Peter 1:16, Word of God from the Apostle Peter. The Apostle Peter concludes admonitions from God the Holy Spirit, and as he was taught by Christ, with this quote in I Peter 1:16 of Leviticus 11:44--by the way more of the law fulfilled in Christ and not destroyed like some of the rules and regulations--“Be holy, for I am holy”. This is the bottom line conclusion and what is being written, preceded and followed by implications for Christian behavior: (1) gird up the loins of your mind, another way to say focus on the long range hope of the Second Coming and the new earth; (2) Be sober; (3) rest in your hope of the grace to come in the Second Coming; (4) Be obedient children of God that do not conform to former lusts that possessed you before conversion and while you were still ignorant; (5) The God and Christ who called you are “holy”, so also all your conduct is to be holy; (6) call on God the Father who judges all behavior without partiality; and (7) be reminded that you were redeemed not with silver and gold but with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Key to Bible Understanding # 2-7: Christians and church members are to seek to be holy and righteous based on the character of God the Maker,
that He is holy. God expects of us, made in the image of God, what He Himself is; and what He originally intended for us to be as made in the image of God.

3. Do not be among those who say the Ten Commandments is all the religion I need, or do not strive to live by the law and laws of God and Moses as, according to Leviticus 18:5, and 16 and as quoted in Galatians 3:12, anyone who desires to live under the law must find life by keeping all the law.

Key to Bible Understanding # 2-8 in the context of Galatians 3's interpretation of the law and of Leviticus 18:5: (1) absolutely no one is justified by the law in the sight of God (Galatians 3:11); (2) the just, or justified, must live not by law but by faith (3:11 and Habakkuk 2:4); the law is not faith and faith is not the law (3:12 and Leviticus 18:5); (3) Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, death and etc, having in the cross become a curse in our place (3:13).

16-3: More from the Bible on the Righteousness of God and Man.

While this second Top Topic of the Bible is based on and centered around the three books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, like with some of the other books of the Bible where quotes overlap and reinforce each other, and in the name of good Bible exegesis and hermeneutics (the science of biblical interpretation with books by Bernard Ramm on THE SCIENCE OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION), where we keep our understanding of the Bible in the total context of the Bible, we must expand to other Scriptures on Righteousness as we did at the beginning of this chapter.

Key to Bible Understanding # 2-9: Whether you are reading from Leviticus, Proverbs, Psalms, or Matthew, the best explanation of what you find in one book, chapter, and verse is what you find in the rest of the Bible. This is the principle of Bible hermeneutics called keep Bible in the total context, the corollary of which is “Read your Bible, it will throw a lot of light on the commentaries”; or we can say what is in one part of the Bible, since the origin in all cases is the same as from God, will shed light on what is in other parts of the Bible, and vice versa.

1. The Righteousness of God and Man.

   (1). Psalm 111 provides us a good introductory description to the Righteousness of God.
Righteousness of God and Man

As we quickly skim through Psalm chapter 111, you will notice the connection between works and righteousness. In fact the phrases are almost interchangeable between “the works of God” which are great in 111:1 and “His righteousness which endures forever” in 111:3. Several things are emphasized about the works of God in this Psalm: (a) The works are great; (b) God’s work is honorable (v3); (c) His work is glorious (v3); (d) It is wonderful how “God has made” (v4) His wonderful works to be remembered, and we immediately think of three ways, in the Word of God and in the works of Creation and Salvation; (e) the works of His hands are verity, obviously a derivative of truth; and (f) God’s works are justice.

Key to Bible Understanding # 2-10: Whether you study the works of man or God, of the righteousness of God or man from the Bible, you will find that works and righteousness are closely connected so that in most cases you are talking about the works of righteousness, man of God.

Manifestations of the works of righteousness of God are given throughout the Psalm: (a) His works manifest themselves in greatness whether you talk about the works of Creation, of salvation, or of the creation and preservation of the Bible; (b) His righteousness and works endure forever, that is they are everlasting, and we must modify the works of Creation in the sense that while the old earth and old heavens will be shaken apart and consumed with fire to make room for the new earth, an earth and in heaven the creations of God do remain (if you read carefully Revelation 21 on the new heaven and new earth, where first there is no more sea, then you start to realize the possibility except for the New Jerusalem that is lowered to the existing Mount Zion that the new earth will possibly exist where the water of the seas and oceans were melted by the fervent heat); (c) God’s works of righteousness include “graciousness” and “compassion” (v4), in fact they “are full of graciousness and compassion” (by the way all the holiness and righteousness of God is to be emulated by Christians as they were emulated to the very tee by our author and finisher of the Christian faith, the Lord Jesus Christ); (d) God’s works of righteousness are seen in that He gives food to the people who respect Him (v5); (e) We see the works of the righteousness of God in that He always has in mind the covenant and covenants that He makes with His own people (v5); (f) God works righteousness as He declares, primarily through Jesus, the Prophets, and the Bible—alias the Bible—the power that is in those works like salvation, Creation, and creation and preservation of the Bible, specifically however according to verse 6, this power is declared as God’s people receive the heritage of the nations, something that will fully happen on the New earth after the Second Coming of Christ; (g) God’s works of righteousness are seen in the realization that “all His precepts are sure” (v7), stable
Righteousness of God and Man

and to be relied on more than gravity, inertia, and gravitational attraction; (h) God's works of righteousness are "done in truth and uprightness" (v8); (h) We dare not neglect redemption, another word for salvation with a particular emphasis on in salvation how God bought us back from sin and servitude to sin even though at Creation we had originally belonged to Him (v9); (i) God is righteous and God works because He has "commanded His (everlasting) covenant forever"—it like God is immutable (v9); and (j) the works of righteousness of God include that all about His character and Name, that He is holy and awesome. (In the previous introduction to holy and holiness from Leviticus, some effort was made to distinguish between holiness and righteousness, but I think that we see that whether we are talking about the holiness and righteousness of God or man, righteousness has the emphasis on the works—more like personality—while holiness has the emphasis on character. The difference is what we do and what we are. And it is hoped that some distinction between actual righteousness and sanctification has been gleaned, recalling that "saints" as a common word in the Bible for Christians is derived from sanctification, and that sanctification is the actual process started with the regeneration of the new birth and finalized when we see Christ as He is. In short, sanctification is becoming more holy.)

Key to Bible Understanding #2-11: Sanctification like character is becoming holy, while righteousness—actual, not legal and real—like personality and starting with the regeneration of the new birth is the works of righteousness. Years ago my habit was to divide righteousness into LEGAL and REAL; but since when God declares us righteous because of faith in Christ that is as real as a righteousness can be even though more a legal righteousness as described in the atonement, so that the two categories of righteousness for man should be (1) Legal and Real, and (2) Actual (for our continuing Bible study on righteousness, you will find that “actual” is a Bible word and from Romans.

NOTE: The first covenant which God made with Abraham was the “everlasting” covenant, when God Himself preached the Gospel to Abraham and Abraham believed; the second covenant was the Old Covenant of the Old Testament given by God through Moses and between God’s original people of Israel; and the new covenant of the New Testament was actually the fulfillment of the Everlasting Covenant, one sealed with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ in atonement and crucifixion.
Key to Understanding Bible # 2-12: The Everlasting Covenant with God made with Abraham, that is "God preached the Gospel to Abraham" and Abraham believed, a righteousness by faith was the first covenant of God with man, and which by the way according to Romans included us as Gentiles since Abraham is our father by faith; the second covenant was the old covenant between God and Israel given through Moses, often violated and broken by God's own people, and was inadequate in that it did not include the reality of the new birth {this became known in Jeremiah and Ezekiel}; and the new covenant of the New Testament based on the atonement and blood of Christ replaced the old covenant; however in reality it was a fulfillment of the everlasting covenant.

(2). We comprehend something of the righteousness of man in Proverbs 12. What we read in Proverbs 12 are some selected thoughts from God on the "righteousness of man". If you were teaching and preaching on this chapter of the Word of God, you might want to entitled it “The Righteousness of Men”.

(a) First Proverbs 12:3 established a contrast between righteousness and wickedness, allowing us to quickly see that they are opposites, then presents the first characteristic of a righteous man as “a root that can not be moved” {the wicked can not be established in the sight of God} (v3); (b) The righteous man has “right thoughts”, of course consistent with “as a man thinketh in his heart so is he” and the statements from Jesus about it is the things that come out of the heart that defile a man, the opposite also being true (v5); (c) The righteous man has a “house that will stand” while the wicked are overthrown and disappear, of course this speaks of end judgment and for eternity (v7); (d) A righteous man is humane and regards the life of animals (v10); (e) the root, and surely we read character here, “of the righteous yields fruit” (v12); (e) the righteous have the characteristics, or resulting personalities, to “come through trouble” as compared to the wicked that gets trapped in the transgressions of his own lips, again of judgment and eternal judgment (v13); (f) since the righteous man declares truth then it is a work or declaration of righteousness (v17); (g) when you look at the long range and end results of the life of the righteous, you will find that “no grave trouble will overtake” them (v21); (h) the righteous are to chose his friends careful (v26); and (i) “In the way of righteousness is life”, where the path does not include death.

NOTE: It behooves us to learn, achieve, and seek the WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, which we will continue to do! Does this not remind you of Jesus’ statement in the Sermon on the Mount, and a conclusion of several
Righteousness of God and Man

other statements in the Sermon of Matthew 5 and 6, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness....”

2. “Righteousness” in the Sermon on the Mount. No doubt you have read, studied, even taught and preached the Sermon on the Mount, or Matthew 5-7 quite often; but have you realized how prominent the word “righteousness” is while still being hidden in the other teachings of Jesus that have gained lasting impressions.

(1). Jesus with a message and more teachings from God in heaven, where He previously lived, gives a promise of blessing or happiness to those who will hunger and seek after the RIGHTeousness of God (Matthew 5:6), the blessing being when God and Christ witness this dedicated effort of hungering and thirsting after righteousness of a promise that “they will be filled”! Later in the Sermon you will find promises that with the proper priority in life of God and righteousness over bread and things, that the bread and things as necessary (not the Gospel of Prosperity) will be added; but here the spiritual bread takes the place of the physical bread and necessities as the guarantee from God and Christ comes that there will be filling. There will be no hunger in the life of any child of God for righteousness when that righteousness is eagerly and seriously sought!

(2). Now with righteous manifestations of good works, there is no immunity from the persecutions of the world. Like Jesus said later, “If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you.” However again while the promise and guarantee is not from persecution, the guarantee is that the persecuted will inherit the kingdom of heaven. In fact, you would have to say that the kingdom of heaven is especially designed for the persecuted. Of course from the book of Revelation we learn that there are two resurrections: (a) the first immediately after death as with spiritual bodies they go to heaven to be with God and Christ; and (b) the second resurrection where the spirits of just men made perfect finally at the Second Coming of Christ receive their resurrected bodies. (Matthew 5:10)

(3). Christ sets very high standards for the righteousness of man in Matthew 5:20 as he tells the children of God that “their righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees.” Oh yes, these men were the religious leaders of the day, some of the most religious that have ever lived in prayer, worship, and works; but it was and is not enough according to Christ. Later as we come to Romans, the book on Righteousness of Man and God, we will
Righteousness of God and Man

see that they “being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, had not submitted to the righteousness of God” which is by faith.

(4). “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:33) The priority of life must be for God and righteousness.

3. Previously we saw in Psalm 111 how the righteousness of God relates, almost synonymously, with the works of God: now we see how in Galatians 5 that the works of man relates to the righteousness of men, of course this is not LEGAL and REAL righteousness but actual.

(1). We have previously looked at Leviticus 19:18 which is quoted by other books of the NT besides in Galatians 5:14, and we will look at it again, including an expanded look at the book of Leviticus with its message of separation from the other peoples in the lands of Egypt and Canaan {separation from other Gentiles and normal Gentile behavior has always been a goal and demand of God for His own people}.

“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Galatians 5:14 and Leviticus 19:18)

NOTE: Later we will see where the Apostle James in James 2:8 quotes this same verse from Leviticus and calls it “the royal law”. Don’t take it too lightly because Pastor James is getting at the practice of discrimination based on clothing, status, and money, a common and accepted practice of unrighteousness and sin and wickedness today. {Yes, while it is true that the American Democratic Faith prohibits discrimination based on race, religion, and creed, the Faith of the Lord Jesus Christ prohibits respect of any persons, calling it a sin as serious as murder or adultery.}

A little perspective of the context of Leviticus 18 and 19 is in order here! I would chose to summarize the title of Leviticus 18, “Do not According to the Doings of Egypt and Canaan” while some Bibles like to call it “laws on sexual morality”, and that is there also. Several key points of some of the verses helpful for our continued study of righteousness and love are: (1) God spoke to Moses, and Moses spoke to the children of Israel that “I am the LORD your God” {right, sounds like the beginning of the 10 commandments first of Exodus 20 and then the review for the new generation in Deuteronomy 6; and indeed you will
find a lot of similarity between the 10 commandments and the subject matter of Leviticus 19 which, in fact, I like to entitle “Commentary on the Ten Commandments”;

(2) God admonished them through Moses (v18:3) not to do according to the doings of the land where they dwelt in Egypt or in the land of Canaan where they were going (stated in another way God told them “not to walk in their ordinances”); (3) From verse 4 and the context of Leviticus we realize that coming from God were four categories of requirements for righteousness--commandments like in the ten commandments, conditions of the old covenant between God and Israel, “judgments”, and “ordinances” (sometimes the word “statutes” is used in the place of ordinances, so that the last two categories of requirements of right or righteousness from God become statutes and ordinances); (4) Previously under the Laws of a Holy God we looked at Leviticus 18:5,6 (and as quoted in Galatians 3:12), “My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them”, however we did not warn you of the Bible in Romans to come which essentially states that the law and laws came after the everlasting covenant was given to Abraham and the world, that the law of Moses and of God was given later to make sin obvious and promote guilt; (5) God’s people of Israel are not to “defile” themselves with any of these things of immorality and lack of rightness mentioned, and as practiced by the other nations around them--God is casting them out before them (v24)--what is happening is that the land is “vomiting out” the inhabitants of the land; (6) The people of Israel are to keep the ordinances of God in order that they will not commit the “abominable customs” of the inhabitants, also in order that they will not defile themselves, the opposite of course, is to be “holy” like God of character and righteous in the works of personality (v30).

Key to Bible Understanding # 2-13: The argument of Romans 3 is to contrast a righteousness by law and a righteousness apart from the law which we will come to later in a closer look at Romans 3 on righteousness; however now is the time in the study to declare according to the Word of God that the law, alias ten commandments, even statutes, ordinances, and judgment (alias God’s character and value system of holiness) in order: (1) that every mouth might be stopped as it claimed innocence from blame, Paul will call it our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ and righteousness by faith; and (2) that the whole world, Jews and Gentiles, might become guilty before God.

“Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” (Romans 3:19)
And as we see from the Galatians 3:12 quote of Leviticus 18:5,6, amplified and explained in the larger context of Romans and Galatians, a miniature of Romans, is that if indeed a man could keep all the laws, statutes, ordinances, and judgments of God perfectly, this would be a way to live eternally; however, it is not possible, and lest you doubt that look at the number of moral Americans and church members who discriminate against the poor and those of lack of status.

4. The Description of Righteousness by Faith of Romans 4.

{Hopefully you read the book of Romans as recommended in Top Topic #1, and it should be easy for you to read now only the fourth chapter of Romans.} Due to limitations of time and space, we can only hit some of the highlights of this chapter as relate to a description of Righteousness by Faith. {Recall that the problem with many religious people, even secular, of the world is that they attempt to establish their own righteousness in the sight of God, therefore never get around to a righteousness by faith.}

(1). The original promise of the everlasting covenant to Abraham, and his seed of faith which includes us, was before the law, being a “righteousness of faith” (Romans 4:13).

(2). It is “of faith” and “by grace”. (Romans 4:16) Never have the little words of “of” and “by” meant so much.

(3). Righteousness is legally “accounted” to us as it was to Abraham when God sees faith. (Romans 4:22)

(4). Another way to say righteousness is accounted to us, in the words of Romans and the Bible is to say that “righteousness is imputed to us who believe” (Romans 4:23,24). While accounted makes it clear that the necessary legal book keeping in heaven has been done for us to be declared righteous, it seems in imputed to get to us here on earth. Either way, you know it is by faith and of grace, a gift of righteousness.

(5). In Romans 4:25 you have two great words of salvation, the atonement not stated but implied in the Christ “was delivered up for our offenses” and directly stated in the “justification”.

5. The Gift of Righteousness of Romans 5.
Righteousness of God and Man

(1). Surely you see “the gift of righteousness” as a Bible phrase as in Romans 5:17.

(2). You also see some definition of the great word of salvation, “justification”, in Romans 5:18 where there is by faith a “justification of life”; and based on another great act and word of salvation, “atonement” without the use of the word itself, as the contrast is made between original sin of Adam and Eve where the condemnation of God passed on to all humanity because of this one man Adam, and then by the one God-man, Christ, and His one act in crucifixion the atonement passed upon all men, “even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.”

(3). By the obedience of one God-man, Christ, “many will be made righteous” (5:20), the MADE RIGHTeous is once again a good phrase to describe the imputation or accounting of righteousness to man. It is legal but it is real as it comes from God and through Christ!

6. Some of the big words of salvation--such as justification, redemption, propitiation, as related to the righteousness of God and man in Romans 3.

(1). Two of the great words of the great salvation of God are in Romans 3:24, namely justification and redemption, as we read “being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”.

(2). God through “propitiation” by the blood of Christ, and through faith GOD DEMONSTRATED HIS OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS: it was necessary according to Paul and the Bible for God to demonstrate that He was still the very nature of righteousness in spite of the fact that he had overlooked all those sins of all those people in past history, “because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed”. In one of the greatest of all statements of the Bible that describes God as “JUST AND THE JUSTIFIER”, in Romans 3:26 God through JESUS’ atonement and “through faith” demonstrates in the present His own righteousness.

(3). There is in Romans 3 a short description of the difference between RIGHTEOUSNESS BY LAW and RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH. (You will find that difference set out quite often in Romans, especially in Romans 10 where it says that the righteousness by faith does not try to reach up to heaven to be like God by works, etc.)
Righteousness of God and Man

a. Righteousness by Law prohibited by: whatever the law says to you or does not say to you, it does say that any and all who chose to be under the law and live under the law do not achieve any righteousness in the sight of God but rather [1] have their mouths of self-justification stopped, and [2] become guilty in the sight of God. (Romans 3:19, 20) There is no justification in the sight of God by the “deeds {works} of the law. In fact, just the opposite “by the law is the knowledge of sin”.

b. Righteousness of God apart from law (Romans 3:21-26): [1] this new righteousness of God apart from law is “now revealed” (obviously in the time of Christ where it was fully demonstrated and through Christ and the Apostles made clear); [2] of course it was witnessed to as the way of salvation and the everlasting covenant by the Prophets in the OT and the Apostles and Jesus in the NT, by the “law and the Prophets”; [3] it is a righteousness of God through faith in Christ: [4] to all and for all who “believe”, there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, only a difference between righteousness by law (which is impossible) and righteousness by faith; [4] Justified by the grace of God and through redemption (another great word of salvation which literally means that God bought us back, although we originally belonged to Him by Creation, from bondage to sin and Satan and death) in Christ--you have to watch the little words in the reading of Romans like the “in” which is “in Christ”, the “through” in through the justification that is in Christ Jesus and the “being” and “freely” in “being justified freely by His grace”; and [5] God set forth Christ as a PROPITIATION (another great word of salvation) by His blood (the blood of Christ being another short descriptive word for the atonement).

7. Characteristics of Righteousness and Unrighteousness as presented in Romans 1. (Yes, as stated previously Romans is, as some commentators like Dr. Wolber of Ouachita Baptist has entitled his commentary, on the Righteousness of God. However once again you must read Romans 1 as in no way can we do justice to the content now.)

(1). In Romans 1:16, 17 the “Gospel of Christ” is introduced as: (a) the power of God demonstrated all the way to salvation {you have no doubt that Paul is about to make the greatest treatise of all on the salvation of God as based on the proper interpretation of the OT quotes on the subject, revealed and witnessed but never fully explained or understood until men could see Christ}; (b) for everyone who believes, Jew and Gentile; (c) through it is the “revelation of the righteousness of God” {yes righteousness and salvation is the subject of Romans}; (d) the Gospel is a way of salvation from “faith to faith”, as it starts
in initial faith and continues in faith; and (e) with a quote from Habakkuk 2:4, “The just {and justified} shall live by faith”, we are assured once again that the everlasting covenant by faith was there in the OT all along. It was really there so God could overlook the sins of the past, being both the just God and the justifier of all who believe.

(2). We can see much about what lived or “actual” righteousness is by what is not, it is not the opposite of “unrighteousness” of Romans 1:29-32. All of these are the very opposite of the nature of God and inspired in men by Satan and the “spirit within us that lusteth to envy” (James 4:5): (a) sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; and with the subsequent description of the character of men where there is unrighteousness: (a) whisperers, (b) backbiters, (c) haters of God, (d) violent, (e) proud, (f) boasters, (g) inventors of evil things, (h) disobedient to parents, (i) undiscerning, (j) untrustworthy, (k) unloving, (l) unforgiving, and (m) unmerciful.
Surely the contemporary social habits and the rising tide of the mystery of lawlessness has not so de-sensitized your American Conscience that your sensors have not picked up the obvious increase in the taking of God's name in vain, a large show of lack of respect for God. WITHOUT RESPECT FOR GOD THERE IS NOTHING: no religion, no faith, and no salvation. All this taking of God's name in vain on TV, in public, and in books is a sure sign that the proper attitude toward God on the part of citizens in America has never been developed so that in spite of all the church attendance and superficial manifestations of religion, God from the Great White Throne in heaven and on the circle of the earth with His feet in the clouds has not witnessed the kind of attitude He needs to see from humanity in order to qualify them as eligible for the famous salvation of the Bible, now and for eternity. Have you ever stopped to think that what stands between you and salvation for now and eternity is what God sees in your heart and mind as compared to the requirements He must see and which He has laid down once and for as part of "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" in order for you to have the change of life that goes with salvation. Yes, in the ultimate analysis, it is just between you and your Creator: what you think and what He sees of what you think. Never be deceived, even as Jesus knew what was in the heart of man and did not need that any other man should have to tell Him, so the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ knows like the very hairs of our head every thought and emotion of the heart which you have!
Respect for God

17-1: **Current Popularity of God’s Name in Vain Does Not Make for “Guiltless”**.

The Bible clearly states that “God will not hold him guiltless that takes His name in vain”. The two primary excuses today will not promote innocence: (1) “Oh, I just did not stop to think”--this is even worse since it shows evidence of a lack of thought for God and about God, the worst thing you can do on the way to a lack of proper regard for and respect of God; and (2) “It is always a way to get attention and place emphasis”, the TV and book writers like to say--and what a cheap way to sacrifice a proper relationship with God and even salvation for emphasis in writing and expression. It reminds me of the “shoestring reasons for tragic decisions” that was mentioned in an earlier chapter. No matter what the excuse, you just can not justify such lack of respect for God as evident in the taking of God’s name in vain. He is your Maker and Creator, He reigns supreme over the earth from His vantage point in heaven; He sees and knows it all here on earth; and while the taking of God’s name in vain may show as much about yourself as it does of your lack of regard for Your Maker, even a lack of respect for yourself will clearly not be accepted by the Word of God, the Bible.

17-2: **The Beginning of Wisdom is Respect for God**.

While the Bible does state “The knowledge of God is beginning of wisdom”, and some preachers most verses in the Bible have stated that “God is the fundamental postulate of all rational thinking”, implied and obvious in those two statements of fact are: (1) that respect for God is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge; and (2) that the fundamental postulate of all rational thinking is really respect for God, for respect for God involves both God and our proper attitude toward God.

Even as I would tend to dislike any person showing a lack of respect for my wife and the name of my wife, so would I even more have disgust at the person who does not respect, including believe in, the God for whom my life has been devoted; and with whom I converse in prayer daily, and count on for my salvation in this life and the life to come. We are really torn in loyalties when friends or loved ones show a lack of disrespect by unbelief, but in the final analysis we must cast our loyalty on the side of God and faith in God!

17-3: **You can not separate God from the Name and Character of God**.

One reason that we are so dependent on the Bible is for our ultimate knowledge on what God is like which goes beyond that of (1) the works of Creation as the
Respect for God

evidence of a loving Creator of ultimate capacity in design; (2) the conscience of man with the Social and collective Conscience of societies, like Romans states automatically “accusing and excusing one another”; and (3) the character and works of the Lord Jesus Christ Who said He primarily came to teach and make known the will and mind of God, even teaching man like in the Sermon on the Mount to pray not to Himself but to “our Father which art in heaven”. If you want to express the name of God do not waste it in vanity and vairness, but in prayer to God the Father; and “your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly”. (Matthew 6:6) Invoke the name of God only in humility and worship!

17-4: The First Four Commandments Strongly Demand Respect for God.

You perhaps remember the first four of the Ten Commandments.

1. You shall have no other gods before the Lord God of heaven, the Creator; and originally identified by God Himself to the children of Israel as the same LORD your God that brought you out of the land of Egypt, so that they knew him to be powerful, and out of slavery in the house of bondage, so they also knew Him to be a God of power and salvation. You see it is not that God does not admit to the fact that a people often have other gods, but He demands first place with first priority. (Exodus 20:2)

2. You shall not make a carved image--like anything in heaven, on the earth, and in the water--or bow down to serve them. By the way, did I tell you that our God “is a jealous God”. That is part of His character and personality and He shows that by: (1) visiting iniquity on a people who hate Him for 4 generations, and (2) showing mercy to the thousands (perhaps 7,000 per generation) that (a) love Him and (b) keep His commandments. (Exodus 20:4,5)

NOTE: And the righteousness which God demands which we will discuss in a following section, a righteousness which God’s demands of His subjects, is a matter of the keeping of the commandments of the Ten Commandments, these four of the Ten and all of the Ten.

Surely you would not try to get into a debate or quarrel with God about the way that He does things even as the clay would not disagree with the potter as Paul describes later in his writings.

3. You know about the taking of God’s name in vain with a reminder of the disrespect that goes with that, a direct quote is demanded of Exodus 20:7. It is short for a commandment even, but to the point.
Respect for God

“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.” (Exodus 20:7)

Did you hear that of careless speaker of God's name other than in prayer? Guilty! “Oh, but it was a slip of the tongue.” GUILTY! “I did not mean to say it as I did it without thinking.” Even worse, GUILTY, as you are not giving thoughts to God with proper priority in your mind and heart.

4. Remember the Sabbath Day {Jesus did change this command to the first day of the week or Sunday} to keep one day of the week holy to God. It is to be a day of physical rest, just like God rested on the seventh day after making the heavens and earth in six days, and spiritual activity.

I bet you right now you feel a little guilty as you know how short you come on just these first four commandments. Your coming short on these is a good way to start a Bible definition of unrighteousness. The quote from Revelation on the cover about unbelievers being right in there with adulterers and murderers, describe a way of life of those who habitually exhibit these acts of unrighteousness by disobedience to the laws of God like in the commandments.

17-5: The Summary of the 10 Commandments Highlight Respect for God.

Don’t ever forget as you read in the last chapter that (1) love for God and (2) love for fellow man summarizes all the commandments. They were summarized this way in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 with the original giving of the law of the Ten Commandments. When a lawyer of Israel ask Jesus a question to test Him, “which is the great commandment in the law?”, Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy 6:5, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” {and I would think that pretty well covers all matters of what a priority of loyalty must live}; following it quickly with “this is the first and great commandment” (Matthew 22:38) {well, God and Jesus together with the Bible certainly let us know where we stand, or at least where they stand, and how this helps to identify our standing and status in their sight}; then about the second which is like the first, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”. And again this later, which many do not realize, is a quote from Leviticus 19:18, so that all of the ten commandments are summarized with only these two verses from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18.

Love as a fulfillment of the law and Ten Commandments, many would like to believe and that is what the lawyer had in mind when he questioned Jesus, came
Respect for God

in the New Testament times of Jesus. Nope, that summary was there in the law of Moses, written in the same first five books of Moses, the Pentateuch, when the Moses wrote those first five books of the Bible.

17-6: Salvation and Respect for God.

It is hopeful that you recognize that when you die you automatically lose all control of where your soul goes; and it is too late to remain here on the earth that you have come to know so well, without mass, no longer controlled by gravity like your body has been for so many years, and whether you like it or not, the Great Maker and Controller of all the automated systems of the Universe determines for you, based on your attitude of life and respect for Him, where you soul goes.

For all those who would be saved, and not just to be saved but rather to be right with our Maker, God demands a certain attitude toward Jesus Christ, His Son. That proper attitudes demands that you recognize His Son as His Son, the Son of God, and that you accept what Christ once for all did on the cross in making provision for the sins of the world (the atonement). The words most often used by the Apostles and Jesus in the Bible to describe the proper attitude toward God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ is (1) repentance and (2) faith. Actually it is one single attitude as there is a little repentance in faith and a little faith in repentance. It is like the about face or to the rear march in the military and in band, at the same time you turn away from a self-centered life of sin, repentance, you are turning toward a life dominated by God and Christ, faith.

17-7: Covenant with God.

Seldom do we stop to think that when we become Christians, we make a covenant with God that includes righteousness. Granted it is not exactly the same as the old covenant that was made between God and God's people of Israel at Mount Sinai and written down by Moses on tablets of stone, recorded also in Exodus and rehearsed again before the people before entrance into the Promised Land (Deuteronomy). Yes, it is the New Covenant of the New Testament with the added privileges not found in the Old Covenant of new birth and atonement and redemption through the blood of Christ on Calvary's cross. However, this New Covenant that you make with God through Christ and through faith is the same as the Everlasting Covenant that God made with Abraham and his seed by faith, which includes all Jews and Gentiles who now believe in Christ. Yes, Abraham is our Father also as the Apostle Paul, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, makes clear in the book of Romans. {Much of this you saw in the last chapter on the Righteousness of God and Man.} The Bible tries to tell us in many ways that God demands right living or righteousness of His own people, or even those who would
become His own people. Throughout the Bible, and addressed to Christians or those who would be, are short quotes like “Be holy, for I am holy” and “You are a peculiar people” and “Come out from among them and be a holy people!”

No people have ever been as religious as the nation of Israel at the time of Christ. The law of the nation was both religious and State law, but the righteousness as explained by Christ and then as the mantel was passed to Paul as the chief editor of the New Testament, one formerly trained in the laws of their religion and nation, a lawyer and tentmaker before conversion on the road to Damascus and after special training by the Ascended Christ in Arabia, was a righteousness by faith which most of them never caught onto.

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.” (Romans 10:3)

This as a characteristic of human nature is a repeated process today which we will discuss in the next section where the majority of the religious, moral, or just “good people”, try to self-identify their own status and standing in the sight of God. They just never catch on, “remain ignorant” of God’s righteousness and the way God through Christ has provided for the righteousness of man, as discussed in the last chapter, the legal or real righteousness declared in the sight of God when God sees the attitude of faith, and then through the power and help of the Holy Spirit and the new birth an actual righteousness that is both “being and becoming”, that is a righteousness being to a certain extent and becoming to a larger extent.

17-8: The Righteousness by Faith apart from struggles to attain Rightness.

What is really being stated in Romans 10:6,7--”Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ in order to bring Christ down to our level or who will descend down into the uttermost depths of the earth in order to bring Christ up to us (you see, all that ultimate in human effort to scale the heights of righteousness or the depths)--is that it is far beyond any human capability and wisdom to attain their status and standing in the sight of God. If it were for the wisdom of the Bible alone, that is of what is quoted here in Romans 10:6,7 from Deuteronomy and further amplified by the Paul who knew both the law of Israel and the teachings of Christ, a wisdom shown here of thousands of years between the law of Moses (the first five books of the Bible) and the New Testament, “every mouth would be shut and the whole world become guilty before God” for a lack of the correct kind of righteousness and morality, or
Respect for God

What is being said is that if you even momentarily ignored that the Bible is the Word of God, God speaking to His own Creatures to tell them what they need to know, then it would incorporate the wisdom of thousands of years of history wherein men and women struggled to find God and His right way of living; and therefore on that basis alone, you are not going to be able to find a new and novel way to identify your status and standing in the sight of God. That is what is written in Romans and Deuteronomy: no matter what efforts you might make after God, Christ, and rightness to scale the heights or plumb the depths, you will find no new and novel way to identify your goodness and rightness in the sight of God, short of the Biblical faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

What does the wisdom of history and the Bible say to you as to every human being that would attempt to identify with God and His righteousness.

“But what does is say?” (Romans 10:8)

What does this Bible, Old and New Testament, of human wisdom and teachings from God Himself tell you. Well, you already know and that is the beauty of it!

“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart...” (Romans 10:8b)

You heard it from preachers, you have heard it from parents, you have heard it from the Bible and Sunday School.

“it is the word of faith which we preach” (Romans 10:8c)

It is a “WORD OF” and ABOUT “FAITH”, that word preached by Moses, Jesus, and Paul.

“that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” (Romans 10:9)

You see, all that effort at religion, morality, and goodness or rightness in the sight of God--all that scaling the heights and plumbing the depths is wasted--for like you really know in your heart and mind, it is simply a matter of (1) confession of the Lord Jesus Christ with your mouth and (2) believing in all that the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the plan and purpose of God, did to provide salvation and righteousness to you.
THE WAY TO SALVATION AND RIGHTEOUSNESS, the bottom line: Please catch this.

“For with the heart one believes unto RIGHTEOUSNESS, and with the mouth confession is made unto SALVATION.” (Romans 10:10)


Perhaps Rick Warren started out right before riches and popularity, before Rick Warren became Rich Warren. But what happened at Saddleback in the Civil Forum with the Presidential candidates of Obama and John McCain, better than any example I know since it is so hard to buy on the part of Christians and church members, and impossible for the “world”—a biblical word that we wish to define in more detail in the next section—how Christians to summarize much of the Teachings of Jesus and Paul and the Apostle John must be “IN THE WORLD, but “NOT OF THE WORLD.” What Bible scholars and students alike can seldom see in discussions of the Baptist Distinctive of “Separation of Church and State” is that at the base line in teachings of the Bible is that we are talking about “Separation between being in the world and not of the world.”

{Roger Williams, a founding father of the heritage of Baptists in the US and founder of the State of Rhode Island, understood this as he first separated from the Church of England, Puritanism, then became an Independent and Separatists, the one of whom Parrington says in MAIN CURRENTS OF AMERICAN THOUGHT is a “Christian and a gentleman whose generation has not yet been born”.

In the United States where the line of distinction between the American Democratic Faith and the Faith of Jesus and the Bible has been blurred, it is so hard to realize that the United States establishment, government and society, is as much part of the world as all the countries overseas, as much as was Rome and Greece and Persia part of the “world”. In fact, the shock that will come to us as we fathom the depths of the meaning of the word “world” in the Bible, especially from the Apostle John in I John where “all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father but of the world,” that to be and become part of the establishment of the United States, social and political, is about as close as you can get to being also part of the “world”.

You stop and think about it: where most Christians and church members fall short today in worldliness is in their frequent practice of the “pride of life” whether it is for their own achievements, possessions, family, church, patriotism, or that of their children and school. It as the Bible and the Apostle John
Respect for God

say in I John 2:15-17 to be OF THE WORLD when you speak or manifest any pride of life!

Separation of Church and State

The longer title would be: "Separation of the American Democratic Faith from the Faith of the Bible and Christ." It is much like the guiding principle of the New Testament that Christians are to be "in the world but not of the world". Paul first wrote a book saying "to separate yourself from adulterers"; but then had to explain that what was meant was to separate from adulterers in the church but not from adulterers in the world, then he said, "you would needs have to go out of the world." To make this a most positive approach and in the name of a reasonable debate: RESOLVED THAT THERE SHOULD BE AND CONTINUE TO BE A SEPARATION OF THE LOYALTIES BETWEEN THE AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC FAITH AND CHRISTIAN BIBLICAL FAITH!

Protestant Pope Pastor Rick Warren.

Now Pastor Rick Warren has done it with the recent leadership of a Saddleback civic forum with the two presidential candidates, Obama and McCain. He has become captive to his own popularity, and that fame will take precedence over any of his Christian convictions. In a next day interview on Larry King Live, Warren made the statement that he does believe in one of the Baptist Distinctives of "Separation of Church and State": then playing with words as he likes to do so often as in his play on the word "purpose" in PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE and PURPOSE DRIVEN CHURCH, where for the word purpose has been substituted for the words of Christian convictions and Bible of "Holy Spirit" driven or "Christ" driven, he stated that while he believes in the separation of church and state, he does not believe in the separation of "faith and politics." Warren is a master of the boomer practice of a compromise between functionality (a good example was the young soldiers of Warren's generation in Vietnam that wore both "kill" and "peace" symbols--this may be some of the "common ground" thinking that he references), that is what works, and convictions; and any time this is done, convictions lose. You take for example, the not too long ago vote of the Presbyterian Church as to whether they should stop claiming that "Christ is the only way of salvation" as it seems too intolerant. Just that attitude that could even bring it to a vote illustrates how Americans of the American Democratic Faith have come to allow the American Democratic concept of "tolerance" to dominate over Christian Convictions. You see, it is not the separation of Church and State, or Faith and Politics, that we have to worry about in America as it is
the separation between the American Democratic Faith and the Faith of Christ and the Bible. Once the ideological battle is won of the American Democratic Faith’s domination, like in tolerance over conviction, over the Faith "once for all delivered to the saints" of the Bible and Christ, then the war is over; and all some Pope like in Rome or in Saddleback has to done is formalize an organization.

Far fetched for Warren to be a Protestant Pope. Well, at the susceptibility of playing with words like he does, it can easily be stated that in fame and ideology he is already there as many like Larry King like to refer to him as the new Billy Graham, for some reasons we will discuss momentarily. Recently a SBC convention pastor in order to find justification for his actions as he ostracized a long standing church member, with approximately 20 of his followers, from church membership in a large church of Alamogordo, New Mexico, because he and his followers objected to the departure from tradition in the church music, this same pastor sought approval before his action from Rick Warren because of his influence from the best-selling Purpose Driven books.

CNN, of course, is just riding the fame of Warren, and no doubt a little self-justification and equal time allowance for a Protestant Pope since we witnessed this unheard of lack of Separation of Church and State when they covered for days the religious services, including mass, and activities of the Roman Catholic Pope. While you may not immediately see in this a combining of Church with State, and on the part of a religious group, the Roman Catholic Church, that has a long standing history of church meddling in the State, surely you do see that the news media are more functions of State than of Church, traditionally and practically. {Surely in this day and time when the control of the administration in power over journalism, as Bill Moyer has tried to make clear in speeches and programs, you see how news is far more an arm of the State than of Church.) If nothing else, you know and I know that the prime subject matter that News agencies have trained us to become accustomed to is to deal with politics and both the domestic and international functions of government.

Granted these slick politicians--Warren, Obama, and McCain--tried to keep religion and politics separated in their discussions of "Evil" where Obama focused more on domestic crime and McCain like George Bush before, and which is a military man tendency, focused on evil as the personification of bad countries like Russia, North Korea, and Iran. What really happened in that forum was that Warren got pulled into a public allegiance, and all Christians to a certain extent with him, where the concept of evil became dominated by a
State concept rather than a religious concept. Goodness, if any of the two should dominate on the subject of evil, it should be religion; and in particular when we as Christians and Baptists have for so long been devoted to outspoken allegiance to the Bible as the Word of God, at least before Warren and his fundamentalist group came along to take over 30 years ago the SBC, evil must be clearly identified as: (1) sin and lawlessness; (2) the heart within every human being, Christian or otherwise, that lusteth to envy, and which Pastor James in the Word of God identifies as the real source of all wars, disagreements in churches and denominations, etc; and (3) Satan, whom the Bible calls the “Evil One”. Did you hear anything about "sin" and "Satan" in that church meeting of Saddleback with two representatives of the US State government present; and by the way dominating the trend of the conversation even as they became agents of politics dominating over faith, State over Church religion.

Warren and Joel Osteen, also Beth Moore and Paula White, and others are no better than Jesus; and Satan comes to each of these religious leaders at the beginning of their careers to seek a worldly dominance of their faith. Satan says to each of them, "I will give you all these things of the world that you see--fame, fortune, status, and homes and lands, and comfort and riches--if you will fall down and worship me; and do not be confused on this matter that any dominate allegiance to the world and the politics of the established world (America or any other country), simultaneously gives prime allegiance to Satan, the prince of this world, as dominant allegiance is given to the world. What Warren and these new religious leaders of America have done in their seeking of and finding of fame and fortune and popularity is to sell their souls to the company store, that is with a devotion to the established world of fame and fortune comes ideological and heart control from Satan and the ultimate in evil. However, it looks so much better than the evil on the streets and the killings by Russians in Georgia, that we hardly identify such devotion to the world--and remember as the Scripture and Jesus state "He that would be the friend of the world is the enemy of God"--as Evil. My goodness, we can hardly conceive of the concept that by allowing the American Democratic Faith to dominate over our Christian Faith that we have already violated the Separation of Church and State, that we have failed to practice the teaching of Jesus to "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's". My, our concept of evil and the world, and "world view value system", to use some words and a concept from Warren, and Satan belong more to God than to the political world. In his play with the words and concept that every one, citizen or church member I would presume Warren means, has some "world view" and value system that goes with the world view; and no doubt has not stopped to think that this places a dominance of world politics over faith,
exerting an influence on other Christians toward this loyalty to the State over loyalty to the faith of God, Christ, and the Bible!

How can Warren be labeled a Protestant Pope Pastor, for true that Baptist history has been in the main stream a protest to being called a Protestant, since they protested against nothing; but rather from direct and individual priesthood of the believers reading of the Bible, came to develop the Baptist Distinctives of: (1) the importance of the individual; (2) the Bible as the Word of God that can be individually understood by every Christian; (3) baptism by immersion as an example and representation of the immersion in the salvation of God; (4) the separation of church and state, and (5) the Bible is the sole criterion for faith and practice (fundamentalists like Warren would attempt to put the Bible and quotes from the Bible as an Appendage to an American Democratic Faith based on custom and traditions, primarily the evolved customs and traditions of Bible Baptists). However, you need to know and appreciate more American Baptist and church history by the recognition that there are distinct differences between (1) evangelicals, (2) Southern Baptist, and (3) fundamentalists. While King in the promotion of "Pastor Rick Warren" remind us often of both his best selling books on purpose and how he is a fourth generation pastor, not knowing the warfare between the Baptist fundamentalists and Southern Baptist. Goodness, you are excused as most church members have never known the differences, without any study of the good books on Baptist History or History of the Southern Baptist Convention. The fundamentalists, most generally called Bible Baptists, the most famous leader of which was the recently departed Jerry Falwell, split off from the Southern Baptist Convention, once the largest Protestant denomination in the world under the downward trend of the last 20 years as the fundamentalists took control of the convention. Besides the splitting off of two other major conventions, there has been that big happening of continuous warfare between "moderates" and "fundamentalists" like between the new fundamentalists convention leaders and State conventions like in Texas, like between Baylor and Southwestern Seminary. Like W. A. Criswell, with support from Adrian Rogers and Charles Stanley, told Bill Moyer on TV, "we will keep fighting until one side or the other wins." Real southern baptists by and large refused to fight, dominated by the Christian spirit of love and moderation, while the fundamentalists under the leadership of those three Pope Pastors, all three of which never came from a SBC background in the first place but were called to large SBC churches as the reading level of America dropped from the sixth to the third grade level, the fundamentalists taking political control. (They still do not have ideological
control as demonstrated by the continued warfare, and as many real southern baptists have never awakened to this historical happening.}

NOTE: Do not be deceived Baptists and fellow citizens, the front of a goat in sheep’s clothing is that of a smiling attitude of “disagreeing without being disagreeable”, that all along the fighting fundamentalists have had during their takeover and warfare against real southern baptists. Surely it must remind you of the popular westerns where a killer can smile and show a gracious countenance at the same time the knife is inserted. What do you think it takes to make a wolf in sheep’s clothing that scatter and fleece the flock except the looks of graciousness, smiles, and like the Trojan horse become Greeks bearing gifts. Did you think a fighting fundamentalists would show all his true colors and put all his cards on the table at once! Look at their history, look at their approach like politicians to the Bible to use the Bible as an appendage to life and faith, and above all look at their popularity in this age of the Falling Away when the popularity of preachers and teachers is a bad sign. Now that they are in control, certainly in spite of the recent decline of the SBC, they would like for you to think that they are the “good guys” with the white hats.

Expanding our horizon to an honest look at early church history, the manner in which the first New Testament churches degenerated into a man-made organization called the Roman Catholic Church, the most outstanding example in history of the opposite of Church and State--and by the way, one of the major reasons for the foundation of this country as thousands flocked to the new country to gain religious freedom from the tyranny of Church over State--was when the pastor, the NT word of "bishop" had preference then, of the church at Rome assumed a larger status than the pastor of a local church which is the way it was in the New Testament, and still is. {You will find only 3 words in the NT for the title of the leader of the local church, pastor, elder, and bishop--all the same--and with clear definitions of those limited local functions.} Yes, the bishop at Rome assumed the title Pope and then was able to exert enough influence on the other churches to make it acceptable to them. Of course, just like today throughout the Roman Empire there were many churches who did not accept that man-made position, just as many real southern baptists do not accept today these protestant popes of the fundamentalists movement. {By the way this current mess of a combination of a Vatican which is an independent State also being a Church or denominational organization is not a practice or example that we wish to see dominate in the United States, even as with the Church of England where the Queen is the official head. Let us not give up
Respect for God

our independence of July 4, gained physically when Puritans and Pilgrims came to this country or our intellectual independence gained by Emerson and others during the Romantic Period, although sometimes men like Warren and the late Jerry Falwell would have used the flag of July 4 to exercise influential control over America, at the same time out of ignorance of American history, church history, the Bible, and Baptist heritage, ignoring intellectual honesty. One of the still famous last sayings of Falwell was the current signs of spiritual revival in this country because of Ted Haggard and the Evangelicals, Rick Warren and the Purpose Driven philosophy, and Tim LeHaye with his fiction based on fiction and the Scoffed Bible Notes. It is greatly significant that the same fundamentalists who have given us all the answers on eschatology by a distortion of the 1,000 years, and all the answers on when to fight and not to fight in the SBC takeover, are the same fundamentalists with an emphasis of custom, tradition, and community over the Bible itself, instead of about the Bible, that are now leading in the De-Separation of Church and State.)

Even as the fundamentalists like Rick Warren would seek to blur in your mind the difference between real southern baptists and fundamentalists, so would they also like in the name of popularity and fortune like to confuse the differences between the American Democratic Faith of military men like John McCain and the Faith of the Bible and Christ, "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." We can believe in the social evolution of Spencer without believing in the physical evolution of Darwin; and while there has not been any evolution whatsoever in the truth of the Bible referenced in Jude 3 as the faith once for all delivered to the saints, there has been an evolution in the American Democratic Faith. For a complete description of the differences you should look at the PDF books offered on www.biblecombibleman.com, www.sun-gristbible.com, and understandbible.googlepages.com; but we will look quickly at the three major differences: (1) the emphasis in the American Democratic faith is on the majority, the minority in the Bible and with Christ; (2) tolerance goes to the extreme, taking precedence over and dominating convictions, or at least watering down convictions and testimonies as you saw in the civic forum of Saddleback--this is the sad, big jump in removing the gap between church and state; and (3) while the focus of the American Democratic Faith, as it should be and as we appreciate it, is elimination of discrimination based on "sex, religion, and creed", the forbidden discrimination of the Bible and Christ is based on "clothing, status, and income". {And wearing flip-flops and colorful Hawaiian shirts, which are in keeping and appeal in popularity to the casual California style, will not cut it as they are the most expensive of
Respect for God

that type just like wearing worn and torn jeans is no longer a sign of identification with the less than rich, when even obviously even 10% of his book sales have placed him in the Biblical category of the rich men, "who oppress you", and in spite of seeking some self-justification from the two Senators with a definition of rich.}

As citizens, and we must appreciate the contribution Rick Warren made to America on a beginning of clarification between faith and politics, we respect the American form of government and way of life which often in American Studies has been called the American Democratic Faith. We also appreciate the Christian Faith as recorded in the Bible, and as "once for all" was delivered to the saints through the writings of the Apostles and Prophets. However, we must appreciate the large gap that exist between them in spite of Warren’s efforts to find "common ground"; and the large gap that must continue to exist between them as we maintain the historical Separation of Church and State which is our Baptist heritage, also our American heritage. Once you allow, as we saw happening at the Saddleback Vatican, the State Faith of the American Democratic Faith to dominate over Christian Faith, you have just lost the ideology battle to separate the two.

You know, none of this is really new except by an unread and untrained generation. It has long been called "intellectual honesty" by Elton Trueblood and the Christian philosophy of religion, even as "purpose" and "community" like Warren is championing is based on the Religious Dimension of Personality of psychology and the Christian psychology of Wayne Oates. What is new in history is the Falling Away among Christians and churches, as well as the world wide rising tide of the mystery of lawlessness and sin, and popularity as a bad sign. This period in American history is not like during the popularity of Billy Graham, when we were not overcome by the "they will not endure sound doctrine" (II Timothy 4:3,4) of the Falling Away, or the vast and popular "heaping up" of Bible teachers and preachers of "itching ears", seeking to teach and preach something new or something that sounds new! Who is to responsible? Warren, the fundamentalists forefathers and teachers that made him, the people who support him at Saddleback or in the rest of the world, just like you can not tell for sure whether in II Timothy 4:3,4, it is the teachers and preachers that have itching ears of the church members, but probably both! In short, popularity in this time of the Falling Away is no longer a luxury that Pastors and Bible preachers of the Word of God can afford. Also it is the unsaved who wish to think that the American Democratic Faith is the same as Christian Faith, the ultimate in a lack of
Respect for God

separation of Church and State: Christians and church members dare not com-

pound the guilt!

17-10: IN THE WORLD, OF THE WORLD”, and Jesus' Sermon on the

Mount.

What this summary of Bible teachings from Paul and the Apostle John, based

on the fundamentals of the teachings of Jesus especially from the Sermon on

the Mount, is that Christians and church members {there can be some Chris-
tians that are not church members like during the time of Elijah there were 7,000 faithful to God not even known by the leader of Israel, Elia-

jah, but who had not bowed their knee to the world of Baal} have to

remain IN THE WORLD in order to be the salt of the earth and the light

of the world, which by the way excludes accepting fellowship with adulter-
erers in the church although acceptable to associate with such in the world,

but not OF THE WORLD where all that is in the world, according to the

Word of God and the Apostle John, (1) the lust of the flesh, (2) the lust

of the eyes, and (3) the pride of life is of the world and not of God the

Father. Can it be any more simple and spelled out for you? Simple to under-

stand, but hard to implement as most Christians never get to the applica-
tion in their life style.}

NOTE: By the way what do you have left in this world when you eliminate

“the world”? The answer is that less than popular word of the Bible called

“the kingdom of God and of Christ”, being substituted in the minds, hearts,

and efforts of Christians today as the church, churches, or even State

and democracy. Did you ever stop to think that this is the reason as Jesus

made so many efforts in the Sermon on the Mount to properly identify

the proper relationship of God to man taught, “Seek ye first the kingdom

of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.”

May we suggest that you put a priority of life and efforts first on the

kingdom of God and God’s righteousness before even your church, your

family, and even the State and your possessions {life, liberty, and the

pursuit of happiness was in the first writing “the pursuit of property”}. Go

and figure this out and you have the message of the Bible on IN THE

WORLD, NOT OF THE WORLD.

We have mentioned the teachings of Jesus and the Apostle Paul on this separa-
tion from "of the world" while in the world, but perhaps you are also familiar with
the teachings on the same subject from the Apostle Paul. Paul wrote a letter,
not in the New Testament Canon, admonishing the church members that as
their Christian faith and responsibility demanded, they were “not to keep company with sexually immoral people”; and since as he received reports back from this church at Corinth, what happened was that many church members were attempting to live a complete separatists life that would have taken them almost all the way OUT of the world. Paul under the inspiration of the Spirit, and based on what Jesus taught him, wrote:

“Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world”. (I Corinthians 5:10)

You see, if you separated from all those in your world, in the world, that are (1) sexually immoral, covetous, extortioners, or idolaters, you would have to go all the way into getting out of this world. {By the way some of many sects and throughout history have tried to do that very thing as you well know.} This is not the extreme that Paul and the Word of God is advising!

“But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.” (I Corinthians 5:11)

This is the reason later Paul wrote in II Timothy 3:1-9 not to associate with fellow church members, having a form of godliness and denying the power thereof—religion without anything inside in other words—listing in great details these bad habits and attitudes of some church members during difficult times, which has been called both “Den of Thieves” and “Hideout for Bad Habits” in books written by SunGrist_Bible and now available online at www.biblecombibleman.com. Also the Apostle John agreed with Paul and with Jesus before both of them, not to take into your home anyone without the full implications of the “doctrine of Christ”. It was a sin to even bid them Godspeed!

That this dedication to the teachings of the Bible and Christ has gone far beyond the faith and practice of Saddleback and that of most American churches is immediately admitted even as “many are called and few are chosen” and even as “narrow is the way that leads to life eternal and few there are that find it” while many and most, of course the majority of the American Democratic Faith as contrasted to the minority of Faith of the Bible and Christ. That as we get deeper into the Falling Way, clearly taught in the Bible as necessary in history before the Second Coming, there will be less and less in the church and in
the world (in the kingdom) who sustain a loyalty to Christian Faith over the
American Democratic Faith; and even as most of God’s original people fell in the
wilderness after 40 years of testing, so also will most church members of God’s
new people fall from the Faith once for all delivered to the saints, and of the
Bible, in favor of a total loyalty and priority for the American Democratic
Faith, the faith of this world.

17-11: “Manifest to Us and Not to the World”.

What is so interesting in this question asked by Judas, not Iscariot, the ques-
tion of John 14:22--“how will you manifest yourself to us and not to the world”--
is that Judas does not say specifically: “How will you manifest yourself to us
{disciples and other believers} and not to the rest of the world? Unlike for
disciples today the world was clearly identified to him and no doubt the other
of the apostles after being with Jesus day and night for over 3 years. There
were two groups, believers called disciples and then the rest of the world; how-
ever, we can be certain from all the problems and Peter with others later had
in associating with Gentile believers, that at this point in the learning Christ
process of the Apostles, “us” meant a select few of the Jews and the world
meant the world of the Gentiles. {You can not help but notice that in the
Bible of the Old Testament, in spite of many teachings about Gentile
believers and how there were many introductions to the new citizenship of
God’s people in the kingdom that would be Jews and Gentiles, the words
“heathen” and “Gentiles” were used interchangeably.} Indeed in the mind
and heart of most Hebrews, heathen and Gentile were one and the same. Look
at the problem Jonah had in going as a missionary to the Gentile nation of Nin-
eveh.

Jesus after Ascension called Paul, once a Hebrew of the Hebrew and great
defender as a lawyer of the nation’s religious, moral, and civic laws (one once so
staunch on the “us” before even Jesus was manifest to him on the road to Dam-
ascus, where he went to place more Christian believers in bondage, that he sin-
cerely thought before conversion that by persecuting Christians he was doing
the will of God), to straighten out Christians on the “us” as a kingdom of Jews
and Gentiles. Later as we know from the history since Christ that less and less
the Jews entered into the kingdom (it is not a subject for discussion for now
but only one-third of them were allowed, and with persecution to become
Christians by God and as predicted in Daniel and Zecharish), most of the
believers of the kingdom of God coming from Gentile nation, and that as the
“Fulness of the Gentiles” has approach, that Paul wrote of in Romans, the
United States and Canada have provided the fullest as well as the majority until recently of the worldwide missionary efforts.

While it is hard to conceive from the perspective of a lifetime practitioner of respect for God that any would not believe in God the Father as the Creator and Sustainer as well as provider of salvation, muchless be able to take a hardened stance of unbelief to attempt a self-identification of themselves as agnostic or atheistic, so of this no doubt is a life long sense of being left out of the “us” group. Often in with friends and associates of the “us” group of believers, but all along realizing that there is something quite different; and still not comprehending the answer as Jesus gave it to Judas on how God and Christ did and do manifest themselves to “us” and not to the world. How can we see Him and they not see Him, Judas was asking? How can we have a personal relationship with God and Christ and not the world? How can we experience in this day and time salvation from God and not the rest of the world? What, bottom line, separates the “them” from the “us”? And we must come back to the seemingly simple answer of Jesus that He and the Father would come into the human heart when welcomed and make Their home with us! (John 14:23) Simple, seemingly, yet all the difference in the world.

It is as if the rest of the world, so busy during a lifetime of reaching up or reaching down for God and Christ, without success; and being frustrated, are saying how can you find God and Christ manifest to you and I have not been able to have Them manifest to me? And the obvious answer is a simple attitude toward God and Christ, an attitude of faith, trust, and belief which says in effect, “God, when you knock as you always knock on every heart through the Holy Spirit’s total presence here on earth, then I am going to listen and invite you into the home of my life, that of my heart.”

17-12: Respect for the Name of God and Christ by Which you Call Yourself.

Closey related to the respect for the name of God in our language is the respect for the name of God we show by our actions, recalling as the Bible teaches of when they force God because of wickedness to curse them rather than bring a blessing.

1. This is what Paul had in mind about the Jewish nation in Romans 2 as he informed them that they had brought shame on the name of God.
Respect for God

“For ‘the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,’ as it is written.” (Romans 2:24)

And this is a quote from their Hebrew Bible of the Jews, the Old Testament, as found in Isaiah 52:5 and Ezekiel 36:22. When they became a hissing sound to the Gentile nation and a term of reproach like when the world looked on the ruins of Jerusalem, knowing as they did that it was because of their own sins and lack of humility and prayer, then it was they themselves that by their actions brought disrespect on the name of God.

2. This is what the Bible tells us in II Timothy as Christians when it is stated “and let every one who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

“Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are His’, and ‘Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.’” (II Timothy 2:19)

a. God places a Seal on His own people.

It is quite often confusing as to who are the real people of God, even in churches where there are members of both the tares and the wheat variety, the sheep and the goats, and there are false and true leaders, pastors, preachers, and evangelists; however GOD KNOWS HIS OWN. They have a seal on them from God: this is the solid foundation of God. And by the way if you want a way to determine to a limited extent anyway which people of God who claim to be the people of God are genuine, then look at the extent to which either they have or have not really departed from iniquity.

b. This seal, like the everlasting covenant, has strings attached that the people of God must: (1) remain righteous; (2) remain humble as contrasted to the evil of the “pride of life”; (3) put loyalty to the God above all other gods of mammon and man; and (4) pray effectively.

17-13: Calamities, Curses, and Chastisement from God.

What you will find in the brief study of the Bible on calamities like Gustav, curses, and the Chastisement from God is that there is a close relationship between the cursing of man, which shows a lack of respect for God, and the CURSE as contrasted to promised Blessing from God where God responds to that lack of respect for His own people. Sometimes in the Bible the same Greek and Hebrew word is used for curse and cursing in the two ways, from
Respect for God

God and from man. History and the Bible has ample testimony to the reality that a lack of respect for God is in many ways the beginning and fulfillment of the downfall of civilizations, and that the Curse of God on His own people is evidence when there is a long period of intense calamities. It can be said: IT TAKES A LOT OF CALAMITIES FROM GOD TO MAKE A CURSE ON THE PEOPLE OF GOD! Unfortunately the people and the land of a country like the United States where God has begun to chastise His own people to promote righteousness, humility, and prayer are just innocent bystanders of the continuous work of God.

Even as it takes many blessings for us to know that God has blessed us, so it takes many calamities for God's people to realize that God has cursed them; but the guarantee of the Bible is that God never does anything without warning, without letting His people know what He is about to do!

17-14: Gustav Grieves the Gulf Coast.

It seems that the real question then is whether the calamity of the hurricane named Gustav is the warning (and certainly for the Gulf Coast, especially for New Orleans, there was over a week of warning), or if Bible teachings on calamities, curses, and chastisement from God are the warnings, and that the intense series of calamities on the United States since 9/11 in floods, droughts, invasion from external enemies in the destruction of the twin towers, fires, hurricanes, and tornadoes is the actual chastisement on God's people. It would seem that Bible teachings in colleges, seminaries, churches, and homes for several generations are adequate to know that God either curses or blesses His own called people directly proportional to (1) their righteousness and obedience, and (2) the effectiveness of their fervent prayers based on righteousness. And what really makes convictions on these Bible teachings of blessings and/or curses from God on God's people from the heathen practices of past history where any “act of God” was considered as punishment from the gods is: (1) where there are many gods as recognized by the Creator of the Universe and written about in the Bible, there is only one real God with the power to manage these calamities; and (2) the ability of God's people to know and understand the teachings of the Bible remove us from such superstitious reactions to “acts of God”.

Even as such destructive acts of nature have always been historically attributed to God or “gods”, so even our weather men of science, if there can really be any such thing, have personalized tropical storms and hurricanes with personal names, which within itself is almost a primitive act of dieification; or would be...
were it not for the Bible teachings on calamities, curses, and chastisement. How do you know when an intense series of calamities are simply the natural result of the law of God automatically applied to the “rain on the just and the unjust”, or when it is evidence of a curse from God on God’s people and the rest of the world is just innocent bystanders. 

(Certainly, this is not an intention to seek the human sacrifice of churches and church members to appease God, like the heathen practices of the past when bad things happened from nature; however, as the professed people of God they are responsible to God for what happens in blessings and/or curses from God on the land and the people, by the extent of their righteousness and the effectiveness of their prayer.)

Well, the answer to that question of how to chose between an automatic law of God and evidence of a curse from God, for one thing, is in the intensity of the calamities, and the location, per unit of time. Also you can go by the acts of grace manifest during the calamities like hurricanes and as for example that while Gustav killed approximately 98 people on the way to the Gulf Coast, on land where we would agree that few of God’s people live, it only killed approximately 7 people on the Gulf Coast!

However, back to the Bible and Bible teachings for some sure word of clarity on calamities and curses!

17-15: Calamities and Curses in the Bible.

It is clear from Bible teachings such as in II Chronicles 7, Solomon’s dedication of the Temple as the House of God and the place where God would place His name, that it takes a curse from God is made up of a lot of calamities. However before a more detailed look at exactly what God told King Solomon in response to His prayer during the dedication of the first Temple of God, we must consider the Bible teachings from Deuteronomy that already existed in the minds and hearts of God’s people, taught often to them and which is the same for us, on the blessing and/or curse of God.

1. Deuteronomy 11:26: The Established Natural Law of God for His own people of either a BLESSING or a CURSE.

God clearly set before His own people in the wilderness, and used the words Himself “I set before you” this very day “A Blessing and A Curse”.

“Behold {sort of like Christ His Son, who learned of course from the Father would stress a most important teaching with the preface of “verily, verily, I say unto you}, I {this is God speaking and none less than God the
Respect for God

Great I, the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end) ... Behold, I set before you today {no doubt as to when He did it and where, in the wilderness, through Moses, and at the time of the 40 years of wilderness wanderings as the new nation of Israel was formed up from the multitudes brought out of Egypt} ... “Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse…” (Deuteronomy 11:26)

What would you like to argue with here, that God said it or that God did it? Or do you just want to disagree by any intellectual and spiritual efforts possible that God exercises those two options toward the treatment of His people throughout history where (1) He either blesses His people based on the extent of their obedience on righteousness, or (2) He curses the people because of the wickedness, the opposite of righteousness, and because of their ineptness on prayer.

NOTE: Even as righteousness and effective prayer go hand in hand, that is according to the Bible “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man {and righteous people} availeth much”, and the opposite would also be true -- without righteousness in the churches and among the church people while still many formal prayers and many words spoken, the effectivity of the prayers will be lessened, so the first big evidence that any House of God has passed from a “House of Prayer” to a “Den of Thieves”, as spoken by Jeremiah and later Jesus, is when the extent and effectiveness of prayer has disappeared. Likewise as the churches pass from houses of prayer to HIDEOUTS FOR BAD HABITS, which is the real meaning of Den of Thieves as used in Jeremiah and from Jesus. Yet you should not be shocked that the most religious people who ever lived, led by the Pharisees, priests, lawyers, Saduccess {the religious leaders} in spite of much speaking of prayers in public and on street corners, and with many words as Jesus observed to His first disciples, became ineffective in prayer about the same time Jesus said they had turned a “House of Prayer” into a “Den of Thieves.” {You may want to read these two ebooks from SunGrist_Bible at www.biblecombible-man.com."

a. THE BLESSING from God to God’s people when and if you obey the righteous teachings of the Word of God, the Bible.

“... the Blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today.” (Deuteronomy 11:27)
Respect for God

Yes, this was also the time of the giving of the commands of God, in particular the Ten Commandments that God's people in the churches of the US know so well.

b. THE CURSE.

“and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known...” (Deuteronomy 11:28)

REMEMBER, then and now, most basic and fundamental is the command to have no other gods before the One LORD God of the universe; and that simple and basic to Bible understanding is that any thing, person, or “mammon” that has the place of loyalty in your life where God should have this commanded priority, be it inanimate or animate, becomes a “god” to you.

2. Deuteronomy 30:1-- For the world, the US included, of God's people just like for our example in the Bible of the history of Israel, and as predicted and fulfilled for Israel in the Bible, the blessing was followed by the curse, and sometimes vice versa, and the cycle of the history of Israel was (1) Blessing, (2) Curse, (3) Return to God and Restoration, and (4) A repeat on the group level of the nation of God's called people, not chosen, Falling Away.

NOTE: Be not deceived as sure as the prediction and fulfillment in the Old Testament of this cycle and Falling Away of God's people, so is the surety of the same for God's people today in the world and the US. The whole book of Hebrews is about the Falling Away we are in now; Jesus taught it in His famous teachings on eschatology like in Matthew 24 where “because sin will abound the love of many will wax cold”; Paul wrote the often ignored book of II Thessalonias to explain that you must look for the Falling Away before the Second Coming, and that if you confuse the historical sequence you are out of step with the Word of God and God's plan for the Universe.

“Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you, and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul {recall the summary of the 10 commandments on love for God and fellow man}, that the LORD your
Respect for God

God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you...” (Deuteronomy 30:1-3)

You want some history and wisdom on curse, blessing, and calamity much older than any history we have about nations and nations of God’s people, here it is! Heed!

a. Curse in the Dictionary: “a prayer for harm to come upon one”.

Of course in the case of a curse from God Himself, the prayer is not a request but a demand to the universe and the nature of the universe that it will be done; and in the case of God the Father for His own people, it is not harm for destruction, but rather for chastisement and in order to promote righteousness and holiness in the life of His own people.

“Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” (Hebrews 12:11)

By the way, why is it that often you hear from people that “God has blessed us”, why but self-denial and at the group level, do you never hear “God has cursed us”? Is it respect for God? No, it can not be for you see what the teachings of the Bible is on these matters of calamities and a curse. Perhaps it is because of our false concepts of God, having in the US in the last few generations created like Phillips said in our minds and hearts “a god that is too small”, or beyond that in the last 40 years or so of the unsound doctrine of the Falling Away in our churches and other pulpits created a god that is not at all the God of the Bible, an idol in our mind that does not exist but to whom we give loyalty over the real God of the Bible and of the Universe. You know what has created this Gospel of Prosperity of this “time when they will not endure sound doctrine” is a false gospel that has rationalized and justified the creation of false gods; and there is need now for a Counter Gospel to this, perhaps a GOSPEL OF GOD’S CURSE OF CALAMITIES!

b. Calamity in the Dictionary: “great distress or misfortune; an event causing great harm or loss and affliction; a disaster”.

That Gustav and Katrina and others of these hurricanes and tornadoes--fire, floods, invasions from abroad by Muslim fundamentalists, and droughts--are great distresses, misfortunes, events of great harm with loss and afflictions,
Respect for God

alias disasters is obvious; and obviously calamities, that an intense series of calamities is evidence of a Curse from God should become more evident, and that it is a gracious reminder for the people of God, alias the many churches of America, to return to righteousness and effectual fervent prayer.

c. Chastisement in the Dictionary: "to correct through punishment or suffering; discipline."

And since we want to be known in churches as God's people who believe in the Word of God, let us look at the definition of the chastisement of God's people in the Bible:

"...but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness." (Hebrews 12:10)

You certainly have a good concept of the Bible teachings on chastisement if you read this and remember the verse after it, Hebrews 12:11, quoted above and add to that the total teachings on the total context of Hebrews 12 on chastisement, how that it is not for the bastard children of the world but for the people of God, those whom God loves and wants to make more righteous, holy, and effective in prayer.

d. Hebrew and Greek words in the Bible for "calamity": the word is found 20 times in the Bible, literally meaning "mist or vapour", "accident and misfortune", and "evil" or "bad" {Isn't that definition of a calamity like Gustav being labeled by the Word as evil, an interesting personification in light of many political efforts to personify evil as something far from our churches and our land and people, all the way to bad nations of the world or even to the streets of Chicago and the caves of Pakistan?}

e. Hebrew and Greek words in the Bible for "curse": found so many times in the Bible, referring to acts of God and man too often to number with 22 distinct Greek and Hebrew words and meanings such as: (1) oath, (2) devoted thing, (3) execration, (4) a reviling or thing lightly esteemed, (5) swearing, (6) imprecation, (7) to place under an anathema, (8) to bless, etc; and the word "cursed" has at least 7 more definitions and words in the Bible in the Greek and Hebrew,

3. Life and death in the Bible is correlated with respectively blessing and curse in the Bible: Deuteronomy 30:19.
Respect for God

“I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live…” (Deuteronomy 30:19)

NOTE: You really want to do something good for the future of this country and the children to follow, then make the choice and choices in your churches in favor of righteousness, effective prayer, and a loyalty for the one God over other gods.

17-16: Now we are ready for Dedication of the House of God by Solomon.

1. When pestilences, calamities, and other acts of God come upon God’s people, it is literally as stated in law “acts of God”; for you will notice in II Chronicles 7:13,14 the number of times and the number of actions by God Himself as He says, “I shut”, “I command”, and “I send”. How can you doubt in the light of the teachings of the Bible on this matter that when these hurricanes like Gustav strike the people of God in the US, that it is God who shuts, God who commands, and God who sends!

“When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” (II Chronicles 7:13,14)

2. According to these verses from the Word of God above: the American land and the American people, and the welfare of both in the present actions and planning and management of God is dependent on the righteousness, loyalty, and prayer of the churches; and bottom line, the churches of America are responsible for the blessing or curse from God.

3. As the assessment of the damage to the Gulf Coast is made, like in other hurricanes and tornadoes as well as other floods and calamities, the question will be asked in mind and heart if not in words, “Why has the LORD done thus to this land and this house?” (II Chronicles 7:21)

Yes, like in the pervious intense series of calamities being experienced by America, you will see churches destroyed and you will see suffering among God’s people! Why not a start from the pulpits and a renewal of Bible teachings on more than a superficial explanation than that being given by people such as Major Nagel, “we live in a hurricane prone territory”, a start of reconciliation of Bible
thought that GOD HAS DONE THIS TO THE LAND AND THE CHURCHES, TO HIS OWN PEOPLE!

4. God's people of the churches are in a proper mental position, it is called attitude, to begin on a revival of righteousness over the Gospel of Prosperity; from excuses and rationalization to an enlarged concept of "Evil" based on the Bible which faces up to "the spirit within us that lusteth to envy" (James, the rising tide of the mystery of lawlessness of the Falling Away; from the HIDEOUT FOR BAD HABITS to the recognitions of follies; and from the "Den of Thieves" back to the Houses of Prayer and righteousness. [For more on "Den of Thieves", see the page by that name in www.biblecombibleman.com, and for more on "Hideout for Bad Habits" see page by that title. Select chapters and the Table of Contents of the 2008 project ebooks are now available online: REPORTS FOR BELIEVING, HIDEOUT FOR BAD HABITS, and "DEN OF THIEVES". To all those on the email list of SunGrist_Bible, a free HERITAGE copy of these complete ebooks will be emailed as they come out of editing.]

"Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore He has brought all this calamity on them.' (II Chronicles 7:22)

Our God is a jealous God; and while He recognizes that other gods {mammon and other prides of life where a priority is given to them over the Father Himself} exist when those prides and gods like the Gospel of Prosperity take the place in any Christian life or the collective congregation of the people of God, the law of curse and blessing is that the curse will be on those people and their land for a very long time, even to several generations. And once we in the United States have entered that phase, and it looks like we have now with the continued series of calamities that it takes to make a "curse" from God, then there is no amount of rebuilding efforts, optimism, or staunch stubbornness that can get us out of it short of a reversal of the Falling Away. The burden rests on the churches and the pastors; that is, "If my people that are called by my name..." With the evolution of American thought and church thinking on Separation of Church and State, we have forgotten the priority of Render to God over Render to Caesar. God demands as a jealous God that there is proper rendering of respect for His name and His Person as Creator and Ruler of this Universe!
...serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.” (Hebrews 12:28,29)

“See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, ‘Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.’ (Haggai 2:6) Now this, “yet once more,’ indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made (mammon of men), that the things which cannot be shaken may remain {the kingdom of God and His righteousness}. “ (Hebrews 12:25-27)

Have we gotten the main point of the teaching of Jesus when He said, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s”? All these debates and rationalizations about what Americans want to do anyway, of the world and man’s mammon, or creations of man--houses, land, boats, cars, and job status and income--and the tributes on the mammon that is due to Caesar takes the focus in life even as in what we remember of this teaching of Jesus from Matthew 22:21, forgetting conveniently as we do that the priority is for a proper rendering to God.

“Fear {respect Him} Who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.” (Matthew 10:28)
The purpose of the Reports about Jesus and the teachings of Jesus as given in John 20:30,31 can be summarized as first (a) believe and secondly as (b) believing. It is necessary to have the initial faith of believe, but to that must be added as the Apostle John did in writing the purpose with the help of the Holy Spirit, the believing process. {Also see the purpose of I John in 5:13.}

“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” (John 20:30,31)

With these Reports from John and the Holy Spirit of God, you are given the opportunity to BELIEVE, “may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; but beyond that you might participate in the "believing" process which is then necessary for the abundant and eternal Christ life. In the chapters and pages of this book, you have read many of these Reports from the Apostle John about the seven miracle signs of John as well as you have been presented many Reports from other parts of the Bible to encourage you into this continuing BELIEVING process. If we were reading from the Wuest Expanded Translation of the Bible, John 20:30,31 on “believing” would be worded something like “keep in the process of believing”, even as the “Ask, Seek, and Knock” of the Bible would be translated “keep in the process of asking, keep in the process of seeking, and keep in the
process of knocking”. It is that continuing process of believing with which this short chapter is introduced.

18-1: This Continuing Process of Believing is a Matter of Prime Loyalty.

Upfront while there are many ways to express the relationship between God and man, and of salvation, and many have been used in this book from the Reports of the Bible, this last and hopefully most challenging of faith for you will be a brief consideration that this process of believing is a matter of PRIME LOYALTY for God and Christ.

While many, thousands who nominally name the name of Christ and as members of God's people, have gotten somewhat superficially past the first of faith in John 20:30,31, “that you may believe”, they are thousands, even millions of miles from the “believing” process. It would remind one of the man in the parable of the seed and sower from Jesus who received the word “with great joy”, with such much enthusiasm that many churches and evangelists would say that this man was born again and saved; however like Jesus told in the parable before the 9 months of the new birth was even up, the seed of faith planted in that man's heart was choked out by the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of sins and the other things of the Gospel of Prosperity. Also church members trying to go from simple “believe” to “believing” may stumble without developing any root, or as also part of the parable Satan can as in the case of millions snatch the seed of faith away immediately as it is planted by the Word of God.

18-2: Anything Short of Prime Loyalty Creates a “god”.

By now, it should be clear from the first of the Ten Commandments and from other Reports of the Bible that anything short of PRIME LOYALTY for God in your heart, mind, and soul creates a false god, whether it is family, country, job, home, income, boat, farm, or whatever kind of “mammon” {creations of man}. Anything, according to the teachings of Jesus and all the other reports of the Bible, that has that first place of priority in your life, before God, is a false God, because it becomes like a god in your life. Because it takes the legitimate place that the Great God the Father, LORD of the Universe, should have in your life. The book of Jeremiah tells the story of one man who cut down a tree; and with the wood he built a fire to warm himself, then with the same wood and fire cooked a meal to feed himself, and finally with the leftover wood, he whittled out a god to worship from the wood, then bowed down to worship it! So are the lives of millions of Americans today, in churches and out, where their efforts and priorities of life are such to cloth themselves and their families, warm themselves in nice houses and cars and with nice incomes;
and then with leftover time and effort--more important with leftover loyalty--nominally "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

However, you just can not go wrong if you give God PRIME LOYALTY!

18-3: Give God the Prime Loyalty.

Yes and surely, there are many ways to describe salvation, religion, and the proper relationship to God, even more in philosophy of life and life than in the Reports of the Bible; however you just can not go wrong on anything of those ways to look at it if you do indeed give God the PRIME LOYALTY in your life! For one thing, God will not let you fail even as the Bible tells us in Romans 10 that no one who puts his trust in God will be ashamed of that trust!

"And whoever believes {by the way, the "believes" here is also the continuing process just like believing} on Him will not be put to shame." (Romans 9:33b and Isaiah 8:14 and Isaiah 28:16)

"The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. He will be as a sanctuary." (Isaiah 8:13,14)

"Whoever believes will not act hastily." (Isaiah 28:16b)

Words can certainly be deemed inadequate when you try to describe even the relationship of a man and woman in marriage for over 50 years. Much more so when you try to describe a lifetime relationship between a man and His God, or the salvation that goes with that relationship. However it is hoped that along with all the Reports previously given in this book, you will consider PRIME LOYALTY as one of the best descriptions of that continuing relationship between God and a man, women, or young person.


According to the Reports of the Bible in I John, the way you distinguish between sin as a bad and condemned habit as contrasted to sin as an occasional wrong is to look closely at the language, for example in "sin" and "sinneth". Yes, the sinneth is much like the continuance process about which we have been speaking. It is a habit. Look at the contrast between the two kinds of sin as background for the two kinds of believing and loyalty. {You see the distinction best in the King James Version.}
Prime Loyalty

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.” (I John 1:8-10)

Now, contrast that with I John 3:6.

“Whosoever abideth in him sineth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.” (I John 3:6)

You see the matter of habit or process in both “abideth” and “sinneth”.

18-5: “Loyalty” as “Charity” or Love with Feet.

Even as Josiah Royce, the philosopher, saw “loyalty” as the supreme motivation, so in spite of the sematical “Tyranny of Words” where words like “love” can have so many different meanings (and you know that there are many different words for love in the Bible such as eros for sexual love, and so on), this philosopher’s concept of loyalty is very close to the word translated “charity” in I Corinthians 13. The King James Version, knowing the problem with so many words for love chose “charity” for love, which implies both a love that lasts with time and a love with feet. We can just use the word LOYALTY. And if that word is applied to our relationship to God and His righteousness, let us put PRIME in front of it to signify that we love God with all our heart, mind, and soul; and before all others and all else!

When in I John the Apostle John uses “perfect love casteth out fear”, this perfect or perfecting love also has the meaning of a continuous process; and from the one who learned how to love Christ best in person, the disciple of love, we come to see that a process of loving God and Christ cast out fear of God and of what will happen in our salvation, or for eternity, even for our present relationship with God the Father.

18-6: Prime Loyalty to Your Church or God the Father.

There is a lot of confusion today on where prime loyalty should be, to your church or to God your Father. Start with Hurricane Ike and the trouble churches are in as God’s people of today. We get several LESSONS FROM IKE {Messages from Above*}. Well Ike hit and what did we learn since it is common to say “lessons learned from...” {*Big difference from most of the lessons and advice we get is that these are based on the written and objective record of the Bible.}
Prime Loyalty

1. That acts of God or calamities as a series of a curse from God, the opposite of a blessing, show a lot more grace of God with only approximately 3 deaths from Ike as compared to 18 dead and 48 injured in the man made accident in the California train collision, and 88 in the Russian plane crash.

2. But for the grace of God in a last moment movement to the east of Ike before landfall, the surge would have killed many as predicted in the lowlands. (Recall the predicting by Judge Emmet and others of "sudden death").

3. Lakewood Leaks Faith. The Gospel of Prosperity for which Osteen and Lakewood Church are famous leaked; and since the famous teaching of this church is the False Gospel of Prosperity which says that if you have enough faith you will continually prosper, got flooded and leaky since surely the calamity of a hurricane like Ike is the opposite of prosperity. In fact, since by the grace of God, the only real causalities were property--for which God has little regard in the first place except to the extent of what is necessary for sustenance of life, this should remind Osteen, Lakewood and the 61% of Americans who have taken a curse on themselves by adopting this false Gospel of Prosperity, which according to Galatians, is not a Gospel of the same kind but a Gospel of a different kind.

4. South Park Baptist Church in Alvin, as well as other churches known to them, got extra attention with a little extra twist of Ike.

5. How did your churches get a "curse" from God: (1) as God’s people you have the responsibility for prayer and righteousness to God; (2) according to Galatians, there is a curse on any church that preaches any other Gospel, like the Gospel of Prosperity; (3) there is a curse according to the last chapter of Revelation on any church that by way of special revelations, for which the charismatics are famous, add anything to the Bible; (4) you can see your guilt when you see according to Corinthians that attitude that "either the Bible came to you only, or the Bible came out of" your church; (5) you have put other gods, materialistic or even "pride of life" with "lust of the eyes and lust of the flesh" in the place of PRIME LOYALTY that God desires, deserves, and demands.
| Prime Loyalty |  
|--------------|---
| 287 Bible Reports for Believing |
Some of the confusion can be eliminated between “Fear” and “Faith” as used in the Bible, quite often in churches and among the people, if you will carefully ask and get the answer to the simple question, “Who is Jesus or one of the Apostles speaking to and writing to when they make those conclusive statements on “fear” and “faith”. Immediately at the extreme, and therefore as the best examples, we would think of the statement by Jesus to “fear Him who can destroy both body and soul in hell” (Matthew 10:28) and the statement by the Apostle John in I John that “perfect love casts out fear”. Who is Jesus talking to when He inspires “fear”? And who is the Apostle John talking to when he throws up the challenge to a perfect love, whatever that is, that can eliminate all fear? (Is this sort of like “absolute power corrupts absolutely”, and what is in between the extremes, on which we will do some Bible exegesis with Bible answers that are much more than the superficial, soft, sentimental, and subverted concepts of Bible, Christianity, and salvation we see so prevalent in this time of Falling Away; when indeed “they will not endure sound doctrine”, and finally with itching ears Bible teachers and the fulfillment of their own “wants” and desires with a subsequent heaping up of teachers and pastors that will pat them on the back, finally turn away from total truth and into fables. Now, you know already just like the last many chapters of this book that you are being lead into the second stage of the two stage process of salvation, from the believe to the believing; just like the Apostle John does in going from the Gospel of John to I John, and like the rest of the Bible tries to lead you when you have ears to hear and eyes to see.
However, briefly before we answer the question “Who is He talking to”, Jesus and John, we must take care of a reminder introduced in the introductory chapter, and with a little elaboration on REPORTS. It has never, ever been the goal to deceive you that all the “Reports” to be covered came from the Gospel of John, especially in only the seven miracle signs of John; and early in this book you were introduced both to the use of reports in Paul’s great treatise on salvation in Romans 10 as well as Jesus quote of the same verse from Isaiah in John 12:38. Now, we reinforce and elaborate before answering the “Who is Jesus and John talking to” question. {It is as important as a personal salvation that lasts with time; yes, with the eternity of time!}

19-1: Reports To Believe and For Believing.

REPORTS, like any book especially on Bible, that is well developed, has gone through 3 stages of development: first as Reports for Unbelievers, then as Reports for Believing, and finally as the realization was made that the believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah and Son of God was complete with approximately the first 8 chapters and still the Reports were going on and on, until it was hard to stop adding chapters, with the final comprehension that “believe” and “believing” are a two stage process. Our problem today, especially, in the Falling Away, is not to get people the proper Bible Reports to believe in this Jesus—even “the devils believe in God and tremble” writes Pastor James—but to get church members and others beyond the first stage of “believe” to the second stage of “believing”. And to be honest while the first 8 chapters centered primarily around the seven miracle signs of John are necessary foundation, most of the book is to promote the kind of continuous “believing” that engenders real salvation, an abundant life here and an everlasting life that begins here and continues on the New Earth.

And this is also true in the Gospel of John itself, especially as supplemented by the epistle of I John where John, and the Holy Spirit through John, found it necessary to write a little but very definitive “Commentary on Believing”: many of the terse statements of which you have puzzled over for years if you are at all serious about study of the Bible as the Word of God. This two stage saga is also highlighted by the obvious fact that the Apostle John seems to end, like Morris points out in the New International Commentary on the Gospel of John, with the statement of purpose of the Gospel Report in John 20:30,31; and then after this seemingly conclusion, let us say it could be the conclusion of the first stage part, to believe, if you could really completely sever one from the other, which you can not, comes John chapter 21 with more resurrection appearances of Jesus to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias where “Jesus
showed Himself” (this was the third time Jesus showed Himself to the Apostles as John notes in John 21:14 after “He was raised from the dead”) (John 21:1) “again to the disciples”, where Jesus leads Peter all the way from belief to believing with the challenge to feed the sheep in proportion to the real love (John 21:17) (also a three time question about love with a three time demand to feed the sheep—three appearances, three questions, and three demands for ministry that “at the mouth of two or more witnesses, every word might be established”—the famous Top Topic #3 of the Bible about which you have heard, the “If Two Agree”, or more, “The Composite Witness of the Bible”; and then the terminal focus of Peter and Jesus on the Apostle John with Jesus statement that if John “remains until He comes again” Peter what business is that to you, and John’s effort in those few verses of the last of John 21 to correct the false rumor that John would live until Christ came again. (John says that is not what Jesus said, and that the rumor was false, John 21:23). Finally in the chapter conclusion of John 21:24 and 25: (a) John notes personally that he is that Apostle John whom Jesus loved in a special way, the same John who wrote all these chapters of the Gospel of John, and known among the Apostles and the first Christians as the Apostle of a True Testimony—and by the way that theme of “the fellowship of the Apostles” as a way to separate those in fellowship and out of fellowship, then and today, John will continue in I John as he knows that he must develop more the second stage of believe and believing; and (b) a brief flashback in John 21:25, the last verse of the Gospel, with the many “other things” Jesus did; see here how it goes beyond just “signs”, even though I hope you will come to know the signs of John as miracles and more, much more, with the impossibility of a library big enough to contain all the books that would elaborate on all the things Jesus “did”, “one by one”.

19-2: The word "Reports" in the Bible.

The Bible has many Hebrew, in the OT, and Greek, in the NT, words translated as REPORTS.

1. The word for REPORT, “akoe”, which has been the primary theme of this book on REPORTS TO BELIEVE AND FOR BELIEVING”, based on both John 12:38 and Romans 10:16, another “Composite Witness of the Bible”; and a point at which two apostles—John and Paul—agree and both agree with the Prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 53:1, is literally translated “A HEARING”. “A Hearing” is also translated REPORT in Matthew 4:24, Matthew 14:1, and Mark 1:28 of the Revised Version (RV). Of course you recognize it as a Noun in our 3 primary book usages: there are 3 other noun usages of Greek words translated report—“euphemia” for “a good report or good reputation” in II Corinthians 6:8, “dusphemia” for “evil speak-
2. Also according to VINE’S, from Philippians 4:8 and the Greek word “euphemos” we are lead all the way to a “good report” after “uttering words or sounds of good omen” followed by “avoiding ill-omened words” and therefore getting to “fair sounding”. {This process leads to a Good Report.}

3. There are five Greek words translated Report in the New Testament: (1) "martureo" for “to be a witness, bear witness, testify” in Acts 6:3, Acts 10:22, Acts 16:2, Acts 22:12, I Timothy 5:10, Hebrews 11:2,39, and III John 12; (2) “apangello” translated “to report, to give a message, announce, declare, and shew” in Acts 4:23, Acts 16:36, I Corinthians 14:25, and I Thessalonians 1:9; (3) “Anangello” translated “to bring back word, to announce, declare, are reported, and have been announced” in I Peter 1:12; (4) “akouo” translated “to hear, it is heard, there is heard or “it is reported” in I Corinthians 5:1; and (5) “blasphemeo” as “to speak slanderously, impiously, profanely, to endure, a saying, as "we be slanderously reported" in Romans 3:8.

4. Oh yes, from the Hebrew of Isaiah 53:1, so important as the quote of Jesus in John 12:38 and Paul in Romans 10:16 uses the Hebrew word "shemuah" translated literally besides with REPORT as “WHAT IS HEARD”.

**NOTE:** Please think both of all that you heard of Jesus of Nazareth as both the Messiah, Hebrew for the Greek word of Christ, and as the Son of God, and to believe that; and to think of how you have read in these Reports and will read in conclusion in this chapter of REPORTS for the second stage of believe and believing, that of believing all the way to full salvation and the one baptism. This will become, under responsibility to God, part of all for you of “WHAT IS HEARD”!

**19-3: Who Is He (he) Talking To?**

What you need to know right now is that those without “believe” and “believing” should, without a false sense of security, be and remain at an extreme of fear, fearing Him {God the Father and Creator} that can destroy both body and soul in hell—the ultimate self destruction—while those who have found the extreme faith of believing by prime love and loyalty to God, independent of all other gods, have found the extreme of faith with perfected no fear.
Fear and Faith

1. Who is Jesus Talking to When He says “Fear Him that can destroy both body and soul in hell”?

   ANSWER: To the 12 Apostles as He instructed them and sent them out to preach the message of the kingdom, not to the Gentiles but to the lost sheep of Israel, warning them that there would be persecution from the leaders just as they persecuted Jesus Himself; and in this context to prepare them against fear of these religious leaders, He compared the power and control ability of God to so much greater than they. These leaders could harm and kill the body, but only God can destroy both body and soul in hell; and that would actually be the just fate of those who persecuted God’s own Son and those who were His ambassadors.

2. Who is the Apostle John writing to when he says in I John that “perfect love casteth out fear”?

   ANSWER: To all those in the fellowship of the Apostles, those Christians left in the assemblies, after all those not of the fellowship of the Apostles had left. Be careful today, as to which group after the division is right and which is wrong, using the criterions of I John to test the spirits, or attitudes, and the doctrines determined by how consistent or inconsistent they are with the Bible of the Apostles and Prophets. And don’t confuse that with much of the Bible, and interpretations, you will hear as churches and God’s people increasingly fall into the Falling Away, the time when there will be a lack of tolerance and endurance for sound doctrine (II Timothy 4:3,4). Yes, every denomination and every group and every true or false prophet and evangelist will try to identify with the Bible, with the Apostles as with all the correct answers from God. Is it any surprise that John writes “test the spirits, as to who is of God”; and this goes to attitudes, like for example fighting, and doctrines.

19-4: Extremes of Fear and Faith.

At one extreme of the fear and faith correlation is (1) A False Sense of Security which we saw as 3 men tried to ride out Hurricane Ike in Galveston on the third floor of a pier; also in the false confidence and trust of American people in the big businesses like Lehman, Morgan Stanley, AIG, and so on and on, even in the misplaced and abused trust in the Federal government and FEMA by the people of New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina, likewise a false sense of security in the message of the Gospel of Prosperity of Lakewood which the people of Houston have recently come to see as leaky; and then the other extreme (2) where...
Fear and Faith

lives are depressed by an extreme phobia of fear from all the uncertainties of life and living, even more so of eternity. There is a balance between these two extremes as recommended by the Bible which we will pursue briefly in this section.


The Friday night and Saturday morning September 12 and 13 that Hurricane Ike rolled ashore at Galveston, 3 men decided to weather the storm in a three story structure built on a pier. As the surge with winds and waves came ashore, at first they watched on TV from the first floor store and later retired to the third story apartment above it. They were shocked and even afraid of the large movements of the structure, three feet to the side and three feet back and forth and sometimes with the wave walls three feet up and down. When the power went out in the third floor apartment, they went down to reset the circuit breakers; but found that the first floor was gone, swept away in the Gulf. During that night they attempted to call 911 for rescue, however according to the plan for Galveston and Houston, search and rescue did not start until far after daylight. The rescue chopper did one by one pluck them out of the crumbling pier structure in a basket, and deposit them on a safe location ashore. When asked why they did it, the response was that they had done it before and it worked. Of course, I am sure, the beer drinking helped their false sense of security during the night until they discovered the disappearance of the store and first story below them.

So it is in thousands of large and small churches, many beautiful of the most modern architecture and some showing signs of rapid growth as they were over the years thrown together, where millions of Americans have found solace and security amid any storms of life. Whether it is the solidity of the structure, or the size of the crowd, or even the comforting nature of the messages and fellowship, they have sought and found security in these church buildings. Like the three men on the third story of the Galveston pier, from their limited without tragedy and calamity experience, they have found security. Like God’s people of Jeremiah, they look around each Sabbath day to see and find security in their surroundings as the world crumbles about them and underneath them. What do you see as the drive past these thousands of churches each Sunday, noting the large parking lots of cars and the well dressed men, women, and children except like when you continue to go to ball games every Saturday or watch on TV, but that this is going to last forever. “We are safe, comfortable, and secure”, you think.
Fear and Faith

Goodness with this series of calamities, with the overwhelming possibility of a Curse from God like from God on God's People in the Bible, how many more examples of a False Sense of Security do we need: (1) these people on the pier at Galveston during Ike, and in the wiped out Island on Bolivar and the rest of the Gulf coast and Houston; (2) the misplaced confidence in big business which for years has been engendered by their ads, like for AIG and others; and (3) the failures of the government recently to do their job to protect the American people just like the failures we saw after Hurricane Katrina, even the failure of protection of the twin towers; and (4) the failure of the basic faith tenets of the Gospel of Prosperity believed by 61% of the American people, the subject of best selling religious books and that attracts thousands to Lakewood and other churches.

2. "We Are Safe." {A False Faith}

What do you think God's people of Jeremiah were really saying in the Temple of God when they shouted:

"We are Safe.

We are Safe."

But that they found security and comfort in the House of God.

What do you think they were saying when during services they shouted:

"The temple of God,

The temple of God are these."

But that the fact that this House of God was the Temple of God assured them security and comfort.

And so it is with God's people in the churches of America today, they feel secure and comfortable in a House of God, but for many reasons made clear in Jeremiah and by Jesus, as well as the Bible on the Falling Away, this is a sense of false security.

God's people in the many churches of America today are saying: (1) We are saved because we are a member of our church, or a member of THE church, or even
because of the size of our church, and that many members could not be wrong; (2) we have security because we are in a House of God, a House of God that is in the United States blessed by God (and at one time that was true with THE BLESSING of God, not a Curse of God, was upon this country); and (3) since this is a House of God, we all name the name of Christ and of God, our prayers are being heeded and have power with both God and man. {Please do not forget that when the House of God of Jeremiah, the Temple of God, became a “Den of Thieves” and “A Hideout for Bad Habits”, God ceased to listen, much less answer, their prayers, and went so far as to tell the Prophet Jeremiah not to pray for that House, those people, the people of God. All we need to know to see if our houses of God in America are in the same position is to determine if the same conditions of a lack of loyalty, lack of righteousness, and lack of love of God before idols and other gods, are being met. Surely by now, and from the Bible studies of this book with a comparison with the conditions of our churches today in America, you know how comparable or similar our houses of God are to that of Jeremiah and of the Temple during the time of Jesus!

2. How Much Fear can Faith Eliminate?

If we had that “perfect love” that John writes about, we would also have a perfect lack of fear; most of us will never find that high degree of love that Jesus and John had for each other, even notable among the 12 Apostles; and we will light on a love and fear somewhere between the two extremes, hopefully if we are always in the process of believing that is also a process of improving with an increase in love and a decrease in fear. It is true according to the Bible, if you can generate enough perfect love for God and Christ, then you can eliminate all fear! Likely this extreme will not happen for you, but you can certainly work on improving it by: (2) feeding other sheep of God and Christ as Jesus encouraged Peter when He also asked three times, “do you love men”; and (b) by eliminating all other gods in your life, perhaps also imperfectly, that nudge out primary loyalty to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

19-5: Some Main Tenets of John’s Commentary on “Believing” in I John.

While we are looking at John’s Commentary on “Believing” in I John, we can also resolve, which John and the Holy Spirit through John does for us in I John...we can resolve the issues between “Fear and Faith”.

1. Often in I John we see the difference between the tense of “ing” and simple present like in believe and believing, like in “sin” and “sinning”.
As has been pointed out elsewhere in this REPORTS book, there is a difference in sin, which some John states say falsely that they do not have; and "sinneth", to ride on the KJV over the NJKV, which is a habit of sinning. We can say the same thing about “believing”; it is a habit of belief. It is belief that continues with time. It is the second stage of believe and believing that is necessary for salvation. It is the two stage process at which we resolve the differences between Falling Away and the famous Baptist Belief of the Security of the Believer. (We might want to change that major doctrine of SB after this Bible study to “The Security of the Believer and the Believing”, while the first may not have that security according to the consistent teachings of the Bible in spite of what many churches today “want” to believe, it is the second that leads to real permanent and attainable in eternity salvation!

2. The Fellowship of the Apostles.

You can not miss who the Apostle John was writing to, for often do you hear “my children” and “little children” in I John. Even as an obvious relationship had been severed among those who once assembled together as God’s people and as one fellowship, the “departed” that John writes of in I John 2:19, so an obvious relationship of fellowship had been formed between the people to whom John was writing, those who remained in the fellowship of the apostles after the big split in fellowship. And so it is today with all the splits in fellowships and divisions, the way you decide is not by listening to the advocates of their own denominations and man-made organizations, but to carefully look to the extent of testing “the spirits” at how their fellowship of doctrines and beliefs and attitudes fall in line with the original fellowship of the Apostles. I hope you see that this is the gist of the titles of the Bible commentaries LEARN CHRIST FROM THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS. Just like in the time of Paul, it is obvious that Christ has not been learned well enough to separate Gentile Christians from other Gentiles, Christians from the world, and that Christ must be learned and re-learned and appropriated in the “doctrine of Christ” based on the fellowship and Bible teachings and Bible of the Apostles and Prophets.

Indeed Jude was after that when he wrote in defense of the “faith once for all delivered to the saints”; for what that “faith”, you might call it a doctrinal statement of faith and practice based on the NT and the OT, was that same fellowship of the saints. Paul referred to it often not only when he wrote of the need for “sound doctrine”, alias a set of doctrines based on the teachings and fellowship of the saints and Apostles, but also “to hold on to a sound pattern of words”.

Bible Reports For Believing

296
3. Whoever is fully born of God with the 9 month period of the new birth does not continue in the habit and habits of sin, and is also the person that has passed into the second stage of the two stage process, that of “believing”.

   a. When the Apostle John, in promoting and sustaining the fellowship of the Apostles and of Christ, writes “whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God”, that is a little “s” on the end of believe that can be missed; but this “believes”, obviously a continuing process of faith and believing, is also the equivalent of “believing”. {You don’t need to check English syntax and rules of grammar to see this, or the Greek, as the meaning is really more determined by the message of the book and books, especially the total content of salvation and “baptism” in the Bible.}

   b. Why do you think Jesus compared the new birth to the 9-month physical birth process? Because every one knows about it, some women better than others; and while maybe it can be 8 months, 10 or 11 months, or something more or less it takes a period of time to have real and actual birth, physical or spiritual. Most in their eagerness for instant salvation and instant new birth, primarily to add instantly numbers to their church and success and to rejoice superficially, have made a rush to an instantaneous new birth which has also superficially looked at salvation, “believing”, and the famous “one baptism” of Paul in Ephesians and Romans, which is really the completed salvation process in life. {There is something more and different with the new resurrection body at the Second Coming of Christ, generally called full Sanctification--perfectly like Christ--and Glorification, like His body.}

19-6: The One Baptism, alias the One Salvation, with “Believing”.

While we can not blame the Assemblies of God and other Pentecostals and Charismatics for the “they will not endure sound doctrine” on the One Baptism, since early in New Testament times such faith and practice had to be rectified, like in I Corinthians 14 bad practices on speaking in tongues because of a falsely called “second baptism” of the Spirit, with the movement of Oral Roberts and many others where people have sought unknown tongues {ignoring that in all historical, and spiritual the tongues were real and actual languages, not the superficial and artificial babbling that you hear today like the Bible reports like on the first day of Pentecost after the Ascension of Christ}. You know and I know, as we have seen and witnessed many times how these so-called charismatics get all emotional on Sunday and in other services then quickly forget it all. It is profession without possession--“a form of religion without the power”; and show without a walking of the walk.
Fear and Faith

1. As in the Great Commission as given from Jesus, the “believes” or “believing”, both words indicating a continuing process, the first part of “He who believes and is baptized” (Mark 16:16), in other words the “believes” is what we do for salvation and the “baptized”, contrary to many popular beliefs and religious and denominational practices is what God does, both leading to the “will be saved” of the rest of the verse, along with “but he who does not believe will be condemned” of Mark 16b. The tendency, of course, is to think of the baptized as either water baptism, some like Baptist believing that it is a matter of obedience in following the example of Christ since Christ said so, and not at all required for salvation, and others like the Church of Christ believing that it completes salvation. This later approach completely ignores the One Baptism of Ephesians which correlates directly with One Salvation, and the extensive in Romans chapter on Baptism which is also obviously the One Salvation.

While not repeating the full argument of volume 3 of the LEARN CHRIST commentaries, “Believe and Be Baptized” which elaborates on this God’s part in the “believes” and God’s part in salvation in the “be baptized”, where you will notice the believer is the recipient of what is done for salvation more than a participant like in water baptism or the so-called “baptism of the Spirit”, or immersion of the Spirit that charismatics claim, not to be repeated here for one reason since that volume of LEARN CHRIST under the theme of “Believe and Be Baptized” covers the 14 letters or epistles of the Apostle Paul.

2. Perhaps you have noticed, without reading the life and letters of Paul from “Believe and Be Baptized”, that Ephesians is a summary of the first ten epistles of Paul; and how that Paul in the Seven Ones of Ephesians 4:4-6 summarizes both Ephesians and those first ten books, and with that summary of summary of what you might call either the major doctrines of the Bible or the top topics or subjects of the Bible—such as seen in the list of One Body, the church of the first-born written in heaven, the One Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the One Hope of your One Calling, obviously the call to be a Christian and the Hope of salvation, One Lord Jesus Christ, One Baptism, and One God the Father—without first what would seem to be no One Salvation to summarize all the Bible, especially Romans and Galatians, on justification, adoption, regeneration, the atonement, and sanctification; and the reason is that with One Baptism, if you look more closely at the One Baptism of the Bible is the same as the One Salvation, or at least equivalents. You just know that the Apostle Paul with his lawyer-like capability and thoroughness after training with Jesus in Arabia and the seven years at Tarsus to read back through the Law and Prophets (the OT) would not leave out of the
The list of what is most important in the Bible is the One Salvation. That is the One Baptism.

3. You can verify that as you look at the thorough discussion of baptism in Romans 6. The One Baptism of Believe and Be Baptized, the One Baptism of the major ONEs of the Bible of Ephesians 4:4,5 is the One Salvation.

(1). The “baptized into Christ Jesus” of Romans 6:3, according to that verse itself is a matter of being “baptized unto His death”, something that water or a speaking with tongues can not do. Of course, water baptism by immersion, not speaking in a tongue does represent the salvation experience of death and the death of Christ for the atonement of the sins of the world.

(2). The “buried with Christ through baptism unto death” of Romans 6:4 is a burial of salvation, not of water or tongues.

(3). It is through “baptism unto death” or through the One Baptism of the One Salvation--with many Scriptures and many Scriptural words to explain like justification, the atonement, and regeneration and the atonement--that “we are buried with Christ” (Romans 6:5), water not able to do that, only something done for us and on us by God Himself, even as works is works and grace is grace and such a work as water baptism, works of men, can not do for us as “salvation is by grace alone” (Ephesians 2:8,9), else works would not be works and grace would not be grace.

(4). Surely you do not think that “just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in a newness of life” both or either happening by water baptism or by the speaking in tongues; but that the newness of life or regeneration and sanctification, a longer former for “One Baptism” and/or “believing” comes from what God and Christ have both done for us, in us, and with us! (Romans 6:4) Once again water baptism by immersion represents this raised from the dead, of Christ and us, and it preaches a couple of sermons about what Jesus did in the atonement and what happens with the One Baptism or One Salvation in our lives.

(5). Surely you do not think that salvation is so simple, that water or tongues could “united us together in the likeness of His death” (Romans 6:5), the likeness of Christ’s death being more like the salvation experiences of repentance and faith than of water or tongues; and more so the resurrection, which even as in John chapter 21 with almost a second stage of the Gospel of
Christ in John with continued resurrection appearances of Jesus to the disciples, after the purpose conclusions on “believe” of John 20:30,31, with the one baptism of the one salvation, not water or tongues, brings us into a relationship like Christ’s own resurrection (Romans 6:5b). You really can summarize the one baptism of this one salvation, what God and Christ did, and what God does on and in us with Galatians 2:20, like in many Scriptures and the 10 epistles, and more, that Paul summarized in Ephesians and the One Baptism.

“I have been crucified with Christ {the repentance and faith of believe and believing with the One Baptism as God accepts the sacrifice of Christ as sufficient for our sins, justification}; it is no longer I who live {the death of the One Baptism, death to a life of sin and slavery to Satan}, but Christ lives in me {the regeneration and sanctification of the One Baptism and of Believing}; and the life which I now live in the flesh {sanctification and believing of the One Baptism} I live by faith in the Son of God {the initial saving faith of the One Baptism with the continuing grace and faith of the One Baptism}, who loved me and gave Himself for me {the blood and the atonement of the One Baptism}. “ (Galatians 2:20)
Lastly and in these closing chapters of REPORTS, it would be negligent for a preacher of the Bible not to mention the severe consequences of a turning away from the truth in this life as well as the future consequences. Most at some point have heard the extreme consequences for the future life, but not for this present life which are also severe. Even as it takes severe effort on the part of God's people or unbelievers to “turn away from the truth” (II Timothy 4:4), so these turners become victims of severe consequences during their life on earth. It is not easy for unbelievers or for the “tares” in the church without the proper wedding garments, to resist the incessant woos of the Holy Spirit as He does the job that the Father and Christ sent Him to planet earth accomplish, right up until the time of the Falling Away and the little while as Satan is released from bondage, and for over two thousand years since the first day of Pentecost after the Ascension, He has across the world, day and night, and persistently convicted the whole “world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8). But you know, whether you are a stumbling and falling away brother who Paul has told in Hebrews 3:12 to “beware brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God”--and surely we know since that is the very definition of the Great Apostasy where most Christians and church members fall away or as Jesus said “because sin will abound the love of many will wax cold”; and then you perhaps know better if you have persisted as an unbeliever in spite of much exposure to Bible, and as you have listened to that small inner voice of the Spirit as He does convict you of sin, of righteousness,

Bible Reports For Believing
and of judgment, “of sin because you do not believe, or righteousness because instead of Christ being seen the Holy Spirit is felt, and of judgement because even the highest power on this earth, Satan, is judged by God at the end of this age.

NOTE: Hopefully you are not among those church members who practice the self-delusion of a rapture sort of like a second second coming, seven years of Falling Away and final tribulation from which your are absent from this earth and so on and on with these extra-biblical words and concepts like millineum. If you are please read “Prep for ‘the End” of DEN OF THIEVES and also “Sound Doctrines of the Second Coming” which you can do at the website of SunGrist_Bible, www.biblecombibleman.com.

20-1: Consider the Mountain to Climb in Order to Turn Away From Truth.

First we will consider church members as to how difficult it must be for them to cultivate and develop that “evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God” that Paul warned about in Hebrews--for one obvious thing they have more truth of God, Christ, and Jesus to turn away from than the unbeliever; but secondly we will consider the challenge to an unbeliever to remain in unbelief.

1. The Challenge to church members and churches to turn away from truth.

Another reason that Christians who are church members should be considered first is that the actual phrase of the Bible, “turn away from the truth” and of II Timothy 4:3,4, is written to church members. It is much harder for us Christians of over 50 years to imagine that a whole church can actual climb this mountain so high of “departing from the living God” (Hebrews 3:12) so as to actually turn away from truth. It is far easier to adjust our mental tents to the prospect of the first three stages of development of the Falling Away, most generally called and recognized as the Great Apostasy, where church members: (1) become intolerant of sound doctrine, “they will not endure sound doctrine”; (2) habitually practice lives and church membership driven more by their “own personal desires and wants” than Christ and the Spirit; and (3) heap up this vast number of Bible preachers and teachers in pulpits, pastorates, and on TV and in conferences, as well as in popular books of the “itching ears types. You know, that we can imagine; because for one thing we are seeing it now, on a large scale and in all churches and denominations. We can also because of what is on the American religious scene right now, imagine the fifth and final stage of the Falling Away easier than the fourth; that, of course, is where church members “are turned into fables”, for we know some of the fables that both
Strong Delusion

hath been bought by the Mormons and the Roman Catholics, and the more current fables of the Gospel of Prosperity and Health, the rebellion against Bible teachings on marriage and divorce without any repentance to God, the massive number of special revelations that bring two curses of the Bible on the special revelators, and so on and on. However, our problem comes to consider what in the world will it take to move the majority of the whole church (and this is in the sense of the whole church here on earth which is not the same, by far, as the church of the firstborn written in heaven) away from “the faith once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3) and objectively recorded in the Bible as the Word of God. Every thing the church does, and stands for, is personified in that Christian Faith and that Book. How did we get away from it?

2. The Challenge of the unbeliever to remain in unbelief.

Often and mistakenly we think of unbelief as a negative matter of such an absence of faith or belief; but not so, it takes a lot of positive effort on the part of unbelievers, especially as they ignore or oppose the wooings of the Holy Spirit, in order for them to remain in unbelief. It goes on relentlessly for years and years; that is, until they finally after over 40 years pass the point of no return (pardon the aeronautical term which is that you can no longer turn back on your journey or flight) called the “unpardonable sin”.

3. In reality, based on the Bible, the unpardonable sin for unbelievers and church members is the same: it was taught by Jesus that all blasphemy would be permitted, like that the religious leaders of His day, committed as they denied Him, except against the Holy Spirit. You can say what you want to in the presence of preachers, Christians, his friends, and even in a church; but what down deep in your heart and for about 40 years you say to the Holy Spirit is what God will ultimately hold you accountable for as far as your eternal salvation.

4. And let it be emphasized again, as at the start of this chapter/message, that pass this point of no return of the unpardonable sin of unbelief, can mean almost as much destructiveness in your life, according to Romans 1, as the eternal lose of your soul! What happens is described in Romans 1:18-32, almost too horrible to list; and while there was a time when it could not be read publicly in churches, now compared to what is actually happening in churches and American society, it is mild!

20-2: What Happens to the Unbeliever or Departee in this Lifetime on Earth?
1. The displeasure of God has always and persistently been “revealed from heaven” against: (a) all ungodliness, (b) all unrighteousness of men, and (c) against all who “suppress truth in unrighteousness”. (Romans 1:18)

2. What may be known of the truth of God, God has and is manifesting to them, “for God {Himself} has shown it to them” through: (a) the designs and comforts of Creation which show clearly some of His attributes {even right here, “they are without excuse” (Romans 1:20); and (b) the high ideas, virtues, and characters held up and previously taught in American education and society; and (c) the soul or spirit that God has Created in every man with a mind, heart, and conscience...

“for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law; these, although not have the law, are a law to themselves, who show the works of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them...” (Romans 2:14,15)

However we must get back to Romans 1 and what happens with continued rebellion against God.

3. Even as they knew and have known some things about God, and since “they did not glorify Him as God” (Romans 1:21), nor did they express or continue to express gratitude to God, three things happened to them during their lifetime on this earth: (a) their mentality was adversely affected as they “became futile in their thoughts”; (b) their emotions were drastically upset as “their foolish hearts were darkened”; and (c) their reputations and characters were ruined in the sight of their peers as “professing themselves to be wise, they became fools”. {While the temptation is to stop here to elaborate on how the Bible in the OT states that “the fool has said in his heart there is no god” and in the NT how God takes “the wise in their own craftiness”, even to dwell more on Romans 1 and 2, but instead we will complete this broad outline now in order to put before you more pressing matters, then in a later section of this chapter, come back to some part of Romans 1 and 2.}

What happens with continued unbelief and “departing from the living God“?

4. As unbelievers, or lack of believers, become more and more foolish in mind, heart, and imagination, (a) they make images to take the place of the God of Truth and the Truth of God, images like men, birds, animals, and even
“creeping things” (Romans 1:23); (b) God gives them up to uncleanness and the lusts of their own hearts so that they dishonor their bodies between themselves, men with men and women with women; and (c) God gives them over to a “debased mind” to swing through the whole gauntlet of unrighteousness, from sexual immorality to deceit and unbelief (actually there is a list of 23 bad habits which goes even beyond the list of 19 bad habits among church members of II Timothy 3:1-9).

NOTE: We will also need to come back to this chapter of Romans on what God does in this life to the unbeliever and departee. You see it in 1:26 with the “God gave them up to vile passions”; you see it in the 1:28 of “God gave them over to a debased mind”; and above that in 1:24 where “God also gave them up to uncleanness”; just like you will find as we look next at the “Strong Delusion” of II Thessalonians where “God sends strong delusion” because (1) “they did not receive the love of the truth” (II Thessalonians 2:10, and (2) so much love of the truth rejected to prohibit “that they might be saved”.

20-3: What God does in This Lifetime to Those Who Turn Away from Truth!

Even as perhaps you noticed from the reading in II Timothy 4:3,4 of the five stages of the Falling Away development--intolerance toward sound doctrine, driven by wants and personal desires, the vast heaping up of Bible teachers with “itching ears”, the “turning away from truth”, and the “are turned into fables”, is that the average church member of the Falling Away turns himself away from truth, God turns him into fables, just like in some of the details of the Falling Away as given in II Thessalonians, as unbelievers and departees do not receive a wholesale love of the truth so they can be saved, then “God will send them strong delusion” (II Thessalonians 2:10 and 11). You just noted also what God did to the minds, hearts, imaginations, and etc of those who caught themselves in the downward spiral of a godless life as “they would not retain God in their thinking” (Romans 1:28). Can you imagine that? All these bad things came into the character and personalities of unbelievers simple because they would not stop to think about God; yet, He is our Creator and Sustainer, our Judge, and “we are the sheep of His pasture”, He is the potter and we are the clay; and certainly He is entitled--God be LORD forever and glorified, as He will be, world without end, Amen, Amen, and Amen!

While we still must answer more adequately how the church of churches can actually “turn away from the truth” as it is in God, Christ, and the Bible, having only introduced the subject and having briefly looked at some of the bad things
Strong Delusion

that happen in the life that does turn away from truth, we will continue to con-
sider all these Scriptures on what God Himself does to those who turn away
truth.

1. When the church and church members turn away from truth, according to
II Timothy 4:3,4, they “will be turned aside to fables”. It might at first seem
to be the automatic result of a turning away from truth, and that is possible,
but in light of how we must consider the similarity of the content of II Timo-
thy 4:3,4 with that of II Thessalonians on “strong delusion”, then we must put
the weight of the interpretation of Scriptures also with God turns them into
fables even as He in II Thessalonians 3:11 “sends them strong delusion”. Of
course we know from the context of II Thessalonians that this strong delusion
happens after: (1) the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from earth; (2) this withdrawal
of the Spirit releases Satan for “a little while” (Revelation 20:3) from the
bondage and restrictions that he has been in since the Spirit came to earth on
the first day of Pentecost since the Ascension; (3) after the church of Chris-
tians are well into the Falling Away; and (4) after the son of perdition becomes
apparent and visual to the church.

It is easy to see how the Mormons with their four non-Christian Bibles were
influenced by a fallen angel and Satan to turn into the fables of those Bibles in
response to the curse on (1) all that add to or take away from the book of Rev-
elation and the Bible, plus the curse on (2) those who preach another Gospel,
say like their “Reformed Gospel” of good works for salvation; and further to
see the Roman Catholics long ago and about mid-history (“the latter times of I
Timothy 4:1), allowed themselves to so turn away from truth of Scripture and
Christ as they became subject to “seducing spirits and doctrines of devils”, not
only putting man’s authority above the Word of God, and taking forgiveness of
sins and granting of salvation away from God and Christ in favor of their own
priests, but also those fables of I Timothy mentioned as “forbidding to marry,
and commanding to abstain from meats that are good for the body”. However,
how can the denominations and preachers and teachers and church members
that we have known so long and grown up with turn away from truth to the
extent that they turn into fables?

2. The obvious answer has to be, and based on Scripture, that when they actu-
ally do it, and like the religious leaders of the Jews during the life of Christ,
that when they come to the point of doing it, they do not even know that it is
happening to them. {Of course, as is the point of this emphasis, God does it,
that is the turning into fables, when it sees in any life no longer a hope for the
3. We dare not progress too far on without a brief mention of "THE LIE" of II Thessalonians 2:11--"And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie"--with its similarity to "THE LIE" of Romans 1:25--"who exchanged the truth of God for the lie".

(1). You can easily see in Romans 1:25 that "the lie" is the very personification of falsehood, half-truths, and lies since the context is that the lie is substituted for "the truth of God".

"who exchanged the truth of God (you see how these unbelievers and deportees made an exchange like they would money, changing from truth to lies) for the lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." (Romans 1:25)

NOTE: How easy it is for church members to adopt such bad habits as to worship and serve human creatures more than God, even as it is easy to practice the other bad habits of II Timothy 3:1-8 such as "lovers of self", "lovers of money", and "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God"; and are you starting to see a pattern in God's Word for "the love of the truth" which also can easily be replaced by love of these other persons and things, even as truth can be replaced with THE LIE.

(2). In the context of "THE LIE" of II Thessalonians 2:10-12, you can also identify the lie as the opposite of "the love of the truth" about salvation through faith and through Christ; and with the specifics of the lie identified in the same context as: (a) unrighteous deception; (b) those who perish as far as eternal life by believing; (c) those who refuse the love of truth; (d) those who believe what will not save, and even here you see what effort and positive exertions it takes to refuse belief; (e) they believe the lie so that it has doctrines, even if perhaps sometimes those doctrines of devils that God through Paul wrote about in I Timothy. (f) the nature of the lie and the beliefs of the lie, alias falsehood, is such as to bring condemnation now and eternally on the unbeliever (John 3:17 where the lack of belief makes them "condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of Christ"); (g) "they do not believe the truth"; and (h) "they have pleasure in unrighteousness".
**NOTE:** Do you find habitual pleasure in “unrighteousness”?

20-4: *Love of Truth in the Abstract Can Wipe Out Real Truth in the Concrete.*

Just imagine, you that have always loved truth in science and education and learning; and to think that the commitment of your life can be such that you actually “turn away from truth” and are turned into fables. This betrays all that you have ever believed and practiced on truth, honesty, intellectual honesty, and science, and education. And it would be very wise to add here the insight of “absolute truth” and “relative truth” that Dr. R. A. Millikan, the nobel prize winning physicist for his proof of a discrete particle known as the electron, gave to us in his lectures and book “Evolution in Science and Religion”. Some of the prime points of this book.

1. There is an evolution in science as well as in religion.

2. Men of science are human also, and science is not as objective as many think. It evolves like other disciplines such as religion with a combination of the knowledge of absolute truth and relative truth. In both disciplines, pride and other human frailties play as much a part as “intellectual honesty”. (While this is this author’s addition to some of the thoughts of Millikan, based on this concept from the Christian Philosopher of Religion Elton Trueblood, you do see the germ of these thoughts in Millikan, and certainly the stimulus.)

3. Like Millikan pointed out near the end of the twentieth century all the physicists (physics, of course, is the ultimate in science that all others try to emulate such as the social scientists) were claiming that all the important discoveries had already been made, and all that would remain in the future for next generations to do would be to improve the accuracy of the previous measurements. Of course, after these audacious statements, and haughtiness of pride, from such physicists came the many new discoveries such as: X-rays, natural radiation, quantum physics and the Hessenberg uncertainty principle, the modified Bohr theory of the Atom, and nuclear and modern physics.

20-5: “We don’t have to win, only Fight” During the Falling Away.

Although it gauls us as Americans and American Christians since we are so competitive and like to always win, this fight against the Final Stages of the Falling Away—stage (4) and (5) is inevitably one battle that we are going to lose. We can put up a good fight, and according to the Bible we must put up a good fight; and granted that our victory will come after the Falling Away and Final Tribula-
tion with the Second Coming of Christ, we must get through as gracefully as possible that “little while” of strong delusion after Satan is released, with the final tribulation of the heavens and the earth crumbling around us, just before the blessings of the new heavens and new earth. However, as emphasized in the chapter/message of “Prep for ‘the End’” of DEN OF THIEVES, while much of the teachings of Jesus of Matthew 24 and Luke 21 are on the signs of the Falling Away and Final Tribulation, the prime message of Christ is for Christians to get ready to go through the Falling Away and the Final Tribulation.

1. Why do you think you read so often in the Bible, “Fight the good fight of faith”?

Paul seemed resigned in the concluding chapter 4 of II Timothy that the fight against falsehood as a body of truth was going to be lost, at least that one gigantic long battle was going to be lost before the final warfare was going to be won with the Second Coming of Christ. Just before in 4:1 and 2, and before announcing that the battle against false truth would be lost as the Falling Away went through the five stages of development, presents two more positive aspects of this end time of history: (1) God will have the final say and last words of the history of this world with His judgment--“who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing” (4:1), (2) with His Second Coming immediately after falsehood wins with the majority of world residents over truth, and (3) with the full realization of His kingdom on earth as the new heaven and new earth are ushered in and populated by the new people that God has been calling out from among the world for many generations.

You can tell by the way Paul urges young Timothy to “preach the word”, and therefore to all preachers of the Word and all Christians of all time since this also is part of the Scripture of the Word of God, that there will come that time in history when all on earth, even God’s people, will listen to and heed less and less the truth of the Bible. You read into the admonition an urgency of the shortness of time and history as God through Paul writes, “Be ready in season and out of season”, and continues with the specifics of methodology in preaching, testimony, and witnessing and of church administration, “Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (II Timothy 4:2). And then pop, the guarantee comes of the inevitability of the Falling Away in the church, that of the great apostasy, as it goes into the first stage of historical development with “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine” {You see, the implication is that is it almost all over, at least among the majority of God’s people, for a reception of the truth in preaching and correction.}; and ending with
“and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.” (4:4)

There is sadness in the heart and life of Paul who has started all these Christian churches among whom young Timothy must preach and teach in spite of their hardeing hearts toward truth and the competition against these itching ears Bible teachers; there is some measure of sadness as Paul knows that shortly he will as a martyr in Rome be leaving some many dear Christian friends among the minority such as young Timothy and others—“the time of my departure is at hand” (4:6). However Paul would encourage Timothy and others engaged in the present fight against the body of falsehood beliefs in that: (1) in that the “good fight” (4:7) has been fought; (2) in that the race God has set out for the few has been successfully run against all odds; (3) in that “the faith once for all delivered to the saints” of Jude 3 has been retained—“kept”—to the end of life on this earth; (4) in that the full “crown of righteousness” awaits Paul and others with the body resurrection at the Second Coming of Christ; (5) in that Christ Himself, “the righteous Judge” will give to Paul and all others on that same one “Day” of His Second “appearing”.

2. You don’t read victory, but only battle, in the famous Christian armor passage of Ephesians 6:10-20: (1) it is to be “strong” without any assurance of a win for that strength; and (2) it is to “wrestle” against “principalites” (this is the famous “the lie” or the body of beliefs of falsehood), against powers which are much bigger than us (those of the world and of Satan, although elsewhere in the Word we are guaranteed that “greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world”), against “the rulers of the darkness of this world” (here you have your falsehood and wickedness from both those that control the world of human flesh and the ruling of Satan, who is after all the “prince and ruler of this world”, and his many powerful and fallen angels with him), and against “spiritual wickedness in high places” (certainly this is Satan and his followers, once angels of light and of service to God, but still with much power to maim and destroy and influence toward falsehood, even more so as for “the little while” near the end of the Falling Away they are loosed from the bondage and restrictions of the work of the Holy Spirit here on earth.

3. Of course, the victory over sin and death, over Satan and falsehood, is also mentioned often, and does come, like Paul says after either death or the Second Coming of Christ, which ever comes first for the very few that are Christians. It has never been a secret, as Jesus taught often and hard, that while the majority of the “many” of the world would go the way of falsehood to
destruction that only a minority of a “few” would go the narrow way of truth that leads to everlasting life; nor has it been a secret that thousands and millions of tares have been allowed to remain in the church body on earth, of course not written in the only church roll that really counts in heaven, until separation at the Second Coming from the few kernels of wheat left in the church on earth; nor has it been a secret that of the many of church members during the Falling Away most will, also according to Jesus in Matthew 24, “wax cold” to truth, Christ, God, and the Bible as “sin abounds”, this of course is also the rising tide of the mystery of sin and lawlessness of II Thessalonians as Satan is released, and as the son of perdition makes his appearances and for a short time establishes some control over history and the world.

(1). “This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.”

(2). “Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”.

(3). “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death where is your sting, O grave where is your victory.”

20-5: What Will Get Church Members Over that Hump as they turn away?

We still must account for sufficient motivation to get the majority of church members over the hump as they make this drastic move to “turn away from truth”, the fourth and next to the last stage of development in the Falling Away.

1. The Falling Away is called the Great Apostasy because it happens to the majority of church members and churches.

2. When Jesus taught in Matthew 24:12 that “because sin will abound” during the Falling Away--obvious the same rising tide of lawlessness and sin that is a mystery in II Thessalonians and of the Falling Away—“the love of many will wax cold”, and since this love had to exist among Christians before it could fall away, and since Jesus says it will happen among the “MANY”, then MOST CHRISTIANS OR CHURCH MEMBERS WILL FALL AWAY, OR TO USE THE WORDS OF PAUL IN HEBREWS, “DEPART FROM THE LIVING GOD” BECAUSE OF AN EVIL HEART OF UNBELIEF, DURING THE GREAT APOSTASY OF THE FALLING AWAY.

3. How can this happen to Our Church?
Strong Delusion

(1). As you keep up the intolerance toward sound doctrine of the Falling Away, the first stage of the Falling Away from II Timothy 4:3,4.

(2). As you continue to fail on an exercise of the self-discipline under the headship and control of Christ in your church life, granted the most democratic and respected institution of the vote, with a priority for your own wants and desires like in the second stage of the Falling Away of II Timothy 4:3,4.

(3). All you have to do is just keep heaping up in many ways and through many channels those “itching ears” Bible teachers with their special, new, and novel special revelations and unsound doctrine perspectives and teachings.

(4). The final move before God takes over and turns you and your church into “strong delusion” or into fables, is as you and your church move away from the truth as it is in the Bible, Christ, and God; and since you have previously made it through the first three hurdles successfully, or wrongfully, then you at this point will, no doubt, not even recognize that you are turning away from truth. What those itching ears Bible teachers and preachers, false prophets if you would, have been telling you for years and in books, comes to make a lot more sense than the truth of the Bible, to you!

20-6: The Body of Beliefs called “The LIE” of Falsehood.

Even as there is in the world and in control of this world system a progenitor of evil and falsehood, always at work and relentless in his efforts at the destruction of truth and good, this one taught in the Bible as Satan and once an angel of light, even so is there a false body of beliefs, say call it false truth, that wars against truth as strongly, in fact more strongly in numbers as it will win out over the majority of people, that counters and opposes all truth, all of the spiritual realities of Christ, God, and the Bible, as well as the “faith once for all delivered to the saints”.

We might compare that body of falsehood, THE LIE, to the truth of the Christian faith, the “faith once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3) by talking about a “false faith once for all delivered to the world through Satan and his angels”. Don’t forget it worked on the Roman Catholics about mid-history as they became victims of “seducing spirits and doctrines of devils”; don’t forget it worked on the Mormons as one of those fallen angels, Maronni that now sits on top of the Temple at Mormon Square, delivered to Joseph Smith Bibles that compete for truth against the Christian Bible; and primarily do not forget that this false faith once from all delivered to the world has worked throughout
Strong Delusion

history among the majority of the world and during the Falling Away among the
majority in the church body here on earth.

1. God’s intention as revealed often in His Word has been to selectively chose
from each generation of history a very small number that would finally complete
the exact number of “the elect” that He needs in order to repopulate this new
earth after the destruction of the old earth and heavens.

2. God’s Word assures that all these few from each generation of history will be
selective to the extent that no longer on the new earth will there be any little
bit of unrighteousness.

“But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an
abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of
Life.” (Revelation 21:27)

NOTE: This speaks of the assured ultimate victory! The victory of the
body of faith and truth over unbelief and falsehood; the victory of God’s
Christ over Satan; the victory of everlasting life over death and sin and pain
and suffering.

As all called, saved, and chosen elect of God from all generations of the history
of this earth, and from all the nations of the Gentiles, are populated by God on
the new earth, and surrounding the New Jerusalem lowered down from heaven
(Revelation 21) with the throne of God, Jesus, and the leadership of the saved
Jews, then all this new people of God will dwell, serve, and work forever near the
very presence of God and Christ themselves. And that is more of the ULTI-
MATE VICTORY which requires faith on the part of Christians to believe now,
but will be easy for all of them as they see what is around them, and they are
there with all the real Christian friends and relatives of all times in history!
With an Amen to this, we write: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it
entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for them that
love Him.”

And the desire and goal of this REPORT TO AND FOR BELIEVING has to
been to invite you relatives of my family to a reunion time and place there,
also to my extended family of friends to whom this book has been
addressed. Won’t it be grand!
3. Even as Jesus clearly identified “the end” of this world age before the new heavens and the new earth as happening immediately after the Gospel is preached to every nation (Matthew 24:14), so also He through the Apostle Peter writing in II Peter 3:12 established that the church of the Falling Away, and those Christians long before in the history of Christianity, that is at least of the kingdom of Christ on earth, would have a part in the time of that Second Coming of Christ, “hastening the day of the LORD and Lord”.

20-7: Non-Religious Dimensions of Personality without God retention.

Remember, according to God’s Word in Romans 1--and Who knows His Creatures better than the Creator as we are created by God and in “the image of God”, which above all has to include character and personality, generally of course, the Bible words to describe character and personality are “heart”, “soul”, “spirit”, and “mind”; but back to God’s Word according to Romans, the distentegration and destruction of personality in this life starts with the simple negligence of the Creature for the Creator, “since they would not retain God in their thinking”, God gave them up to... Right then and there before over 40 years of neglect to think about God, and by the way worship God “in spirit and in truth”, all those bad things mentioned in Romans 1 and 2 begin to happen to the unbeliever, and also the believer who “departs from the living God” in his heart and thoughts.

Of course, what is being presented here for non-religious dimensions of personality is based on, and an opposite takeof, on Wayne Oates famous book THE RELIGIOUS DIMENSIONS OF PERSONALITY. This former professor of religious psychology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary presents, as many of you pastors and religious educators know, presents in good detail and with examples how from psychology and Bible man being made in the image of God and with a natural created affinity for God, has inherently certain “dimensions” of religious personality. (Perhaps you are reminded of the conscience mentioned in Romans 2 that “accuse and excuse” as part of man’s religious dimensions of personality, this conscience working on both the individual level as part of the “spirit” of man and further at the “community” level--by the way “community” is one of the listed religious dimensions of personality as man has certain group tendencies, also ordained by God. You can easily see that at the community level of conscience, it becomes the American Conscience that becomes, in the words of Romans, “a law unto itself, accusing and excusing one another” of the local community, state and national community, and world community. (We are definitely described in personality by our communities at all levels, alias what state were you born in, were you raised in the city or country,
Other religious dimensions of personality listed by this former teacher, scholar and Christian psychologist (the kind of psychologist that we should be paying far more attention to than to the behaviorism of B. F. Skinner and the pragmatists like William James—which by the way along with the Gospel of Wealth and Success movement in American Thought History has been bought “hook, line, and sinker” by Americans and American Character, are: purpose, meaning, and, integration.

And these very dimensions tend to disappear and disintegration, the dimensions become more lacks of dimensions, through many years of persistent unbelief. For example according to Romans 1 and 2 the purpose as listed in the Bible in Ephesians 1:10, where God brings together in Christ all things as one (this is also ultimate integration), is lost; and in spite of recent efforts by Rick Warren in “purpose driven” lives and purpose driven churches to substitute as a religious dimension of personality what God has ordained for “purpose”—in other words you should keep Holy Spirit and Christ in the place of purpose yielding based on the Bible, especially Ephesians, the Holy Spirit and/or Christ driven life and church. While it may seem paradoxical that among church members, such substitutes as offered by a fundamentalists pastor, of the best-selling book category, can assist in the disintegration of purpose as ordained by God as a religious dimension of personality; it is only typical of all the substitutes that Christians and church members come up with to replace God’s ordained religious dimensions of personality when they both (1) refuse to think about God, and (2) substitute artificials, superficials, and secondaries for thought and worship of God. (The consistent teachings of the Bible are that we are made for God, that is part of our image, and as human beings there is something missing in our personalities and characters when God is not thought about, worshipped, and given the due place in our life style.)

Also personality through the years of no thoughts about God, no prayer, and no allegiance to God, begin to lose “integration” and “meaning”. Crudely stated, there is no real meaning to life apart from God, Christ, and the Bible; and to life when it is short-termed. Why work and plan and think when you know “you can not take it with you”, even on your personality and character development. True, you can keep a certain reputation in your communities; but even that you can not take with you as they will disappear into eternity also.
Likewise with integration. How can you possible integrate meaning with lifestyle unless God is retained in thinking and lifestyle. According to Romans the less you think about God, and worship God to give Him his due, the more dis-integrated, the opposite of integrated, does your life become. Even as we all recognize a social evolution in world history, in American history, in our society and world; so we recognize by reading Romans 1 and 2 a sort of social de-evolution downward, as instead of progressing to better persons and a better society, without God in the thought processes, the spiral is downward into an abyss in this very life of darkened thoughts, passions, thoughts, and morality in life.

20-8: Greed in America has Disintegrated the American Economy.

Yes, even as a lack of faith in God can disintegrate the individual personality, so the believing of the lie at the national level, with the “greed and wickedness” that comes with it, can disintegrate the National collective personality or character. Some in American Studies have even described the lifestyle of Americans as the American Character. And surely, if you have never recognized the problems with greed in American Society, you are seeing it now. Almost all, except Bush who choses to call mistakes the failures of Banks and other financial institutions, refer to a combination of “greed and incompetence” as the reason for this current financial crisis in the country, and in the world. Politicians and commentators have suddenly in this last year began to sound more like preachers and the religious as they mention so often “greed” as the real cause of the current financial crisis and hardships; and while it would be difficult to prove from the Bible that the present lack of blessings from God on our nation, one which is called a curse in the Bible, is like all the other calamities that have come on this nation since 9/11, you know even as Benjamin Franklin said at the Continental Convention that formed this nation, “A nation can not rise to greatness without His blessing”—just like a sparrow can not fall to the ground without His notice—so the opposite is true, when calamities like all the fires, floods, hurricanes, 9/11, and etc come on a country it is a certain sign that God has removed the umbrella of His blessings from this country. Did God send this economic collapse as a punishment to this nation for a lack of righteousness and effectual fervent prayer of the churches? Once again, that is hard to prove from the Bible; however, it is quite easy to support from the Bible the individual and collective to a Nation bad effects and disintegration where “greed and wickedness” have come to dominate the nation as we find in America today.
1. Proverbs 1:19 speaks of how anyone and “everyone who is greedy of gain” loses his own individual life. It is also a group and social action like in a nation as the conclusion of this “taking away of the life of the owner” of greed, starts in 1:10 with an enticement and invitation from a larger group to the son of the writer, “Come with us” (1:11) to “lurk secretly for the innocent without cause”; and certainly what has happened now on Wall Street and in Banks and big business is the result of bad decisions and greed for many of the past years—it has been done for the most part in secret—and certainly it has been against many “innocent” Americans and “without cause” in that the motivation was not really so much to destroy innocent Americans, that was only the end result. And how can you fail to recognize in 1:13 the motivation of financial and government leaders for material possessions when you read, “We shall find all kinds of precious possessions”, a collective invitation from Wall Street and big business to get, get, get to the extent of greed. Covetousness is the wickedness, and when covetousness has been given full reign in a nation like now, it is characterized in the Bible as “greed”. And then is top to bottom greed in America, or vice versa whether you are talking about the greed of the home buyer who purchased more than they needed and could handle with their budget, or the realtor in the middle, or the banker and insurer at the top, or the CEO who profited so much gain while knowing that both his company and the economy was going down the drain.

“So are the ways of everyone who is greedy for gain. It takes away the life of its owners.” (Proverbs 1:19)

2. In the sight of God the number one leaders in a nation are the pastors and deacons of a church, and the Bible cautions both of these groups of leaders not to be “greedy for money”. (I Timothy 3:3,8) Along with such high standards from God of a righteousness described by “blameless”, the husband of one wife, “sober minded”, and “of good behavior”, there is this admonition individually and collectively in the church not to be greedy for money.

3. Even as Jesus said “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35); and that in the context of all the teachings of Jesus, the blessings or curses from God come more in the long range of eternity after judgment, also you can see the adverse effects on any leader or other person in this life as it becomes apparent to them of the end results of all their actions and greed. Even if you have not cultivated an adverse attitude toward the Gospel of Wealth and the corollary of success, a major thought pattern in American Thought and one truly dominate today in the disintegrated economy, you must see that the life style of Americans that finally lead to this collapse has been “receive, receive, receive"
instead of “give, give, give”—receive big homes of extreme comfort and pride, receive large and larger salaries and profits and gains, receive more material possessions and recognition, and receive more and more millions without restraint until it goes into billions. There is only so much pie available; and so many get more and more of the American pie, it does not get to all. Those 10% of Wall Street that control 50% of the American wealth, those you might say of more than $250,000 a year, have both taken advantage of the 90% of Americans, the people in the land, and have almost, if not literally, to use the words and concepts of Proverbs 1 taken the blood of innocent people. These gains of the 10% have been at the expense of the blood and sweat of most poorer Americans.

4. It was this very destruction of the inward character and personality of the religious leaders of His own time that Jesus spoke of in Luke 11:29, when He taught that they were so concerned with the outward personality characteristics of the washing of hands, cups, and dishes while their religious characters inside, "the inward part" (11:39) "is full of greed and wickedness". That God that made the outside personality also made the inside character, Jesus taught. (11:40) And further that if you concentrate on giving what you have, little or much, rather than receiving more, you whole personalities and characters are cleaned up. {You might call this behavior and character of cleaning up, or cleaning up your act, as integration.} The real fault of these leaders, even as government and business leaders today, was that in favor of an appearance of cleanliness and neatness in their lives {morality and ethics}, they have passed right by in their life "justice and the love of God" (11:42). True, Jesus said, you should continue in ethics; but while you are doing that, do not leave out these important aspects of JUSTICE and LOVE OF GOD. You want, want, want the "best seats" and the respect and "greetings" in the marketplace of Wall Street; but Jesus for God expresses "woes", or curses, on them because of this greed of behavior that goes with this wickedness (11:42,43), and it is a present, not wait for eternity curse, in that they have become inside "like graves which are not seen, and the men who walk over them are not aware of them" (11:44). The lawyers {also CEOs, government officials, and Bankers}, Jesus also criticized (11:45,46), because they "load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers".

5. Paul, and God through Paul, criticized church members in Ephesians 4:19 for the destruction of their own personalities by being like other Gentiles of the world around them, "who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." And in this whole passage of
Strong Delusion

Ephesians 4:17-19, before the outstanding admonition to properly Learn Christ, you see how ordinary Gentiles of the world, apart from Christ, over a period of their life, say 40 years, practice a disintegration of life here on earth, way before eternity: (1) they walk or live a life style of “the futility of their mind” (4:17); (2) since they are “alienated from the life of God”, then inevitable according to God and Paul, “their understanding darkened”; (3) ignoring the things and thoughts of God and the Bible, they are called “ignorant” {by the way very close to strong delusion}; (4) they become “blind of heart”, certainly strong delusion; (5) past feeling for God and others, you might call it indifference; and (6) have given themselves over to “lewdness”. {Lewdness as used in the Bible, especially in Jude 4, Acts 18:14, and throughout the Old Testament, especially in Ezekiel 16:27, literally means “evil, wicked, wicked thoughts, and wicked devices”. It is easy to conclude that we in America have witnessed a lot of this lewdness of behavior from inward hearts dedicated to greed in our destroyed economy. None, except the 90% of the people, were victims of inevitable circumstances; but the recipients of the mistakes and greed on economic leaders.}

20-9: Strong Delusion from American leaders about the Economy.

Can we compare the strong delusion from God of the final stages of the Falling Away to the recent delusions cast on Americans by our American leaders in government, business, and even in schools and colleges. You know that many of them before the final drop of the ball on the economy knew that this was coming; and while you can easily see how financial leaders such as in Fidelity and AIG can hardly expect investments without confidence, and that they would cover up, this same can not be said of all these leaders of the economy. Remember how such a leader as President Bush was encouraging Americans to make 401Ks, perhaps the greatest victim of this economic crisis, their primary source of retirement, and in the place of Social Security. This has been disastrous for thousands, even millions of Americans. Recently a former teacher of finance in a University said two things about this strong delusion: (1) he felt bad about encouraging his students quite a few years ago to get into these failed financial institutions like AIG and many others “bailed out” by the American public through their agents of government; and (2) wait until the new reports come out on the 401Ks for teacher retirements, and there will be more shock. {There is so much government waste even in our programs to feed and help people in the incompetence of civil service and the indifference with which they administer these programs. Civil Service was a good system when Roosevelt first developed it, but now it is in need of a major overhaul as (1) after one year, they can hardly be fired, or ever are; (2) they find their prime job is to lay low in the stealth mode and protect their own rear ends, CFT; and (3) like Can-
Strong Delusion

delisa Rice, a product of the Washington Civil Service System, who Donald Trump said, “Bless her heart, she waves her hands and smiles, and that is about all she does”, they know how to simply hold a position, scrap the gravy off the top of the American economy for themselves like “scum”, and lay low while making little or no real contributions to America and the American people. In their minds and their thoughts, much like the Red Cross and other social institutions, they conceive of themselves as more supervisors and administrators than of servants for the American people!

1. While this strong delusion may not be by way of Osama Bin Ladin and Satan, part of the strong delusion of II Thessalonians and that of the final stages of the Falling Away, it has the same effects on the American people and the world of that strong delusion. And perhaps in even more ways, as far as what the American people feel and hurt, you do get the attention of the American people when you start hurting both their pocketbook and their standard of living, especially when it leads to homelessness as has happened to many average Americans lately of the wage earning type. What is being said, is that the results are the same, whether the strong delusion has come from God, from Satan, or from leaders in government, finance, and education!

2. We know the source of “greed” and “avarice”, whether in education, commerce, and government as: (1) the human spirit within us that lusteth to envy; and (2) the motivation from Satan. It is bad enough that these American leaders of the economy have by their greed and incompetence, and in the words of Proverbs 1, run swiftly in the destruction of their own lives and careers; but add to that by their cover-ups, if not their intents, they have lead millions of Americans into economic chaos.

3. To the list of leaders in science and religion, and from Millikan in “Evolution in Science and Religion”, we must add leaders in education and government and business who also thought they knew everything about the economy like science thought they knew everything about physics at the turn of the century. How no new developments would come after the 1900s, only improvements in the measurements already made in classical physics.

4. We might easily compare such haughtiness in financial leaders, a certain know-it-all-attitude that promoted deception and cover-up, sometimes even as CEOs were bailing out of their own companies stock to leave the employees to hold the bag in their 401Ks, to that of physicists at the beginning of the twentieth century. A haughtiness then which had it's bubble busted by modern
physics, a haughtiness now which has its bubble busted by the realities of the American economy on Main Street and on Wall Street.

5. In all of the calamities that have come on the US since 911 in the floods, hurricanes, fires, earthquakes, etc, none have so devastated and affected the American people right where they live and worship as has this financial crisis. While floods and hurricanes have been limited to certain areas as have also fires and earthquakes and droughts, the economic collapse has gone into every home. And if it has not been felt now, it will be felt in the future tax increases that will be required. It will also be felt for our children and grandchildren as they seek to pay off the huge budget deficit required to bail out all these financial institutions which before only wanted our money.

6. Have you noticed beside the doling out of money to the well-to-do with incomes of over 250,000 a year (and by the way this includes the Congress and administration), the solution of these economic leaders is to: (1) entice the American people to spend more money; and (2) entice the American people to borrow more money. This will shift the American pot of money from the people to them. While this effort to get the little piece of pie that is left to 90% of the American people, the effect in turn is to make the piece of pie which those that 10% of the American people have. While some Republicans recently complained, and the people know better, that Obama was going to re-distribute the wealth of America from a few to the many, what is really happening with these recent efforts to entice the American public, especially to spend during the Holidays, is to bring the bigger piece of pie back to the 10% of Americans that control and spend over 50% of the money.

7. The strong delusion on the economy certainly had the same ultimate source as the strong delusion of the Falling Away: (1) a turning of ears away from truth, in the case of the economy on the realities of the World and American stable economic system, alias what is sensible and even moderate, or none greedy; and (2) the being turned into fables, in the case of the economy the fable that all, leaders and people, could practice wholesale greed and incompetence without destructive affects on America and the world. Of course, part of the fables that America has been turned into is: (1) that we can keep spending without any day of accountability for the country; (2) we can borrow indefinitely and without limit as much from foreign countries as we want; and (3) that the money can simply be printed that we need without any future effect on the dollar in the world. When such idealistic and reckless behavior is allowed to take the place of good
old common sense, we as a nation have certainly turned into fables, one of those pre-dominant fables being that “if the government does it, it can not be wrong”, or the corollary “if the government does it, everything will be alright.”

8. Based on Millikan and what happened to the so-called scientific at the beginning of the Twentieth Century, let us modify the title of his lectures and book to “Evolution in Science, Religion, and Economics”. Well, really we should call it a “De-evolution in Economics of the Twenty-First Century”. Even as Bush will go down in history as another Hoover, so this century of 2008 will go down in the history books as both the greatest depression and recession since Hoover, with the exception that now we see so much cover-up and deception on the part of economic leaders. They wanted us to have confidence in them; but now we think that either none know economics, or they do not care as they rush to take care of themselves before the close of the stock market. *{Are they really trying to save the American people of the 90% with 50% of the American money, or are they trying to save the 10% of Americans with 250,000 or more of 50% of the American money?}* 

9. The problem with the trickle down theory of Bush, McCain, and the Republicans is that it can not trickled down through the greed and avarice filter. “Avarice is greed gone amuke”, and certainly we see that in the financial leaders of this country after so many years of cover-up and deceit.

**20-10: How This Relates to the “To Believe” and “For Believing” Gist of this Book.**

It is safe to say based on the Bible details of the Falling Away, especially the book of Hebrews, II Timothy 3 and 4, II Thesalonians, and Matthew 24 and Luke 21 from Jesus, that approximately 50% of unbelievers are church members and 50% have always been unbelievers. *{As always this is hard to believe, but the reader, especially if you have forgotten some of the main Bible messages of this book on REPORTS as well as “DEN OF THIEVES” and HIDEOUT, is reminded that almost all of God’s people by far in the wilderness after a 40 year process of “departing” from the living God where not only denied access to the Promised Land but also to the eternal rest of heaven.} (Read the book of Hebrews as the Falling Away is as big a part of it as Christ as Priest, no doubt one reason that so many repugnant to this message from God on the background of the Great Apostasy, deny Paul as the author. That is, they wish to accept the comforting messages of books like Ephesians and Philippians, the other of the 14 letters written by God through Paul, but not this one as it goes so counter to what they want to be believe about both The Security of the ...
Believer and what will happen to most church members during the final Great Falling Away which must, and will inevitably come, before the Second Coming. (II Thessalonians) The message and chapters in this book on “for believing” have been addressed primarily to those 50% that are church members, although unbelief is unbelief where it is among those church members who went through the “to believe” process but also then through the “depart from the living God” process of Hebrews 3:7.

1. Once again, salvation is a two step process; and this is true even based on the most fundamental scriptures and books of salvation and believing, John 20:30,31 and the Gospel of John. Like in these verses, recall the statement of the very purpose for which the Apostle John wrote John: (1) in order that humanity might “believe”, the “to believe” process of faith, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and (2) “for believing”, in order that “believing they may have everlasting life.”

2. The whole tenor and statements of the New Testament is that there must be continuation in faith for it to be saving faith in such verses as (1) work out your salvation with fear and trembling, (2) beware brethren (church members and Christians) lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God (Hebrews 3:7): (3) you will be saved if you continue to the end, Jesus said in Matthew 24; and (4) so on and on through many more. Please read the SunGrist Ebook SNATCHING, STUMBLING, AND THE FALLING AWAY which is a “reconciliation of the Security of Believer with the Falling Away based on the parable from Jesus of the Seed and the Sower.

3. The proper learning of Christ, the opposite of what the world is doing and how they live, is the sure cure to the disintegration of personality like other Gentiles, that Paul elaborates on in Ephesians 4. No CEO, government official, religious leader, pastor, deacon, or church member and average citizen could possibly practice this greed that leads to personality disintegration and “strong delusion” who: (1) Practices Jesus’ teaching that “it is more blessed to give than to receive”; and (2) does not covet any possession or money of his American neighbors; and (3) loves his American neighbors, the people in the land, more than himself, and loves God with all the heart, mind, and soul.
CHAPTER 21

Religious Dimensions of Personality

While we will borrow all that research, psychology and Bible, from Wayne Oates, and his RELIGIOUS DIMENSIONS OF PERSONALITY (no doubt out of print now, and along with other previous professors at SBC seminaries is discouraged by the present fundamentalists in control of the SBC), just to list those dimensions; and even mentioned the distorted concept of Warren on "purpose" where he skillfully replaces "Christ" and "the Holy Spirit" in man made words and concepts like purpose in purpose driven lives and churches, if nothing else as a springboard for the real purpose of God, "to unite all things in Christ" from the book of Ephesians. There is the real meaning in life, meaning is one of the religious dimensions of personality from Oates, when any life gets hitched up to the purpose of God Himself for the Universe and beyond to the New Earth under the New Heavens with a new people with whom He can personally dwell because of a newly provided way of righteousness.

21-1: Basis of Chapter--Ephesians and ONE COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS.

The primary borrowings, perhaps it should be called the foundation of this chapter, that is besides the previous 20 chapters, is from the book of Ephesians and on an excellent commentary on the book of Ephesians, of limited distribution, entitled ONE COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS. (The intention of SunGrist_Bible as time permits is to make a reprint of this commentary on Ephesians, and in E-bookformat for free download on the internet at the web-
Religious Dimensions of Personality

The very title, of course as a commentary on the book of Ephesians, begs the subject of meaning and purpose and even integration under the theme of God's purpose for humanity through the Lord Jesus Christ, that is "that God might make one, or unite all things through Christ", redemption through the cross being the foundation of this very purpose of God for the universe.

“...having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him.” (Ephesians 1:9,10)

1. Like so many other mysteries of the Bible, we would never as humans know about it--that is this purpose of God for the universe--had God not taken upon Himself to let us know through: (a) the history on earth of Christ and the cross; (b) the records of the Bible, and (c) the work of the Holy Spirit across the universe and throughout history after He was sent in great power and glory and extent and democratically throughout the world to convict the world of "sin, of righteousness, and of judgment". When we lose that assistance of uniting purpose near the end of the Falling Away as the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from the earth, much like Jesus was inserted and then withdrawn in the Ascension, there will be even much less of meaning and purpose on this old earth. While Christians and church members will still pray {of course no longer with the assistance of the Holy Spirit in their prayers, to pray as they ought to and with power}, “Thy kingdom come {to God the Father}, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”. Less and less, without the Holy Spirit, the will of God will not be done nearly as much as churches pass into the fifth and final stage of the Falling Away, and after the disintegration of turning away from truth, into the strong delusion as Satan is simultaneously released with the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit.

2. Most of the Bible, which by the way is a gradual revelation of God coming to an eternal climax in Christ, tells us what God thinks and what He expects of His own people, or even how to be among the elect of God. {Often a very difficult and trying subject here on earth as is the Bible, especially the Scriptures from the Apostle Paul, like Ephesians, that according to the Apostle Peter “they wrest to their own destruction."} One recent Bible search question for the BibleQandA of the SunGrist_Bible websites was, “What is the Meaning of the
Religious Dimensions of Personality

Bible?”, no doubt from a foreign country; and another was, “What is the Meaning of Faith?” Well, those are good, fundamental, and timely questions; and that is exactly what the Bible is all about, and the purpose that God has carried out in the history of man through the Bible and through Christ.

3. You see from the context of Ephesians 1:9,10 above that God the Father went into a conference with Christ the Word and the Holy Spirit, sometimes in the aeons of eternity and in heaven, to decide among themselves what was: (a) the pleasure of God and (b) the purpose of God for the universe and humanity.

4. God the Father, the Son, and the Spirit chose the fullest time in human history to make His own pleasure and will known through the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the cross; also assuring that not only would Prophets predict these dispensations in the Old Testament, and assure the distribution to humanity through the Jewish people to whom “were committed the oracles of God” (Romans 3:2), but also that Jesus would personally teach Apostles, including Paul the majority author and editor of the New Testament with respectively 14 and 17 letters, who would write of this purpose and meaning for humanity, then helped to preserve all of these 66 books in a Canon called the Bible. Also in the fulness of time, there were printing presses and there was English to increase the distribution to the whole world as “the gospel was preached to every nation”, just before the END.

5. God decided to get it all together in ONE, all of heaven and all of earth, with full meaning and purpose as only God the Creator can do, and with a salvation plan through Christ and the death of Christ on the cross (the atonement) and faith in the historical act of Christ for redemption of man from sin and bondage. You see how in the plan of God and the history of God speaking to man as recorded for thousands of years in the pages of the Bible, the cross as Christ “died on the cross for the sins of the world” was the means whereby God decided to unite all things in Christ. Why did He do it that way? Well, it was wise; it was His pleasure; and it was His will.

“...at the name of Christ, every knee should bow and every tongue should confess that Jesus is the Lord and Christ (the Messiah of the Old Testament) to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:10,11)

6. God ordained salvation or redemption of the human race through Christ.
Religious Dimensions of Personality

“In Him, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence.” (Ephesians 1:7,8)

21-2: What is the Meaning of Faith?

Well, Paul answers that {please remember that after conversion the Apostle Paul met with the Ascended Christ in Arabia to be taught what would become Bible} in the book of Hebrews, Hebrews 11:1--"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"--then elaborates on it along with the Gospel and the cross in Galatians; and like with all the other 14 letters of the 27 of the New Testament that Paul wrote as guided by Christ and the Spirit, he summarized in the “faith and testimony” of the book of Ephesians.


2. The Gospel of Christ and the Cross in Galatians, by the way which is a miniature of the more thorough treatment of faith and salvation in the book of Romans.


And by the way, do you ever get some integration of all doctrines and “the faith once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3) in the book of Ephesians as Paul summarizes the whole matter of faith in the Seven ONES {one always is the ultimate number of integration} of Ephesians 4:4-6. And even as Paul, and Christ and the Spirit through Paul, use the book of Ephesians to integrate into one little letter of testimony and faith the previous of 10 of the 14 letters from the Apostle Paul, so Ephesians 4:4-6 further integrates all of the book of Ephesians into the seven ONES. Brother, that is integration!

21-3: What Is the Meaning of the Bible according to the Bible?

1. What the Apostle Peter wrote on the meaning of the Bible in the little epistles of I and II Peter.

2. What Peter said about the epistles that Paul wrote.

3. What Paul wrote in the pastoral epistles--I Timothy, II Timothy, and Titus--on the meaning and purpose of the Bible.

21-4: Bible Words for Salvation in the Bible.
Salvation was simply the means that God chose to carry out His purpose, as He brought all things together in one through His Son Christ; however so important and so big is the plan and subject that God in the continued effort to communicate to man through the Spirit, through Apostles, Jesus, and Prophets, used many words to explain salvation.

1. Bible Reports on “Redemption”.

2. Bible Reports on “Atonement”.

3. Bible Reports on “Justification” and on “Justification by Faith”.

4. Bible Reports on “Grace” and “Works”.

5. Since according to the Bible, and the Reports of the Bible (the gist of this book from SunGrist_Bible), salvation is past, present, and future, we should briefly look at some of the Bible on these three.

(1). Past salvation, the “new birth” and initial faith.

(2). Present salvation, sanctification.

SunGrist_Bible has tried to describe how there must be both a past and presently continuing aspect of salvation, for it to be real, with the two aspects in this book of “TO BELIEVE”, the faith of initial salvation, and “FOR BELIEVING”, the continuing aspect of salvation which must be present and exist in order for the believer, Christian or church member, to go all the way to “everlasting life”. (John 20:30,31). Also in the volume 3 of the LEARN CHRIST commentaries as a thorough look it presented of the 14 letters of the Apostle Paul, and his life, and some of the many things about salvation that Christ and the Spirit taught him are presented under the title “Believe and Be Baptized”. Here, also, past and present, you have the two stages of salvation, whereby the individual does the first, the “believe” or faith of initial salvation; and God does all the rest, including regeneration, or the new birth, sanctification, and glorification--“we shall be like Him for we shall see Him (Christ) as He is.” (I John 3:2)

Oh yes, many with the assistance of Satan and ignorance of Scripture try to subvert this second step of salvation away from God, and into things which they can attempt to control like “water baptism”, the sacrament, salvation by works of men themselves, and with authority from other men, and even a baptism of the...
Religious Dimensions of Personality

Holy Spirit; however study Ephesians and the rest of the Bible closely and you will find that the “one baptism” is the same as the one salvation, since otherwise the one salvation is not in the list of seven ONEs, and in the dynamic passages from Paul where like all other aspects of faith and salvation, the one baptism is described, it is not water baptism or a second baptism in the Spirit, but how baptism from God is a work of God and is a thorough description of the one salvation. (And Pete also explains this in his little epistles.)

(3). Future salvation, glorification and like Christ.

21-5: Peter Provides Explanations for “Faith”, Rock and rocks, and the Church.

The Apostle Peter knew from the problems that he encountered in the first century in Jerusalem and beyond throughout the Roman Empire that many would distort the conversation between him and Jesus, “upon this rock I will build my church” (XXXXX x:x:xx), to use it for their own benefit and personal gain, so in his little epistles he sat down to explain the Rock and the little pebbles like himself and all other Christians. (Wow, did after so many denials and hardships did Peter learn some humility.) Also as was the assigned job of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Ascended Christ to “teach all things” and bring to remembrance among the Apostles, and God of course knowing what would happen in the future, goodness Christ even predicted it, how men would use and distort the primary means of salvation and a testimony of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

21-6: Religious Dimensions of Personality According to the Bible.

We will take advantage of Oates extensive training and knowledge of psychology and Christian psychology to like him list briefly, and comment on from the Bible, six religious dimensions of personality: (1) meaningfulness, (2) direction, (3) balance, (4) community, (5) maturity-in-love, and (6) integration. The emphasis, except for the listing from Oastes, will however be on the Bible more than Christian psychology and Oates’ book. (Of course, also on the book of Ephesians as a summary of those dimensions from God’s perspective.)

21-7: Covetousness as in the Parable of Bigger Barns Destroys Personality.

Today in this calamity of the downturn of the American economy, most often we hear “greed” with incompetence as the most likely cause of the destruction of financial institutions and the loss of homes.
1. Greed is nothing but covetousness run amuck, and years ago with the first formation with a people of God as a nation, at Mount Sinai and with the giving of the laws of the ten commandments to the people of this new nation through Moses, God forbade greed and covetousness not only because of His own holy nature, but because of the effect it has on any land and people. “Thou shalt not covet,” God said. You shall not covet anything that is your neighbors: land, wife, family, and possessions.

2. Just like in the giving of the commandment “Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy”, God knew that His own people would be far better off if they would both rest and practice righteousness at least one day of the week. So likewise is it with covetousness, it is not just the effect that covetousness has on a whole nation, nor is it a violation of the holiness and righteousness of God, but also it is a perversion of individual personality that leads to destruction. This is clearly seen in the parable of the bigger barns.

3. Jesus told the parable of bigger barns, of the soul at ease because of his possessions, and “not rich toward God” (Luke 12:21), before the parable of bigger barns in Luke 12:15 He warned of the bad effects on personality of covetousness; and then after the parable of bigger barns, He contrasts “the building up of treasures for himself” to the that of being “rich toward God”.

   a. Teaching and warning of Jesus before the Parable of Bigger Barns.

   “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.” (Luke 12:15)

   There is the trivial saying widespread in America, and has been for many years as business, things, and free enterprise with the American Dream has grown, that “at the end he with the most toys wins”. Toys, of course, being the allegory for possessions. And while it has almost been a joke, that thought pattern of many or the most possessions, a thing which the Bible would call greed and covetousness, has dominated the American Dream and life style of this nation, especially now as it becomes evident what it has done to the American and world economy. Even as you might say that with the religious dimension of “community”, the motivations of Americans and the American Dream has been driven by possessions, competition for those possessions, and status with them, so greed and covetousness has simultaneously run amuck and come to dominate the end result of the American community. Jesus gets at this very meaning and motivation of “one’s
Religious Dimensions of Personality

life” as a drive and life style of “the abundance of the things” which a man owns, which a man can call his own.

b. The Parable of Bigger Barns, even as Jesus tells it and we read it, seems to us just like the natural expression of the free enterprise system in America. We tend to think like is often said, “that is just business”; we try to explain and rationalize it, especially preachers and pastor to men of large and small business try to rationalize. However the whole tenor of the parable of bigger barns from Jesus is that: covetousness and greed in God’s sight is bad; covetousness and greed are bad and destructive for the human personality; and covetousnes and greed can also destroy a nation.

It all seems very innocent and naturally American as it tells how the earth of a certain landowner was so rich in soil that it “yielded plentifully”. (Luke 12:16) I imagine that he did work hard, but the prime credit is given to the richness of the land which yielded so well. So the rich man puzzled over what to do with the large crops which the land yielded because his barns were not large enough to store these blessings from the land. You know how we could think of several ways out of this dilemma such as give the food to the poor, sell the food, or send it to market for wider distribution; but Jesus did not get into these possibilities in order to rush to the prime conclusions, and it is obvious already that the man was more interested in hoarding and keeping in his own possession what the land had given to him.

What pondering on the problem and possible solutions, the rich man came up with the most popular solution today in America--“build bigger barns”. I will tear down my old barns, he said, and build bigger barns. You know, once again, he could have built an extension to his existing barns even if he refused to distribute his acquired wealth to the poor or sell it; so that more and more into the parable we are starting to see the effects on his personality of so much material blessings, as he is motivated by the status that such prosperity can bring him, a status that would show to his neighbors and community in the big barns.

And if we are not careful, we almost miss the line of reasoning in the thought of the rich man as he decides "I will store all my crops and all my goods". It looks like he even moved all his goods out of the house and put them into this beautiful new barns.
Then the rich American free enterprising businessman started talking to his own soul, the very seat of his personality and character, saying, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years (today this would be stock laid up in the stock market or bank as well, or 401Ks for retirement); take your ease: eat, drink, and be merry.” (Luke 12:19)

Perhaps this natural business-like gluttony of bigger and newer barns, and with the hoarding of many crops and other goods, would not have been condemned by God through Jesus, had this not been the end conclusion of the man’s conversation with his own soul. In the first place, in the serious conversations that any American has with his own soul, it should never primarily be a conversation about possessions. Somewhere in that soul’s conversation should be God and the things of God as righteousness and the kingdom of Christ. Indeed, the conversation of any soul, that personality and character heart of being that only will live forever, should be dominated by thoughts about God and His righteousness. However, it was not; and such natural but fallicious thoughts and conversations of the soul, lead him to the complacency of eating, drinking, and the merriments of pleasure while those possessions rotted in the new, bigger barns. What does that remind you of but what Jesus taught about the shock to souls of the Second Coming, as people were “eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage” right up to the time Christ suddenly came back on the human scence. All these things are the normal and natural life styles of all humanity; for it involves family and marriage, it involves food and the acquisition of food and it involves the pleasure of drinking.

Well, God had a response to this self-centered, greedy, and covetous rich man as He had something to say to his human soul and personality: “Fool! (not a good start from the God of Creation, the ruler of the Universe, and the Controller of soul welfare in eternity) This night will your soul be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?” (Luke 12:20)

c. Jesus’ bottom line conclusion about the greed and covetousness of the building of bigger barns.

“So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” (Luke 12:21)

What were the options for his accumulated wealth beyond what he needed in order to live: (1) give to the poor and needy, even his less fortunate neighbors, or sell at a reasonable and just price that they could easily afford; or (2) give it
Religious Dimensions of Personality

to God through charitable organizations or to the house of God or for the service of God; or (3) invest it somehow in the expansion of the kingdom of God and His Christ; and/or (4) Be satisfied with much less.

21-8: Covetousness and Greed Destroy any Nation.

You see, God just does not like Greed and Covetousness. In fact, the Bible tells us that God despises and brings judgment on Greed and Covetousness. In Jeremiah, which has been the focus of all the bad habits and “Den of Thieves” Bible discussions in this book and from which Jesus quoted to warn all temples and other houses of God against free enterprise at the expense of righteousness and worship and prayer, Jeremiah 6 explains from God to a nation all the bad things that come on a nation when covetousness and greed have run amuck in the larger community of the nation.

1. We are reminded of America and the American economy today, and perhaps even startled that God has something to say on any national financial system including the US, as we read Jeremiah 6:13a as we read what is below.

“Everyone (from the homeowner who covets and buys more than he or she needs or can afford to the well-to-do businessman that makes the loan, or insures it, or profits from the hard times of others in the stock market) from the least of them even to the greatest of them (that gets it from top to bottom in greed and covetousness), everyone is given to covetousness.” (Jeremiah 6:13a)

Does that not describe the American economy today? Top to bottom, least to greatest, every single American with few exception if given over to greed and covetousness. He is telling his soul, or at least did tell his soul until this last year, “Soul, enjoy yourself and pleasure in the things of this life; for your future is taken care of.” You will have a long and prosperous future because of these bigger barns and things! Enjoy the Gospel of Prosperity as a blessing from God, for it is a sign of your faith in God!

2. God looks at any nation of His own people and says “enough is enough”, bringing judgment on that nation even before eternity.

“‘For I will stretch out My hand against the inhabitants of the land,’ says the LORD.” (Jeremiah 6:12b)
If you have seen the blessings of God on America in the formation and preservation of this nation up to this point in history, surely now the obvious greed and covetousness in the American economy likewise shows you that at least God must withdraw, as someone has said, the umbrella of His blessings from America, and most likely like in the times of Jeremiah, since so many of our houses of worship and prayer have become unrighteous and ineffectual in fervent and righteous prayer {a natural outcome when people of God turn bad with greed and covetousness}, will stretch out His hand in judgment against this nation!

3. And like in Jeremiah, and the message of God to the nation through Jeremiah, you will not be able to hide or take refuge in your houses of prayer that have become both a “Den of Thieves” and a HIDEOUT FOR BAD HABITS. You see, your prophets, priests, and pastors are also caught up in this greed and covetousness, and false doctrines.

“And from the prophet to the priest, everyone deals falsely. They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, saying ‘Peace, peace’, when there is no peace.” (Jeremiah 6:14)

You may have found slight comfort on your worship services as the pastor or the priest spoke, or even at that religious conference for women where basically you found justification of greed and covetousness in the Gospel of Prosperity and the corollary of success, but you were only comforted “slightly”; because you did not receive this message of reality like in Jeremiah, the current message of a curse of calamities from God that is on the nation of American, simply because of a lack of (1) righteousness in the churches, and (2) a lack of effectual and fervent prayer which is so because of the lack of righteousness from the church members.

4. Yes, the Prophet Jeremiah, or really God through Jeremiah, also foretold of how a greedy and covetous nation would also lose their homes and real estate.

“For even the husband shall be taken with the wife, the aged with him who is full of days. And their houses shall be turned over to others.” (Jeremiah 6:12a)

Let us not ever, ever think that the series of calamities that America has brought on the US since 9/11 exclude a calamity on the American economy, since a curse from God which necessitates an infinite series of calamities is complete and thorough in that it must get to all Americans and where all Americans live.
Actually the source of the curse is three fold: (1) it is the natural and collective result of the greed and covetousness of millions of Americans, from the least to the greatest, as greed destroys first their personalities and then their communities; (2) it is God sitting back to let it happen after He has warned often in the pages of the Bible to what can happen to a nation without righteousness and effective prayer and worship; and (3) it is a direct intervention of God as in adverse acts of nature like hurricanes and floods and fires, where God actively intervenes to bring immediate judgment on a people and their nation.

NOTE: While it is good to see the charitable work of the Southern Baptist Convention in feeding people in the Galveston area after the hurricane; surely they know their own guilt in both a lack of righteousness and of effectual prayer, and must be aware that even more important for them as a church, since that is really where God’s people are anyway, is to clean out the bad and unrighteous habits and to make their House of God more an effective and fervent place of prayer for the welfare of the nation. Do you not recall the famous verse of Chronicles, “If my people, which are called by my name…” etc.

21-9: Covetousness and Greed Destroy any Community or Church.

Hopefully, we are beginning to appreciate just how bad covetousness and greed, especially avarice which is greed run amuck, is in the sight of God. Did you not notice that in the list of bad habits of church members, those who "have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof" of II Timothy 3:1-8, and right behind the bad habit of “love for self”, is covetousness.
Have you noticed with the use of computer software like Windows, how often after you make an initial decision by way of a click with the mouse, that a little window comes up which says to verify, or do you wish to “continue”? So it is with “continuing faith” that goes beyond an initial faith and a tradition of faith, to a continuing of the present and the future. The bottom line of so much of the Bible, which might also be saved is part of the 50% of the Bible often ignored or overlooked, is the half that continuing salvation requires continuing belief. Effectively what God through the Holy Spirit—convicting of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment—does in the life of every “called” Christian (and “many are called but few are chosen”), is to each year over a period of forty years or so, say to the believer, “Do you wish to continue in faith?; or “Do you wish to continue to believe”.

There is nothing new from Bible Reports, although it may sound new to you as the half of the Bible on the Security of the Believer have dominated your life and faith, while the half of the Bible that your salvation is not complete with a continuity of faith has been neglected. You see both are true: both the Security of the Believer and “departing from the living God”, to borrow a few words from the Bible in Hebrews 3:12, are true doctrines of the Bible; and they are completely compatible, if we give them a chance to talk to us. What is being said here, that we have been heeding and listening to half of our Bibles. Well, those on “departing from the living God” after an initial faith are right there in the same Bible as
Continuing Faith

the Security of the Believer; however we have only been listening to the half that we want to hear, primarily because if we listened and heeded it would interfere with the type of life style that we have chosen. To show you how old the Bible reports are on this fundamental concept of “departing from the living God”, often in favor of other non-living gods such as possessions, it has been there all along in the Gospel of John, a Gospel most often considered as primarily for the children and for evangelism and initial salvation; it has been there all along as part of the primary gist of this book on BIBLE REPORTS FOR BELIEVING, although at least half of American church members have never caught onto the difference between “believe” as in the past, and “believing” as in the present and the future; and my goodness, it is the second and essentially half of the very stated purpose of John 20:30,31, that after an initial “in order that you might BELIEVE that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” comes the rest of your lifetime of forty or more years during which you must “and that by BELIEVING you might have everlasting life”. Does this mean that there are two steps to salvation? Yes, at least; and three if you include the final redemption of your spirit and body at the Second Coming of Christ, when “we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is” (I John 3:2).

22-1: Two Steps of Salvation in BELIEVE and BELIEVING of John 20:30,31.

You see how it has been right there in the stated purpose of John 20:30,31 all along, although we have slighted over it in our Bible Reports and reading, although we have seldom heard this part of continuing faith for continuing salvation preached, or we just plain are afraid of it because of the way we choose to live and want to live.

“...but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” (John 20:31)

1. What part of the two steps of salvation do you not see here? First there is the “Believe” as in “believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God”, something you did years ago and hold to as the sole necessity for your eternal salvation; but then there is the more weighty matter that takes a lifetime of faith to complete, in fact takes beyond that to an eternity of life, the “and that BELIEVING you may have life in His name.” In short, while you as a church member have been “called” to salvation, you may not be “chosen”--like God's original people who were called out of Egyptian bondage and saved from that fate to a new life in the wilderness for 40 years but then not “chosen” after 40 years of “an evil heart of unbelief” (Hebrews 3:12), unless you have added to
Continuing Faith

that instantaneous and one-time act of faith long ago in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. Would that it were so easy to be both "called" and "chosen"; but the chosen takes a long lifetime work of faith, and it is far more difficult to live by faith for over 40 years than it is to in one glorious moment in the past make an initial profession of faith. How did we ever get to such a concept and practice of faith and salvation, whereby it is so easy and so permanent to do something in one instant that will last a whole lifetime and eternity, without the work of faith required from John 20:31 of continuing faith, or which for simplicity we will call the second big step of salvation. And if initial faith and salvation is a little step, and certainly it is as it only takes one day or one hour of one day, as most of you know, then the second of continuing faith would have to be the giant step of salvation and everlasting faith. (Also see I John 5:13 on continuing faith.)

2. And even as we have overlooked the "continuing" in faith of the "believing" in John 20:31, along with the half of the Bible Reports that teach and preach that you must "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12), so we have also overlooked the "LIFE in His name" as being the span of our life all the way from initial salvation and faith to eternity.

(1). This "LIFE" is for well over 40 years of living, and by the way "an abundant life" of a fully developed life that includes the religious dimensions of personality reported on in the last chapter. Remember, as Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly". (John 10:10) True only the Apostle John uses this "abundant life" concept of the religious dimensions of personality, but remember that it came from Jesus; and it is only one of the teachings of Jesus that John chose to take you all the way from the initial salvation of "believe" to the continuing salvation of "believing".

(2). While we have learned and been taught well the everlasting aspect of faith encompassed in the "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God", it seems as though we have made a leap over "believing" to get all the way form "believe" to everlasting life. In other words, to state the real meaning of John 20:31 just by a faithful exegesis of the verse itself, also reinforced by the larger context of the whole purpose and meaning of the Gospel of John, and the even larger context of the whole 50% of the Bible that has been neglected: you must continue to believe, "believing" has an ING on the end of it for a lifetime of continuing, in order to have both an abundant life of religious dimensions of personality and an everlasting life.

Bible Reports For Believing
NOTE: This chapter is about that other 50% of the Bible, and of John, and of John 20:31, about the “believing” of “believe”, that we have neglected in our Bible Reports. Even as Reports in the Bible begs the issue of what you hear and what you have heard in the Bible you have received, even begs the issue of what you have read and heeded in your Bible readings and listening, so you have not heeded the admonition that “ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God” and it profitable... until you face up to the meaning and message of the other 50% of the Bible on “believing”.

22-2: “Evil Heart of Unbelief in Departing from the Living God” (Heb. 3:12)

It is much like the chicken and the egg puzzle, which comes first, as we try to untangle the Bible here in Hebrews 3:12 on whether the “evil heart” as a religious dimension of personality comes before the “unbelief”, or whether “unbelief” comes in a Christian life before “an evil heart” dimension. Untangle as a word and concept is used respectively here, having recognized as always that the Bible is the Word of God--divine in origin, absolute in authority, sufficient in its message, high fidelity in communication, and self-interpretative--what is meant by the use of the word “untangle” is like the Apostle Peter said of what others do with the other Scriptures given from God through the Apostle Paul, how some “wrest to their own destruction”; with exception, that we by a proper “search {of} the Scriptures” (John 5:39) as Jesus taught, we might wrest out of Hebrews 3:12, with the help of the Spirit and in total Bible context, above all adding the ALL SCRIPTURES that have been neglected and continue to be neglected, what is needed to keep this destruction of coming on our own lives that happened to everyone of God’s people that came out of Egypt, except for a few and almost all of those under the age of 21.

1. When any Christian or church member “departs” from the living God, that departure has been inspired by another kind of “god”, most often a material god given priority over the real and living God, to take the place in life demanded by the only God the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ and Creator of this universe. Let us quickly enumerate some of these other gods, which while they do not have names like “Baal”, “Asteroth”, and “Moloch” that the children of Israel went whoring after, they have other and more modern names like those listed below.

(1). Material possessions can be a god in our lives that take the rightful place of the Living God in our life, and for 40 or more years, which is about the terminal point at which God will stop putting up with such behavior from one of His creatures.
Continuing Faith

(2). Our job, reputation in the community, and other forms of status in American society and community can be a god that takes the place of the Living God in our lives for 40 years. You see, there is the stress of the long time of 40 years; as God is patient as He waits and waits and watches and watches, as He “tests and proves” His own people as He did in the wilderness, to see whether there is real faith there, and continuing faith, or a faith that is as superficial, non-life changing as that of the devils, “who believe in God and tremble” (James 2:19)

2. What does an evil heart do to your religious dimensions of personality?

3. Which happened first in your life: an evil heart as an absence of thinking about and priority for the living God in your life, or many years of unbelief.

4. We must in order to properly “wrest” Scriptures, at least the 50% we have neglected, see how from God’s perspective that “unbelief” is as evil, if not more evil than adultery, murder, and other sins like discrimination against individuals based on clothing, status, and money.

22-3: Covetousness Causes a Straying from Faith and Personality Destruction.

All sorts of bad things happen, like today in the collapse of the American economy, not only to the rich but in the words of the Apostle Paul in I Timothy 6:9 when Americans “desire to be rich”. You immediately think of the three categories of Americans who with greed have precipitated this economic crisis: (1) those who are filthy rich with millions and billions and keep working hard to accumulate even more, the 10% of Americans that spend 50% of the American money; (2) the other half of stock market investors, still working and retired, of over 250,000, who would “desire to be rich”; and (3) millions more of Americans with a dedication to the popular Gospel of Prosperity (believed by over 60% of church members and formerly in the history of American Thought called “The Gospel of Wealth” and “the corollary of success”) are daily saying I “desire to be rich”.

1. Paul writes about the heart-felt attitudes and dimensions of human personality that can prevent this straying from faith and personality destruction caused by the “love of money” (I Timothy 6:10).

“Now godliness with contentment is great gain.” (I Timothy 6:6)

NOTE: Now here are the religious dimensions of personality and character that can eliminate straying from the faith and personality destruction: (1)
godliness considered as “great gain”, or success in life, over the gain of money and the things which it brings; and (2) contentment. You might call this contentment “happiness”. Did you know that original in the Declaration of Independence where it was written “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” as the inalienable rights given by God to men, was originally written “life, liberty, and the pursuit of property”. No doubt it seemed too worldly and materialistic by those attempting to originally form one new nation under God, so what Americans have learned to practice as dominant in the American Dream, a Dream turned into covetousness and greed, has in reality made happiness as synonymous with the “pursuit of property”.

2. What initially happens to the personalities of Americans when they “desire to be rich”? It at first, before 40 years of departing from the living God and with “an evil heart of unbelief”, starts somewhat innocently, as many unsuspecting Americans are enticed by the examples of the wealthy and financial leaders (also their own spirit that lusts to envy and Satan) as they:

(1). “fall into temptation and a snare” (I Timothy 6:9). And here from the Apostle Paul, or really the Word of God through the Apostle Paul, you get the picture of rabbits or beautiful birds, and innocent ones at that, who motivated and enticed by the “desire to be rich” get trapped by these temptations that relate to money and what money can buy as possessions, status, and pleasures.

“But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare…” (I Timothy 6:9)

(2). also as they “desire to be rich” they inevitably, as we have seen in a tragic way in present American history and economy, they fall not only into “temptation and a snare” but also “into many foolish and harmful lusts” (I Timothy 6:9)

“But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.” (I Timothy 6:9)

3. This greed and covetousness inevitably “drowns” men and women's personalities in destruction and also inevitably leads to everlasting “perdition”.

NOTE: You have noticed the ups and downs of the Stock Market as one day those below 250,000 per year sell their stock to get out of the mar-
ket in order to rescue their money and profit from more loss, and then the next day as the wealthy 10% with 50% of the money glutonously gobble up that stock which did belong to their neighbors in order to buy cheap and profit greatly later, much like the rich man who built bigger barns. Here, the barns are more and better stock.

22-4: Misunderstood “Covetousness” has two basic Meanings in the Bible.

Covetousness as a sin, as a wrong against God, neighbor, and an investors’ own personality has been neglected in American religion and business. Today, increasingly leaders are admitting the end result of covetousness in “greed”; although not to seem too religious they are using the word “greed” instead of covetousness, and many like Bush who will not admit guilt and responsibility refer to the follies of American businessmen that caused this collapse as “mistakes”. (Remember it was Bush who promoted national leadership to get Americans away from Social Security and into the stock of 401Ks, Quickly, we will look at the two basic meanings of “covetousness” in the Bible, the first from the New Testament and from the Greek language of the New Testament, and the second from the Old Testament and the Hebrew word of the Old Testament.

1. Covetousness in the New Testament Greek is literally translated as “the desire to have more”. {You can check it in any Analytical Concordance like YOUNG’s.) And do you not see that this “desire to have more”, more of the American pie and more of the American Dream, more of the happiness through property and money and stock, is what created this economic collapse, at least one of the three causes according to the Bible.

2. Covetousness in the Old Testament with the Hebrew word of “betsa” literally means “dishonest gain”; and do you not think that when the executives of World Com and Enron, a precursor of what happened on a larger scale in this more recent economic collapse, were selling their own company stock to protect their wealth and leaving their fellow employees to lose their retirements as the 401Ks, disappeared...do you not think it was dishonest, and dishonest gain?

22-5: Covetousness is Destructive: (1) nationally to neighbors; and (2) to self.

Covetousness destroys both neighbors, the people in the land up all the way to the national level as we are witnessing now in the limping American economy; and destroys the individual personality as: (1) it leads the “lover of money” away from faith (I Timothy 6:10); (2) as it inspires “greediness”; and (3) as it “pierces” the individual passionately through “with many sorrows”.

Bible Reports For Believing 344
NOTE: On a lesser scale, you heard about the teacher of university finance, who stated how badly he felt for encouraging students to get into investments with such recently failed financial institutions as AIG, and etc. Yet all of the ads of these businesses were designed to entice Americans into a false sense of confidence that they had all the financial answers; and so most Americans thought, and so most government leaders thought and practiced.

“For the love of money (and stock, we might add as the more modern form of money) is a root of all kinds of evil {you know as Bush tried for us 8 years ago to define “evil” in terms of the axis of evil, we are sure that stock and money were not included in his definition even as incompetence and greed are not now included in his explanations of what happened, Bush knowing where his bread is buttered), for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” (I Timothy 6:10)

1. Covetousness and Greed creates a straying from Christian faith.

2. Covetousness, alias the love of money and what it can buy in status, creates greed and "greediness".

3. Covetousness and greed causes the destruction of human personality, from the least to the greatest, as these human personalities self-pierce--"pierced themselves through with many sorrows"--their own personality with sorrow, sorrow for themselves and their wealth and personality as well as sorrows for national neighbors and students for whom they were bad examples.

4. “To covet” and “covetousness” often condemned as wrong and sinful and destructive in the Bible of Old and New Testament, unfortunately still today has been thought of what you do against God and your neighbors, without though that it has a destructive effect on individual personality. To covet is bad for you; and over a period of 40 years taking the place of your faith will disintegrate your personality like the American economy has been collectively disintegrated. When the physicist stated “entropy” as the destruction in the physical universe of system and order, which by the way will happen at the Second Coming of Christ as the destruction of this old earth ushers in God’s creation of a New Earth for a new people, they did not have in mind the social application of this concept to the American economy and American personality: but wow, here it is!
Continuing Faith

22-6: What Caused the Recent Destruction of the American Economy?

Even in this time of economic collapse on both Main Street and Wall Street, those below 250,000 a year and those above, when it seems that there are absolutely no experts on finance and the American Economy, it is again a comfort to know like on all issues we can find an answer to what caused this collapse in the words of the Bible. Today on TV was a routine program entitled “Make a Fortune from Real Estate Foreclosures”, a testimony to more greed and the taking advantage of the people in the American land that lost their homes and real estate to foreclosure. (Surely you see this as a covetousness of what is your neighbors homes and property, a now collective violation of a command from God as a forbidden wrong. You should see more in this leadership on covetousness this Christmas as American leadership entices the American people to: (1) buy more; and (2) borrow more. Also in spite of the Bible admonition, “Do not loan money with usury”.)

1. It is not that some leaders in government, Bush excluded, failed to recognize the realities of “Greed” and covetousness as the cause of the financial collapse. Men that have been admired as knowledgeable and trustworthy as CEOs of large companies have gone beyond mistakes, and incompetence, into the religious realm of greed and covetousness. You can easily say that those of the banks, those of real estate, those who desired larger and more comfortable homes, did not exercise the Bible admonition of “godliness with contentment is great gain.” The gain they sought was money and the things that money can buy.

2. You can summarize the causes according to the Bible of economic collapse as: (1) the inevitable result of so much accumulated greed, among the greatest and the least, over so many years, as individual greed became collective, social, and national greed; (2) the natural human spirit within every American, like all humans, which Pastor James says “lusteth to envy” (James 4:5); and (3) the curse of calamities that God has placed on this nation since 911, no doubt, building up from the lesser calamities of fires and floods, the larger and more widespread effects on American people of hurricanes and droughts; and finally like the plagues that God brought on Pharaoh and the land of Egypt, to the extent that it effected every home and person in America in a pinch on the living standard and pocket book. It would seem that God, after many futile efforts since 911 to get the attention of the American people toward righteousness (covetousness and greed are the opposite of righteousness) and prayer, finally sent a plague or calamity on this nation that would get the attention of the American people. However, if we fail to see the real causes, the probability of getting a
proper solution through righteousness and prayer in the churches of America, is impossible!

22-7: Covetousness in America Has Made of Churches a “Den of Thieves”.

Even if you could see so many recent calamities on the United States since 911, such as hurricanes, fire, and floods, as calamities as part of a curse from God {the opposite of a blessing or blessings from God}, you probably gullibly thought that the recent calamities of the economy on Main Street and Wall Street had nothing to do with the responsibility of God’s people and the churches. Well, if so, please read again the Temple Message of the Prophet Jeremiah, or really God through Jeremiah, as God labels such houses of God as today in America as a “Den of Thieves” and as a HIDEOUT FOR BAD HABITS. You know now that you had a “Den of Thieves” in these large business institutions as they profited at the expense of their own employees and other Americans, exercising greed and decisions which eliminated the homes and retirement 401Ks, of millions; but although most of these executives are church members, if not all, and typical of their lesser counterparts in churches who also “desire to be rich”, and who soothe that desire over with the Gospel of Prosperity, also have made into a “Den of Thieves” what was originally intended to be houses of prayer and righteousness.

1. All this covetousness and other unrighteous violations of the ten commandments (Jeremiah 7:8,9) have continued as a normal lifestyle of American church members at the same time each Sunday they go into their own houses of prayer and God to effectively say that God is blessing us to do all these “abominations” (7:10) of violations of the commandments of God.

2. You see, this is what is so bad, when the church is made a HIDEOUT FOR BAD HABITS, it is as if in their own mind as stated by Jesus and Jeremiah, that God has blessed them for being so greedy and gluttonous. {Isn’t that the real message of the Gospel of Prosperity adopted by over 60% of American church members, that part of our faith and church membership is that God blesses us with greed and covetousness?}. And much of it started during the last 50 years as so many evangelist rationalized their own wealth and seeking of wealth as a blessing from God, leading and preaching for other church members to believe and practice the same Gospel of Prosperity.

“...and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, ‘We are delivered to do all these abominations. Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your own
Continuing Faith

eyes?’ ‘Behold I, even I, have seen it’ {you are not hiding in that church as much as you think, and your cover ups are not working as God still sees and knows all about it}, says the LORD.” (Jeremiah 7:10,11)

3. The nesting of Dens of Thieves in American churches started, like in the case of these evangelists of the Gospel of Prosperity, with doctrine and beliefs of “lying words”.

“Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit.” (Jeremiah 7:8)

Even worse than the misplaced trust in financial institutions of investment like AIG {and the leaders who lead to trust in them}, which turned out also to be “lying words”, is the trusting of lying words from evangelists and pastors of the lying words of the Gospel of Prosperity.

4. Those same “abominations” (Jeremiah 7:5-9) of Den of Thief churches are present in American churches today as Paul testified for such “perilous times” as these in I Timothy 3:1-8 as he listed the follies and bad habits of church members. And did you notice that number one in the bad habits as these churches make their own church a HIDEOUT FOR BAD HABITS is (1) love of money and number two is, surprise surprise, (2) covetousness.

5. Please notice also in Jeremiah 7:5,6 the obvious warning to business and governmental leaders {the problem with so many of our leaders in government is that they also are among that of incomes over 250,000 a year, and therefore naturally have their commitments and loyalty to this group, the “world knows its own”, sort of thing} because they have “merchandised” the people of God in their own nation. There is in Jeremiah 7:5 a positive way out of the dilemma from God, “For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor”; and then in Jeremiah 7:6 with more specifics of what the government, business leaders, and church members must do by way of a true execution of justice and judgment: (1) “if you do oppress the stranger”, (2) “the fatherless, and the widow”: (3) if you do not shed innocent blood; and (4) if you do not walk after other gods to your hurt”, recalling that any entity placed in the life before God, like money, status, greed, and covetousness is a false god.

22-8: Cover Up of the State of the American Economy Eclipsed by Churches.

As frustrated as Americans are over the sudden revelation of all these problems in the American economy, should be the frustration and concern of Americans,
Continuing Faith

especially church members, over the cover ups {hideouts} of a lack of righteousness and effective prayer in American churches that lead to this collapse. Yes, the American churches are responsible to the American people for the condition of the American people that lead to this most destructive calamity in the series of calamities on this nation since 911. Yes, you will not get them to take responsibility like the government leaders, religious leaders of the temple, and the people of God would not take responsibility for their own concept of “Den of Thieves”, nor for the destruction that was about to come on their own nation.

They had already lost the favor of God. God told Jeremiah that no longer did He want to hear prayers on the behalf of these people of God. God would no longer listen; and the rest of the plague or curses on the nation would naturally follow from the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe. It does not matter whether you chose to think of the “curses” of the Bible as (1) an absence of blessings from God, which of course they are anyway; or (3) a series of calamities from God because favor with God for a nation of God’s people has been lost. The result is the same in calamities!


Surely in our religious dimensions of personality, we do not want a faith of the sort that the devils have, where they “believe and tremble”? How can such fear as trembling ever be good for our personality, welfare, and development? Certainly it is not good for our eternal salvation, since we know the ultimate fate of the devils, Satan included as the head devil, as they are cast into the “lake of fire and brimstone” for eternity. Let us briefly but closely look at the very blunt and practical teachings of Pastor James in the book of James on this important distinction between SAVING FAITH and DEAD FAITH. While saving faith, according to James and the rest of the Bible, will do marvelous things for your personality—“eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those who live Him” (I Corinthians 3:9)—dead faith can kill you; and in fact will in this life and for the life to come in what is called in the Bible “the second death”.

22-10: Reconcile “workout your salvation” with salvation “not by works”.

Both Ephesians 2:8,9—“For by grace are you saved through faith, not of works lest any man should boast”—and Philippians 2:12—“work out your own salvation with fear and trembling”—are Scriptures from the Word of God, and true doctrine and teachings from God, and by the way also both given by God through the Apostle Paul as Paul wrote both the book of Ephesians and the book of Phil-
Continuing Faith

Paul had these two seeming contradictions of Christianity worked out in his own mind so that he also would not wrest the Scriptures to his own destruction, certainly the ones that he himself put on paper, or parchment, with pen and ink.

1. Salvation by grace, not of works of Ephesians 2:8,9.

2. The “work” in “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” of Philippians. Incidentally, how close do you think the extent of this recommended “trembling” in the Word of God is to the trembling that the devils do as “they believe in God and tremble” (James 2:19)

(1). Never, ever, forget that Pastor James, the half-brother of Jesus and the Pastor of the first church in Jerusalem until martyrdom, wrote “faith without works is dead”. (James 2:20)

(2). Since we are really reconciling Scriptures from Paul with Scriptures from James, as well as two different Scriptures and in context from Paul in Ephesians and Philippians, both of whom were Apostles with the commission to write oracles from God and consistent with and based on the teachings of Jesus, we naturally use some of the original teachings of Jesus as a basis for reconciliation.

22-11: “With the Holy Spirit”, the Place of the Spirit in the Bible Reports.

What we would get at here is really the place and activity of the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, on your own human spirit, the very seat and heart of your personality and character. What, in other words, does He do for you in the creation of good religious dimensions of personality versus the destructive and bad religious dimensions of personality.

1. When we have read or heard about the work of Satan who “goes about as a lion seeking whom he may destroy” (I Peter 5:8), how often have we thought of this destruction as the bad destruction of our religious dimensions of personality. To put it bluntly, Satan as the opposite of God and everything God represents in truth and righteousness, does not want you to be what God intended, created, and designed you to be, in this life and for eternity; and also bluntly, Satan will do everything in this world, subtly and overtly, to destroy your good, religious dimensions of personality, starting of course, with the darkening of your mind like has happened to whole civilizations as in Romans 1.
2. What the Holy Spirit, based on Bible Reports, will do for good and for your religious dimensions of personality.

3. How the Holy Spirit can practically and realistically keep your salvation and spirit in the good religious dimensions of personality.

22-12: Back To The “Fear and Faith” of I John 4:18.

Fear along with distrust in American leadership, business and government, has dominated the thinking of the American public since the truth hit home that our economy is in almost as much trouble as during the Great Depression of the ’30s, if not as much or more! Does the Bible have any message for this fear? You looked at this subject “Fear and Faith” in the previous chapter of chapter 19, now hopefully it has even more meaning to you in terms of your own good religious dimensions of personality, that of the faith and fear that builds up your personality in this life and naturally leads to everlasting life!

1. Really, it must be added that the Apostle John in I John is making an appendix to the “believing” of John 20:31 and of the Gospel of John, a commentary if you would on the second step of salvation beyond only “believe”, the believing of salvation and faith; and in doing so, although you have never quite thought of it like that, John is helping you through the Holy Spirit develop the good religious dimensions of personality.

   (1). For example in “perfect love casts out fear” (I John 4:18). What would that do for your personality if you were able to achieve perfect love, a love like the Apostle John had for Jesus and vice versa, that is to eliminate all fear and dread from your life!

   (2). Even as this kind of perfect love is almost impossible to achieve, since there are just not that many Apostle Johns around, and in fact will not be fully achieved as with all the best personality traits until we see Jesus, “and we shall be like Him because we will see Him as He is” (I John 3:2), just the goal of such an achievement and the progress away from fear and into more faith will do so much for us in this present life, as we patiently wait and work toward the full achievement of it on the New and eternal life on the New Earth.

2. You must understand “faith and fear” of I John 4:18 in the total context of I John as well as in the total context of the Bible, especially the Gospel of John, where John and the Spirit developed in the “believing” of John 20:31, the very foundation of the second and giant step in salvation.
Continuing Faith

(1). The Believing is synonymous with the “Be Baptized” concept of the “Believe and Be Baptized” which summarizes in many ways the 14 letters from the Apostle Paul.

(2). I John 4:12.

“No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.”


“Love has been perfected among us in this that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.”


“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may CONTINUE TO BELIEVE in the name of the Son of God.” (I John 5:13)

Wow, if you did not see in John 20:31, the second step of salvation, the “believing” of a lifetime right up to eternity added onto the initial believe of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, then you must see it here in the “continue to believe” of I John 5:13 above.

22-13: Today, Choose God’s Eternal Rest over Any Unbelief!

You can hardly count on tomorrow, so that only today is what you have to: (1) halt the trend of unbelief and unrighteousness and ineffective prayer; (2) correct that “evil heart of unbelief” (Hebrews 3:12) that causes a “departure from the living god” in favor of gods which do not profit and which really do not exist as gods, although sometimes such material realities as status, possessions, and stock; and (3) to halt any more departure in your life from the living God, and thoughts of the living God and His kingdom; and (4) to stop any more “hardening” from “the deceitfulness of sins” which can in a lifetime reap the destructive consequences of “strong delusion” (Hebrews 3:13).

“Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” (Hebrews 3:15 and Psalm 95:7,8)
“Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you will hear His voice: 'Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion,' as in the day of trial in the wilderness, when your fathers tested Me; they tried Me, though they saw My work. For forty years I was grieved with that generation, and said, 'It is a people who go astray in their hearts (there is that evil heart of unbelief with something as simple as covetousness, greed, alternate gods, and unbelief), and they do not know My ways.' {Obviously the ways of God come from the Bible Reports, many in this book, that God has given us to know and understand the right way and ways!} So I swore in My wrath {and no wrath is wrath and death}, 'They shall not enter My rest.' {That rest of the New Earth where God dwells eternally with a new people, created in righteousness and worship with effective prayer, and wipes away all sorrows, tears, death, and no unrighteousness can enter into the gates!} (Psalms 95:6-11 and Hebrews 3:12)
CHAPTER 23

What Were God’s People of Jeremiah Thinking?

Sorry for the extension of the chapters of BIBLE REPORTS deep into Isaiah and Jeremiah; but when you consider the difference between the message and messages of the Gospel of John which church members have received for many years, which they quickly will purport to believe and as very fundamental to them as “old stuff” as they have been believing in the Bible Reports about Jesus in the Gospel of John for years; however when you contrast that professed belief with what is manifest in the many churches across the land of the Americas, there is an obvious gap, and that gap can be filled with the message of the Prophets like Jeremiah and Isaiah that God’s people of today seldom hear or have known. It can be lamented of God’s people in the churches today like God Himself lamented in Jeremiah 1-6, that even the keepers of the law, or the Bible, have not “known Me”. The prophets are in trouble, the priests are in trouble, the princes of the government are in trouble, and the people in the land are in trouble. And there is little difference between the leaders and the people, “from the least to the greatest”, they are covetous and deal falsely. And the reason church members fail to recognize or acknowledge this, like God’s people of Jeremiah, is because they are right in the middle. So well and so thoroughly and for many years have church members and leaders developed so many excuses, like God’s people in Jeremiah, to rationalize and “beautify” their “ways and doings”, that those many excuses, or “lying words” in the word of God and Jeremiah, seem like the real thing. While formality has replaced spirituality, God’s peple also like in Isaiah and Jeremiah have become satisfied with that formality as a substitute for spir-
Like Today All the Answers

Of course, as you see so much depth and meat from the Prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah, please remember that they are the two sources of “Den of Thieves” and “Who has believed our Report” that both Jesus and Paul quoted to bring home the truths of the Gospels of John and of Romans.

23-1: From “Continuing Faith” of John to the Prophets Jeremiah and Isaiah.

1. BIBLE REPORTS.

   (1). From Jesus in John 12:38.

   (2). From Paul in Romans 10:16.


   (1). From the Prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 56:7.

   (2). From the Prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah 7:11.

   (3). From Jesus in John 12:38 and Matthew 21:12,13, two temple cleansings.

3. Formality in Worship over Spirituality.

   God through Jeremiah was sick of the formalities of the cultus—formal range of religious activities, objects, and official personnel—without true obedience and true worship in spirit and truth. "Circumcision" of the heart was demanded in Jeremiah 4:4, reminding one of Paul with “the true circumcision of the heart” of Romans 2:29.

   Also from Paul in II Timothy 3:1-8 centered around the words “having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof”; and after a complete listing of the bad habits that churches would make to grow a HIDEOUT FOR BAD HABITS, bottom line concluded that church members should find them and “not associate with them”.

Herein you will find a contrast between what God thought and what God’s people of Jeremiah thought. How could they be so wrong right up until the final calamity that took God’s own people into Captivity? What were they thinking,
Like Today All the Answers

and what were they doing in spite of all the warnings from the Prophet Jeremiah who stood daily at the gates of the Temple to warn the people of eminent and ultimate destruction unless they changed their “ways and doings”? Did they realize that all these “abominations” of the people, in the temple and in the streets of Jerusalem and all the cities of Jerusalem, were so completely unacceptable to God that God instructed his prophet Jeremiah to no longer even pray for these people? God refused to any longer hear the prayers of His own people, in the house of God or elsewhere; and likewise He refused to hear any intercessory prayers on the behalf of these people.

Surely we can not with confidence say that all in the book of Jeremiah and all before it in the book of Isaiah is “LIKE TODAY”. Much in America is like in Jeremiah among God’s own people, and with the seeds of history for it in the book of Isaiah, both not exactly the same. For example, in the frequent religious practices of the heathen religions around them, which Jerusalem and Judah adopted, there was the frequently sacrifice of their own children to appease other gods. A practice, of course, which does not happen in the United States unless you include the sacrifice of young men and women to the war in Iraqi, a war without justification apart from lies.

Many books of American Studies and American History and Literature have been written on what Americans think or have thought through the periods of American history like: Colonial Period, Period of the Enlightenment, Romantic Era, and so on. In this message/chapter we are stirring to figure out from the history of God’s people in Isaiah and Jeremiah, culminating in the Temple Message of Jeremiah, what the people were thinking in order to get so far on the wrong side of God. How could a people of God, of any generation, country, or time, think they had all the answers, when according to the message as given to Jeremiah from God they were so far gone as no longer to be prayed for? The prophets were all in trouble, all except the one lonely prophet, Jeremiah, that no one would listen to except a few princes on rare occasions; the priests were “all covetous” and “dealt falsely”; the princes of the government and the kings by and large tried to kill Jeremiah after they tried to discourage the delivery of his message; and the people were in trouble. What were they thinking?

23-2: Thoughts of Isaiah 55 for the Thinking of God’s People.

Isaiah 55 as an Introduction to the Temple Message of Jeremiah.

Thoughts of God versus Thoughts of God’s People. As we come to the Temple Message of Jeremiah in chapters 7 and 23, we will focus on what in the world
Like Today All the Answers

God's people of that time were thinking to allow them to ignore the message of God through Jeremiah. What is very obvious to us is the contrast even in America today between the thought patterns of God, and emphasis; and the thought patterns of God's people of any age, and to the extent that they are influenced by the dominant thought patterns of their generation.

1. Like today, God Himself decides the acceptable times that He will hear prayers from His own people, and the times when He will no longer receive intercessory prayers on the behalf of His own people. Although we concentrate now on the book of Jeremiah for the contrast between the thoughts of God and the thoughts of God's people, it is to Isaiah that we turn for the introduction which will momentarily become clear, partially because it is Isaiah that so poignantly announces “the acceptable time” and times of the LORD God, when He will hear and when He will not hear prayers. Other reasons you will find as we introduce Jeremiah with Isaiah 55:6-11: it mentions the contrast often between the “thoughts and ways“ of God as compared to even the thoughts and ways of God's own people; it introduces the similarities between the seen and unseen worlds with an introduction to “rain, snow, and the Word of God” in doing so it also alludes to the differences between the unseen world of God and the seen world where we see such objects as rain, snow, money, stock, profits, gain, success, and other things; and it provides a natural contrast with our own accomplishments, profits, and prosperity as compared to what God chooses to accomplish in the world and our lives, with what God wants to prosper from the word and words He sends through the Bible, what returns God gets on His own investments of His Word and Words, etc.

Isaiah 55:6

“Seek the LORD while He may be found.” (Isaiah 55:6a)

Today, we may think at first that this is not talking about God's people: because they have already in the past sought God when they knew that He was available to them, but that is exactly the kind of contrasting thoughts to those of God that God's people of Jeremiah had: like today, they were saying in effect--and in a few moments we will look at the exact words and thoughts... saying in effect, that God has blessed us, our house of God, our city and nation in the past, and He will continue to do that in spite of anything we do. In fact beyond that they were saying, “we are (actually delivered to do all these things”), alias, God is blessing us exactly because we are doing these things.
“Call upon Him while He is near.” (Isaiah 55:6b)

Well, in Jeremiah, God was no longer near as He instructed Jeremiah, the only prophet and priest in the country that was even listending to God...told Jeremiah that He was no longer near in that He would not heed, answer, or even listen to prayer. And so many churches today, in spite of the discontinuance of Wednesday night prayer and especially of the cessation of the effectual fervent prayer based on righteousness, in spite of these conditions in most churches, they confidently think (and this is another contrast between the way God thinks and the way churches think, that because it is group prayer in their church, it will be heeded and answered. Somehow it is thought that in spite of all the bad habits and the “Den of Thieves” in any house of God, that somehow when you mix all that unrighteousness together collectively among a large body of the people of God, it becomes holy; and that the prayers as expressed by that group become righteous and effectual prayers. What a fiction!

“Let the wicked forsake his way.” (Isaiah 55:7a)

“Ah, hah, preacher, I have you now as here it is obvious that God’s Word in Isaiah is talking about those outside the churches and temple, about the wicked, the heathen, the atheists, and the agnostic!” Well, brother and sister, read on in Isaiah.

“And the unrighteous man, his thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:7b)

You see, it is talking about any unrighteous man, whether he is in a temple or a church, or any house of God, or outside of such; and by the way, it is call for a change in thoughts, a change in the way of thinking among God’s people, because then as now, the people had ways and means of thinking that were and are so drastically different from the thoughts and ways of God. And then the clincher comes in the last part of Isaiah 55:7c, that it is about God’s own people, then and now!

“Let him RETURN to the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God for He will abundantly pardon.” (Isaiah 55:7c)

2. Not only is the LORD God Creator of the Universe more intelligent than we are; but also the patterns of His thought and ways are so much higher and holier than the thinking of even God’s own people!
3. The similarity of the Word of God, the Bible, and the words of God that fall into the lives of all God’s people to rain and snow is that: (a) it prospers in lives of faith and righteousness for the sake of God {God prospers}; (b) it is not voided but God receives back from His investment in lives; (c) God gets a RETURN on His investment; and (b) the Bible accomplishes in the lives of certain believers what God pleases.

4. One difference between the seen, like rain and snow and money and investment returns and profits; and the unseen, is exactly that we live in a world where the materials such as money and rain and snow are more seen and noticed than the unseen matters of God and faith.

5. Another difference between the seen things of this world such as rain, snow, and money and the unseen things of God such as faith and the Bible words that change lives is in the unseen things, God: (a) PROSPERS; (b) Gets RETURNS on His investments; (c) gets ACCOMPLISHMENTS in the world as well as in heaven; and (d) God gets PLEASURE more than us.

23-3: The book of Isaiah as background to fully understand Jeremiah.

Primarily we are after background to understand the history of thought of God’s people in the time of Jeremiah that allowed them to ignore the Temple Message of Jeremiah from God.

1. Like B.H. Carroll records, and based on Sampey that went before him, the book of Isaiah was wisely placed in the Old Testament ahead of all the Prophets from Isaiah to Malachi, not because historical sequence {Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, Amos, and Hosea were before or contemporary with Isaiah}, but because Isaiah spreads out the total message of Prophecy.

2. The key verse of BIBLE REPORTS, of this book, that of the “who has believed our report” of Isaiah 53:1 is suggested by Carroll and Sampey as the “Heart of the prophetic message, from Isaiah to Malachi, of the Old Testament {Please see THE MESSAGE OF THE WRITING PROPHETS, where all the Prophets, major and minor, of the OT are purported to have preached a singular message, this also is a thesis of unheeded Bible Reports. A suggestion, of course, that no more than a very small remant will ever believe! (Read Isaiah 1:9).}
Like Today All the Answers

NOTE: In order to appreciate this middle position of Isaiah 53, that is in the middle of the last 27 chapters of Isaiah, the chapters on Peace, we should quickly consider the top outline of Sampey on Isaiah.

____________Sampey’s Outline of Isaiah___________

I. Prophecies on Judgment, 1:2 through 35:10.

NOTE: For a world and present perspective, we should note that one of the detailed judgments, far beyond on Babylon and Assyria and Moab and Judah and Israel, is the precise judgment on all nations, a judgment that is still pending; and a judgment which can not be ignored in America today, as part of the world, even if this country can ignore and minimise the chastisement of the recent series of calamities on this nation since 911.

2. Book of Immanual, Isaiah 7-12.
3. Foreign Prophecies, Isaiah 13-23.
5. Book of Zion or Woes, Isaiah 28-33.

II. Historical Interlude: God’s Miraculous Rescue of Jerusalem from the King of Assyria in 710 B.C. Isaiah 36-37.

NOTE: As we look at the Temple Message of Jeremiah in order to understand what in the world God’s people were thinking, we may find some rationalization or justification in the heritage of their history that God had rescued them before. This would help somewhat to understand the concept of salvation and peace in spite of the fact that the ten tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel were now virtually gone, except for a few inhabitants, into Captivity, and in spite of the daily and eminent threats from foreign kings to their own freedom and survival. (Of course they trusted often in the nation of Egypt for their salvation, a false sense of security against which both the Prophet Isaiah and the Prophet Jeremiah warned! Sometimes we must wonder today, if the trust of Israel for rescue by the United States, and for Peace, is also not a false sense of security for the Israel of today!)

III. The Three Last Books of Peace, Isaiah 40-66.
NOTE: By the way Carroll likes to call these last 27 chapters of Isaiah on Peace, chapters 40-66, “One Great Messianic Poem”. What God is really doing here is to lay out his eternal plan for the earth and for the people of God. Comfort and assurance, that He has it all under control in spite of all the chastisements, punishments, judgments; and in spite, of the believing of the reports by only a “very small remant”. Each generation may have only a very small remnant of real people of God that are called and chosen; however, God will extend history long enough until the very small remants of each year add up to enough thousands of years to make a vast multitude that no man can number in eternity.

1. The Purpose of Peace, Isaiah 40-48

Now, we can appreciation that right in the middle of all this peace from God and all this summary from Isaiah of complete prophesy of the OT is the BIBLE REPORTS of Isaiah 53:1. And of course, we could not leave this background of Isaiah point, without a quick look at (1) the introductory words of Isaiah 53:1 how it is both on the salvation of God and the Messiah as the means of salvation, and (2) the atonement or crucifixion of Christ as predicted in Isaiah 53:5,6 and fulfilled in the BIBLE REPORTS of the four gospels, explained in the rest of the New Testament.

(1). Introduction to the BIBLE REPORTS of the Bible, Isaiah 53:1, as on God’s salvation and on God’s Messiah as the method of salvation.

"Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? {Often in history as in the times of Isaiah and Jeremiah, and today, it has seemed as though not only is none listening among God’s people, but also who in the world is left for the salvation of God, or “who then can be saved” is the rich and well-to-do, not automated for salvation.) For HE...” {And that HE, of course, is the Lord Jesus Christ who died on the cross for the sins of the world.} (Isaiah 53:1,2a)

(2). The atonement, crucifixion, or cross introduced in initial words, 53:5,6.

“But He was wounded for our transgressions....And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:5,6)
3. Isaiah is a large book, although smaller than Jeremiah which we try to summarize from the first six chapters and in the Temple Message; but as Sampey and Carroll also point out in order to give us a condensed view of the history of God's people, the Prophet Isaiah gives us in the very first chapter “A Preface to the Whole Book of Isaiah”.

23-4: Isaiah 1 as a Summary of Isaiah and of the Prophetic Message of the OT.

Once again from Sampey and Carroll, all of Isaiah and all of prophecy is summarized in the four points of chapter 1.

1. The charges and indictments from God Himself against God's own people. (Isaiah 1:2-9)

Even as the Prophet Isaiah had in mind all of Israel, that is Judah and Israel, when he mentions Jerusalem as the city of God and Judah as the nation of God's people, so God in the writing of the message of the prophets, just like we sing today about Jerusalem and Zion, had in mind all of God's people of all time and of all nations. While we might be inclined to think that certain judgments, charges and indictments, of God against all nations were obliterated on the cross of the Messiah; not so, those charges of God against His own people of all time still stand. God still chastises like in the calamities from nature on Judah and Jerusalem, and then finally captivity, in such calamities of nature as the US has seen since 911; and the ultimate judgment on all nations by God is pending for the United States as it is for the rest of the world! (Pending Judgment of God!)

What are those charges or indictments of God? They are six in number; and you yourself decide if they apply to America today, or at least which ones do and do not apply?

(1). God's people, that God nourished and raised, have REBELLED against Him: “they have rebelled against Me”. (Isaiah 1:2b)

(2). God's people no longer know God or even think about Him, “But Israel does not know, My people do not consider.” (Isaiah 1:3b)

NOTE: You see here in verse 1:3b how Israel is used for Judah and Jerusalem, for the united and divided kingdoms of God, alias for all the people of God of all time!
(3). God’s children are corrupt in their wickedness, and they have departed from the living God, “Children who are corrupters, they have forsaken the LORD.” (Isaiah 1:4b)

(4). God had already chastised them so much there was no room on their body left for stripes, and the chastisement had ceased to bring gain: “There is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores...” (Isaiah 1:6b)

(5). The country of God’s people would become desolate and the remnant would go into captivity. (Isaiah 1:7)

(6). An introductory preface is given here to the Program, Prince, and Purpose of Peace that is introduced by Isaiah, the message of the last 27 chapters of Isaiah, as a big ray of hope is given that there will always be “a very small remnant” of salvation that God will keep for Himself. (Isaiah 1:9)

NOTE: Face it, even like today, the long history of God’s people in the Old Testament with no exceptions is one of falling away, of rebellion, of chatiesement, and of wickedness; and when suddenly we want to shed a ray of hope on all this dismail history, we are practicing the prophetic message of the Old Testament as introduced by Isaiah, the bottom line of which is that God’s called people, that is most of them, will also degenerate into wicked and rebellious people, but that out of each generation, sometimes more and sometimes less, much less in the generation of Jeremiah, God selects a very small remnant of his own called and chosen people until finally He has enought for a vast multitude for eternity and for the end of time. And to think any less or any more, is neither optimistic or pessimistic; but is the reality of the prophetic message of the Bible, the realities from God Himself.

And we continue with the summary of the book of Isaiah and consequently of the whole prophetic message from Isaiah chapter one, with the four points of Isaiah.

2. God’s people had no shortage of religion and worship, but God’s people had replaced spirituality with formality. (Isaiah 1:10-17). We will find that also in the Temple Message of Jeremiah where God said that He was tired of their sacrifices and other aspects of worship, that to obey was better than to sacrifice; and I hope this summary point of Isaiah and prophecy reminds you of how Paul summarized the bad habits of church members in II Timothy 3:1-8 as “a
form of godliness without the power”, alias religion and worship and attendance without any internal change from God and spirituality.

“Bring no more futile sacrifices; incense is an abomination to Me.” (Isaiah 1:13)

NOTE: Please keep this definition of “abomination” in mind, when in the Temple Message of Jeremiah, God says after committing all these abominations all week, you have the nerve without even blushing before Me, to come before Me and say as part of your worship and thought, “We are delivered to do all these abominations”.

By the way, in Isaiah unlike in Jeremiah, there was still room for the repentance in the people; and here in Isaiah 1:17, we see what God considers to be the cure for FORMALITY WITHOUT SPIRITUALITY, whether in Isaiah, Jeremiah, or today among God’s people.

“Learn to do good; seek justice, rebuke the oppressor {something not very popular today from the pulpit or otherwise as the concept of tolerance of the American Democratic Faith overcomes the sense of godliness and righteousness of Christian and Bible Based Faith}; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow.” (Isaiah 1:17)

NOTE: Who is pleading for the widow that recently lost her home in America, or lost her retirement as her 401K was destroyed by American greed and selfishness. And while we might hear and want to hear of a few stories of care for the fatherless and the widows, no doubt in this economic crisis it has grown worse and worse for the poor as even from the government we hear every day of a redistribution of wealth away from middle class and the poor into the hands of those of incomes of 250,000 plus. As in Russia and with a noted professor of history, Americans are believing in the possibility of a divided United States caused by conflict over inequality in financial distributions.

That was quick, we are half through with Isaiah and all the Prophets of the Old Testament, that is as summarized in the first chapter of Isaiah in four points.

3. In Isaiah and Prophesky as summarized in the third point of Isaiah 1, Isaiah 1:18-23: (1) God offered grace and mercy; (2) God appealed to reason; and (3) God gave assurance of the deepest cleansings of the deepest pollutions.
4. Finally in the Isaiah 1 summary of Isaiah and all prophesy, Isaiah 1:24-31, God tells how the judgment on the ungodly is both punitive and correctional.

(1) Punitive judgment.

Even in the three books of peace, remember the last 27 chapters of Isaiah, the concluding verses of all three books in Isaiah 57:21, in Isaiah 48:21, and in the very last words of Isaiah 66:24, are eternal words of God's punitive judgment against the ungodly.


(2) Corrective judgment, "purge dross" and "take away alloy".

23-5: Surely Jeremiah 1-6 Provides Insight on the Thoughts of the People.

State of the Country in Judah with God's own People. (Jeremiah 1-6)

There are two ways to understand the Temple Message of Jeremiah in chapters 7 and 23: Either (1) to consider the background for the message in chapters 1 through 7; or (2) to look at what is happening in the Judah today of the United States. Since the first is less painful and more likely to be heeded, we will start with it.

1. First we note in Jeremiah 1:1-3 that the book of Jeremiah records "word of Jeremiah"; that it was to Jeremiah "to whom the word the LORD" (and we will presume that this is our same LORD God the Father, the same LORD of hosts of all Jews and Gentiles, the same God of all God's people); and the outstanding event was "the carrying away of Jerusalem captive" of 598-582. You might note for purposes of determination of the thought patterns of the people of God, that approximately one hundred years had passed since the background of Isaiah and one hundred years approximately since they had been saved from captivity to Assyria.

2. Jeremiah was ordained by God Himself as contrasted to all the official prophets and priests of the nation at that time, of whom the record says, "They ran and I did not call them" (Jeremiah 23:21); and Jeremiah was specifi-
Like Today All the Answers

cally ordained to be “a prophet to the nations” (Jeremiah 1:5). God had in the
book of Jeremiah a message not only for His own people of His own nation, but
also a message for all the nations of the earth. And we should note as we have
seen in Isaiah and will see again in Jeremiah that it was a perennial message of all
time for all nations. Especially the charges, indictments, and judgments of God
were lasting for all times, right up to eternity. You see that inclusive and for all
time nature in the words of Isaiah 1:10. {Pending Judgment on all nations!}

“See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to
root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to
plant.” (Jeremiah 1:10)

3. You will see as you have never seen in the inspiration of the Bible, and the con-
cept of inspiration, how God chose the very words of the book of Jeremiah.
“Behold”, the wording is in Jeremiah 1:9, “I have put My words in your mouth”. Please keep this in mind as God gives Jeremiah the words of the Temple Message
where we find point by point by God Himself a description of what God’s people
of that time were doing, what they were saying, and what they were thinking.
These are God’s own thoughts on their thoughts, and God’s own conclusions of
the way they were thinking and living, the favorite phrase for which were the
“ways and doings” of God’s people.

4. Even as you have learned from Isaiah one hundred years previously that God
had sent so many calamities for chastisements on His own people that no room
was left on their backs for chastisement, for they had become hardened against
chastisement, so you learn from both books that one “more calamity from the
north shall break forth” (Jeremiah 1:14). *

5. We are forwarned in Jeremiah 1:10 that through these words given to Jerem-
iah and recorded in the book of Jeremiah, “I will utter My judgments against
them concerning all their wickedness”. God will again like in Isaiah enumerate
both all his charges, indictments, and judgments, and enumerate the details of
their wickedness, even get into with the Temple Message that He gave Jeremiah,
the thoughts and sayings of the people. Of course, God has Jeremiah both
record the sayings of the people and what they thought about those sayings; but
then made the final judgment call on what the people were thinking when they
made certain common statements in the temple and otherwise. You will find that
some of the statements recorded from the people were actually part of the
praise songs in their temple worship each Sabbath day.
* God’s Calamity Control for Chastisement and Correction (II Chronicles 7:13).
6. The reasons for this judgment from God against their wickedness is given first on the general level: (1) because God's people had “forsaken Me”; (2) because they burned “incense to other gods” {you recall how even 100 hundred years ago and in Isaiah God was tired of their incense and sacrifices in worship, and you will find further in the temple message that during the week on rooftops throughout the cities of Jerusalem and Judah, the families as part of family worship and activity would offer incense to the Queen of Heaven}; and (3) “worshipped the works of their own hands”.

NOTE: Even if God’s people in the many churches of America today can claim innocence from forsaking God and from burning incense to other gods, and that is questionable, they can not claim innocence from the worship of the works of their own hands, albeit it be a temple or church dedicated to God, or a home, or a work building, and so on.

7. God warns Jeremiah in 1:18,19 that he has been made a “fortified city” because all the nation is going to fight against him: (1) the kings of Judah will fight against him and the message; (2) the princes, or government of Judah, will fight against the Prophet Jeremiah and his message; (3) the priests, of all people, and we will see why as we get into the Temple Message, will fight against him, by the way Jeremiah was the son of a priest of Anathoth and the people there tried to kill him when he would not cease to deliver the same message from God; and (4) the “people of the land” will fight against you.

8. Jeremiah 2 starts (2:1-3) with a "Go" to Jeremiah, to go “cry in the hearing of Jerusalem” even though the message is to be addressed to Israel; and once again rather than being to the divided northern kingdom of Israel already in a series of occupations and deportations by Assyria, is another way to talk about both, all of God’s people. The lament is of how the mighty have fallen from when they came into the holy land under Joshua to take possession, a lament over when “Israel was holiness to the LORD” under the judges, Samuel, King Saul, King David, and Solomon.

“Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob and all the families of the house of Israel. Thus says the LORD: ‘What injustice have your fathers found in Me, that they have gone far from Me, have followed idols, and have become idolaters?’” (Jeremiah 2:4,5)

(1). God goes back to His heritage in the 12 tribes of Jacob, later named Israel with the “all the families” of Israel.
(2). God at this point is begged for justice in the treatment of His people for Himself, and justice on the two-way covenant that was made between God and His people. Jeremiah is making this plea, before God turns around his thinking!

(3). God calls Israel by an interesting term in 2:3, "the firstfruits of His increase", a picturesque manner in which to say those 12 tribes of Israel were to be the beginnings of a building of a people of God; and notice at this point it is LORD instead of LORD of hosts which always implies the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews.

(4). Part of the covenant on God's part was security and protection, all surrounding nations that attempted to devour them would experience disaster. Among other victorious deliverances this would primarily remind Jerusalem of the miraculous deliverance of Isaiah form Sennacherib, the King of Assyrian, in 710 B.C. (2:3)

(5). As Israel had during the last 100 plus years gone to follow idols, they had simultaneously "gone far from" God. (2:5)

(6). The lament of God Himself over backsliden Israel continues in that His own people did not even say, "Where is the LORD who rescued us out of Egypt and preserved us for 80 years in the wilderness?" (2:6-7) God brought them into a "bountiful land" and led them in the dominance over their neighbors.

a. Not even the priests were saying during the generations since entrance into the land, "Where is the LORD?" They did not even miss the God who brought them there, God laments.

b. The scribes and scholars of the law did not even know and understand God. Along with the word of God through the Prophet Isaiah and other Prophets, the law through the Prophet Moses had been given to Israel; and yet those very custodians of the law did not "know" God.

c. The rulers were violating the law of the Ten Commandments and the covenant in that they "transgressed against Me", leaving us open to the possibility we will confirm in the Temple Message that simultaneous with a misunderstanding of God Himself was a lack of understanding of the real meaning of the Ten Commandments. A thing we do find prevalent today as gambling on many fronts is rationalized; as greed and great gain overlooks covetousness; and as intellectual honesty is divorced from integrity.
d. The Prophets, all except Jeremiah, did two basic things wrong in the sight of God, although we will find much more wrong with them especially on special revelations based on visions and dreams: first, they prophesied in the name of Baal like so many of their neighbors; and two, “they walked after things that do not profit.” {We will hear much more about what does not profit in the Temple Message.}

(7). The defiling of the land given by God was more than hundreds of years old as it started, God says, right after His people first entered the land (2:7b).

(8). As in Isaiah, in God’s sight “an abomination” is a word that God uses often in Jeremiah. Here in 2:7b, it is that God’s people have “made My heritage an abomination.” It is a sad day, especially to God, when a people have even made the heritage of their history an abomination in the sight of God. It would seem that the 80 year plus investment that God made to get these people out of Egypt and to preserve at least the younger generation of them was wasted as the returns from the people was an abomination instead of a blessing to the glory of God. You may recall the returns, profits, and prosperities as goals of God in Isaiah 55; however, the returns to God from His own people of the Jeremiah and Isaiah periods were very meager. *

9. Who among all the nations of the earth, among all the heathens, has it ever been heard that “a nation changed its gods, which are not gods?” Think of it, China in its long history retains its many gods; the Buddhist countries retain their gods; and the Muslims, mostly Arabs, retain the god of Allah and the Prophet Muhammed who wrote the Koran to emulate the Bible.

10. Profit comes up again on this subject of changing gods as God laments that “My people {a people God had chosen to be His own back at Abraham before they existed} have changed their glory”, that is what was the very “Glory” of the nation, that they had as God the God of the Universe Himself, was changed into something which would not profit.

11. The famous saying from God--My people have committed two evils (another word for two abominations) in that (1) they have forsaken Me as the fountain of living waters and (2) they have built themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water--is introduced as part of the lament in 2:12 and 13 with an appeal by God to the heavens as He can think of no higher appeal than to Himself as the real Creator of the heavens instead of the false gods like the Queen of Heaven:

* During these dark days, God also spoke of the new covenant and new heart.
“Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid (you get the implication here that such forsaking of God has long range and eternal implications for the final destruction of the heavens and the earth); Be very desolate (already God has decided on that the defiled earth and the defiled heavens would be destroyed in favor of a new heaven and a new earth along with a new people of God, and begins to leak out some of this ultimate truth--don't forget in the end passages of the previous oracles of God from Isaiah is a solid introduction to the new people, the new earth, and the new heavens), says the LORD. (Jeremiah 2:12)

NOTE: At this point in the reading of the first six chapters of Jeremiah, you would begin to think that much of the Temple Message will be an elaboration on the two evils or abominations of the people: (1) the forsaking of the God of the foundation of living waters, alias salvation now and eternally; and (2) the ways and doings, the people constructed broken cisterns that would not hold water, and sought to justify with excuses and praise songs, their "ways and doings" even in the worship service and attendance at the Temple of God. You will be startled by the accusation of God against them through Jeremiah's Temple Message as God says you don't even blush when you come before me with sacrifices and little praise songs of lying words about the abominations you have committed all week. You even have the nerve to say that the very reason we are delivered each year is in order to continue to do all these abominations. Later in the Temple Message, you will hear Jeremiah decry about "the lying words that do not profit"; and we will come to focus on some of these lying words as clues to what in the world the people of God were thinking.

12. Now the book of Jeremiah in 2:14 comes to focus on the northern kingdom of Israel as part of the families of God, and the fact of their Captivity under Assyria. Actually on the northern kingdom there were many raids by the Assyrians over many years, at least the one hundred between Isaiah and Jeremiah; some residents were killed, others transplanted, and more faithful to Assyria rulers and residents imported. Even the close neighbors of Nop and Tahpanhes {western lands of the Arabian desert} were taking advantage of the northern kingdom.

(1). You recall from New Testament studies that this was the beginning of intermarriage of the northern kingdom centered around Damascus and Samaria, that later caused Judah and Jerusalem to treat them as half-breeds, as even
Like Today All the Answers

the disciples of Jesus were surprised that Jesus spoke with the woman of Samaria at the well, and about living water.

(2). Such picturesque words from God as “Is Israel a Servant” (2:14-17) remind them of all these bad results of invasion from Assyria: (a) born as slaves in a foreign land, (b) the land of the northern kingdom constantly plundered, (c) youth of a younger country made the land waste, (d) cities were burned, became uninhabited and deserted, and (e) neighbors took advantage of them {by the way, Isaiah and Jeremiah both pass on the judgments of God against all these neighbors for the wrongs they did to the people of God, including the more distant neighbors of Assyria and Babylon. You may recall that Isaiah mentions “Cyrus” by name, the king of Persia who destroyed the kingdom of Babylon.}

(3). “Have you not brought this on yourself?” (2:17) God and Jeremiah were telling the people of Israel and Judah, that whether you recognize it in the face of all the lying words you speak in the Temple and elsewhere, it is true that you brought this calamity of captivity upon yourself!

23-6: Concluding Purpose and Prayer of this Book, REPORTS, Against Excuses.

A concluding prayer of this book is that you will see in the many excuses ("lying words in the sight of God) of Jeremiah, the same rationalizations and justifications that God’s people in the churches use today to continue a formality of worship mixed with unamended abominations in the sight of God, also based in the thought patterns and excuses of the American people in the land! Primarily the big excuses of: (1) since this building is a house of God, or a Temple of God, we are safe and saved in it, likewise about the buildings of our government, nation, and cities; and (2) that the sacrifices we make for attendance in these houses of God is sufficient for salvation in spite of our “ways and doings” during the week that God sees as abominations; and (3) the substitution of many broken cisterns of life, other gods and objects of loyalty, in the place of the Living God of the Living Water of Continued Faith and Salvation.

Like for God’s people of Jeremiah and Isaiah, it is the only way of continued survival for a nation of God’s people. Without the righteousness and godliness that comes from amended abominations like the three listed above, the series of calamities since 911 will continue unabated no matter how many times southern baptist and others rebuild; and without the effectual fervent prayer to God as a natural outgrowth of this righteousness, there can be no continued salvation for church members and the nation!
The immediate future for America is by no means simple, even as it has not been for others of God's peoples since Isaiah and Jeremiah. Always and ever, in Old Testament times and New Testament times, there are at least two major controls that God exerts of history day by day and year by year until the Second Coming of Christ terminates history as we know it:  

1. God always intervenes in the history of His own people, and in any nation of His own people--called and chosen--to "Correct and Chastise His own People Through Calamities--something you have seen before as "God's Calamity Control for Correction and Chastisement" {if you fail to see this as a true reality of God's intervention and control in history, for individuals and churches and nations, and in both Testaments, then you miss much of the intended message of the Bible for you, such as in Hebrews 12:5-11}; and 

2. there is this "Pending Judgment of God of all nations" that you read about in such Prophets as Isaiah and Jeremiah, a judgment reserved and directed by God to be executed immediately after the Second Coming of Christ. Certainly the United States will not be excluded from this all nation and pending judgment of God!

Also, do not be deceived by certain fundamentalists that have swallowed the NOTES on eschatology of the Scofield Reference Bible that Christians will have a "rapture" {this is not a Bible word and not a Bible teaching, although it is somewhat similar to the real "caught up in the air" of Christians at the Second Coming}... a dreamed rapture of false hopes that will rescue those still living during the final days of the Falling Away. Set that false deception and strong delusion aside right now in favor of the clear teachings of Jesus and of II Thessalonians. For example, who in the world in Matthew 24:12 do you think Jesus is talking about during the end of the Falling Away as He says, "because sin or lawlessness will abound, the love of many will wax cold", except the Christians living during those last days of the Great Apostasy called the Falling Away. Oh, these same fundamentalists strain at a gnat and swallow a camel as they strive for consistency on eschatology with that off the wall interpretation of II Thessalonians 2:7, where the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from earth during the last days of the Falling Away, as they falsely claim that this is the Holy Spirit in Christians only, already gone from earth in the "rapture". They thus overlook the significant fact of Bible history that what bound Satan for a long time, referred to as 1000 years four times in Revelation, was the Coming of the Holy Spirit on the first day of Pentecost after the Ascension; and further will does and will
release Satan near the end of the Falling Away to do his final dirty work is that very historical fact of II Thessalonians where the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from earth.

And you can imagine the effect on the world and especially on the churches and Christians that remain in America after this withdrawal of the Holy Spirit from earth: no longer will He be here to "convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; although of course, He will continue in Christians to do the many works that God and Jesus assigned to Him as Jesus taught in John 14-16. {By the way, these works of the Holy Spirit are elaborated on in the Appendix of this book under the title of "Rivers of Living Water".} And the rising tide of the "mystery of sin and lawlessness" of which Paul writes in II Thessalonians 2:7, increasing across the world and across the years of history, will find new impetus as both Satan is released and an appearance of the man of sin, that final "son of perdition" called the man of sin {perhaps Bin Ladin or a similar Muslim leader who will bring the vast army against Jerusalem and the camp of the saints}; thus overwhelming many churches and Christians during the "little time" of the end of the Falling Away, taking many churches and Christians away from their first love of God and Christ, or in the words of Jesus Himself as "sin abounds" from this rising tide of the mystery of sin and lawlessness then "the love of many" Christians will "wax cold". And while the history of the world under the law, even like gravity and inertia, has witnessed a steady rise in this lawlessness and sin with a few minor exceptions of revivals and reformations, we can reasonably expect to see a sudden peak in such with the simultaneous withdrawn of the Spirit and the release of Satan.

The good news of Isaiah and Jeremiah, indeed of all of the Bible is that the end control of God over history and the end of time is to create a new earth with a new people living under a new heavens. God clearly announced this "new heaven and new earth" in Isaiah 66:22, and other places in the Bible; a new Jerusalem in Isaiah 66:18 and Revelation 21:1-8; and a new creation of new people in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and many places in the New Testament. In fact, it would seem that far beyond the pending judgment on all nations, the whole "creations groaning until now" after sin entered, beyond calamity control and the rising tide of sin, is the determinative factor of new people and new earth.
CHAPTER 24

Top Two Abominations of God’s People

The excuses, rationalizations, and lying words of mistrust go on and on in Jeremiah 1-6 and continue in the Temple Message of Jeremiah 7 and 23. So many ways, like today, the people of God of both Israel and Judah, those still resident in the land and those captive, had to justify their “ways and doings”. The picturesque words of God that God gave directly to Jeremiah to record are that God’s people sought “to beautify their ways”.

24-1: The Rest of Jeremiah 1-6 is a Commentary by God on The Two Evils.

As pastors and other leaders of churches look at what is happening in their churches today and what is happening to all of God’s people throughout the land of the Americas, how they wish it would be simple enough to summarize the fallen nature of the people of God in the terms of only two sins: (1) that they had departed from the living God who is the fountain of living waters, the only cistern that will profit and hold water; and (2) they have amassed and built up alternative salvations with broken cisterns that will not hold water. Let us see what words God gives the Prophet Jeremiah to elaborate on these two great abominations in the sight of God.

1. You have forsaken the LORD your God right in the middle of His leading you in the way. (2:17)
2. Part of the broken cisterns God’s people sought was the non-living waters of Egypt, of the river Sihor, and of Assyria. You will find as we continue in Jeremiah and in the Temple Message, that much of the misplaced trust of the people in Judah and Jerusalem was that Egypt would come to their rescue against Assyria and Babylon. (2:18)

3. This Captivity in Assyria and Babylon, recall as predicted to be 70 years in Isaiah, was to be the real teacher to correct their wickedness and backsliding. (2:19)

(1). You see now what an evil and bitter thing this wickedness and backsliding is in the sight of God. The magnitude of the correction and punishment highlights the magnitude in the sight of God of the wickedness of the people. At this point, and so many other calamities like in Isaiah, it was the only way God could both get their attention and correct their “ways and doings”. And what was so evil (2:19b): (1) THAT THEY HAD FORSAKEN THE LORD YOUR GOD; and (2) and no fear of God was in them, says the LORD of hosts. Two more ways to elaborate in the picturesque language of God on the two evils of (1) forsaking the living god, and (2) building up non-living gods as broken cisterns that can not hold water.

NOTE: Suddenly you see the change from the LORD God to the LORD of hosts, noting that God is going to more and more direct His efforts toward the Gentiles to populate for eternity His new people of Jews and Gentiles {see the book of Romans on Jews and Gentiles}.

SECOND NOTE on today and in American churches: While we have as many excuses, alias “lying words” to rationalize and justify our own broken cisterns in our own lives and churches that have taken the place of the living God and His fountain in Jesus of living cisterns, we still by and large claim innocence on this violation of the first commandment of the law, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me”, as if things and homes and lands and boats and status and even family can not take the place God deserves in our lives and efforts, even in our sacrifice of service in worship! Yes, you must come to see as you read and hear Isaiah and Jeremiah, that there are many other broken cisterns of church members today that are every bit an abomination in the sight of God as Baals and Queens of Heaven. One such obvious broken cistern is the recent cult movement from Rick Warren and Saddleback of encouraging church members to find any self determined substitute for the driven lives and churches by the
Spirit and Christ, finding in their own “wants” (II Timothy 4:3,4) purposes to drive themselves rather than the Spirit and Christ. It is subtle, but it is real; and it has come as much from the people as it has from Rick Warren or any other self-declared leader of the people.

(2). “Your backslidings will rebuke you.” (2:19a)

4. The Noble Vine of a Seed of High Quality planted in the Promised Land had become a “degenerate plant of an alien vine”. {Alias, like today, there was no distinction or separation between the people of God and the Gentiles around them.} Their “iniquity” is clearly marked before God (2:20-22): (1) in spite of the previous salvation of God where He broke their yoke and burst their bonds; (2) the people were still, and over the past one hundred years were saying, “I will not transgress”, and yet they went right up every day to every high hill in the land and under every green tree to play the harlot with other gods; (3) while God planted them in the land as “a noble vine” and “a seed of high quality”, they had turned right before Him in His face as “a degenerate plant” and “an alien vine”; and (4) in spite of all the washing of their hand--obvious excuses and substitute worship and sacrifice-- to be clean, of lye and of soap, “your iniquity is marked before Me”, alias it is recorded by God in heaven.

24-2: “I Have Not Polluted Myself, and Gone After the Baals.

1. “I am not polluted”, and “I have not gone after the Baals”, the people were saying, just one of the sayings we will find in the Temple Message, that were lying words of rationalization and excuses. How can you say that, God says, when you in all the valleys are like a swift donkey, sniffing in the wind in her heat and time of mating?

2. “There is no hope”, the people were also saying. And the reason many of the people were saying that is because they had intermarried with aliens and they loved them. You see, why the New Testament cautions not to be “unequally yoked together with unbelievers”, always a source of a divergence of loyalty away from God; and why Paul says in Ephesians “that is not the way you learned Christ”, in other words not like the other Gentiles in the land around you. These people of God were determined, making a positive affirmation of loyalty to them above loyalty to God, saying, “and after them I will go”. (2:25). Already we begin to appreciate the admonitions against families throughout Judah and Jerusalem who on the rooftops of their homes would burn incense to the Queen of Heaven. Wives who married men of God remained loyal to the foreing god of the Queen of Heaven, consequently the children gathered fire wood and the fathers built a
fire to burn the incense of the cakes the mothers made. Or in some cases vice versa, women of God would marry aliens with loyalties to other gods. As goes the family, so goes the nation and the churches of the nation!

3. “Den of Thieves”. This famous quote of Jeremiah, and from God, of the Temple Message is introduced here in 2:26, and of Jesus later in the Temple, has an introduction right here with “the thief is ashamed when he is found out”, sort of like the difference between “godly sorrow that leads to repentance” and just the sorrow for being caught. That is the message of “DEN OF THIEVES” and “HIDEOUT FOR BAD HABITS”; and also a co-message with the seven signs of John, and other Bible Reports, of BIBLE REPORTS FOR BELIEVING, this book that we are concluding now. Those three Projects of 2008 and now continuing into 2009 for completion started with an effort at the seven signs of John, but with the introduction from John of “who has believed our report”, a quote from Isaiah 53:1, and the “Den of Thieves” incident of Jesus in John, diverted and developed into 3 simultaneous E-book Projects: BIBLE REPORTS FOR BELIEVING, “DEN OF THIEVES”, and HIDEOUT FOR BAD HABITS. Mainly because that is where exegesis leads; and in spite of what is being heard and not heard today from the Bible, these are the major messages of the Bible for the churches today! Churches are going out into the world to make people just like themselves, fallen people of God, and by so doing they became “seven fold more the child of the devil than they were before”. It has not always been that way; it is the time of history where we are now in the fourth of five stages of the falling away; and while like God did lament over the current state and status of His own people as compared to the past heritage of their history, the crying over spilled milk today will not take the place of the required righteousness and effectual fervent prayer to stop the series of calamities from the curse of God on American churches and the land.

4. “Stone and Tree, you are my father and my god”.

“As the thief is ashamed when he is found out, so is the house of Israel ashamed: they and their kings and their princes, and their priests and their prophets, saying to a tree, ‘You are my father,’ and to a stone, ‘You gave birth to me.’” (Jeremiah 2:26,27)

NOTE: As lest you think that you and your fellow church members and leaders are immune to this charge from God, then consider how you and your members also WORSHIP TREES AND STONES, in the brick and wood
of church construction and home construction, also effectively saying to stone
and tree that you are my father and my god.

24-3: Going Backwards and Not Forwards, Their Backs to God.

With all the answers, alias excuses and lying words, in Jeremiah we can continue
with an easy 17 sayings from God’s people to justify their “ways and doings”. What surprises us is that God took time to listen to all of them, and then
time to answer them through His Prophet.

1. “They have turned their back to Me and not their Face”, God continues in Jer-
emiah 2:27b; although He is predicting right now that in a time of trouble that
they will turn back to God for salvation. How like the ineffectual and non-fer-
vent prayers of church members today, who fall short of devotion and loyalty to
their God in times of peace and prosperity but suddenly in a personal or national
crisis turn in desperation to the Living God for rescue and salvation!

2. There were a lot of cities in Judah including Jerusalem, and God said that in
Jeremiah 2:28 that they had as many gods as cities: where are those gods
now, the God of the Universe and of hosts says; let them arise and make them-
selves known and felt; see if they can save you in these times of trouble.

3. Like the same message of Isaiah where there was chastisement of calam-
ities from God on the backs of His people that no room was left, here in 2:30 God
talks about how vainly He has chastised the people of Jeremiah.

4. The context is obvious here that although the children resist correction, the
“generation” and that is the word of 2:31 and implication of 2:30, is the fathers
of the children; and later when we come in the temple Message to the “Genera-
ton of God’s Wrath”, we must actually make it at least two generations, that of
the fathers and that of the children.

5. “We are lords; we will come no more to you.” (2:31b) The princes, proph-
ets, priests, and people of the land were effectively saying to God, “We are run-
ing things now, and we no longer need any allegiance to you.”

6. “My people have forgotten Me days without number.” (2:32b) We have
read evidence of it for over 100 hundred years in Isaiah and Jeremiah, and here
in the first six chapters of Jeremiah have read about the heritage of departure
from the living God that started right after the people came into the Promised
Land.’ And some of those ways get more specific.
(1). Because of “love of an alien of a foreign god”, they have attempted in many ways and over many years to “beautify their ways” (2:33), a picturesque manner in which to say excuses, rationalization, and “lying words”.

(2). Ways they sought to beautify or cover up like with cosmetics their true colors: (a) they taught the wicked woman their ways, (b) they sacrificed the blood of poor innocents.

7. The people were saying, “Because I am innocent, surely the wrath of God will turn away from me.” (2:23) and they were saying all the time, “I have not sinned”. Well, now does that not sound like God’s people in the churches today!

8. God has rejected “you trusted allies of Egypt and Assyria” (2:37); and as they went out of the land with “their hands over their head” to Assyria, so they will also go to Egypt.

9. In the series of calamities of the last one hundred years, God Himself has “withheld the showers” and declared “no latter rain” (3:3).

24-4: Dialogue Between God and Jeremiah on the Two Evils. (3:6-6:30).

1. What the LORD said to Jeremiah in the days of Josiah the king about backsliding Israel? (3:6-10)

2. “Backsliding Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah.” (3:11-13), so God gives Jeremiah a message for Israel of the north, some more words and a message.

3. “Return, O backsliding children”, says the LORD in order to receive restoration (3:14-18)

4. Jeremiah objects in the dialogue with God, “But I said” (3:19) and “I said” (3:19b).

5. A reply came from the “desolate heights” which was an echo of the weepings and supplications of the children of Israel (3:21-4:2)

6. What the LORD says to the men of Judah and Jerusalem. (4:3-4).

8. Jeremiah intervenes with dialogue, starting with “Ah, Lord GOD”, surely you have deceived this people and Jerusalem into thinking they would have peace, and now it is the message of the sword (4:10-18), and Jeremiah then with more humility says before God what he will preach to them.

9. Jeremiah begins a lament now for what will happen to the doomed nation in 4:19 which continues through 4:26.

10. God responds with two curses, 4:27-30, the one more immediate and the one for the end of the earth.

11. God appeals to Jeremiah’s conscience for His people to find one righteous man in Jerusalem, 5:1.2, and states how the people are saying, “As the LORD lives: surely they swear falsely”.

12. Jeremiah bows to the justice and truth of God. (5:3-6).

13. God detects some reluctance and sarcasm, mainly sympathy for the people, in the statement of confidence from Jeremiah, continuing with how in the world can He forgive and pardon a people for what they have done and remain a just God, 5:7-9, and reiterates in other words the two major sins of His people again.

14. “Therefore thus says the LORD God of hosts” (5:14), the God of Gentiles and of nations. (5:14-19)

15. “Declare this in the house of Jacob and proclaim it in Judah, saying”: (5:20-31)

16. “Children of Benjamin, gather yourself to flee from the midst of Jerusalem” (6:1-5).

17. “For thus has the LORD of hosts said:” (6:6-8)


24-5: The Temple Message of Jeremiah. (Jeremiah 7 and 23)

NOTE: While you can read the details of the Temple Message, and should as background from the two chapters of Jeremiah 7 and 23, and also in the last chapters of HIDEOUT FOR BAD HABITS (“The Temple Message of Jeremiah”) and from “DEN OF THIEVES” (The “Ways and Doings” of God’s People), in this last chapter of BIBLE REPORTS the focus will be on what in the world God’s people of Jeremiah, and of today, were thinking and are thinking that can lead them to ignore the need for righteousness and the effectual fervent prayer that goes with it in favor of “abominations” and excuses. In short, it is the purpose of this message/chapter to contrast the “thoughts” and thinking of God with that of God’s people, God’s people of Jeremiah, God’s people of Jesus’ day in the Temple when He quoted Jeremiah that they were making His Father’s house a “Den of Thieves”; and I’m sorry, but decide for yourself, as God’s people today in churches across America are repeating the follies and mistakes, even abominations, of Jeremiah.

1. Their faith and confidence was no longer in the living God, but in the places and acts of their own worship sacrifices.

“Do not trust in these lying words, saying, ‘The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD are these.’” (Jeremiah 7:4)

   a. They trusted in their buildings of the temple, the city, and the nation of Judah more than they trusted in the living God.

   b. It was a ritual and formality of weekly worship that they went through each week, and even during the week, a sort of a chanting praise song to give them group confidence, singing in praise and repeating in unison like in worship services today little quotations. In the case of this praise song which was superficial, soft, subverted, and sentimental, it was “the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD are these.”

   c. God said these are “lying words” so that they knew better: they knew in their hearts that no longer where they worshiped belong to the LORD God; no longer was Jerusalem the city of God and the city of peace; and no longer was the little nation of Judah a dedicated people of God. It is hard to tell whether their worse abomination in the sight of God was such lack of trust in God, or
Like Today All the Answers

more because they lied to themselves and others that these buildings were still
dedicated primarily to the worship and service of God.

d. What they were really lying about, which enraged God to the extent that
He no longer heeded their prayers or intercession for them, was the lack of con-
tinued faith in Him. They didn’t even blush about these abominations, God said.
(Jeremiah 8:12)

e. Like today, they deceived themselves on the group level into a psychologi-
cal warfare whereby the ritual and sacrifices of just coming to the house of God
and giving, would provide salvation to them.

f. The big lie was that they were still God’s People. It was no longer true, and
they knew that it was no longer true!

2. They thought since there was no immediate punishment on what they were
doing, in spite of it being abominations in the sight of God, was right. See, if
they were wrong, not only would there not be continued material blessings, but
also immediate punishment.

“We are delivered to do all these abominations.” (Jeremiah 7:10)

We must be right; we must have all the right answers; and we must be doing what
is right: because aren’t we still here, and don’t we still have material blessings,
have a house of God, a city of God, and a nation of God’s people!

3. They really thought they could violate all the commandments of God during
the week, each week; and then have the nerve to come stand before God in the
very presence of God and in the house called by God’s own name to make a public
profession of faith that, “We are blessed to continue to do all these things.”
This is the will of God for us and for our house of God and for our nation! Why,
because, this is the way it is!

“Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to
Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, and then come and
stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, ‘We are
delivered to do all these abominations?’” (Jeremiah 7:9,10)

a. They were precursors of Budhist in that they worshipped and served all the
gods in case they might neglect one of them.
b. Oh yes, they had and knew the ten commandments; but like today they had so rationalized the meaning and made it so legalistic as to lose any real righteousness.

c. Just like today, they rationalized that if their worship of other gods was family activity, then it was sanctified in the sight of God. The whole family was involved in weekly worships and other activities for the Queen of Heaven: the children would gather firewood, the fathers would be the fire, and the mothers would bake cakes of incense to the Queen of Heaven. It was right, it was just, it was fair, and it was righteousness because it was family activity!

d. Certainly this was not a direct quote of the people, that is to recognize that all these abominations were abominations. This was a word from God, and a word--abominations--chosen by Jeremiah to explain what the people were doing and what they were thinking.

e. They knew the other Bible which was part of their religious heritage had a lot to do with abominations in the sight of God; for example the six abominations of Proverbs, the seven that God hates. And to recognize those as real abominations would have meant to recognize how they daily and weekly over many years violated the Ten Commandments themselves.

f. One commandments is not mentioned here, “Thou shalt not covet”; as it was the subject of a later message and at another gate. A message where covetousness was the primary subject.

“Because from the least even to the greatest everyone is given to covetousness; from the prophet even to the priest everyone deals falsely.” (Jeremiah 8:10)

3. They thought the very abominations of their “ways and doings” were the reason that God delivered and blessed them.

4. They thought the past blessings of God were sufficient to take care of them, no matter how or what their “ways and doings” were. In other words, since God had blessed their nation in the past, God would always continue to bless their nation in the present and the future.

5. They ignored the stipulations of the covenant with God for righteousness.
a. God's people ignored the detailed requirements of the covenant for righteousness and effectual prayer and worship.

b. God still requires righteousness from His people today, the real difference is that it is righteousness more by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

6. Today, there should be some blushing when all the right answers are spoken after the unheard of series of calamities since 911 of fire, floods, draughts, hurricanes, earthquakes, and economic disaster.

7. They put their own sacrifices of public worship ahead of any real faith in God and commitment to real righteousness. They ignored the covenant between their people and God, and that it was a joint covenant between them and God.

“For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.” (Jeremiah 7:22,23)

a. Then as now the sacrifices of worship and service can never take the place of obedience to the righteous commandments of God.

b. A people that covenant with God have no right to unilaterally decide what is righteous in the sight of God and what is not righteous in the sight of God. Like it was written in the covenant of the Ten Commandments was the way it remained in the sight of God.

c. Then as now, a people can only be the people of God, or can only claim to be the people of God, when God agrees that there is righteousness among them.

8. Some thought they could hide from God in the group.

9. Like today they thought the special revelations from their official prophets and priests, revelations of peace and the Gospel of Prosperity, could be substituted for the real Word of God if enough of them agreed on it and stated it loudly and enough.
"How do the 7 miracle signs of the Gospel of John relate to me?" was a recent Bible search question on one of the websites of SunGrist_Bible. So important is this to the very gist of this book, BIBLE REPORTS FOR BELIEVING, that it must be answered with the highest priority; and in this last chapter of the book. This chapter is addressed to you surfer of the web, and of that question, as well as the many who delve into this book or the Gospel of John itself without realizing the personal significance of the messages and stated purpose of John to them. If you see the messages of the miracles, you are ready for the salvation, now in this life and forever, of the stated purpose of John.

"And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." (John 20:30,31)

Perhaps the problem with seeing the personal nature of the Gospel of John, from the stated purpose or from reading the Gospel for yourself, or even reading about the Gospel of John in this book, is a failure to understand how ORGANIZED is the Gospel of John. Even that a book of the Bible would so clearly express the gist or purpose for the writing of that book shows a high degree of planning and organization: (1) that of all the miracles performed by Jesus, only 7 are selected to be in the Gospel of John; (2) these seven are carefully chosen
and the whole life and teachings, with focused messages centered around each miracle—before the miracle is recorded, after the miracle is recorded, or both—are also chosen as part of the organization of the Gospel (it is not that the Apostle John, an eyewitness of the whole public ministry of Jesus, in any way changed the sequence of the life and teachings as lived by Jesus of Nazareth, nor can not be harmonized with the synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke—which by the way were in the possession of Pastor John as he wrote from Ephesus near the end of the first century—it is just that Jesus taught so much and performed so many miracles, that it was easy to chose 7 messages to go with 7 miracles; also assisted by the fact, as often stated by Jesus that the miracles were like signposts to point to the teachings and eventually to God the Father, Who gave the teachings to Jesus and sent Him for the purpose of making them known as well as for dying on the cross for the sins of the world, then showing that resurrection was possible though faith in Jesus as the firstfruits of a resurrection from God); and (3) so that all miracle signs, all teaching signs, all signs of character, all signs of actions such as cross and resurrection are carefully chosen to generate the two steps of believing in salvation:

a. To believe initially that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and

b. To practice the "Continuing Faith" of believing, the One Baptism of the One Salvation, in order to have abundant life now, like a flowing fountain of living water, and forever salvation on the New Earth with all of God’s New Creation and with God and Christ themselves as Gentiles are planted on the New Earth surrounding the New Jerusalem of saved Jews, the Apostles, and God and Christ.

25-1: Top Message of 7 Miracles is Faith in Jesus as Co-Creator of Universe.

If even one of the miracles, like the turning of water into wine or the causing the lame man to walk, creates enough faith in Jesus in your heart for salvation, then the top message of the Gospel of John, and the miracles of John—that is, to get you to believe all the way to salvation—has been achieved for you personally. Even as Phillips made clear years ago in the book YOUR GOD IS TOO SMALL, that the God of this Universe, of the Bible and the Father of Jesus, knows radar, computers, science and technology with the arts and higher education, so Jesus was an expert then as now on all the sciences and human knowledge; and once you have come to see Jesus as the "Word" of the introduction of John 1, the "Him" of "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not
7 Messages for 7 Miracles

anything made that was made” (John 1:1), then you will have no problem with the fact that Jesus, in spite of some accepted limitations as God-man, the Son of Man and the Son of God, could easily transcend all the norm in natural and biological science to do miracles; and consequently go step by step, and all the way, to faith in Jesus as both the Christ, the Promised Messiah, and as the Son of God. Even as the miracles demand attention that they have to come from God Himself, so the works with a total of four witnesses mentioned by Jesus in His teachings; and the first that you might really consider as 8 messages on the 7 miracles, as it is at the top book level of the book of John, as works from God the Father Himself were witnesses to Jesus. John the Baptist was a witness to Jesus as “the lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world” (John 1:29); the existing Scriptures testified often to Jesus point by point as He fulfilled the predictions and other prophecies of the Old Testament, especially of Isaiah; and Jesus with a sterling character and life claimed to be the Son of God. However in John 5, in the continuing teaching ministry of Jesus as given to Him by the Father, Jesus puts at the top of the list of witnesses to His Sonship as the Son of God the works from God:

“But I have a greater witness than John’s; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish--the very works that I do--bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.” (John 5:36)

25-2: Message on “Wine” to go with the Miracle of the Wedding Feast.

1. The Miracle of Water into Wine.

Surely you recall that the first miracle of Jesus in the Gospel of John was the turning of water into wine, John 2, a miracle of (1) concern for a family and of personal interests in the routine affairs of life; (2) a miracle that engendered faith in the first disciples that became Apostles and spread the Gospel. Well, guess what the message on wine is not in John, but in the three other Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. These gospels that the Apostle John as Pastor at Ephesus had in his possession at the time of John’s writing, had not doubt referenced to people often, even taught and preached from; so that not only is John recommending to you the reading of these synoptic gospels, also acknowledge their authority as Scriptures from God, but also forcing you to go to one or more of them to get your message on the first miracle, the message on wine to go with the miracle of turning water into wine. Hey, the Word Who created grapes and the fermenting process, and Who created water, why should He not also be the Lord over Wine and Water and Nature.
7 Messages for 7 Miracles


For our message on the first miracle, and on wine, we will briefly look at Matthew 9.

FASTING LIKE THE PHARISEES DID WAS OKAY, AND THEIR TRADITIONS AND RELIGION, BUT WHEN YOU HAVE JESUS RIGHT THERE WITH YOU, THEN YOU HAVE THE NEW WINE AND NEW WINESKINS.

NOTE: MESSAGE #1 of Miracle #1: Jesus, like new wine and new wineskins, has priority in life, church, and salvation, yea in personal relationships with God, over religion, tradition, and community practices.

25-3: Message on Life to go with the Healing of the Nobleman Son.

1. The second miracle, number two (see John 4:54), where Jesus restored the life of the Nobleman’s son from a distance.

Even as we sometimes do not have the “warm fuzzy” of nearness of God and Jesus, we note that among other things Jesus performed this miracle of healing at a distance. Jesus was back in Cana where He had previously turned the water into wine, and the Nobleman’s son, at the point of death, was over in Capernaum, so that when Jesus declared to the man, “Go your way, your son lives” (John 4:50), the results were both instant in time and at a distance as the record records that when the Nobleman arrived home to hear that all was well with his son, and asked when he began to amend, it was the same time Jesus said remotely, “your son lives”.


“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly”. (John 10:10)

Really, if we are faithful to the text and the context, we will admit: (1) that the life now is life, and (2) the abundant life like the water of life on which Jesus so often taught, like to the woman at the well of Samaria, that gushes out into everlasting water and life; was that of eternal salvation and life; and (3) we will recognize in context that this is the second half of a verse, and of a teaching of Jesus to contrast how is the “door of life” and how the many who came before Him were thieves. The first part of John 10:10 is:
Jesus is the great miracle giver of full time and abundant forever life. He is the Master of Life and of miracles of life. Of course, the ultimate life that He will give you personally is the resurrection from the dead as Jesus is also Lord over life and death, but more to come on that in the last miracle of bringing Lazarus out of the grave and from death.

25-4: A Message on Health for Healing of the Man of Infirmity 38 years.

In this day and time when the false Gospel of Health and Prosperity has swept the nation, perhaps a little less this year as many church members suddenly realize that they have lost their prosperity and still have faith, it is good to look carefully at the scripture about faith-healing by Jesus of the man who could not walk because of an infirmity of 38 years.

1. Obviously there had been some efforts at faith healing by the man and his associates during those long suffering years of 38 years.

   Since someone had placed him by the pool of Bethesda at the sheep gate of Jerusalem in the midst of the multitude of sick people for the stirring of the water by an angel and healing. (John 5:1-4) Although they were too busy to stay with him, since his complaint to Jesus that there was not one to help him to the water after the stirring of the angel.

2. It is obvious that God, like always in history, was active in faith healing business because at a "certain time" an angel from God and heaven would come down to stir the waters, and the first one by the pool to step in would be healed.

   (1). As early as Job, no doubt the earliest book and Prophet of the Bible, God is known to have healed Job; because with his restoration of family, prosperity, and status came also healing.

   “And the LORD restored Job’s losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.” (Job 42:10)

   It is not coincidental but incidental that when Job was completely restored, health and wealth, it was after “he prayed for his friends”. How often in so-called faith healing meetings do the sick come forward for healing, and pause to
pray for their friends. Well, in reality is like the healing of God, most generally can not be sudden and in a meeting, but over a period of time as that is the preferred manner in which God always works in the Bible. Why get another involved of questionable righteousness with obvious dominant motivations toward status and wealth, when it is your own faith and prayer to God that will heal you. Don’t be surprised, however, in the full context of Bible teachings on the subject of faith healing if the answer to your prayer and faith is not healing, like with Paul who prayed several times that his thorn in the flesh would be removed, and the answer was not in healing; and Job who suffered righteousness for no wrong which he had done. If God answered all feeble prayers there would be little death and dying in the world; which points out the collective human race and history long curse on the world, nature and humans, because of the original sin that distorted, maimed, and made so many wrongs in the beautiful world that God first created. And on top of that long term, and eventually terminating curse from God, there is also the obvious collective curse (curse, remember is the opposite of a blessing and series of blessings) on America since 911--and which now after all the droughts, fires, floods, hurricanes, has touched every home in the economic crisis, making it opposite that like in Jeremiah, Isaiah, and so many other books of the Bible, God is involved in the chastisement of this nation in order to restore righteousness and the effective, fervent prayer that goes with it. In other words, while your lack of healing may not be because of wrongs which you have done, it could be from the wrongs of your society or of the human race; and you are just fortunate enough to be both American, human, and a church member.

(2). Elijah healed people by way of the power of God and the prayers for friends; and surely in Israel through the years, there were many other examples of healing by God on a one-to-one basis where it did not hit the news, even the news of the Bible, just the 7,000 who did not bow the knee to Baal about whom God told Elijah were not known to Elijah or the public.

3. The consistent healing of the multitude before and after Jesus was on a first come first serve basis much like our hospitals today. Only the first of the multitude to step into the pool after the stirring of the water was healed; and the kinds of sicknesses of the multitude was great: blind, lame, paralyzed, and just plain sick. (John 5:3)

4. In the historical context of the day, we should realize that in Palestine and the Roman Empire were medical doctors like Dr. Luke who traveled with Paul and therefore was the resident, or itinerant physician for the whole evangelis-
5. Evidently, also like today, many in the multitude needed an illness to have something to talk about, or needed some attention as Jesus must have had that in mind as He asked the man with the infirmity of 38 years, “Do you want to be made well?” (5:6)

6. Jesus after the man explained his helplessness to get to the water, since he was so slow, perhaps even crawling—and the helplessness was because he had no family or friends to be there and help him—told the man, “Rise, take up your bed and walk!” (5:8)

7. The man did not even know Who healed Him by name as when the Jewish leaders questioned him about the violation of the Sabbath because of the healing on the Sabbath; however later Jesus found him in the Temple (5:13,14), telling him, “See, you have been made well (it took some time for the man and others to know). Sin no more, lest a worst thing come upon you.”

Do not misunderstand, for often Jesus would correct His disciples who held like the religious people around them, the false concept that either the man or his family had sinned and that was the reason for the illness. However, the worse thing like for all who sin, was that habitual and continuous sin could lead to death and the second death of eternal damnation.

8. It was Jesus, the man told all, that made him well. (5:14) And you bet that Jesus heals today, forgives from sin, and makes people whole and well both physically and spiritually; and like for other cases of healing in John and the rest of the Bible, for the glory of God. You might try the method of faith healing that worked here, and in the privacy of prayer between you and God as God likes to hear and honors prayer from hidden places since He is the hidden God, pray for your friends, and expect healing!

25-5: Fourth Miracle—Sign and Message on Bread and Living Bread.

1. The Miracle and the Message.

John has made it easy for you to get both the message and the impact of the miracle on bread in John 5, the miracle is recorded in John 6:1-14 where Jesus fed five thousand men, besides women and children, with five barley loaves of bread and two fishes (by the way Jesus the Word also co-created the fishes of...
the sea on the fifth day), the teaching by Jesus on Himself as the bread of life that others must personally eat is in John 6:22-40, where with hard sayings, difficult to understand, and which many current disciples could not accept and turned away from following Jesus (John 6:41-71)

“And Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger; and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’” (John 6:35)

By the way, this has both an apparent implication for faith and one in the more abundant category for faith: as Jesus amplified on in the Sermon on the Mount, those who believe will never go hungry for sufficient bread during their life—in recall the “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33); and you see the eternal promise of “never hunger” and “never thirst” based on “he who believes in Me”.

2. Is this too hard for you, as it was too hard for many of the disciples that for a short time followed Jesus? (John 6:41-71)

   a. Jesus was rejected by the religious leaders of His own Jewish nation. (6:41-59)

   b. Many followers turned away from discipleship but still attended the church {Temple} (6:60-71).

They could take believing for a little while, but not in the long run. And even as they no doubt first heard Jesus in the Temple before they began following Him, they no doubt also went back to faithful House of God worship as a substitute for discipleship with Jesus when they stopped following Him. What was so hard for them? To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus; but once again Jesus was speaking in parables that were hard to understand in order that those only designated by the Spirit of God could understand. In order that the kingdom of God and Christ could no longer be taken by force, but only with the proper attitude of repentance and faith. However, Jesus explained it to them just before they went away, primarily for the benefit of the 11 out of 12 {of the 12 that Jesus “called”, one, Judas was not “chosen”} that remained:

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” (John 5:63)
c. Then Jesus explained what the real problem was with disciples that could not go all the way in Lordship and discipleship. It was a lack of “Continuing Faith” which prayerfully you have come to understand, and did understand in the reading of that chapter on “Continuing Faith”. And the in the verse below has both tenses of “believe” and “believing”, alias “to believe” and “for believing”, initial faith and continuing faith.

“But there are some of you who do not believe.” (John 6:64a)


1. Jesus had a lot to say to the religious leaders of His day of how they could discern the weather by the face of the sky, but could not see the signs of the times predicted in Scripture.

2. Jesus tried to give some perspective of the eternal being that He was and is, some perspective on Himself as the eternal Co-Creator of the Universe as He compared the puny understanding of scholars on science and the universe as He stated about the weather, “that you don’t even know where the winds come from.”

25-7: A Message on Spiritual Blindness to Go with Healing of the Blind.

1. In this day and time when doctors can so easily do lens transplants, and other outpatient surgeries, the healing of the blind does not seem nearly as miraculous as in the days of Jesus; but this was then, even as now, a special case as the man was “blind from birth” (9:1)

2. It was here that Jesus rectified a false concept of the community that the man was blind because he or his family had sinned. (9:2) Neither, Jesus said, “but that the works of God might be revealed in him.” (9:3)

3. Jesus shared His own urgency to do the very works of God, and for the glory of God the Father, for the time He had left to be in the world. (9:4)

4. While in the world, Jesus clearly identified Himself as “the light of the world” (9:5)

5. When Jesus heard that the Jews cast the man out for sass (9:13-34), and because of the false belief that he was “completely born in sins”, also because of pride because the man tried to teach them something because they did not know
7 Messages for 7 Miracles

Who Jesus was in spite of the miracle done by him, and His obvious connection with God the Father, Jesus sought him out and found him.

(1). “Do you believe in the Son of God?” (John 9:35)

(2). “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?” (John 9:36)

(3). The dialogue between the blind man from birth and Jesus.

“And Jesus said to him, ‘You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.’” (9:37)

(4). More dialogue.

a. “Then he said, ‘Lord, I believe!’ And he worshipped him.” (9:38)

b. However you can tell what Jesus said next, like often in His teachings to go with the attention gained from His miracles, that Jesus was as much talking to the crowd and His disciples as to the man.

“And Jesus said, “For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.”” (John 9:39)

c. The listening Pharisees took it personally, as should they and as should all that read these teachings of Jesus centered around the miracle-sign of the man blind from birth.

“And some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, ‘Are we blind also?’” (John 9:40)

“Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, “We see.” Therefore your sin remains.” (John 9:41)

25-8: The Holy Spirit took over in the world for Light After Jesus.

When Jesus said that He was the light of the world as long as He was in the world, the implication was that the Holy Spirit would come to take His place, as He clearly taught later in John 14-16. And above when Jesus said that He came into the world for judgment, it also implied that later the Holy Spirit would take over that judgment.
Believe me, today, when you see the light of the truth, receive the forgiveness of sins, and recognize that all are judged accountable to God and Jesus, it is by the work of the Holy Spirit; but do not delay belief, as both the heart can become too hardened--thus the Bible always says "today is the day of salvation", and because near the end of the Falling Away the Holy Spirit is going to be withdrawn from this earth, an historical happening as certain and momentous as the original coming of the Spirit in great power and presence on the first day of Pentecost after the Ascension of Christ. In fact, so historical as to mark the beginning and end of the "last days" of the Bible, terminated with wholesale gathering from the four corners of the earth by angels, separation and the passing of eternal judgment; and the ushering in of the New Earth with a New People chosen and saved from each generation of history, one by one and two by two.

25-9: On Resurrection and Life to go with the Raising of Lazarus.

You know, when you have gone all the way with seriousness of both initial faith, to believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God; and continued for a few years in the continuing faith of for believing, on into spiritual maturity where you have "your senses exercised to discern" and partake of the spiritual meat of the Bible and prayer, these miracles of Jesus and the proofs and evidences of their validity from the Co-Creator of the Universe will become less and less important to you. So great will be the personal fellowship in prayer and Bible of this Risen and Ascended Christ, and with God the Father, that such needs for initial faith and evidences, in spite of the fact that "faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen", or because your personal faith provides both the substance and evidence of these spiritual matters like God, Christ, the new birth, and the being and becoming like Christ, that the miracles sort of fade in the background except to the extent that they call attention to other signs.

1. The death of Lazarus was just as common as the death of any today, or of any previously, except he was fortunate enough to know Jesus; but common in that like all, while the body is and looks dead, the soul and spirit continue to live, and like Jesus calls it "sleep".

"Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up...Then Jesus said to them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead.'" (John 11:11-15)
2. Good ole Thomas like his environment had the standard concept and answer about death, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." (11:16)

3. Dialogue between Martha, the sister of Lazarus, and Jesus.

   (1). The faith of Martha in Jesus for life and healing.

   "Now Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give you.'" (John 11:21,22)

   (2). Double meaning in the one on one teaching of Jesus to Martha and the listening disciples like so many teachings of Jesus and of all Bible predictions.

   "Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.'" (11:23)

The big difference with Lazarus was that he had to go through three resurrections: this first for at least a few more years where He had to put up with the same old body, the second of his soul and spirit only, as at death his soul went instantly to be with God and Jesus; and the third at the Second Coming of Christ as with all except those who died the death of a martyr, he received a new resurrection body. Yes, Jesus did both almost at one time; although He in spirit during the three days in the grave, did go preach to all those people of history held captive in Hades, and in order to give them like the thief on the cross a second chance.

   (3). For Martha and for all present, and for John and other Apostles to record for Bible Reports in the Bible that we could read, and for the Holy Spirit to use in our hearts and lives, Jesus said to her.

   "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die (sleep), he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die (the second death). Do you believe this?" (John 11:26)

   (5). Martha for us all.

   "She said to Him, 'yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world." (John 11:27)
And you can not honestly tell me that when you read these recorded words from Jesus, if indeed you carefully read them, that you heart was not warmed. Well, that is the work of the Holy Spirit!
CHAPTER 26

One miracle not mentioned as a miracle per se in the Gospel of John, although definitely considered as a sign in John, is the pre- and post-Jesus miracle of God as “the fountain of living waters”. As one way to describe the salvation of God and salvation in God, it runs all the way from Old Testament books such as Jeremiah, where God’s people had “forsaken God, the fountain of living waters” and made “cisterns, broken cisterns, that would not hold water as substitutes for the salvation provided by God; to the living water that Jesus in John promised to the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well; and even to the book of Revelation, where the New Jerusalem lowered down on Mount Zion from heaven, along with a forever dwelling place of God and Jesus on the New Earth has the fountain of everlasting waters that flows out to all the nations of Gentiles around it, and where in the last chapter (Revelation 22:17) “whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely” that helps to conclude the message of the whole Bible on God the Father through Jesus the Son as the Fountain of Living Waters.

26-1: Jesus Offers “Living Water” at Jacob’s Well in Samaria.

It could be considered by some that even the fact that Jesus talked to the woman of Samaria as a miracle. The disciples were surprised. The Samaritans, the leftovers and products of Assyrian Captivity and intermarriage with foreigners in the land, since the time of pride of Judah and Jerusalem of Jeremiah, were considered as half-breeds and irreligious, without hope by the Jews. Yet it
Fountain of Living Waters

was to a Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well and later to the whole city as they responded to the testimony of the woman, “Come see a man that told me all things that I ever did, is this not the Christ” (John 4:29) Also, there are many other miracles, at least exceptions, signs, and marvels of life and religion, in the dialogue between Jesus and the woman.

1. JESUS: “Woman, give me a drink of water.” (John 4:7)

2. WOMAN: “Jews have no dealings with Samaritans, so why is it that you a Jew ask of me a Samaritan for a drink of water?” (4:9)

3. JESUS: Woman, if you only knew “the gift of God” (again it is God as the fountain of living waters), and Who is talking to you, “you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.” (4:10)

   (1) You have to personally ask for this living water.

   (2). If you ask, without exception it will be given to you.

4. WOMAN: Where are you going to get that “living water” as the well is deep; and are you a miracle worker greater than our father Jacob, Jacob was father of both the Jews and Samaritans, who gave us the well and drank of it himself. (4:11,12)

5: JESUS makes a contrast between this kind of water like in the well with the kind of water that He offers personally to you and to all: (1) contrary to the drinking of this normal water, those who drink the water from Jesus “will never thirst again”; (2) the water from Jesus once drunk will in turn and inside become “a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” (John 4:14)

26-2: The Backsliding of God’s People in Jeremiah Away from Living Water.

It takes a lot of messages and Bible in Jeremiah to adequately describe the Temple Message of Jeremiah with what God’s own people were doing wrong in their “ways and doings”, even to describe the Bible based concept of “backsliding” so different from what our pastors and church members desire to think today as away from attendance at their own houses of God; but God tries in the words He Himself gave to Jeremiah to summarize the backsliding nation and people of God, although always active in worship and sacrifice rather than obedience, as going backward spiritually and not forwards, as forsaking God as the
fountain of salvation and living waters for substitute broken cisterns and salvation.

“For my people have committed two evils (later in the book these evils will be enumerated by God as numerous “abominations”): they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns--broken cisterns that can hold no water.” (Jeremiah 2:13)

Like Jesus would later tell any who desire to be or call themselves the people of God:

1. The place of worship is not that important as the day came with Jesus when it was no longer important to worship the Father on certain mountains or in certain places like Jerusalem, or special temples and houses of God like the First Baptist Church. (John 4:21)

2. It is very important to know which god and what image of God you worship as to whether it is the God the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ; for only this God of the Universe can provide the “salvation” of the Book Reports, the salvation of the fountain of living water. (4:22)

3. True worshipers then, now, and always must worship God the Father in “spirit and truth”; for the goal of God the Father is to seek those of the universe and of each generation that will worship Him spiritually and truthfully. (4:23)

4. God is a Spirit which necessitates that He must be worshiped spiritually, never only formally, and must be worshipped in truth, or really. (4:24).

5. Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, who has taught all things about God the Father and proper worship. (4:25,26)

26-3: Abominations of God’s People in Jeremiah are Against God the Father.

These abominations of Jeremiah 7:6-10, and of the Temple Message, have a longer list to them than what we might appreciate; however, what all these abominations have in common is that they are against God, most of them were clearly prohibited in the Ten Commandments, which even as today, were legally interpreted so as to become ineffective.

1. The top and first before mentioned abomination in the Jeremiah 7:4 was to stop “the lying words” chanted like a praise song in their worship services; lying
words and concepts which portrayed in the sight of God a misplaced faith in their Temple as a House of God, of the city of Jerusalem as the city of God, and of the nation of Judah as the nation of God's chosen people.

2. Their “ways and doings”, daily and Sabbath life and lifestyle, were an abomination in the sight of God; and God had a message through Jeremiah, wherein God Himself even gave the words to say, for His own people to “THOROUGHLY”, top to bottom and in all ways with quality and quantity, to “AMEND YOUR WAYS AND DOINGS” (Jeremiah 7:5)

3. Change, alias the amendment of the ways and doings, was a call for true and thorough justice over the appearance of justice and of legality: “if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor” (Jeremiah 7:5). If you are familiar with the 10 commandments long established in the Word of God, and in the records and reports of the Word of God, you know that while the first four are about God—no other gods (no images or likenesses to other gods or even images of the real God of the Universe, no bowing down or serving these other substitute gods), respect for the name of God in the words that come out of your mouth, not using His name for your personal use to make a point or emphasis or write a line for TV or books or movies; and like God rested on the seventh day from the works of Creation to make one day of the week a holy day of rest. Then the next six are about this aforementioned in Jeremiah 7:5 thorough execution of justice between a man and his fellow citizens; yet we must see, especially in that at the end of the list, covetousness, that it is against God as well as fellow man.

4. Do not practice the abomination of oppression toward “the stranger in the land.” (7:6); nor the abomination of fatherless and widow oppression; nor the shedding of innocent blood in “this place” (house and houses of God, cities, and nation); nor above all, which is the subject of the backsliding nation of the book and messages of Jeremiah, forsake God and His salvation by going after other cisterns which are broken and can hold no water, “walk after other gods (any substitute in ways and doings of life for primary service and loyalty and devotion to the God of the Univers and His Christ) to your hurt” in the words of Jeremiah 7:4.

5. It is an abomination to God and to your own heritage and forefathers, forefathers to whom the land was given forever as a heritage and as a legacy, when by the practice of all these abominations of unrighteousness, you make it impossible for God to continue to preserve and bless you in this land (Jeremiah
7:7) Can you hear the pathos in the voice and words of God Himself as He laments that such abominations make it impossible for Him to put such unrighteousness in the New Land of the New Earth with the rest of Gentile New Creations of the New Nation of Jews and Gentiles.

“How can I put you among the children and give you a pleasant land, a beautiful heritage of the hosts of nations?” (Jeremiah 3:19)

It reminds you of how nothing can enter the gates of the New Jerusalem on the New Earth that is unrighteously and unholyly an offense to God, say like in these abominations to God category.

“But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.” (Revelation 21:27)

6. Like today, the people of God of the days of Jeremiah--what you might want to call the “Den of Theives” days like in the time of Jesus--had a faith, and much faith, but the faith was the misplaced faith in lying words of worship and praise: (1) our salvation is in these buildings, our houses of God; in the fortified cities of our nation, and our governent buildings which by the way show our history and heritage, and in our city as the city of God of the people of God; and (2) we still exist here and continue in material blessings as a nation, city, and of many houses of God, in order that we can continue to live without change or repentance in all our current “ways and doings.”

7. Look at the commandments list from God Himself: steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other unknown gods. All this is absent from the original 10 commandments is (1) the taking of God's name in vain, but they did that when they burned incense to Baal and went after other gods; (2) the keeping of the sabbath day, but that will come in a few verses since their very acts and practices of Sabbath Day worship were an abomination to God because of (a) the life of abominations they lived all week and each week, (b) that they would come without shame or blushing behind a week of such a life and then make a weekly profession of faith that “we are delivered to do all these abominations”, more lying words; and (3) strangely enough you might think there is no mention of “covetousness” as in the last and bottom line commandment, “thou shalt not covet”, the reason being that this was the primary subject of another message and other messages.
"Because from the least of them even to the greatest of them, everyone is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even to the priest, everyone deals falsely." (Jeremiah 6:13)

8. It is an abomination to God to constantly see His own people turn the original concept of the House of God and of prayer into a Den of Thieves in their own puny little minds. (Jeremiah 7:11), a HIDEOUT FOR BAD HABITS.

9. God will now do to this place--the house which is called by His name, and the place of the city and nation which God gave to them and their forefathers, just like He did to Shiloh of the northern kingdom of Israel; for it is also an abomination to think that the people of God can count on their past history and faith for continued blessings in the future without righteousness and effective prayer. (Jeremiah 7:14)

10. It is an abomination to God when calamities and a series of calamities for chastisement toward righteousness and effective prayer to automatically think that God no longer controls nature and the Universe, and to think that it is not God at work when the curses come in the place of the blessings of the past.

“They have lied about the LORD, and said, 'It is not He. Neither will evil come upon us nor shall we see sword or famine.” (Jeremiah 5:12)

11. It is an abomination to God to pervert the words of God and Word of God of the 66 books of revelations by striving to supplement them with the “dreams and visions” of special revelations, or special oracles.

“...for you have perverted the words of the living God, the LORD of hosts, our God.” (Jeremiah 23:36b)

26-4: Connection between Commandments and Righteousness.

We still make the frequent mistake as Americans and church members of thinking of rightness and righteousness as (1) behavior only or morality and ethics, and (2) as what happens strickly between men and men, men and women, and women and women as if God did not give commandments, and the 10 commandments in particular, to define what is right and wrong in His sight. Sin is the opposite of rightness and righteousness; sin is against the God that made us; and the commandments (the 10 and the teachings of Jesus) set down God’s standards for sin or rightness.
1. The law—10 commandments and other commandments and teachings of God and Christ to promote righteousness on this earth, the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans is our “schoolmaster” to bring us to Christ. We would never have known sin had not the commandments, or laws of God, defined right and wrong as a standard for righteousness.

2. We just can not get it into our head that the simple act and life style or ignoring God, that called “ways and doings” in Jeremiah, is sin and unrighteousness. In fact the very first four righteousness standards of the 10 commandments are about the relationship between God and man: (1) nothing in the human life of greater love and loyalty than that for the Creator; (2) to images of God, physical or mental in your own mind, to divert you from the God of the Bible and the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ; (3) no show of disrespect with your mouth by taking the name of God in vain, which in turn reflects a bad attitude and unrighteousness in your heart; and (4) set aside a day of rest in which you remember your God and your relationship to Him as spirituality takes precedence over all other pursuits of life.

26-5: Last Reports of the Bible Make a “Record” for Everlasting Life.

After a lifetime as pastor at Ephesus, interrupted by a short exile on the isle of Patmos where the Ascended Christ gave John some new and final revelations of all Bible Reports, John wrote the last Bible Reports (books) of the New Testament and Bible; and in the sequence of Revelation where he received the word “Word” for Christ to use as the beginning preface for the life of Christ in John 1, then the Gospel of John--the launching pad and core of belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, of this book BIBLE REPORTS FOR BELIEVING (and it has been a long journey about ready to complete) with also the believing of “Continuing Faith”, and with perhaps the very last words of all revelations from God, the three little epistles of John--I, II, and III John--give us the bottom lines of how to daily and yearly for a long life live this continuing faith in the battles, trials, and all the “ways and doings” of life. (It is recommended that you buy and read “Christ for Individuals”, volume 2 of the LEARN CHRIST COMMENTARIES, which is a commentary on the five books written by the Apostle John--Revelation, the Gospel of John, and the 3 little epistles of John.)

Somehow we now, even after we have personally related the 7 miracles of John, and other of the signs to personal faith and personal life in the everyday “ways and doings” of modern life, that this believe and believing alone is not enough to live a full and challenging life of faith. Well, it would be if we get, see and know all the aspects and implications of the continuing faith of “believing” all the way
to full and everlasting life; and God knew that in His supreme wisdom and plan to communicate to humanity about Himself and His salvation plan, having John write the last three books of the revelations in the little epistles. There you read about the realities of sin in the Christian life, the necessity that those sins can not remain habitual, dealing with the very practical divisions of Christian fellowship and who is right and wrong, and above all who is saved, and how the Bible, especially in I John, provides a Bible Record of assurance for that security of salvation; and yes, practical details about love and the new birth.

Do you not see the similarities between the stated purpose of the Gospel of John in John 20:30,31 and these bottom line words of I John, all the Bible Reports of the Word of God, and of how to live the Christian life in continuing faith in spite of obstacles in the churches and in the world? For example not in I John 5:13 below the phrase of “you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”

“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know {confidence and a sense of security based on the Bible Record of this Bible Report} that you have eternal life, and that you may CONTINUE to believe in the name of the Son of God.” (I John 5:13)

What was simplified in the believing continuity of the miracles and to believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Promised Messiah, and Son of God is very bottom line here, and for you--in both the personal implications for you of the 7 miracles, all the miracles of the life of Christ and incarnation as the Son of God, and of the salvation plan and program God has provided through Christ and the atonement for the complete and total, long Christian life--is stated right here in this Bible record of I John 5:13 with encouragements for you “to continue to believe”.

1. As in I John 1:1-3, that these Bible Reports from the Apostles like John about Jesus Christ the Son of God are records of eyewitness accounts of what the four evangelists in agreement “heard”, seen with their own eyes, looked at every day for over three years, and even touched; and what was Word of righteousness in Revelation became the eternal and pre-existing “Word” in the Gospel of John, and now here in the bottom line of Bible Reports and Records “the Word of Life”.

2. That life in Christ, manifested in the Gospel of John, eternal and from God and incarnated in Christ--fully seen because death and the grave could not hold
Him captive; then born witness to by the Apostles {you see that was their primary job as disciples}, and eternal life that was with God the Father and that can personally for all continuing believers be with God the Father; and that leads to fellowship with the Apostles, fellowship with this same God the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and fellowship with Jesus (I John 1:2-3)

3. Surely you would agree that all the 7 miracles do something for you, surrounded by all the 7 messages of those miracles, and in these practical applications, records, and reports of I John as you very personally recieve "joy", and joy that is full joy.

“And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.” (I John 1:4)

Granted it takes all of the Gospel of John, all the other synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke; all "these things" from the Apostles John, Peter, Jude, and all Paul--all 27 books of the New Testament and 39 of the Old Testament to appreciate the full impact of the full joy of the full life, now and eternal, God has provided for those that (1) believe and (2) continue to believe.

You might call it the "joy of the record of everlasting life, the fountain of living waters, which can flow right out of your innermost being now and lead right up into everlasting life. It is recommended to you, that you read prayerfully and devotionally--above all personally--the whole little book of I John. After all, it is only 5 short chapters long!

26-5: Last Word of the Bible, the book of Revelation, and the last chapter.

You might call these among the last words of the last Bible Reports! The bottom line words of the last chapter of the book of Revelation, chapter 22, are also bottom line words of everlasting water from the "River of Life".

1. After the New Jerusalem is lowered down from heaven to the New Earth, a place where the Apostles rule the Jews and an eternal abode for the Father and the Son, around which all the New Creation of the Gentiles can come to worship, coming out of the throne of God and Christ the Lamb is a “pure” river “of water of life”. (Revelation 22:1,2)

2. Even as God gave Jeremiah some sarcasm about His own people in the Temple Message of “go ahead and add all these abominations to your weekly worship with sacrifices” instead of obedience, so the Apostle John, the Ascended Christ, and the Spirit of God have some parting words in the same tone to give about living
life among the thorns and battles: “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still”. (Revelation 22:11)

3. Jesus says, “I am coming quickly” and that He will bring rewards to give to everyone of all time at the resurrection of the dead, and according to their own works which are filthy, or holy, or righteous, or just or unjust (Revelation 22:12)

4. Oh yes, and on every side of the River of Life in the New Jerusalem of the New Earth where God forever more lives personally with the New Creation selected from each generation by one and two, is “the tree of life”: all one has to do in the bottom line of Bible Reports is to keep the teachings and commandments of God and Jesus: “that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14) Yes, this is a right of citizenship on this earth that you must earn through proper respect and regard for all the teachings and commandments of God and Jesus; again, by obedience.

5. Far away, but visible, and outside the city walls of the New Jerusalem, even beyond the regions of the New Creatures of the Gentiles, are a group of people with whom you will not want eternal company: dogs, sorcerers, sexually immoral, murderers, idolaters, and “whoever loves and practices a lie.” (Revelation 22:15)

6. The source of this Bible Report and Record is “I Jesus” with a message through angels to the churches of the world. (Revelation 22:16)

7. God the Holy Spirit and God the Son, called here “the bride”, send out personally to all humanity the message of “Come”. What was “Come and See” in the invitation of Jesus to His first disciples and a start of evangelism in the Gospel of John becomes a bottom line message of all the Bible Reports as “Come” to the one hears the message and invitation: “Come” to all humanity that are thirsty for the eternal, everlasting, living water; and “Whosoever desires, let him take the water of life freely”. (Revelation 22:17)

Is that personal enough for you? You in the bottom line of Bible Reports are personally given the invitation to “Come” in three ways and times; and then based on nothing else but the personal “desires” of your life, to “TAKE the water of life freely”!