

Galatians, Gospel of the One Baptism

By now, Paul has started to overlap many of the revelations that he received from the Ascended Christ; but as new problems arise in the churches that he started, the Holy Spirit gives him additional answers, and Paul has far from utilized all the OT quotes that he recorded on a parchment back at Tarsus for explanation in NT Scriptures. Here in Galatians the focus is again on the Gospel, giving to the Galatians a miniature of the same Gospel he preached for the Hebrews and Romans. Decidedly, do you have here in Galatians a miniature of Romans. If there is a major step of progression in Galatians as compared to Romans on the Gospel, it is with a renewed emphasis on the One Baptism. Before Paul will make his summary of the major doctrines of the Bible in the Seven ONEs of Ephesians, it remains to fully develop as part of Scriptures the One Baptism which is really quite synonymous with salvation. While in the Seven ONEs you will not find "one salvation", you will find the "one baptism".

"There is one body {developed in I Corinthians where there are many members of the total body of Christ, the churches}, and one Spirit {II Corinthians does as much to advance the arguments of the one Holy Spirit as any other, where the new covenant is administered by this One Spirit}, one hope of your calling {we saw that in Timothy Paul got around to the one calling}, one Lord {well, the Lord Jesus Christ was magnified in many Scriptures from Paul, but we would have to say the most magnificent is in Hebrews where even before Jesus as the author and finisher of our faith, and even before Jesus as the great high priest at the right hand of God the Father to make intercession for our sins, is the

Son of God ordained to be such by God the Father and given a name which is above the angels}, **one faith** {in Hebrews where faith is defined as “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen}, **one baptism** {well, you know that this major doctrine, or teaching, is most fully developed here just before we come to the book after Galatians, the book of Ephesians for a summary of all major doctrines given through the Apostle Paul}; **and one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all** {and I would think that we would have to be indebted to I Corinthians and I Corinthians 15 for our exalted relationship between the reign of Christ and of God the Father, where God the Father becomes “all in all”.} (Ephesians 4:4-6)

And it is Galatians 2:20 that you see the relationship of Gospel to the One Baptism. While the Gospel would include the crucifixion of Christ for the sins of the world and according to the plan of God, also a repentance of death to sins and a living by way of Christ living in us, the new birth, likewise sanctification whereby Christ continues to live in us and grow us; with all these aspects of the Gospel from Christ is the One baptism from the Holy Spirit whereby we personally **{one salvation}** appropriate these blessings from Christ and God the Father. Look at it!

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)

Wow, if we can get so much out of one verse of Galatians, what is the treat and understanding that we are in for in the rest of the revelations of Galatians. We might call Galatians the book of the Implications and Applications of the Gospel.

14-1: Galatians in the other books of the New Testament.

1. It is evident from Galatians 1:2 that Galatia was a region of the Roman Empire, and that Paul had organized several churches in Galatia. **{It is best to stick to the internal evidence of the Bible itself than to wander off on the many tangents of historical criticism, more of the idle talk that generates disputing.}**
2. Thus not only is distortions of the Gospel with detrimental effects on all the churches noted in Galatians 3:1, the “O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you...” but again it is echoed that the epistle is to all the churches in the region of Galatia.
3. Perhaps the first mention in time of Galatia as a region is in Acts 16:6. **{We will not get into fruitless discussion about the difference between writing, publication, and distribution of Galatians and Acts.}** We know Acts 16 to be part of the second missionary journey of Paul since Silas is with Paul instead of Barnabas, his appointed companion on the first missionary journey. It was just before 16:6 where “they had gone through Prygia and the region of Galatia”, that Paul joined the young Greek {his mother was Jewish} Timothy to their group (16:1-3). If you

look on one of your Bible maps, you will find the region of Galatia in the north central portion of Asia Minor.

4. The second historical mention is in Acts 18:23, where after Philippi, Thessalonica, and Corinth “he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples”.

5. In I Corinthians Paul had already “given orders to the churches of Galatia” for the collection of money for the saints at Jerusalem, something Paul encouraged the Galatians through Titus and the epistles to do likewise (16:1).

6. By the time Paul was in prison in Rome and as he wrote in II Timothy for Timothy to come before winter to bring his cloak from Troas, the books, and the parchments, he needed company since Demas had forsaken him to go to Thessalonica (II Timothy 4:9-21), among those departing to go from Rome to the whole world was Crescens for Galatia. Then there was Titus to Dalmatia, Tychicus to Ephesus, Erastus who stayed in Corinth, Trophimus in Miletus sick.

7. The Apostle Peter got in the act in I Peter 1:1 when he wrote “To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bythynia...”; and since it is the second epistle, with no doubt a similar and same audience, that Peter mentions both how Paul writes Scriptures (3:16) like the OT Prophets, but also how churches are “wresting these Scriptures to their own destruction”, surely this would include the book of Galatians as hard for the readers to understand. And perhaps we can use I and II Peter as commentaries on the book of Galatians.

14-2: I and II Peter as Commentaries on Galatians.

Before we can use I and II Peter as commentaries on Galatians, we need to outline them.

1. That the subject of I Peter is similar to the Gospel Applications and Implications of Galatians is clearly seen in 1:25b after a lengthy preamble in the first 25 verses.

“Now this the word which by the gospel was preached to you.” (I Peter 1:25b)

The gospel preached to them in Galatia and the other regions has been summarized in the first 25 verses, so let us work backwards to see what that Gospel is: (1) Peter, also giving revelations from God for Scriptures, mentions in 1:22-25 the new birth--by the seed of the incorruptible Word of God, and purified with love of the brethren by obeying the Holy Spirit; (2) redemption is part of the Gospel in 1:13-21, where those called to be holy are redeemed with the precious blood of Jesus Christ; (3) if Paul uses the one baptism and one calling more often to describe the implications and applications of the Gospel for the individual, Peter more often as in 1:9-12 uses the word “salvation”, (a) it being the end of faith, (b) the grace to come to you as foretold by the Prophets, (c) those Prophets listening to the Spirit of Christ in them about the sufferings of Christ, and (d) their revelations given as a basis for

the reports from the Apostles through the preaching of the Gospel; and (4) Blessings on God the Father who has “begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”, which would certainly be the equivalent of Paul’s “one hope of the one calling”, and we recall how Paul clearly added to the Gospel of Jesus in I Corinthians, the resurrection of Jesus as the first fruit of others to follow.

1. Starting Point in I Peter 3:16 with Peter’s testimony of how Paul writes Scriptures of the Word of God, some hard to understand like OT Scriptures; and how some “twist to their own destructions” both Scriptures. According to I Peter 3:16 there is a certain category of people who “twist” the Scriptures to their own destruction: they are “untaught” and “unstable” people. Granted, there is a beginning point with such people in that something about them latches on to Scriptures, Old Testament and from Paul, that are “difficult to understand”; so that as we start with Peter as a commentary on Galatians {in spite of personality differences say between Peter and Paul, the Apostles were always consistent when they wrote Scriptures of the Word of God as an Apostle}, we will look at both the characteristics of these kind of people who twist Scriptures and latch on to Scriptures had to understand, but also which Scriptures have been most difficult for them to understand. These Scriptures difficult to understand are obviously, based on I Peter 3:15 are those on “the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation”, for it is this subject which both seems to be a conclusion of I and II Peter; but is also why Peter brings up Paul, Scriptures, “hard to understand”, and twistings in the first place.

“Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation--as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of THESE THINGS {that’s what we want to focus on, these “these things” from Paul that are hard to understand, that are twisted by some to their own destruction}, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness {here is the danger to the individual believer of such misunderstandings, not that the personality of Paul might be used as an excuse to ignore the authority of Scriptures from any Apostle as the Word of God but that it can lead to their own personal destruction}, being led away with the error of the wicked {certain key words we see here in Peter such as “hard to understand”, “destruction”, and now “error of the wicked” which we can use to retrace the arguments of Peter backwards from this point and through all of II and I Peter are the more precise parts of Scripture, from Paul and the OT that are

hard to understand}; but grow in the grace and knowledge {obviously this individual growth for a believer in "grace" and "knowledge" is a cure for such lack of understanding} of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ {of course this understanding in grace and knowledge needs the correct focus, that of on "our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ}. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen." (I Peter 3:14-18)

(1). It is obvious from here in Peter that Paul is writing Scriptures of the Word of God in the same category as OT Scriptures. You that wrestle with the personality of Paul take heed between when Paul is taking a personal concession to express an opinion and when Paul as an apostle is giving commands from God. One clue is when Paul definitely says he "commands" with the authority of an Apostle; when he says that as the Ascended Christ told him; or when Paul makes a decisive and definitive statement like those on "silence of women in the church" where he basis it on the OT Scriptures. By far, one of the most outstanding characteristics of the Scriptures from Paul is the extensive number of the OT quotes, another is his support of His authority as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. Beware, lest you are opposing the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the obvious consequences of which would as denial of the Lordship of Jesus over your own life, be your own destruction.

(2). It is also obvious that the degree of understanding difficulty {remember of how way back in I Corinthians, understanding was what Paul started with} from the Scriptures through the Apostle Paul is the same kind of understanding difficulty in the OT Scriptures, and perhaps on the same subjects.

(3). It is also apparent that these Scriptures hard to understand have something to do with "salvation", so that it our sweep backwards of II and I Peter we will also be looking for the key words "salvation" and Scripture. {Since I am going to make the speculation right now that at least in Galatians where it is maintained that the prime subject is "The Gospel of the One Baptism", that "baptism" in Peter is also a key word, since the One Baptism is what Paul uses often to describe the one salvation. {Remember in the what is the most important subjects of all the Bible in the Seven ONEs of Ephesians, there is the One Baptism while salvation is not mentioned.}}

(4). Perhaps if we would go back to the original words of Peter and Paul--something which Paul likes to call "the pattern of sound words" in Bible teaching and preaching today, there would be less misunderstandings today and new words like "anointing", protection, and on and on.

2. It is clear from II Peter 3:1,2 that Peter has in mind in both epistles to remind believers at Galatia, and at other locations, of Scriptures from the OT Prophets and of "commandments" from the Apostles {Paul, Peter, and others}, in particular how those Scriptures told of: (1) scoffers of the Second Coming in the last days that are motivated in their teachings by their own desires {does this not remind you of

the “time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine” of the Apostle Paul in II Timothy, where such intolerance of itching ears teachers comes from the motivation of their own desires?); (2) these scoffers forget OT history of the destruction of the whole earth by flood, also how the next judgment and destruction of ungodly men will be by fire; (3) they forget the longsuffering of God based on (a) His patience as one day is a thousand years and a thousand years as one day, and (b) His unwillingness that any person should perish {in this “long-suffering of God” you see the subject of 3:15 echoed--“that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation”--knowing that the subject hard to understand from Paul and the OT relates also to this five point message to counter the scoffers}; and (4) the day of the Lord will come suddenly, the heavens will pass away with a great noise, the elements of heaven and earth will melt with fervent heat, all of the earth and the works on the earth will be burned up, and there will be new heavens and a new earth; and (5) what manner of persons should you be in “holy conduct” and “godliness”.

Can this five point message also be a summary of the Scriptures hard to understand? Certainly the subject of II Peter 2 is those scoffers of (1), there called false teachers with their false teachings. And the subjects of II Peter 1 are introduced by Peter, before in 1:16-21 a reminder of Scriptures about judgment and promises of destruction, the grace and peace from “knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord” (1:2) about: (1) the divine power that gives to us things “that pertain to life and godliness” (1:3); (2) God’s exceeding great and precious promises as partakers of the divine nature, also an escape from the corruption of the world through lust. Also certainly in the final words in I Peter 5 to “elders”, to “young people”, and to Silvanus, they can easily be considered as the admonitions of “holy conduct” and “godliness” of (5). The sufferings of believers and of Christ of from I Peter 3:13 through 4:19 is more difficult to relate to the five point message of the last of II Peter, just before Paul, Scriptures, and hard to understand the long-suffering salvation of God; however, it can easily be considered more of (3) in the five point message, part of the longsuffering and patience of God. That one of the prime subjects of Peter is the Word of God, and of a desire for the Word of God in order to grow, coming back to the Scriptures again, seen in I Peter 1 and 2, with the obvious applications in a life before the outside world, toward government, toward supervisors, and about husbands and wives {it seems as though Peter would take care of the problem of “silent women in the church” of Paul with OT teachings on submission of women to husbands in the home and on women as the “weaker vessel” as well as heirs together with their husbands of the grace of life.}

Our short outline of Peter, then, as a basis of a commentary for Galatians would go like the following.

I. Respect for the Living Word of God, the Scriptures, as shown by applications in the world, government, toward supervisors, husbands, and the good life: I Peter 1-3:12.

II. Sufferings, Christ and believers, in proper perspective: I Peter 3:13-4:19.

III. Holy Conduct and Godliness for elders, youth, and Silvanus: I Peter 5.

IV. Life and Godliness with escape from the world's corruption, with the resources from God for which, in II Peter 1.

V. Destructive Doctrines and False Teachers, the Scoffers and their Scoffings: II Peter 2.

VI. A five point summary of the Message of II and I Peter: II Peter 3:1-13.

VII. Paul, the OT, Scriptures, and things hard to understand that some twist to their own destruction: II Peter 3:14-18.

14-3: Defence of Apostleship and the Source of Scriptures.

While we are looking at the teachings of Galatians, and using the above outline from Peter **{you see if you disagree with both the Apostle Peter and the Apostle Paul, then your problem is with Apostles in general, rather than with any personalities}** as a commentary on Galatians, and on the Gospel of the One Baptism of Galatians, we must find also in Galatians perhaps Paul's largest defence of himself as an Apostle. Why spend so much time on it, when it was he himself in the region of Galatia, like in Corinth, that had first told the church member of Jesus, indeed had led them to Christ to the extent that most of what they knew about Jesus had come through the messages of the Apostle Paul. Why then so much of Scripture on the defence of his Apostleship? Because Scriptures of the Word of God only come from either an Apostle or a Prophet; because to the Jews, as we get from Romans, was given the custodianship of the "oracles of God", Paul recognizing his own part as a Jew of the Jews and as a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a former lawyer of the Jewish nation, of custodianship of Scriptures; and the call of Jesus to have Paul become the chief editor of the New Testament, part of his ministry as we will see in Galatians.

1. The very introduction of Galatians (1:1,2) is a statement **{if not defence}** of Paul as an Apostle, "(not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead)", this echoed the summary Paul will later make in Ephesians of where the Ascended Christ gave the gifts of Apostles as the supreme authority under His Headship over the total body of the church.

2. The Gospel and where the Gospel Paul delivered came from as defence.

There is little doubt as to the prime subject of the Gospel of Galatians from the statement in Galatians 1:6-9, and as a lead in into Paul's authority of an Apostle. **{If we do not appreciate the authority of Paul when he writes Scriptures as an Apostle from Jesus, then we will not doubt no appreciate the 14 letters of Paul**

as having the authority of the Word of God; consequently, it will be easy, especially for women-Bible teaching leaders today to twist these Scriptures to their own destruction--and by the way to the corresponding destruction of those who would listen to them.}

"I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel {my, how many different gospels we have today to turn church members away from the original gospel originally given by the Apostles in the writings of Scriptures}, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ {it is likewise amazing the tolerance we afford such perverts and scoffers of the gospel today, the tolerance being more a product of the American Democratic Faith than it is of any recommend believer behavior from Paul or Peter, or Christ--like so much of the false doctrine of the Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, and many others it is not based on either the God, the Christ, or the Gospel and Holy Spirit of the Bible, rather it is what these scoffers have chosen to believe is in the Bible--and that is a big, very big difference}....But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed {don't welcome them in your home, don't bid them Godspeed, lest you also partake of the curse of another gospel that is on them--how differently we think today than Paul, than Peter, than the Word of God as originally delivered based on the mind and character of God Himself--that is, God never has been and never will be, according to His Word, tolerant of unsound doctrine, another word for unsound teachings except that doctrine includes applications of doctrine with the teachings}....As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:6-9)

Let me quickly spell it out for you, the Mormons will, when they get away from appearance and into the nitty-gritty of their four other Bibles, tell you of a "restored gospel"--and those are their own words, which adds works for salvation to the Gospel of the Bible. This places one curse on them, the curse above of Galatians 1:6-9; and they have another curse on themselves, the curse of adding to the Word of God with their four other Bibles. Now about the Jehovah Witnesses, who can be neither of Jehovah, for the only God of the Bible is the God of the Lord Jesus Christ; and far from being witnesses to the God of the Bible, they are witnesses to some strange doctrines like Paul spoke of in Timothy, what would happen in the latter times, when "some would depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils". And the problem that you have with seeing these Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses as representatives of Satan is the same problem you have of recognizing any nonbeliever as under the control of Satan, perhaps based on the fact that you even fail to recognize the reality of Satan as of the prince of this world as the crowning agent of spiritual wickedness in high

places. When we look at the total kingdom of God with such tares of the Mormons and the Jehovah Witnesses, we must see those tares among the wheat as Jesus said with an interpretation of the parable of the seed and the sower, "an enemy has put them there". "An enemy has put them there" to mislead you from the real gospel, the gospel of the Bible and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. "An enemy has put them there" at your home's door to impress and divert you; an "enemy has put them there" with substance and high visibility to make you think that they are as real in the kingdom of God as any other church members, and so--admit it--you have come to think, indoctrinated by the word, the American Democratic faith, and your own desire for tolerance and gullibility.

3. How the Gospel Paul delivered, and wrote in Scriptures, came through Revelations of Jesus Christ, Galatians 1:11-2:21.

(1). First the precise statement of how it came, nor from men, but "through the revelation of Jesus Christ", Galatians 1:11,12.

"But I made known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Galatians 1:11,12)

{By the way, every time a women stands up to teach and preach in the church, she is calling the Apostle Paul a liar, that women should not "keep silence in the church"; consequently she is calling the Bible as the Word of God a liar, she is calling God Himself a liar in that He never made some such commandment; and in doing so, she is fulfilling the same weakness that lead woman to believe the first lie of Satan, a lie that also called God a liar. Perhaps the same weakness that allows women to trust more in intuition, in the appearances of matters, and of a trust more in things than even men do. You will note that the measure often of the care of a woman is in the presence of things. Much of their comfort and well-being centers around these same things. Much of the activity of their life as according to the expectations of society center around things and what things can do for the family. The plea of the Word of God for spiritual leadership of the men, in church and home, is really a plea for a priority of the Word over things, God over mammon, and the servitude of God over the servitude for Satan. Just the fact that these women like Joyce Myers and Paula White stand before you as Bible teachers and preachers within itself preaches a deep-seated and unspoken message to you that it is okay to ignore and rebel against the Bible teaching of silence of women in the church. While you may have found nothing contrary to sound doctrine in their messages, generally it is there if you will go beyond the appearance, it is their very presence before you that makes a liar out of God!}

(2). Details of the "through the revelation of Jesus Christ".

How Paul previously as part of Judaism persecuted the church of God; how advanced Paul was beyond most of his peers in Judaism, with zeal for the “traditions of my fathers” (1:14); how the same God who gave him birth also called him, God revealing His Son in Paul, the very beginning of the revelation of Jesus Christ being an inward revealing; how God made this inward revealing of Jesus inside Paul in order that “I might preach Him among the Gentiles” **{the very call of Paul for salvation was the call to PREACH!}**; how Paul went immediately after conversion to Saudi Arabia to be taught of the Ascended Lord Jesus Christ, not going to Jerusalem to receive instruction of other Apostles (1:17); three years later after Damascus Paul went up to Jerusalem to spend 15 days with the Apostle Peter, recording in the manner of a lawyer, I believe, the testimony of Peter to Jesus to use later as a basis for Mark or Luke to write their gospels; how the only other Apostle Paul saw was James, once again I believe recording his testimony of Jesus to write one of the Gospels, which he passed on as part of the books and manuscripts from Timothy and Troas to give to John Mark and Dr. Luke; how Paul went afterward into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, although unknown to the churches of Judea by face, only by reputation and glorying that the Paul who previously persecuted now preached “the faith”; how 14 years later Paul did go to Jerusalem with Barnabas, remember his companion of the first missionary journey, and ;with Titus; but how Paul went to Jerusalem “by revelation” **{obviously by a revelation from God, the Holy Spirit, or the Ascended Lord Jesus Christ, all the equivalent}**, and the revelation was in order to communicate the same gospel that Paul preached among the Gentiles, of course privately to those of reputation he had known in Judaism; how the law and circumcision became a large part of his battles and message and Scriptures, as contrary to the Gospel, yet how neither he nor Titus did not yield “even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you” {evidently false brethren were using Paul’s circumcision of Titus and what Paul did in Jerusalem as an excuse to preach law and circumcision, law and works, over the true Gospel; how the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to Paul like the gospel for the circumcised had been committed to Peter, as those at Jerusalem witnessed; how He that effectively worked in Peter to make him an Apostle, also effectively worked in Paul to make him an Apostle (2:7,8); how the Apostles James, Peter, and John--the pillars of the church at Jerusalem--both perceived the grace that God gave to Paul agreed that Paul and Barnabas would preach the gospel to the Gentiles that they preached to the circumcised; how the request of these pillars was that they would remember the poor saints in Jerusalem, remember one of the big subjects of II Corinthians, and centered around Titus as the collector with an unnamed person from Jerusalem **{I think it was perhaps the Apostle John, since as the keeper of Mary, there was some effort to keep him anonymous}**; how Paul at Antioch reprimanded Peter to his face for a failure to eat with Gentiles, hypocritically eating with them before some came from James, thereby exerting an influence on other church members and even on Barnabas.

And Paul spends so much time on this as it is important for a non-distorted, not another, gospel.

“knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law {any work, ten commandment or circumcision} but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ {truly here is the special emphasis on the Gospel in Galatians as in Romans, in the “JUSTIFIED BY FAITH IN CHRIST”} and not by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.” (Galatians 2:16)

14-4: The One Baptism of “Believe and Be Baptized” of Galatians 2:20.

Then we have in Galatians 2:20 the great statement of the One Baptism in Christ of the Gospel, based on the cross of Christ and on the justification by faith. By the way, a Gospel of the One Baptism that we would like to compare “baptism” in I Peter 3:18-22, since Peter has become our prime commentary on Galatians.

“There is also an antitype which now save us--baptism {did you get that this is a “baptism” that “now saves us”, so that you know it can not be a work of water baptism as there are absolutely no works in salvation}...(not the removal of the filth of the flesh {you see how this “baptism”, the Gospel of the One Baptism, has nothing to do with water nor the cleansing of water which inevitable happens when one is immersed}...but the answer of a good conscience toward God {this is simple the response in belief of a good conscience when they hear the Gospel; and granted that it is the same good conscience that will also later after the Baptism of the One Baptism of Salvation also want to follow the example of obedience of Jesus in water baptism}...through the resurrection of Jesus {how did the resurrection of Jesus get in here, while it is symbolized in water baptism, it is a basis as the Gospel of the resurrection of Jesus as first fruit for subsequent believers in the resurrection receiving a similar resurrection in Christ--“I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ lives in me”}...” (I Peter 3:21)

(1). The Gospel of One Baptism is the truth for those who hear the Crucifixion of Christ; it is the receiving of the Spirit by faith, not law; it is the same Spirit at the beginning of salvation as in perfection, not of the flesh; it is your justification for any sufferings you have had by identification with Christ, not in vain; and it is the Gospel of the One who works among you with miracles and the Holy Spirit by the hearing of faith, not of the works of the law, Galatians 31-5.

(2). The Gospel of the One Baptism was preached to Abraham and Abraham believed it, Galatians 3:1-18. ONLY those who are of faith of the Gospel of the One Baptism are the sons of Abraham, believing God for the righteousness of the One Baptism as Abraham did.

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“just as Abraham ‘believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’” (Galatians 3:6 and Genesis 15:6)

The OT Scripture “foreseeing” that God would justify Gentiles by the faith of the Gospel of the One Baptism, also preached the gospel of the One Baptism to Abraham.

“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations {you see that primarily has to be Gentiles} shall be blessed.’” (Galatians 3:8 and Genesis 12:3; 18:18;22:18; 26:4; and 28:14)

(3). Law and faith are opposites even as water baptism and the One Baptism of Salvation and of the Gospel are opposites, Galatians 3:10-14.

Don't you see that water baptism is a work of man? It is both a work that you can do for yourself as you are water baptized, but it is also a work that a pastor or evangelist does on you in order to put you under the water. Contrast this to the One Baptism of salvation which is the same as the “be baptized” by the Spirit, Christ, and God of the great commission after you believe as in the “believe and be baptized” of the Great Commission and of Mark from Jesus.

--If you place water baptism in front of the One Baptism, you place works ahead of faith, and you place yourself under the curse of the law, a place you really do not want to be as you then become a debtor of the law and obligated to keep all the law!

“Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.” (Galatians 3:10 and Deuteronomy 27:26)

The book of the law we know to be the Law of Moses or the first five books of the Old Testament--Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

--If you place water baptism in front of the One Baptism, you are trying by a law of works to justify yourselves before God.

“But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for ‘the just {the justified and just because of justification} shall live {now and eternally} by faith.’” (Galatians 3:11 and Habakkuk 2:4)

--If you are water baptized for salvation, it is of law and not of faith.

“Yet the law is not of faith, but ‘the man who does them shall live by them.’” (Galatians 3:12 and Leviticus 18:5)

Can you live by water baptism continuously, like being water baptized every day or even “anointed baptized” every day? No, but you can live every day by the One Baptism of salvation.

--Christ becomes a curse for us in the One Baptism, like "I am crucified with Christ..." in the One Baptism, not by water baptism or any other baptism that the Pentecostals have generated by extra-biblical revelations.

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us {for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.}'" (Galatians 3:13 and Deuteronomy 21:23)

--In order that the blessing of the Gospel of the One Baptism might come on you even as on Abraham and other Gentiles, you must receive the One "promise of the {One} Spirit through faith", that promise of the One Baptism. (Galatians 3:14)

--Even as the promise of the One Gospel of the One Baptism was with the One Seed of Christ, the law of Moses given 430 years later can not annul this original covenant of the One Baptism, nor can water baptism as a work which can much later during the ministry of the last OT Prophet, John the Baptist, annul the One Baptism. (Galatians 3:13-18)

--If transgressions had not come from man, there would have been no reason for law at all, even the law of the water baptism of John for "repentance".

"What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator." (Galatians 3:19)

--The Scripture, Old and New Testament, Old and Paul, confirm that all of mankind are under sin, and like a schoolmaster can take us by the hand to bring us to Christ, that is in order that those under the law might also take with the curse, the promise of the One Baptism by "faith in Jesus Christ" when they believe (Galatians 3:22)

--You are the Sons of God through faith and by the One Baptism, once again the equivalent of the "believe and be baptized" of Jesus, of Mark, and of the Great Commission.

"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:27)

Could that be any clearer to you that Paul, like Peter, is talking about the One Baptism, and about the Gospel of the One Baptism. Which can you compare best to "put on Christ", water baptism as a putting on of Christ--certainly not--or the One Baptism of salvation as the putting on of Christ. What does the "put on of Christ" remind you of except Ephesians 4:17-24 where the old man of deceitful lusts is put off, the new man "created according to God in righteousness and holiness" according to God" (4:24), where Christ is really learned if a disciples really hears Jesus and is taught by Jesus.

--If you daily experience that inward experience whereby the Holy Spirit causes your spirit to always cry out "Abba, Father", then you have experienced the One Baptism.

"And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father'". (Galatians 4:6)

And this is the only real "anointing" that you need, the anointing that John speaks of in I John, the anointing not of the extra-biblical revelations of the Pentecostals.

14-5: Freedom of Choice in Galatians.

The Meat of Galatians for the Galatians, Chose between the Two Covenants, between God and those by nature "not gods", between the marvelous promises from God and the from the former "weak and beggarly elements", between freedom and bondage.

"But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain." (Galatians 4:9-11)

We would compare the children of Israel, fresh from rescue of bondage in Egypt, with their 40 years of wilderness wanderings whereby they desired to return to the "weak and beggarly elements" of security and comfort, to these Galatians and believers today who have become "known by God". And perhaps this is a better description of the children of Israel in the wilderness and of church members today, as in Galatians, than "God's people", where we know that they did not really "know God" in the full sense of the Word, as there was in them "an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God", although certainly God had known the children of Israel, by name and number, as He brought them out of Egypt, even as He also knew the Galatians to claimed to have known God and were water baptized as Paul was there, and even as church members today who perhaps are more "known by God" than "have known God".

(1). To be known by God more than known of God is makes an Apostle like Paul "an enemy" because He speaks only the truth of God, 4:12-20.

(2). To be known by God more than known of God is to be children of the bond-woman instead of children of the freewoman, 4:21-31.

(3). To be known of God more than known by God is to be free rather than to be under a yoke of bondage, 5:1-6.

(4). To be known by God more than known of God is to be hindered by some unknown somebody, and does not come "from Him who calls you", 5:7-12.

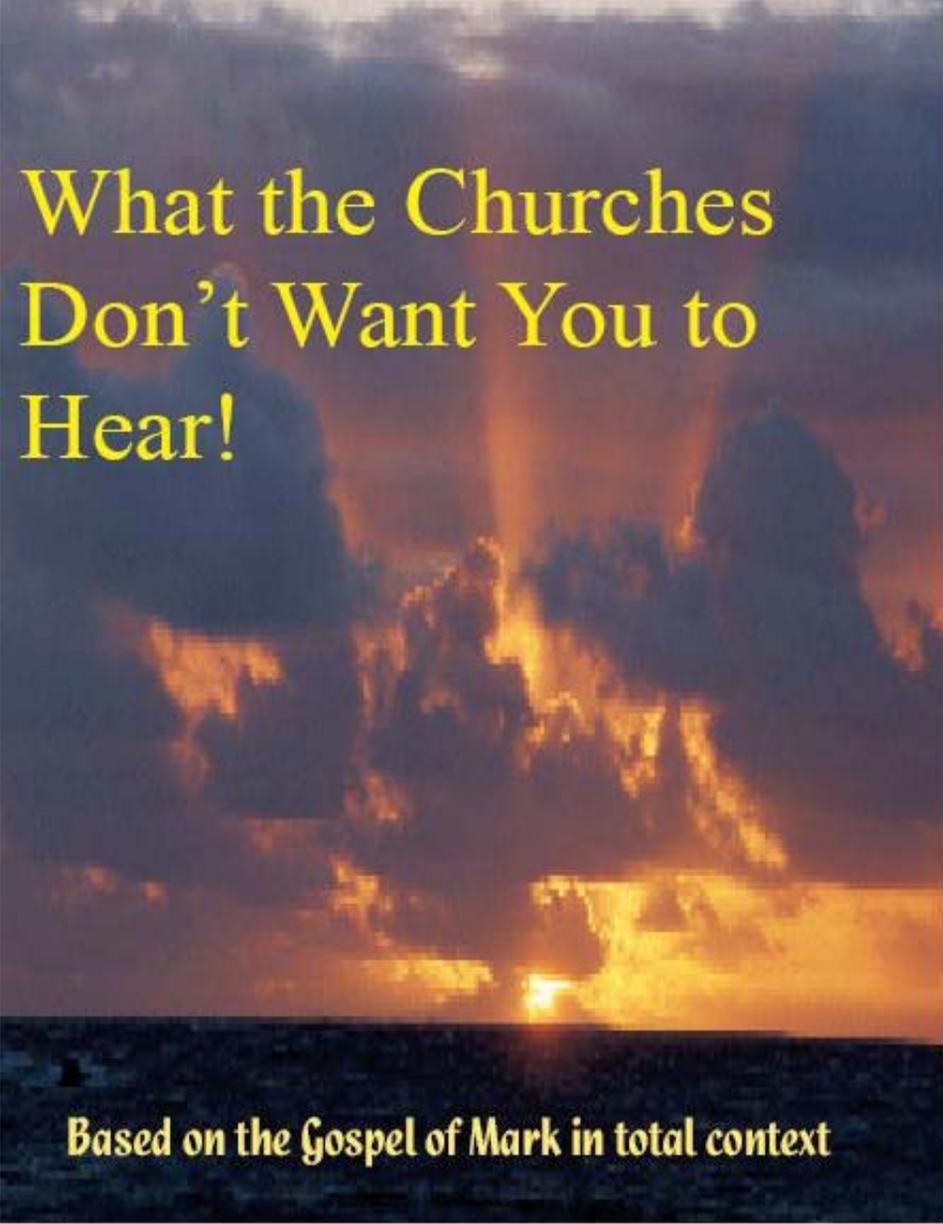
(5). To be known of God more than known by God is the call to liberty, however not liberty in the flesh; and the fulfillment of liberty in the law is given by "love your neighbor as yourself", 5:13-15.

(6). Those that are known by God only may "walk in the flesh" while those that are also "known of God" walk in the Spirit, 5:16-26. **{Which by the way is also the walking and living in the Gospel of the One Baptism!}**

14-6: Applications and Implications of the One Baptism of Galatians 6.

Applications and Implications of the Gospel of the One Baptism of Galatians 6, also of the "holy conduct and godliness" of Peter's commentary.

1. For brethren in the church, 6:1-5.
2. For those teachers "taught the word" to share, 6:6-10.
3. For those "who would not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ", 6:11-15.
4. For "as many as walk according to this rule", 6:16-18.



**What the Churches
Don't Want You to
Hear!**

Based on the Gospel of Mark in total context

Acts of Paul and the Holy Spirit

After this chapter, we have only two others on the Scriptures of the Word of God from Paul, Thessalonians and Ephesians. It seems appropriate that we might make a paraphrase of that portion of the book of Acts that applies to the Apostle Paul. Believe it or not, we will get a lot of Paul and his perspective under Christ from the book of Acts; because it is based on a log of their travels that Paul made in a lawyer-like manner and which he passed on to Dr. Luke for the writing of Acts. Where else would Luke have known about the conversion of Saul to Paul on the road to Damascus, known of the period of instruction from the Ascended Christ in Arabia, or of the seven so-called silent years at Tarsus which was really a major reread by Paul of the OT with a recording of those quotes he would need to later write epistles as Scriptures, and known of the places on the missionary journeys where the "we" of Luke disappeared as Paul and him temporarily separated. While it is true that the book of Acts is "the Acts of the Apostles", and what they did on the first day of Pentecost after the Ascension of Jesus and subsequently and primarily centered around the Apostle Peter with some contributions from the Apostle James, from chapter 13 until the end of the book in chapter 28, it is a focus on Paul and the Holy Spirit. Even before Acts 13, we have a short on (1) Paul's persecution of the church before his conversion in 8:1-3; (2) we have in 9:1-31 most of one chapter on the conversion of Saul on the road to Damascus, his baptism by Ananias, his first preaching in Damascus, and then from Jerusalem to Tarsus with a footnote in 9:31 of how the environment for church growth had been enhanced by the conversion of Saul.

“Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.” (Acts 9:31)

15-1: Acts 8:1-3, Saul Persecutes the Church.

Stephen was stoned to death while the witnesses against him “laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul”. Although young, this would lead us to think that Saul was the supervisor of the death by stoning. Bare minimum as the record tells in 8:1 “Saul was consenting to his death”, something that would later haunt Paul as no worthy to be called an apostle as he had persecuted the church. At that time, and here we have a landmark of Christian and church history, “a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem” (8:1); consequently except for the Apostles many disciples were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. **{It causes us to wonder if the pilgrims to whom Peter wrote of the dispersion, were dispersed way back during the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities or dispersed during this persecution. Obviously from Peter, however, it had come to be known as the Dispersion.}** While “devout men” carried Stephen to his burial and made a great lamentation over him, Saul continued to “make havoc of the church” **{contrast this havoc with the peace and edification of the churches of 9:31}** How did Paul persecute the church, or make havoc of the church (8:3): (1) by forceful entry, door to door, of every house in Jerusalem; (2) with armed guards and followers from the high priest and the Sanhedrin, he supervised the dragging out of the houses and the off to prison of men and women; and (3) through some kind of legal authority of his own, or through the religious authority of the Sanhedrin as permitted by the Roman government on religious matter, Saul had these first Christians committed to prison.

15-2: Saul Converted and Baptized, Acts 9:1-19.

In keeping with the “believe and be baptized” theme of this volume, we would no way try, as many do, to make the conversion of Saul typical of what most Christians experience or will experience. The Ascended Christ needed another Apostle, a Jew that could write Scriptures for the nation to which care of the oracles of God were committed, a lawyer with a firm background in OT Scriptures from which the veil of blindness could be removed with conversion; and He also need, with the Holy Spirit, a short period of peace for the church while the last Jews were saved, then an Apostle especially for the Gentiles, Paul’s background as a Roman citizen and his training with many languages and much history of Israel would help. In short, Paul’s talent and call to be an Apostle with a ministry as chief editor of the NT was not like the call of a typical disciple; nor would his conversion be typical. Hardly anyone in the history of Christianity during their conversion experience, first sees a “light shine around” them from heaven, hardly ever hears an audible voice **{most**

often in most conversions the voice is inward and not audible), and hardly anyone is ever blind for three days because of the experience.

We do get in 9:1-2 some insight into the legal process Saul used with his breathings of "threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord" (9:1). It started based on authority from the high priest. Paul asked letters of the high priest from him to the synagogues of Damascus so that when he found any of "the Way", men or women, he might put them in chains and bring them to Jerusalem. Even as Jesus said that a cup of water given to even the least of His own children is a cup of water given to Him, so the Ascended Jesus asked Saul, "why are you persecuting Me?" (9:5) And there is one way that the conversion of Saul was similar to that of all disciples in that he had been under conviction according to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit long before the experience on the road; that is, "it is hard for you to kick against the goads." (9:5). This convicting work made it possible under the supervision of Jesus Himself to obtain instant "repentance", the instant response was a call of faith as Saul used the word "Lord", knowing He had authority and knowing that He identified with the faith of the Christians; and then with repentance and faith based on those few minutes--this is also unlike most conversions where the new birth like the physical birth takes 9 months or more--trembling and astonished as this whole new world of repentance and faith opened up to him, asked, "Lord, what do you want me to do?" Saul had just receive a turn around in directions, accepting new directions from the Lord Jesus Christ of the Way, a Way he had come to learn much about from his captives like Stephen.

The initial instruction from Jesus to Saul was to go into the city, then he would be told what is the next step. For three days Saul prayed, not eating or drinking as being a religious man under God he knew how to pray and fast, also a Pharisee and leader of the Pharisees who believed in the principle of the resurrection of the dead; and while this was going on Jesus was working with a certain disciples in Damascus named Ananias in a vision, telling him to go to a house of Judas on Straight street to meet with a person called Saul of Tarsus. {While Saul was praying at Judas house for three days, he also had a vision of Ananias coming to put his hand on him in order that he might see again.} Ananias was terrified.

"Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name." (9:13,14)

"But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.'" (9:15,16)

Even as Paul in the subsequent Scriptures he wrote, and also Peter, would stress the sufferings of discipleship and of an Apostle with the sufferings of Christ, even so

now the message to Ananias that he would convey to Saul would be of both ministry and suffering.

While the intensity of Saul's One Baptism had more side-effects, the process was the same as the "believe and be baptized" that Christ would commission him to preach throughout the world, the same as the great commission given to all Apostles and disciples. Ananias when he arrived told Saul that the same Jesus who appeared to him on the road had sent him **{this established clearly in the mind of Saul the three-way communication that included Jesus and Ananias}**; and Ananias stated his purpose in being there: to lay his hands on Saul that He might both receive his sight and that he might receive the One Baptism, "be filled with the Holy Spirit". That is, the being filled with the Holy Spirit as a response from Jesus to "believe" is the same: what is different is that few, if any, are blind for 3 days. But immediately something like scales fell off the eyes of Saul; he arose, and he was baptized; this later baptism being a water baptism. Why did Jesus want another like Ananias involved? To lay on his hands, to secure the identification between Jesus and those of the Way, like Ananias, who were His disciples, and to water baptize Saul. Saul ate and spent "some days with the disciples at Damascus" (9:19).

15-3: Saul Preaching, Escaping, and on to Jerusalem and Tarsus.

Saul preaches, escapes a Plot of the Jews against him, goes to Jerusalem and then Tarsus, Acts 9:20-31.

"Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God." (Acts 9:20)

What a surprise this must have been to the leaders and people of the synagogues in Damascus! Like Ananias and the other disciples of the Way, they knew that Saul had come with letters to those synagogues with authority to take prisoners any Christians of the Way; now, he was preaching the Christ as the Son of God, that he had persecuted through Jesus' followers.

"Then all who heard were amazed, and said, 'Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?'" (Acts 9:21)

As for Saul: he increased the more in strength, the implication being of both physical and spiritual strength; he confounded the Jews of Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah of the OT that must come for the salvation of Israel and the world; that very Suffering Servant of Isaiah. And we are not surprised how that after many days, no doubt motivated by their own observations and communications with the high priest of how Saul had deserted to the other side, the "Jews plotted to kill him" (Acts 9:23). **{Jesus said that since they tried to kill Him, they would also kill disciples faithful to Him; and later Paul would**

write that “all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution”.} Saul learned about the plot as he still had many friends and supporters in Judaism; and although the plotters watched the gates day and night to kill Saul, the disciples helped him to escape by night by lowering him down the wall in a large basket.

“And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. {You see how it helped at Damascus for Saul, Jesus, and Ananias to develop common communication. But Barnabas knew the story of what happened at Damascus: how Saul had seen the Lord Jesus Christ on the road; how the Lord Jesus had spoken to Saul; and how Saul had preached boldly in Damascus in the name of Jesus.} So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out.” (Acts 9:26-28)

Saul: (1) spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus at Jerusalem; and (2) disputed against the Hellenists. There was another plot to kill Saul so that when the brethren there found out, they took Saul to Caesarea to put him on a ship for his home town of Tarsus. Then Saul becomes silent for seven years--but we know that he is doing a major reread of the OT to record quotes for the Scriptures that we already know he will write. And the churches of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had rest, peace, and were multiplied in number of church members.

15-4: From Damascus to Arabia to Damascus and then Jerusalem.

It is Galatians 1:11-21 that fills in some of the gaps of the life and ministry of Saul {or Paul} as recorded in Acts: Paul's starting point in his own autobiography, after the preaching of the Gospel of the One Baptism, is the call from the Ascended Jesus, “through His grace” (1:16)--and how it was important to Paul that he did not confer with flesh and blood Apostles, rather with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in Arabia, and no doubt at the leadership from the Holy Spirit as always--from Damascus he went to Arabia then back to Damascus, this side trip to Arabia not being recorded in Acts; after 3 years in Damascus with the side trip, Paul did go to Jerusalem where he visited with the Apostle Peter 15 days {it seems that these two apostles were always close, Peter testifying to all church members that Paul wrote Scriptures and of how they were as hard to understand sometimes as the OT Scriptures, and as tradition has it they were both martyred at the same time in Rome}, I believe recording in his lawyer-like fashion a written testimony of Peter to Jesus to later write a Gospel, which of course running out of time he had to deliver to John Mark and Dr. Luke so that they could write for him as part of his ministry; likewise when he saw the Apostle James in Jerusalem, he recorded another life of Jesus for John Mark and Dr. Luke; then Paul went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia {which you will recognize from Acts as the beginning of the first missionary journey, starting where we will come to shortly in chapter 13}; 14 years later, between the first and second missionary journeys, and with Barnabas and Titus went up to Jerusalem for the Great Jerusalem Conference where Peter and

James spoke {it is important to Paul to note here in Galatians 2:2 that "I went up by revelation", that here as in most cases of his life after conversion, he went the place and time as dictated by the Holy Spirit and the Ascended Christ, also with encouragements from God the Father Himself in visions of a dream and it is here that we learn of how he spoke the gospel of the one baptism privately in Jerusalem to Roman leaders and leaders of Judaism from previous acquaintances, called those "of reputation" (Galatians 2:2); and how when the Apostles Peter, James, and John recognized the grace in Paul and Apostleship, gave them the "right hand of fellowship" (2:9) to go again to the Gentiles. We will save the autobiography and justifications of his own Apostleship of I and II Corinthians after we look from Acts at some of the sufferings, labors, and ministry to the churches.}

15-5: Acts 13, The First Missionary Journey of Saul.

{Saul starts being called Paul, after evidence that he was filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts 13:9).

"And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their ministry {it is also important to Dr. Luke and Paul, that they fulfilled "their ministry" in Jerusalem before leaving, once again under the leadership of Christ and the Spirit--it can be called Acts of the Holy Spirit even more than Acts of the Apostles}, and they also took with them John whose surname was Mark. {This is the same John Mark who was a close friend of Peter, called in Peter's epistles "his own son in the faith", the same author of the Gospel of Mark who as a young man ran naked from the Garden of Gethesemane, and who on the first missionary journey deserted Paul and Barnabas; yet who Paul told Timothy was "profitable to me for the ministry", asking Timothy to bring him to the prison in Rome with books and parchments that Paul might pass those on to John Mark, and Luke, for the writing of the Gospels of Mark and Luke}.

"Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets {we must face "prophets" as contrasted to OT Prophets with the corresponding implications of whether their gifts came from the Ascended Christ as stated in Ephesians, and how connected they are with the "prophecies" of I Corinthians that were designed to exhort, edify and comfort the churches} and teachers {I really think that here since we find the Ascended Christ giving in Ephesians only gifts of Apostles, prophets, teachers, and evangelists, that these prophets and leaders of disciples were more pastors than Prophets}: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrach, and Saul. {We learn that Herod the tetrach, Saul, and Manaen were companions of youth.}

"As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said {ah, it is obvious where the leadership is coming from here, from the Holy Spirit}, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'" (Acts 12:24-13:2)

The Holy Spirit called them through Jesus, and the Holy Spirit of Acts called them for a specific work. What the Holy Spirit wanted these prophets and teachers, pastors and teachers, at Antioch to do was to "separate" Barnabas and Paul; that is, dedicate them, fast and pray with them, and then lay their hands on them with a blessing to go away, further into the Roman world.

1. Preaching in Cyprus, 13:4-12.
2. Antioch in Pisidia, 13:13-52.
3. Iconium, 14:1-7.
4. Lystra and Derbe, 14:8-20.
5. Back over Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, 14:21-28.

"Now when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God {the original commission called separation by the Holy Spirit is here called "commended to the grace of God", no doubt from the prayer and fasting of the pastors and teachers with the blessings of the laying on of hands, sort of like the right hand of fellowship, but more}...for the work which they had completed {completion of the first missionary journey}.

"Now when they had come and gathered the church together {their leadership is more obvious now as more early disciples comes to recognize the work to which the Holy Spirit had called them}, they reported all that God had done with them {to God be the glory}, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles {once again the open door and leadership of God, but a great door in that at this point in history and through these men God had opened up salvation for the Gentiles; although predicted many times in the OT, and by Jesus, and even iterated to the first disciples on a smaller scale, this was the big IT; and there would be a demand about this from Jerusalem and with the Great Jerusalem Conference to come}. So they stayed there a long time with the disciples." (Acts 14:25-28)

15-6: The Jerusalem Council, Acts 15:1-29.

The Jerusalem Council is also explained by Paul in Galatians and Corinthians. The real issue was not whether to circumcise the Gentiles, but a matter of salvation by works or by grace.

15-7: The Syria and Cilicia of Acts 15:30-41 and of Galatians 1:21.

“Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.” (Galatians 1:21)

15-8: The Second Missionary Journey, Acts 15:36-20:38.

Paul takes Silas and Barnabas takes John Mark.

1. Plan of the Second Missionary Journey and split after contention, Acts 15:36-41.
2. Region of Derbe and Lystra with Timothy, 16:1-5.
3. A vision and closed doors by the Holy Spirit while in the region of Phrygia and Galatia, 16:6-10.

We truly see much work of the Acts of the Holy Spirit here, forbidding Paul and company to go two places--to Asia and to Bithynia; and then leading them in a vision to cross over to Macedonia in Greece, subsequently the party taking sail from Troas, to Samothrace, to Neapolis, and then to Philippi, a colony and the foremost city in Macedonia. (16:11,12)

4. Into Greece with the Gospel, Philippi of Macedonia, Acts 16:6-40.
5. Thessalonica, Acts 17:1-9.
6. Berea, Acts 17:10-15.
7. Athens, Acts 17:16-34.
8. Corinth, Acts 18:1-17.
9. Sailed for Syria, cut his hair off in Cenchrea as the signal of a vow, left Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus after reasoning with the Jews there for a short time, sailed to Caesarea greeting the church there, then went down to Antioch; then went back over the region of Galatia and Phrygia strengthening the disciples there, Acts 18:18-23.
10. Apollos comes to Ephesus behind Paul, an eloquent and mighty in Scriptures man, instructed in the way but knowing only the baptism of John, Acts 18:24-28.
11. While Apollos is at Corinth, Paul passed from the regions above Ephesus to Ephesus, so that for 2 years Paul continued to work in Ephesus and all Asia, Acts 19:1-41. **{This gets here in Acts somewhat confusing; and it is meant to be confusing partly by way of a cover up of controversies between Paul and Apollos, or with Dr. Luke and other companions not agreeing as much with Paul in the defence of his Apostleship as what Paul would express by letter to the Corinthians, and about Apollos. Also right here in these chapter of Acts we have Paul expressing the intention to get immediately to Jerusalem, which evidently did not happen, and several unusual moves by Paul and his companions.}**
12. Back to Macedonia and Greece, in Greece 3 months, back through Macedonia, Luke and Paul after 5 days meeting several important companions **{Sopater of**

Berea who had gone with Paul to Asia, Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica, Gaius of Derbe, Timothy, and also Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia--names of which we will find both in the salutations and farewells of the Paul's letter epistles--although difficult I know that Paul hopes we will date the epistles based on such companions, also that they will become authenticators as the NT Canon is formalized among the early churches} at Troas where they all stayed for 7 days, Acts 20:1-12.

13. Troas to Miletus with at Miletus the famous Ephesian Pastor's Conference, Acts 20:13-38.

14. Sailed to Cos, then to Rhodes, then to Patara, then sailing to Phoenicia, to Syria, landed at Tyre where they stayed with disciples for 7 days {this was the first warning by disciples not to go to Jerusalem}, sailing from there to Ptolemais where they stayed with brethren 1 day, going "with companions" to Caesarea and the house of Philip the evangelist staying there many days, then they packed and went to Jerusalem, Acts 21:1-15.

That there were prophets in NT times, not the same as the OT Prophets, is evident here in Acts 21 as well as from the total context of the NT. That the gifts from the Ascended Christ included prophets as well as apostles, pastors and teachers, and evangelists; had to be prophets of the NT since these gifts from Christ were given after His Ascension. We know that the Prophets of the OT, the only other group and gifts to write Scriptures, were moved by the "Spirit of Christ" rather than the Ascended Christ. We also know the event that marked the beginning of the last days, the Coming of the Holy Spirit extensively to take the place of Jesus on earth, also marked a more democratic time of prophesy by prophets young and old, male and female. We find here at the home of Philip the evangelist, which the record reminds us was also one of the 7 deacons (21:8)--this telling us that some first believers received more than one grace {the individual received the grace, the church receives the gift} from the Ascended Christ--that Philip had 4 virgin daughters that prophesied. If they prophesied they were prophets, and further we know from I and II Corinthians that to prophesy is to edify, exhort, and comfort. Another prophet came from Judea named Agabus with a word of prediction.

"And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, 'Thus says the Holy Spirit {notice the source}, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" (Acts 21:11)

What we really have in such predictive prophets is another category of prophets which unlike in I and II Corinthians which is more like preaching, that is more related to the office of OT prophets with predictions, reminding us not only of John the Baptist--generally considered as the last of the OT Prophets--but also of cer-

tain men through whom predictions about Christ came: (1) there was Zacharias, by the way a priest, to whom an angel appeared to predict the birth of John the Baptist, who would go before Christ in the "spirit and power of Elijah", (2) later Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, in the same manner as the judges in the OT, "and prophesied" (Luke 1:67) about the future for John and Jesus.

15. Conference with the Apostle James and the elders of the Jerusalem church, Paul asked to keep a vow of the law with four others, and after 7 days the Jews from Asia saw him in the Temple, and Paul arrested, Acts 21:15-21.

16. Paul before the Sanhedrin, Acts 21:22-23:10.

17. Paul again under Roman Guard, Acts 23:10-26:32.

18. Voyage to Rome, Acts 27:1-28:10.

19. Rome, Acts 28:17-31.

*Philippians, the Gospel
of Good Church
Behavior*

There is no grounds for the argument that God has changed His mind on human pride. I recall in Lexington Park Maryland a few years ago teaching a men's Sunday school class of military officers and civil service workers--probably typical middle income Americans and successful according to the world's standards of success--but being surprise as in the course of Bible teaching, I routinely brought up the necessity of "humility" in the sight of God. The response of the group was natural and instantaneous as they said, "Humility in this day and time, huh, people will run over you." While I tried to stress that "humility" in the Bible was more a relationship between a person and God, we all knew that it also had to have implications between man and man; and I know from similar training in Aerospace big business on practical management dynamics, that the dominant concept in the class--and no doubt typical of in any and all churches today, is that somehow the Biblical concept of humility had become outdated. Management dynamics, primarily today based on behaviorism but with also the elements of the cognitive, and always with the Machiavellian motivations in mind, is dominate in education, in educational psychology, in big government, big military, and big business. It is perhaps the dominant movement in the American free enterprise system, and certainly a dominant and practical thought pattern in the American Democratic Faith.

Somehow with this practical psychology of management dynamics aided by all the self-help, self-growth, and self-improvement books, we have somehow come to think of "humility" as being outdated, and as pride being much more acceptable. Indeed the American Style of life and thought has rationalized and justified, even devel-

oped, human pride to the extent that it has become an idol. However, the Word of God stands firm, although faintly or seldom heard today, that God hates human pride. The Bible is still valid on the "six things the LORD hates" (Proverbs 6:16-19); it is still indelible recorded in God's Word of Proverbs 6:16-19 that "seven things are an abomination to God" with "a proud look" leading the list of sin and seven; and it is still as applicable to any human on this earth as it was, based on the character and personality of God, as the day God through the Prophet Solomon had it recorded in His book. You might as well expect the changing of the tides, or the force of gravity and gravitational attraction, or any other natural laws of God as seasons, day and night, as to really expect that God's attitude has changed on human pride and humility.

"These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him. A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren." (Proverbs 6:16-19)

God, who is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow, does not change His mind on his expectations for human behavior and attitudes, nor does He repent of them since the words of the Bible are really reflections of what God is like. His holiness and righteous demands will not permit, men today or in the past, of the luxuries of discord among "brethren", of the devising of plans for control in a local church independent of that of Jesus and Jesus through the Pastor, and of a "proud look".

16-1: II Timothy versus Philipians on Church Behavior.

Even as II Timothy can be considered as the book of bad church behavior and attitudes, so Philipians can be considered the book of recommended good church behavior.

You get that right after the long preamble, as is most often the custom of Paul in writing Scriptures, and with Philipians 2:3.

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself." (Philipians 2:3)

Think of how many problems are caused in your local church by one member or a group of members, riding hard on Democratic expressions and self-improvement, allow themselves to be controlled by "selfish ambition"--in other words actions that promote only themselves--and "conceit"--where self is put before the welfare of the total church body, before the welfare of Christ, and before the welfare of the pastor. {Here, I think Rick Warren with his concept of "protect the church" would be more Scripturally valid if this was protect the pastor, protect Christ, and protect the total church body rather than to protect the "cover-up" of the church.} While not based on Scripture, if you read the 40 day

purpose books you will find that Bible is only added as an appendage to the previous extra- and non-biblical conclusions, sort of like window dressing but subtle enough for readers not to realize that it is the opposite of exegesis, the protect your church movement based on PR, cover-up, agreement with Warren and his staff, it is far from being based on a "lowliness of mind" among church members and church leaders, and it is far from an "esteem {for} others {as} better than himself. It rather picks a certain group of members that have sold themselves to a man-written church covenant as the basis for the esteem to other church members. It is more consistent with the management dynamics of American Society than of Philippians and Philippians 2:3.

In this time of history during the Falling Away, where the rising tide of "sin and lawlessness" sweeps over the church, churches, as well as over the world, can we really expect such church behavior among church members as that recommended by the Apostle Paul in the book of Philippians. I doubt it; as except for periodical revivals, the love of many more in the churches will wax cold as the rising tide of sin and lawlessness overwhelms us to the point of--to use the words of Daniel about the historical period of the Falling Away--until "the power of the Holy people is completely shattered". It is shattered now, I think you would admit if you were honest, but it is not "completely shattered". It will be completely shattered according to I I Thessalonians when the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from this earth. Suddenly some week, in the not too distant future, we are going to have the sick feeling among God's people that things have so changed drastically that they can never be the same; and that will be the week that the Holy Spirit is quietly withdrawn by God the Father from doing His work here on earth, the only remaining work of the Spirit will be in the lives of individual Christians. There will no longer be the work of the Spirit in the world to convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; and even as it would be a drastic work of history if suddenly the influence of all churches in America were removed, so that removal of the restraining work of the Spirit will be more so drastic and sickening among those who have any love left for righteousness.

Well, since revival is a special blessing and work of the Holy Spirit on a group of people, then we can still have revival right up to the time of the Holy Spirit's withdrawal. It will hardly make an difference when the Spirit is withdrawn in the Pentecostal and charismatic practices of many, for they have so simulated and faked true worship, a loud and show-off worship with the lips and mouth in song, praise, tongues, and shouting, that they will carry on as if nothing happened. But real revival as summarized in the famous quote of I I Chronicles 7:14 about which we seldom here today, because the simulations have taken the place of the realities, is still possible for short periods of time and in certain places, as long as the Spirit is still on earth. **{To list just a few of the simulations: increased church or Sunday school attendance which is falsely considered to be the same as real church growth like in Ephesians --this is where we have been faked out by Saddleback Church and**

Rick Warren, not realizing that even the Mormons and the Roman Catholics can fill churches with empty people--excitement on Sunday or at other meetings for an hour or two as a replacement for living up to the calling of Christ for six other days, highly organized endeavors of a denomination which can make God's people feel good as a substitute for obedience to Christ, going to retreats and mountain-top conferences of large numbers and lead by those who would take first place in the kingdom, that is in their own mind and in the mind of those easily lead astray by the popular-itching ear Bible teachers, and so on and on such as with extra-biblical revelations.}

"if My people who are called by My name {don't you and your church call yourselves by the name of God or of Christ, most do}...will humble themselves {oh, there is that word again "humble" and "humility", how did that sneak into our Bibles}, and pray {much of the little of prayer that is heard in churches today gets no higher than the ceiling of the church, because it comes out of the mouth of a church member that is active by their church behavior and attitudes in the grieving of the Holy Spirit}...and seek My face {it takes much more prayer, it takes the seeking of the face of God, the opposite of the OT and common today practice of substituting loud lid and moaning mouth to compensate for a heart that is far from God--you know I have observed through fifty years in churches that as the closeness of a human heart to God goes down, the outward demonstrations of simulated sincerity especially in worship services goes up; and it is as though some of God's people knowing their own hearts and fakeness in worship, want to keep others from suspecting what they already know to be true.}, and turn from their wicked ways {well, this is too much: for God's people at the Temple where Jeremiah preached at the gate to stop their weekly evil practices in order for God to honor "We Are Safe" and "the house of the LORD...the house of the LORD"; and likewise for God's people in the churches today to really seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, put the seeking of things in second place...well, that is too much. Let us have a Gospel of Peace, Security, and Comfort...let us be encouraged with self-achievement, self-improvement, and the Gospel of Prosperity.}, then {then...then...then, we don't want the "then" today, and perhaps that is the reason that we so seldom here about it any more coupled with the ways in which we can fake and simulate revival}...then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal there land. (II Chronicles 7:14)

Part of the reason we don't hear this prayer much any more in the churches, is because we do not believe that the present drought in Texas and New Mexico has come from God. We do not believe that God sent hurricane Katrina, and other earthquakes; and we do not believe that God allowed 911 to happen in an effort to get our attention before the Falling Away is complete and the Second Coming is here. However, also still part of God's Word is the thirteenth verse before II

Chronicles 7:14 {and which by the way is from God to the one of the wisest men that every lived and in an answer to his prayer to bless the temple of God}...

“When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people...” (II Chronicles 7:13)

16-2: Good Church Behavior and Good Church Attitudes in Philippians.

There is both something “cognitive”--“for as man thinketh in his heart, so is he”--and something of “behaviorism” in Philippians. Even the useful paragraph headings of your Bible tell us this with subjects like: “Thankfulness and Prayer {first an attitude of thankfulness this a behavior or action of prayer}; “To Live is Christ” {a life style of attitudes and actions like Christ}; “Striving and Suffering for Christ” {“not only to believe in His name, but to suffer for Him” (Philippians 1:29)}; “unity through humility” {the setting aside by church members of personal conceit and petty personal ambitions in the church in favor of a certain mental attitude called “lowliness of mind” with subsequent actions and attitudes of esteem for other church members as better than yourselves}; “Example of the Humbled and Exalted Christ” {whose humility led Him to the complete obedience of the Cross}; “All for Christ”, “Pressing Toward the Goal”, I improve your attitudes by “Meditating on These Things”, and it would help if you thought of your true citizenship as in heaven, beyond your own church doors.

1. Actions and Attitudes consistent with “to live is Christ”.

To be able to based on the start of a good conscience toward God that started with the Gospel of the One Baptism, and what the Apostle Peter meant, to continue with a good conscience toward God and Christ that can say when I speak and live in the church or elsewhere, it is the equivalent of Christ living through me. In other words, the people who listen and see me, are reminded of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Conduct yourselves worthy of the Gospel of Christ.

Everyone knows of the greatness of the Gospel of Christ, even some of the greatness of the Gospel of the One Baptism; well, here is an Apostle of Christ, Paul, and with Words from God as Scriptures, admonishing us to live worthy of that Gospel.

“Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come {and Paul will certainly be among those who sleep in Christ who come with Christ as the Second Coming; I think then you will recognize his authority as given by Christ as he with other apostles governs part of the new earth even if you do not adhere presently to the authority of the Apostles and Prophets as given in Scriptures, as authority from God and Christ} and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs {how are you affairs, do they seek things or the kingdom of God and His righteousness?}, that you stand fast {even more important during the Falling Away, only now you have to find a select group in

your church with whom to stand fast} ...in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel..." (Philippians 1:27)

How long, if ever, has it been since you could say that your local church was of "one mind"; or that the attitudes of your fellow church members was such that it could be considered as "one spirit". Well, you see we don't even look at it that way anymore. We stress the personality individuality and personal differences of all human beings; we stress how not persons even church members are perfect, and that some human frailties often prevail which we must overlook. Well, that is far from the one mind and one spirit recommended, yea even commanded by the Apostle Paul with authority from Jesus and God.

3. Take the mind of Christ for actions and attitudes.

"Let this mind be in your which was also in Christ Jesus...but made Himself of no reputation {how long has it been since you have seen a church make himself of no reputation, rather than seeking to promote his own reputation and status in your local church, regardless of the gifts he or she may or may not have received from the Holy Spirit}...taking the form of a bondservant...He humbled Himself and became obedient to the death..." (Philippians 2:5-8)

May I make a suggestion based on Scripture that instead of praying like the extra-biblical revelations of Jim Baker and "Praise the Lord" where you thank God for every mud puddle that you can step in or see, you should pray as any "care" comes into your life: "God through Christ, As I humble myself under your mighty hand that You may exalt me in due time {it may be here on earth or it may be in heaven, leave that to God the Father}, casting all my care upon You because you care for me, I now cast this particular care {mention in by name no matter how small or large} upon you." We know Christ taught us to pray this way; we suspect that Baker's prayer like the famous Baker's dozen is extra-biblical and even non-biblical.

4. **"Work out your salvation with fear and trembling", Philippians 2:12.**

Yes, shock of all shocks, and contrary to many of your church conversations and your personally held attitudes, YOUR SALVATION IS NOT COMPLETE. What has been worked for in and what has been worked in you has to be worked out in the open by you.

This is the Gospel of the One Baptism

You continue in the beliefs of the "believe" of "believe and be baptized" and God continues to "work in you" (2:13) according to His good pleasure and will to the extent that you will allow Him to continue to work in your for His good will and pleasure. Never say die, or never say complete, or never say saved until the Second Coming of Christ, and then your salvation with sanctification and glorification of the new resurrected body is complete.

(1). Believe it or not part of the working out of your own salvation, is not to complain or dispute in church meetings or with church people, or even anywhere.

“Do all things {that is the anywhere--church, work, or otherwise} without complaining and disputing...” (Philippians 2:14)

(2). That is, if you really want the end results of working out your own salvation: (a) become of such a character as to be “blameless” and “harmless”; (b) to be called a child of God without fault in a world that excuses most faults; (c) to shine like a light in the darkness of American Society and the rest of the world; (d) hold fast and faithfully to the Scriptures of the Word of God, all of them and not only your favorites if you would work out your total salvation with fear and trembling {Paul said in the last of Hebrews that it is a “fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”, especially if you have not worked with the salvation that God gave you as a gift}; (e) so that you and Paul, or anyone else had anything to do with your initial salvation might rejoice in “the day of Christ”--the Second Coming of Christ {the Day of the LORD of the OT becomes in the NT the Day of the LORD and Lord, LORD God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ}. This sort of summarizes the answer of a good conscience, toward God and more so than any justification or rationalization of the American Conscience--if it seems right to me, I do it--as the One Baptism, not “the putting away of the filth of the flesh” as in water baptism, or the theoretical second, etc. “anointing” baptism of the extra-biblical revelations of the Pentecostals and other charismatics.

5. In the place of seeking “your own things”, seek the things of Christ.

“For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 2:21)

Paul saw this behavior and attitude in young Timothy so that Paul called him “like-minded”. Sometimes you will notice in the epistles of Paul that there is the “we” of Timothy, Titus, and others, almost as if they also were apostles; although Paul never really defends this position as He does his own Apostleship, it seems that he considers them to be so like-minded that when they bring a message it is as though Paul Himself, or really Christ through Paul, is speaking to them. It is like a faithful ambassador of the US to another country, like-minded with the government in power; but these are ambassadors for Apostles and Prophets, for Christ and God.

6. Seek out such men that strive after the examples of Paul, Timothy, and Titus; and having found those in a pastor or other church leader “Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem.” (Philippians 2:29)

We might contrast such men as Paul, Timothy, and Titus that we should hold “in esteem” with the ones that we most generally, even in church, hold with esteem. Would you not give a movie star or other famous person, or person of position in our society, a better seat in your church than a man poorly dressed? Yes, and by doing

so we have become a "respector of persons", condemned by the Word of God in the book of James as in the same category of murder or adultery. You see what accepted church behavior has departed almost entirely from the Word of God!

7. "Beware" as an attitude that becomes church members: "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers {that are, and increasingly will be as we plummet more deeply into the Falling Away, more "evil workers"}; beware of the mutilation." (3:2)

Well, today in America we do not have to worry about the mutilation of circumcision. That is not one of our problems, although we do have the power of who are the real people of God, those "who worship God in Spirit"--this is the real circumcision that sets the real people of God apart, the real Israel of Romans and of the real Jews; and related to that is our problem with the mutilation of the Word of God whereby today many popular Bible teachers and preachers {another characteristic of the Falling Away, that is of itching ears teachers} mutilate what was given in the Word of God of the Prophets and Apostles with their extra-biblical revelations of "God told me" or "God gave me". Why don't you next time when a pastor or leader, tells you be "forget" any unsound doctrine or practices in your church, simply because it is for his personal benefit for you to do so even though a compromise, while pragmatic of Scripture, to respond in term to him by saying, "BEWARE".

8. Press toward the UPWARD call of God in Christ Jesus, Philippians 3:12-16.

9. Walk with a pattern, not like the enemies of the cross of Christ--whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly {I bet that is an idol, the belly, that you never thought about}, and who glory in what they should be ashamed of, that pattern determined by faithfulness to your real citizenship in heaven.

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Philippians 3:20)

10. Wow, would you not like to so live in the church and otherwise, so that the Apostle Paul Himself, or even better Jesus Himself, might say of you, "and the rest of my fellow workers, who names are in the Book of Life." (4:3).

There is no judgment for you if your name is written in the Book of Life. At the Second Coming, before Jesus sends out the angels to the four corners of the earth to collect and separate the living and the dead "tares" and "wheat", the angels do their homework in heaven to decide who is a tare and who is a wheat; and then those already written in the Book of Life of heaven, with this record of their citizenship in heaven, automatically are picked up by the angels as wheat.

11. Meditate on "these things", Philippians 4:8-9.

Thessalonians, Second Coming and Prerequisites

Thessalonians, I and II Thessalonians: the subject of I Thessalonians is the Second Coming of Christ, and the subject of II Thessalonians is a list of the prerequisites to the Second Coming.

17-1: Thessalonica.

While a great multitude of the devout Greeks in the city of Thessalonica were persuaded by Paul about Jesus Christ, there were also a few Jews, and some of the "leading women". (Acts 17:1-4) Since there also was a synagogue of the Jews, that is where Paul started his ministry in the city, which was his custom when possible, and the record says that he reasoned with them from the Scriptures about Jesus: (1) that the Christ, the Messiah, had to "suffer and rise again from the dead"; and (2) that the Jesus they preached is the Christ. As everywhere most of the Jews were not persuaded, and like everywhere they stirred up a mob. **{Actually the Scriptures tell us that they were envious of the crowd of Greeks attracted to the preaching of Jesus.}** Their method this time was to gather "evil men" from the market place, use them to gather a mob, consequently setting the whole city in an uproar, then they attacked the house of Jason where they thought Paul and Silas were staying. Not finding Paul and Silas there, they dragged Jason and some of the other Christian brethren to the city rulers where the accusation was, "Those who have turned the world upside down **{the reputation of Paul and company obviously preceded them}** have come here too"; and Jason has harbored them; and all of these are guilty of "acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar" because they claim that there is another king--King Jesus. It appears that although this troubled the rulers

and the crowd when they hear this, no punishment was meted out, only the equivalent of bond money had to be put up for Jason and the other Christians. Luke tells an interesting thing about the ministry of Paul in Thessalonica in Acts when he writes how Paul “explained and demonstrated” the Christ, leading one to think that when we come to I Thessalonians 1:5 where Paul first recalls in writing the ministry at that city, he writes, “For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit...” that the power and Holy Spirit was the “demonstration” part of the preaching of Christ.

18-2: Previous Ministry of Paul at Thessalonica.

Paul’s description in I Thessalonians 1 and 2 of the Previous Ministry at Thessalonica. We get more details from Paul himself about the ministry at that city.

1. The church of the Thessalonians” were ever since in the prayers of Paul as he gave thanks to God for them.
2. Paul remembers about that church: (1) their work of faith, (2) labor of love, and (3) their patience of hope in Jesus and God.
3. Paul recalls how the Gospel came to them (1) in word, (2) in power, (3) in the Holy Spirit, and (4) “in much assurance” (I Thessalonians 1:5).
4. How they became followers of both Paul and Silas at the same time they were become followers of Jesus. {I think it is important to realize that as we become today followers of Jesus, we also become followers of the Apostles and Prophets that were commissioned by God and Jesus to give us the Scriptures.
5. They “received the word in much affliction”, but also with the joy of the Holy Spirit (1:6)
6. For some reason or reasons Paul sets them up as example church members for all who believed “in Macedonia and Achaia”. (1:7) Evidently even as Paul’s reputation had preceded him into Thessalonica, so also the reputation of the new church members there had preceded them out into the Roman Empire.

“For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.” (I Thessalonians 1:8-10)

This is outstanding for Paul as in only 10 verses he has introduced what will be the main subject of I Thessalonians: that Day of the Lord when the Son of God comes from heaven, what we and they are waiting for, and how when He comes He will deliver us from the wrath to come. To understand the obvious to Paul based on the

OT understanding of the connection of how the Son will deliver us from the wrath to come with the Second Coming of Jesus, we must consider both the Day of the LORD of the OT where judgment and punishment were obvious in the light of the Day of the Lord of the NT where the focus is on the Second Coming of Jesus. {The Day of the LORD God the Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ were the same, are the same, but some things are made more prominent than others when they are mentioned in either Testament. IT IS THE SAME PERIOD CALLED A DAY! It is a day of reckoning for unbelievers and a day of rejoicing for believers!}

17-3: Day of the LORD and Lord.

As always in the Bible, the capitalized version of LORD refers to God the Father while the lower case with a first capital letter refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. You already know from our studies in I Corinthians 15 of how the Lord Jesus Christ at His Second Coming will establish reign over all on earth as in heaven, and then how He will deliver that kingdom of LORD God the Father in order that God the Father might be all in all. {We should not have any problems with that in spite of our often neglect of this doctrine of the Bible, since Jesus Himself taught us to pray to God the Father as "Our Father which art in heaven..." and taught us that it would be through Him in that He would be after Ascension at the right hand of God the Father to ever make intercession for our sins.}

1. Day of the LORD is mentioned in Joel 2 where: an alarm is to be sounded from God's holy mountain that all the inhabitants of the land might tremble, "for the day of the LORD is coming" (2:1), yea it is at hand {you see quite often in the Prophets as here in Joel there is a more immediate day and a more distant day of the LORD, both have in common the elements of disaster, judgment, and punishment}.

"A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness. Like the morning clouds spread over the mountains {you know how there is often over the mountains an overcast of clouds in the early morning}. A people come, great and strong, the like of whom has never been; nor will there ever be any such after them, even for many successive generations. {It is obvious that right here the Day is the more immediate judgment day, a day of invasion from a foreign army.} (Joel 2:2)

Yet it is obvious that the Day passes from the immediate to the more distant Day in Joel 2:10-11 for several reasons, the main one being that the common physical disasters of the Day of the LORD as found in both testaments are mentioned--alias, earthquakes, shaking of the heavens as well as the earth, and diminished light from the stars, sun, and moon. However the LORD "gives a voice before His army" since His camp is very great, and strong is "the One" {obviously the Lord Jesus Christ} "who executes His word". Thus is apparent that in this Day of the LORD we have also the more clearly taught Day of the Lord Jesus Christ of the NT, although veiled

somewhat in "The One": it also being obvious that God is about to rescue at the same end time, the army of His own large camp {this reminds us of the camp of the saints near Jerusalem that God Himself through Christ intervenes to save, at the great battle of Armageddon.}

"For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; who can endure it?" (Joel 2:11b)

2. We know of the famous quote by the Apostle Peter from Joel 2:28-32 given as an explanation of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in which Peter not only establishes firmly {that is Peter and the Prophet Joel and the Word of God} the day of the LORD as "the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD" but also the beginning and end of the last days. (Acts 2:14-21)

(1). Peter clearly defines the beginning of the last days as that very day, marked by the coming of the Holy Spirit in special power and a special way. It is the same as the famous binding of Satan of the book of Revelation; and consequently the loosing of Satan after a figurative one thousand years, is when the Holy Spirit is withdrawn as we will look at more closely in II Thessalonians.

(2). There is a little difference in time between the end of the last days at the famous Day of the LORD and of the Lord, alias the second coming of Christ with subsequent judgment and punishment, and the time when the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from the earth. That short period of time is somewhere in the historic period of the Falling Away, also of II Thessalonians, perhaps approximately 40 years. The withdrawal of the Holy Spirit although made clear in II Thessalonians is somewhat veiled in Daniel as when "the power of the Holy people is completely shattered."

(3). On that first day of Pentecost after the Ascension of Jesus, you know how the Holy Spirit more democratically came on male and female, young and old, while in OT times it was more isolated like when the Spirit came on Samson and the other judges to meet certain specific problems.

(4). The period of the last days will be marked from beginning to end with the signs (a) in the earth beneath, (b) blood, (c) fire, and (d) vapor of smoke. Note that with any disaster you witness on TV there is those three elements of blood, fire, and vapor of smoke, whether God sends an earthquake, a hurricane, a tornado, or whatever natural disaster. It is all part of the continuous from beginning of the last days to the end of the last days "groaning of all creation like a woman in travail", often called as it comes to an end of the last days as not only a shaking of the earth as previously during the flood but also a shaking the last time of the heavens and the earth.

(5). Just before the coming of the great and awesome Day of the LORD and of the Lord, then the lights are diminished, of sun and moon and stars, the sun into darkness and the moon into blood.

(6). Now the good news is not only that the Holy Spirit will be there during most of these last days to restrain against the flood of sin and lawlessness, by convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment--doing the same work that Jesus did when He was on earth except on a larger world-wide scale--but also it is a time of salvation for many", "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." (Acts 2:21 and Joel 2:32)

3. The Prophet Joel also in the context of Joel 2 and 3 having announced in 2:32 that plan of salvation as a "deliverance in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem", obviously the life, message, and death of Christ for salvation; also mentions how God will call only "a remnant" (2:32), and before that coming of the Messiah {it is veiled of course}, there will be the restoration of the Captives.

"For behold, in those days and at that time, when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehosphaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there..." (Joel 3:1,2a)

What is not apparent until you take it in the context of the whole Bible is that between the restoration of the captives and the gathering of all the nations for a great battle and judgment, alias the distant Day of the LORD, has a large gap of time in it that Revelation choses to describe figuratively as one thousand years. You see how it could have been if precise 2012 years, or 2007 years, or something similar; and you will recall how the one thousand years between the coming of the Spirit in power and the withdrawal of Spirit is not exactly the same one thousand years {long and indefinite or unidentified period of time} of the last days. We would estimate that there must be about 40 years at least of the Falling Away before the end of the last days, and the Second Coming, with some where during that Falling Away the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit from work on earth.

4. Again the final and distant Day of the LORD with typical describers is mentioned in Joel 3:14-16.

"Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness. The LORD also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and the earth will shake; but the LORD will be a shelter for His people {for a complete description of "His people" at this time as Jews and Gentiles, the real Israel, the real Jews, the real children of Abraham and of God, the reader is referred to the book of Romans}, and the strength of the children of Israel." (Joel 3:14-16)

17-4: I Thessalonians on The Day of the Lord.

Volume 3: Believe and Be Baptized

What Scriptures Paul offers us in I Thessalonians 4:13 through 5:11 about the Day of the Lord, called “the day of the Lord” in 5:2 and “this Day” in 5:4 and “the day” in 5:8. {Needless to say as always what Paul says is based on the OT, with quotes or without. I and II Thessalonians are two books without quotes.}

1. That Day is called by several words and phrases in chapters 4 and 5.

(1). It is called the “coming of the Lord” in 4:15, which Paul declares “by the word of the Lord”, with a reference of how those who are alive when Christ comes again will not get ahead of those who are asleep in the Lord, as He will bring them with Him. {I don’t know which is better to go ahead and die in the Lord, going to sleep as it is called, the spirit going to be with the Lord until the body is awakened at this second coming; or to hope for a life long enough to be here on earth.}

(2). It is called “for the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, the voice of an archangel, and the trumpet of God” in 4:16. The dead will rise first, be caught up in the air to meet the Coming Christ, then those alive will be also caught up in the clouds.

(3). It is called “the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night” in 5:2, so Paul does not even try to get into the times and the seasons here, although in the second letter of II Thessalonians he will find it necessary to get into the times and the seasons to the extent of several historic events that must come before the second coming: (1) the Falling Away of God’s people; (2) the visibility to the world of the final man of sin, the son of perdition; (3) the rise of the tide of sin and lawlessness; and (4) the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit from earth.

(4). It is called a time of “sudden destruction” in 5:3 on those who at the time in the world are crying “peace and safety” even as God’s people in the temple in Jerusalem were crying the same with “we are safe” and “the house of the LORD...the house of the LORD”. It will come as labor pains on a woman, suddenly; and this is another time that Paul compares labor pains which start gradually and suddenly step up and then increase in intensity until birth with the end of this earth with heavens and the birth of a new heaven and a new earth.

(5). It is called in 5:4 as “this Day {which should not} overtake you as a thief” since believers should not be in the dark about it even as Paul considered the church members at Thessalonica not to be in the darkness about it, for he had told them. {The fact of the Day of the LORD and Lord as the Second Coming of Christ with judgment and punishment for unbelievers and rejoicing for believers Paul told them, what he must make clear in II Thessalonians is what must happen before that Day. In order words the prerequisites for the Second Coming.}

17-5: Prerequisites of the Second Coming, II Thessalonians.

**“Let no one deceive you by any means, for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition...”
(II Thessalonians 2:3)**

How much clear does this need to be to church members today that you can not have the Second Coming of Christ until: (1) First the Falling Away, and (2) also revelation in the world **{visibility}** of the man of sin. I know the confusion and confusions that are thrown up around the man of sin of Daniel, and the confusion with the Anti-christs which many like to think are the Pope. Well, in reality, and we will look in a few moments at Daniel--which is the real basis for Paul on these doctrines, along with what Jesus gave him in Arabia and the leadings of the Holy Spirit to write Scriptures. You see, we must also always keep in mind God's promises in the Prophets not to do anything without warning His people. The problem is that His people are not listening today. You hear about the Second Coming of the Day of the Lord; you hear of the judgment of the Day of the LORD and Lord of unbelievers with the punishment of eternity in hell; you hear of how all believers written in the book of life will not be judged, only go to meet the Lord Jesus Christ in the air; and you hear of eternity in heaven and hell; but you do not hear of what must come before that great and notable day of the LORD and Lord--that is, today there is silence on the Falling Away and the revelation of the man of sin, even silence on the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit and the period before it as the flood of sin and lawlessness increases. And this silence on the sound doctrine of the Falling Away and the related world-wide events is within itself evidence that we are already in “the time will come when they {church members} will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own desires shall they heap to themselves **{heaping out sound Bible teachers and preachers and heaping into churches the unsound Bible teachers and preachers with itching ears like the congregations}** teachers with itching ears; shall turn away from the truth and turn into fables.” **{We just never thought that it could happen in the SBC until approximately 20 years ago as the fundamentalists started to take over the convention. Why the fundamentalists? Because they under the discipleship and captive to the theories of Darby and Scofield have been the dominant influence in the silence and ignorance on these events that must take place before the Second Coming. From them you will hear of a kingdom on earth for a thousand years, not so; and you will hear of the Second Coming; you will hear of heaven and hell; but you will not hear of the Falling Away and the corresponding events. Why, because the Bible here does not fit into their little schemes as well as does not fit into their claim to have both the Message for the times and all the answers, that is THE SOLUTION. How in the world can a church or churches be a leader in the Falling Away, and truly church members have more to fall away from of God, Christ, and the Bible even while their attendance is going up because of the appeal to the world of their unsound doctrines, while at the same time they claim to have the answer, the solution, and the message!}** Look at the Bible facts, these inevitable events of

world history, that must happen, below as clearly given in II Thessalonians. {The only alternative which I think is what Jack Graham and the 23,000 member Preston Road Baptist Church in Plano do, is to throw out the epistle of II Thessalonians as not part of the Word of God, and then likewise you have to deal with Daniel, and on and on until you do not have much of a Bible left.}

1. Bible fact # 1 from II Thessalonians 2:3--THE DAY OF THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST CAN NOT TAKE PLACE "UNLESS THE FALLING AWAY COMES FIRST. Yes, the Falling Away actually prevents the Second Coming as you will notice in the wording of II Thessalonians 2:3.

"for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first..." (2:3)

You probably never thought of the Falling Away as preventive of the Second Coming, if you thought about the Falling Away at all.

2. Bible fact # 2 from II Thessalonians 2:3--THE DAY OF THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST CAN NOT COME UNTL IT IS CLEAR TO BELIEVERS AS TO WHO IS THE MAN OF SIN, THAT IS AFTER HE MAKES HIS APPEARANCE.

{Don't confuse the Antichrists, many of which even existed in the day of John the Apostle, with the three men of sin, nor the other two of the Greek and Roman times with the last man of sin of Daniel and II Thessalonians, obviously the man of sin just before the second coming.} This man of sin of here in II Thessalonians, and based also on Daniel, does have the same characteristics as the first two men of sin: (1) who opposes all that is called God and is worshipped; (2) who exalts himself above all that is called God and is worshipped; and (3) who sits like God in the temple claiming to be God. But the time in history separates the final man of sin, or call him the final Antichrist if it helps you, and the supreme Antichrist, as just before the Second Coming, as in the words of II Thessalonians 2:8 as the man of sin doing his dirty work when Christ comes again, "whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and desire with the brightness of His coming". When does this man of sin live and make himself a visible revelation to the world; well, in time for the brightness of the Second Coming of Christ to consume him. We will find other identifying characteristics in a later look at Daniel such as he is a man of war, he despises and mistreats women, and he is a king from the north with certain movements between countries near the end of time.

3. Bible fact # 3 from II Thessalonians 2:6--the man of sin has his own time as he rides onto the world sin on the tide of sin and lawlessness, assisted by the intolerance of God's people toward sound doctrine.

"And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time." (2:6)

4. Bible fact # 4 from II Thessalonians 2:7--the Holy Spirit presently "restrains" the rising tide of sin and lawlessness, and He will continue to do so until He is taken

out of the way. It is as though the Holy Spirit with conviction on sin, righteousness, and judgment is a giant dam that holds back this flood of sin and lawlessness, which the Bible calls the mystery of lawlessness {a mystery already at work during the time of Paul and increasing, but which will increase more rapidly during the time of the Falling Away, especially as the Holy Spirit is withdrawn}.

"For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way." (II Thessalonians 2:7)

5. Bible fact #5 from II Thessalonians 2:8--shortly after the revelation of the man of sin, "the little while" of Revelation and the "halftime" of Daniel, the Second Coming of Christ will consume the man of sin.

"And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming." (II Thessalonians 2:8)

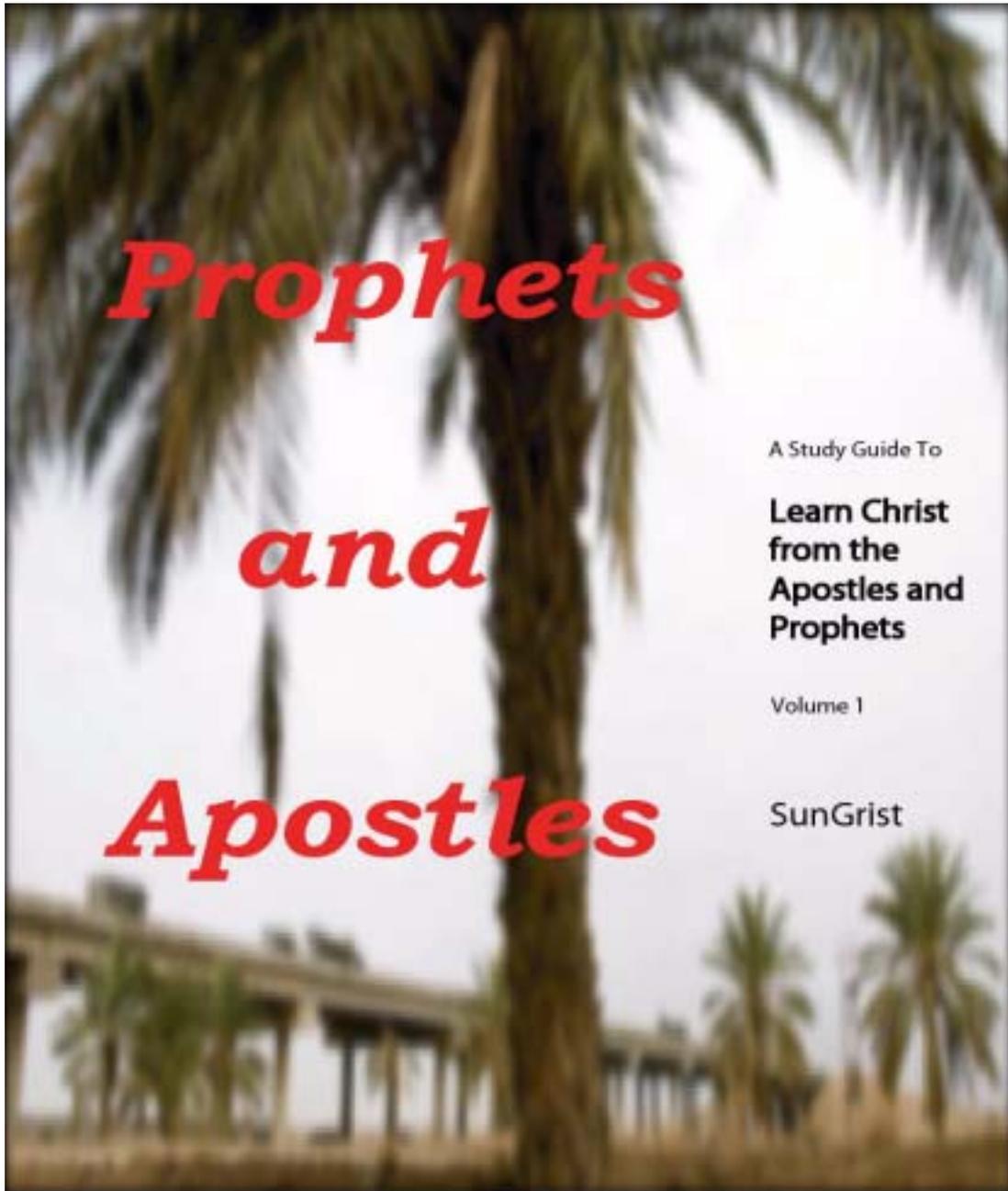
6. Bible fact # 6 from II Thessalonians 2:9--this son of perdition {and once again do not confuse him with Judas who was also a son of perdition, this is the last man of sin} has signs of his coming just as Jesus has signs of His coming, and well into the Falling Away the signs will intermingle.

"The coming of the lawless one is according to the workings of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders." (II Thessalonians 2:9)

7. Bible fact # 7 from II Thessalonians 2:10-12 and II Timothy--the "unrighteous deception among those who perish", those recipients of "strong delusion", those who perish because they fail to love the truth {the same of whom Jesus said because sin and lawlessness will abound "the love of many will wax cold} includes all of God's people and all other unbelievers who by way of unsound doctrine come to believe "the lie", the all who are condemned because they do not believe the truth. Recall that the Falling Away, the first in the wilderness and the second in Hebrews as well as here and in II Timothy, is God's people who "have an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God."

{And you that would hold to the Security of the Believer as part of your "the lie" should please read my commentary, "Snatching, Stumbling, and the Falling Away", which is a reconciliation of the Security of the Believer with the Falling Away based on the details of the parable of the Seed and the Sower. Bottom line of the parable is that 50% of the seed sown among God's people that creates the tares among the wheat, and which is not separated until the end, is unfruitful for eternal life: either it is superficial in the individual hearer because there is no root to their faith, or difficulties because of their faith cause them to stumble, or the cares of this world with other things choke out the Word. In short at least 50% or more of those who call themselves God's people and church members have not learned Christ in the manner that we will

discuss in the last chapter on Ephesians. They truly did not experience the salvation of the Christ by hearing Him personally and by being taught of Him. Crude, yes; but realistic yes; and quite often the teaching of the Apostle Paul, and the Word of God.}



Colossians and Ephesians

You have no doubt noticed the similarities between the epistle of Ephesians and the epistle to the Colossians. It is almost as if Paul had the same outline or parchment for both, and did a rewrite to address any special problems that he both remembered from his ministry there and the words about the churches that came to him from messengers, especially from his own sons in the faith like Timothy and Titus.

We do know from the history of the development of the New Testament Canon of 27 books that when church councils met to decide on which books would be in the list for the Canon, one of the most decisive criteria was how generally accepted were all the epistles and books for the Canon in practice among the churches. In other words the councils only put a stamp of approval on what was widely circulated and accepted in the early churches, which immediately tells us of a practice whereby the church at Laodicea would also share the epistle to the Colossians, etc. We see the beginnings of this in Colossians 4:16.

“Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.” (Colossians 4:16)

Since we do not have in our Canon an “epistle to the Laodiceans”, and since the ministry of Paul to Ephesus was really a ministry to all of Asia Minor--“And this continued for two years **{the ministry at Ephesus}**, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks”--is it then possible that Colosse like Galatia was a region and one of the specific churches of the region was the church

at Laodicea. We certainly know that as near the end of the first century as persecution of Christians increased, and as the Apostle John--which tradition has as the pastor of the church at Ephesus--wrote from exile on the isle of Patmos, just off the coast of Asia Minor and Ephesus, that both Ephesus and Laodicea were two of the seven churches of Asia Minor to be specifically addressed in the book of Revelation.

“What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to (1) Ephesus, (2) to Smyrna, (3) to Pergamos, (4) to Thyatira, (5) to Sardis, (6) to Philadelphia, and (7) to Laodicea.” (Revelation 1:11)

We also know for the context of Revelation 1 that the Ascended Christ, “the Son of Man”, chose for John to write to these seven churches, perhaps not only because of the unique problems of unsound doctrine and practices in each church as presented in Revelation 2 and 3, but also because that these seven churches, seven is always a number of completion in Scripture, were typical of the problems in all the churches of Asia. While we know of the specific problem in the church of Laodicea during the life of the Apostle John was lukewarmness--“So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth.” (Revelation 3:16), we do not either how seriously the church at Laodicea took the epistle of Colossians when Paul wrote it, if indeed Colossians was written to them; nor how seriously they took the message from Christ through John to be “zealous and repent” (Rev 3:19). We are encouraged by the oft mentioning in early church history of a Bishop at Gaul {France} who came out of the church of the Laodiceans. {By the way, we also have encouraging words of faithfulness from Bishops in Antioch, Symrna, and Alexandria. We are discouraged by the developments in the church at Rome whereby, under the decree of the Roman Emperor Constantine, the bishop of the church at Rome was declared in 313 A.D. to be a head bishop of all bishop, a “Pope”. We are also discouraged that secular government had such control over early church affairs, although we might be encouraged that this Emperor made Christianity the official religion of the state, mostly for unity in the Empire reasons, which stopped the persecution of Christians according to Fox “Book of Martyrs”. We find that persecutions of Christians and churches the first three centuries were by the government of the Roman Empire, and encouraged by Jews throughout the Empire, the persecutions then well after 313 AD came more from Rome and the Roman Catholic Church as they attempted to force a conformity and orthodoxy on churches throughout the Empire that was based on unsound doctrine, practices, and extra-biblical revelations based on an authority of the Pope and his officials who took to themselves an authority of writing Scriptures that were the Word of God; and in some cases, making orthodox only these interpretations of Scripture from Rome.}

18-1: Some Background on the Asia of New Testament Times.

The only mention in Scripture of the word "Colosse" is in Colossians 1:2 where Paul addresses "the saints and brethren at Colosse", obviously not addressing a specific church in the city of Colosse. Young's Concordance provides this definition of "Colosse": "A city of Phrgian Pactiana, on the confines of Caria in Asia Minor, near the conflux of the Lycus and the Maeander." {Does this mean that the church in the city of Colosse to whom Colossians was written is the church at Pergamos of the seven churches?} The church of Revelation 2:12-17 that: (1) how they held fast to the name of Jesus in spite of environmental and governmental efforts to make them deny the name of Christ in favor of the name of the Roman Emperor; (2) suffered much persecution as sort of a center of opposition to Christianity, having one of the first martyrs, Antipas, and how in spite of this intense persecution in their city did not deny the faith of Jesus; (3) had some unsound doctrine in the church which they allowed to be taught, perhaps more by a minority than the majority, the doctrine of Balaam which allowed God's people to eat meat sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality in the name of idol worship; and (4) they also allowed a group of church members to hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, a doctrine hated by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some maps of early Christian churches {before 100 A.D.} do show a church at Colosse, just below a church at Laodicea in Asia Minor, while the church at Pergamos is shown between Troas and Thyatira. One of our great conservative and trustworthy Bible scholars of all time, recently passed away, F. F. Bruce notes how the intense missionary activity of Paul and companions spread the word from Ephesus to all of Asia from 52-55 A.D., and how through the ministry of Paul's companions the work went beyond Ephesus to many churches where Paul never visited. "Among these last," Bruce writes in his commentary on Colossians in the NEW INTERNATIONAL COMMENTARIES, "were the churches planted in Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis, which appear to have the fruit of the missionary activity of Epaphras. This is plainly to be inferred from the references to Epaphras in Paul's Epistle to the Colossians (1:7f and 4:12f)." And you know how we love the informative, preachy, and more expository than exegetically style of B.H. Carroll in AN INTERPRETATION OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE; well, Carroll always a lover of history and knowledgeable on history, writes--

"Colosse is only sixteen miles from Hierapolis and only six miles from Laodicea--all right there together, all on the Lycus, a tributary of the Meander. The man who planted these three churches--who directly established them--was Epaphras, an evangelist, who lived at Colosse. He established the churches, but Archippus, the son of Philemon, was the pastor at Colosse--a rather slow-going pastor. He had to be stirred up right sharply, and Paul takes occasion in two of his letters to stir him. These people ethnologically were Phrygians, but politically they belonged to the Roman province of Asia."

While we are in Carroll on Colossians, we should also get the benefit of his insight from history and the Bible about the reason for the writing of the epistle to the Colossians.

“The occasion of the letter to the Colossians was the visit of Epaphras to Paul in Rome, giving him an account of the state of affairs in the Lycus valley **{so the problems being dealt with in Colossians at Colosse as well as in Revelation in the church at Laodicea would be problems of the Lycus valley}**. The conditions were much sharper at Colosse than elsewhere, but the same errors prevailed somewhat in the whole province. Hence, while he wrote a special letter to Colosse, he used the main thoughts of the letter and elaborated them into a circular letter. {You see, we did notice similarities between Colossians and Ephesians, not to mention the also noticeable and oft mentioned in this commentary place of Ephesians as a summary of the doctrine and the first ten epistles from Paul}.”

“The letter to the Ephesians was certainly not addressed primarily to Ephesus. A great many copies were distributed among the churches of Asia....There is a reference in Colossians to a letter which they would receive from Laodicea, which doubtless is the circular letter which we call the letter to the Ephesians. As the letter to the Romans elaborates the line of thought presented in Galatians, making it an abstract discussion, so Ephesians elaborates the line of thought in the letter to the Colossians, making it an abstract discussion. **{Don't you just love the boldness, generalizations, and comments of Carroll in a set of commentaries not verse by verse or strictly exegetical, but more topical, practical, and a total look at all of the Bible as well as some of the best of scholarship?}**”

One more thing from Carroll before we get into the messages of Colossians and Ephesians; and that is a definition of what Carroll and others consider to be the problem about which the epistles primarily deal, the problem of “Gnosticism”, which is so important to us today because it is very similar, if not the same, as the many “extra-biblical revelations” that we are hearing from Pentecostals and other charismatics today. **{You know what I mean, “God told me”, or “God gave me a special word for you”, or something similar not specifically based on any Scripture.}** Paul calls “Gnosticism” the common problem of the Lycus valley which, of course, would include Colosse and Laodicea. **{Thus the problems of Colosse and Laodicea would be similar to those of the book of Revelation; in fact when in approximately 250 AD a council of churches was held at Laodicea, the same heresies dealt with there were the heresies dealt with the epistle of Colossians.}**

"Gnosticism is derived from the Greek "gnosis", which means "knowledge", like "agnosticism," which means ignorance--not knowing. The knowledge to which they pretended was a mystical knowledge above that which was written {extra-biblical and away from the Scripture, at least beyond the Scriptures without any pretence otherwise}, and it took the place of the written word. {Oh how horrible we would say, for what any Bible teacher or preacher would say to take the place of the Word of God; but yet so subtle of the many itching ears Bible teachers today of the Falling Away, that we fail to recognize what they say, while sounding good, as taking the place of the Written Word.}."

From NT times to now there have always been men and women, inspired by Satan and his disciples, who practiced such "gnosticism" but who have used different words. In the time of B.H., it was "The Spirit moves men now as well as he did in bible days", so that they go on "Spirit knowledge", saying things in Carroll's day like "I just feel that it is so", or they spiritualize, saying "the letter is nothing, the Spirit is everything" and "you must not interpret the Bible literally".

I don't know about you; but I am getting anxious to get into both epistles for an exposition of the Word itself. All these historical and background matters hardly make any difference at all as long as we get the messages of the Word, to be used where possible and if possible to assist us in the understanding of that Word. Where I think it is helpful is to see that even as Solomon said of his time, "there is nothing new under the sun", that the problems faced by Christians in Colosse, Laodicea, in Ephesus, and in Carroll's day are so similar, often only modified by the words used to express the same heretical thoughts.

18-2: OT quotes in Colossians and Ephesians.

Even as the Amplified version translates the words of description of the work and ministry of Paul in Thessalonica and in Acts 17, where Luke records of the preaching and demonstration of the word, the demonstration interpreted by Amplified as how Paul quoted OT verses to prove the Christ, so also those OT quotes in both books can prove some of the similarities and differences.

1. OT quotes in Ephesians.

(1). Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8.

**"When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men."
(Psalm 68:18 and Ephesians 4:8)**

Paul uses that as a basis of authority to support the authority of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers as authority from the Ascended Christ, the head of the church. Christ gives the gifts for such and gives the authority for such ministry of the gifts; and the implication is that there are to be no other authorities of gifts. {Recall also how we discussed in I and II Corinthians of how the gifts are given to churches, not individual churches, even as the members like a toe,

foot, eye, and ear are members of the total body rather than each local church having all the foot/eye/ear etc. members of the body; therefore how also some churches proliferated for extra-biblical reasons may not have any or all of the members, thus may not also have any of the gifts.}

(2)., Zechariah 8:16 in Ephesians 4:25.

"Therefore, putting away lying, 'Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,' for we are members of one another." (Zechariah 8:16 and Ephesians 4:25)

Even as the region of "neighbors" grew throughout the Empire, the extent of the one body of the one church also grew and the many neighbor-members of whom the church at Ephesus was spiritual joined. However, it should be added that the dominant thought of the Ephesians 4:25-32 passage is not to "grieve the Holy Spirit". {I have often wondered why it is necessary for God to withdraw the Holy Spirit from the earth before the end of the last days, although of course it is not my place to question God as the clay should never question the potter; but often wondering that if somewhere in the recesses of the OT is not a simple statement to explain a reason for the loosing of Satan by the withdrawal of the Spirit. I could do without it, for one; and the only reason so far I can think of is in order that Satan and his leader, the man of sin, might collect all the unbelievers in the world for the great and final battle in the valley of Jehoshaphat. The gathering of such a large group of nations of unbelievers would otherwise not be easy, and it does facilitate God's work of separation between believers and unbelievers as well as making it easy for the Returned Christ and His angels to in one swift blow destroy all the rebellious and unbelievers, that is, that live at the time of the Second Coming. This kind of speculation is always dangerous as it gives the wind bag with all the answers an opportunity to step in with a solution! Of course, he has an answer just like he or she has answers on all questions, difficult or otherwise.}

(3). Psalm 4:4 and Ephesians 4:26.

"Be angry, and do not sin': do not let the sun go down on your wrath." (Psalm 4:4 and Ephesians 4:26)

Not easy but it is possible to get righteously mad and not sin. One way to guard against the kind of angry that does sin is by not letting the sun go down on that angry. In other words deal with it like any other problems with action and prayer, and do not allow the devil to take advantage of you here as in any other problems. Even as it is possible to get angry without sinning, and to not let the sun go down on your wrath, so it is also possible to judge righteous judgment. {Don't you know that you will be judges in the life to come, and that God has placed you here on earth as unique creatures that are afforded the authority to make righteous judgments on many matters.}

(4). Genesis 2:24 and Ephesians 5:31.

“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” (Ephesians 5:31,32 and Genesis 2:24)

Always and ever in the Scriptures of the Word of God, Paul wants every local church and every member of every local church to know that they are first of all members of the total body of Christ, the church; and as such become members of Christ with the necessity of first of all recognition of the authority of Christ over the church, then also of apostles and prophets through Scripture, and the pastors, teachers, and evangelists to propagate the Scriptures consistent with what Christ, the Apostles and the Prophets put in there. “Wives submit yourselves to your husbands in the Lord” should primarily be wives submit to the authority of Christ and Scriptures; “husbands, love wives as your own bodies” should first of all be husbands love Christ and the total body of Christ more than your self; and so on.

(5). Deuteronomy 5:16 and Ephesians 6:3.

“that is may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.” (Ephesians 6:3 and Deuteronomy 5:16)

You know what this is another way of saying: obey the Word of God as well as the teachings of your father and mother from the Word of God. Acknowledge and respect the authority of the Scriptures!

2. OT in Colossians.

Well, this is easy as there are not direct quotes of OT Scriptures in the book of Colossians, so momentarily we will look at the possible paraphrases on the five quotes in Colossians that Paul uses in Ephesians; and we will look for other possible paraphrases as well as references to the OT. {Although it really does not make that much difference, and with all due respect to Carroll and others, this lack of similarity of quotes between Colossians and Ephesians--especially this lack of any quotes in Colossians which puts it in a category of when Paul stopped quoting and summarized in epistles; leads me to think that Ephesians was written before Colossians, although the distribution to the churches may have been vice versa, perhaps Paul writing Ephesians as a preliminary parchment at Tarsus before the missionary journeys.}

(1). Colossians 1:15.

The “He “Christ” is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation” of Colossians 1:15 reminds us of Hebrews if not of OT, especially of the first chapter of Hebrews where there are so many OT quotes. Like the “You are My Son, today I have begotten you” of Hebrews 1:5 and Psalm 2:7; like Romans 8:29 where we are to be “conformed to the image of His Son” by the One Baptism, also Christ as the

firstborn among many; like I I Corinthians 4:4 where Christ is the image of God; and like in Hebrews 12:23 where the total body of Christ is called the assembly of the firstborn.

(2). Colossians 1:18, Christ remains the head of the church.

“And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.” (Colossians 1:18)

We might consider this as necessary in our study flow on Colossians and Ephesians as a definition of the firstborn as “the firstborn from the dead”. Also we might note that Carroll considers the book of Hebrews to be a supplement to and a commentary on Colossians and Ephesians. Increasingly as we progress through the first 10 epistles of Paul with the foundation in all the OT quotes, and progressively as those quotes peter out in Philemon, Colossians, and Philippians, we also have sufficient foundation in the OT and NT Scriptures combined of the first ten, to start to use them as authority on other NT Scriptures, like on Colossians and Ephesians. **{The old guideline of comparing Scripture with Scripture gets additional justification in the internal evidence of the Bible itself.}**

(3). While we would have difficulty in summarizing all of the OT Paul had in mind as he wrote of “the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”, we know it is OT based even as we know all wisdom and knowledge like treasures and mysteries, were based on OT Scriptures. We also know that this knowledge and wisdom was supplemented in the life and ministry of Paul when He met Jesus on the road to Damascus, when he was taught by the Ascended Christ in Arabia, and when the Spirit worked with him back during the so-called 7 silent years at Tarsus as he read back through the OT with the help of the Spirit and based on what had previously been taught and learned, recording all the OT quotes that he intended for the epistles like Colossians and Ephesians to come. In short, I think Paul knew at the time in Tarsus, even in Arabia, and as you can see written here in Colossians of his ministry as chief editor of the NT. Don't you see that in Colossians 1:25?

“...of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God.” (Colossians 1:25)

To “fulfill the Word of God” would be to complete the Word of God by writing personally 14 books of the 27 of the New Testament and then to sponsor three more with parchments for John Mark and Dr. Luke. And certainly you see in the larger context of Colossians 1, especially in 1:26 with “the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints”, an awareness of Paul that part of his ministry was revelation, “to reveal” those mysteries to the saints.

(4). The "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit" bespeaks of both Paul's total education as a Roman citizen as well as a lawyer of the Hebrew nation, requiring extensive knowledge of the law and the Prophets. How would this "philosophy" from the Greek education and this empty deceit from both the Greeks and the education of the Romans come, even of the Jews who denied the Christ? (a) According to the tradition of men, and even today, what is considered the best of the traditions of men up to this point in history come to us in education-philosophy, government, law, ethics, and etc.; (b) According to "the basic principles of the world"--that is, much of what we learn of custom and tradition are of the world, come from the world, and is considered like the wisdom of the ages; and (c) not according to Christ--that is, where we must often part company with custom, tradition, the world, and education is when it is not according to Christ. When it obviously contradicts Christ and all we know of the teachings and life of Christ, all that comes to us from the Apostles of Christ in the Word of God. We have problems when we start listening to this extra-biblical proponents, then called the Gnostic, now called Pentecostals and other charismatics. It is the very same problem that Paul dealt with in I and II Corinthians where women and other church members acted as either (a) the Word of God came to them only, and that is what the Gnostic did with their unique knowledge above and beyond the written words of the Apostles; or (b) the Word of God came out of them only, and that the Gnostic readily admitted to, would also that so many extra-biblical Bible teachers today would do the same. What an ego, to think when surrounded by all the Wisdom of the Word of God, that we in our little time and generation could come up with some new Word of God! That is sacri-religious, heretical, and is an avenue for profit-taking and ego building, the same problem of which Paul spoke to the Ephesian elders of how after his ministry would come some from both within the churches and from outside the churches who like wolves would scatter the flock, making disciples to themselves.

(5). We will find in the "circumcision" discussions of Colossians 2:11-23, really a discussion and presentation of the One Baptism, both much Old Testament about circumcision, law, and the real covenants with God and much of the NT previously presented by Paul in epistles where OT quotes were made. Paul often and ever tries to make it clear that even as the primary and One Baptism is "hands-off" so also is the true circumcision that really matters.

"In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands {you, when you hear the word "circumcision" you think immediately of the circumcision of the OT that definitely required other hands; but this spiritual circumcision is "made without hands" even as the One Baptism is a spiritual baptism without the hands required in a water baptism}, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." (Colossians 2:11,12)

Surely you do not think that you are buried with Christ in water baptism, and surely you do not think that are raised with Christ in water baptism. You are raised with Him “through faith in the working of God”, that working of God being salvation, and the salvation coming through faith: that is the One Baptism. How in the world the church of Christ got water baptism mixed in here as a requirement of salvation is beyond me; but any people who can claim to be the only Christians because they had placed a sign in front of their church building which says “the church of Christ” show the foolhardiness of their understanding of Scriptures. They are the same people that can hardly face up to spiritual circumcision and spiritual baptism. The One spiritual baptism that comes immediately after “believe”; the One spiritual baptism, the true identification with the death and resurrection of Christ, that is as far from water baptism in importance as the spiritual circumcision is from the physical circumcision of the Hebrews.

What follows in 2:12 of the formerly “dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh” and then the “made alive together with Him”, you must see as the same argument of the Before In Christ (BIC) and the After In Christ (AIC) of Ephesians 2.

“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins...and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus...” (Ephesians 2:1-6)

Ministry of the Mystery

And that Colossians was written before and it partly the summarizing basis for Ephesians is seen in Ephesians 3 where Paul writes about “the mystery” previously written to them, and of how the recording of this mystery was part of His designated ministry. And as always, part of that Ministry in Ephesians and Colossians, is that Gentiles are fellow heirs of the same total body of Christ, the church.

“how that by revelation {always the writings or epistles of Paul are by revelation so that they are Word of God, Scriptures in the same category as the OT Scriptures, as also Peter testified to} He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)...” (Ephesians 3:3,4)

Here is the way it goes: an Apostle like Paul or a Prophet by “revelation” is given some understanding of the mysteries of God and Christ, which is not similar but not exactly the same as the understanding that any reader must have in order to know what it is all about. The similarity is a matter of degree rather than of kind, in that the Holy Spirit is both the common source of the Revelation to an Apostle and the source of the illumination of that same Revelation to a reader. I think if you nowhere else in this commentary saw the Ministry of Paul as both writer of Scriptures and chief editor of the NT, you should begin to see it here. The call to any Apostle is the call to write books of the Word of God even as the call to a

Writing Prophet of the OT was the call to write Scripture; and what was unique in the call of Paul to the ministry of Apostleship was the fullness of his understanding of the plan of God, not only for one body of believers of Jews and Gentiles, but also of the place the complete Bible Canon, of which Jews were made custodians, would play in the Fulness of the Gentiles as the Gospel was preached to every nation.

The Form that the Gnostic Special Revelations were Taking

We spoke of how gnosticism was a movement, much like the "God told me" charismatic movement of this day and much like those of the time of Carroll, that claimed special and extrabiblical revelations to supplement and replace the written Word of God which can come only through the 12 Apostles. We know the problems it creates in the kingdom and church today, and in the time of Carroll, and know we come to the problems that it was creating in the early churches like Ephesus, Laodicea, and Colosse (Colossians 2:16-23): (a) little matters of formality and imposed regulations for worship were placed forward as important as true worship, like certain food or drink, or about a special festival, new moon, or Sabbath--all more in the category of I Timothy as proofs of "a form of godliness without the power thereof {these are shadows not the substance}; (b) false delight and humility in the worship of angels which God never intended to be worshipped as Hebrews makes clear; (c) "not holding fast to the Head", that Head of the church is of course Christ, and any time that Christ is not allowed to run the local church, we have a practice of extrabiblical revelations; (d) don't subject yourselves to special regulations that are man-made like "don't touch, don't taste, and don't handle" as these are "according to the commandments and doctrines of men" (2:22); and then a summary in 2:23.

"These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom {you know how when you hear these special revelations on TV, etc. they do have that "appearance of wisdom", with a real problem for the hearer to tell where they have departed from the Written Word to get into special revelations--of course a key is always words like "God told me", or "God gave me a word", or "The Spirit told me" as in the day of Carroll} in self-imposed religion {you must see much of this from the itching ears teachers of TV and best selling books is SELF-IMPOSED religion, and if that is what you want that is exactly what you can get; however remember that it can "cheat you of your reward" (2:18)}, false humility {this is certainly a humility that we do not want}, and neglect of the body {it is not even physically healthy as God has ordained these meats and drinks for our own welfare}, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh." (Colossians 2:23)

NOTE: Brother and brothers if we want the SBC back of our youth, we must get back to the Bible and the Christ of Carroll and Truett and Scarborough, of Dr. R. G. Lee; and of the Apostle Paul.

18-3: The One Baptism Presentation of Colossians 2 and 3.

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As we come near the end of the 14 letters of the Apostle Paul, near the end of this commentary on "Believe and be baptized", the great commission and one of the prime messages of the Apostles as well as the topical subject of this commentary, as we make our last effort to deal with the doctrine of the One Baptism in Colossians and Ephesians, we are also talking about the general subject of the 5 commentaries entitled LEARN CHRIST FORM THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS. That is the twin subject of both how to learn Christ, and how to do it according to the only designated manner by God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the Revealed words through the Apostles and Prophets.

1. Not only is the One Baptism fundamental and consistent throughout all the letters of the Apostle Paul, of Peter, and the whole Bible; but here in Colossians 2 and 3 it permeates every other doctrine as you will see it does when we come later to the Seven major ONES and doctrines of Ephesians 4:4-6. Salvation, another way to say the One Baptism, depends on all the other six major doctrines; and salvation for every man that believes is the natural outgrowth of all the other doctrines. God is the God of salvation; God the Holy Spirit is the effecting cause of salvation in the world and in our hearts; Jesus Christ is the author and finished of the faith of our salvation; and so on and on as we will discuss in the seven ONE's of Ephesians. If Ephesians is a summary of all Paul has previously written, and I believe it is, then the Seven ONES of Ephesians is a summary of both Ephesians and all previously written by Paul where he quoted so often to prove the ASI, that is that "no Scripture is of any private interpretation". You interpret I Corinthians and Hebrews and Romans in the ASI light of the OT; then you interpret Colossians, where there are no OT quotes in the light of the previously 10 written epistles of Paul; and then you come to interpret all in Ephesians. Here, even as in I and II Corinthians and as at the beginning of Ephesians 1, Paul challenges the reader and the hearer for "understanding", understanding on "the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ". You Greeks of Asia Minor and elsewhere, in Corinth and Athens and Thessalonica, want some wisdom; okay, find your wisdom from God and Christ as the Source, find it in the mystery God has made known through such foolish Apostles as Paul.

"...and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Colossians 2:2,3)

Look to Christ in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden!

2. Go back to the fundamentals of Christ and the Word rather than "anyone should deceive you with persuasive words" (2:4).

"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him". (Colossians 2:6)

You know how “to walk” and “walking” is a favorite word of both Colossians and Ephesians as a description for our style of living and life, and before we conclude this final chapter we must summarize much of how both books tell us of “how to walk”.

(1). “Rooted and built up in Him” (2:7) which will take you out of the category of seed planted on stony ground where there is no root so that when any adversity comes because of the Word, there is stumbling.

(2). “Established in the faith” (2:7) as on a solid rock and foundation.

(3). “as you have been taught” (2:7), much like the LEARN CHRIST of Ephesians 4:21 where “if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus”, the teachings of the Apostles, Jesus, and the Prophets.

(4). “Abounding in it with thanksgiving (2:7), the “it” being abounding in the faith; by the way the One Faith.

3. If you have been “raised with Christ”, the second phase of the One Baptism and after death with Christ, then a natural outcome of such an inward commitment and experience is: “seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God”. (Colossians 3:1)

(1). “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth”. (Colossians 3:2)

The One Baptism causes this natural focus above where Christ is as in the ONE Baptism “you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (2:4).

(2). As the final outcome of the One Baptism will come glorification in your life, that final aspect of salvation, where you will appear like Christ at His Second Coming.

“When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.” (Colossians 3:4)

(3). What dies with Christ is the initial phase of the One Baptism?

The members which are on this earth: fornication, uncleanness {**this is an uncleanness, not the filth of the flesh in the sense that water can wash it off, but is an uncleanness that the death with Christ, much like repentance, can wash off**}, passion, evil desire, and covetousness which is idolatry {**often today you as a church member and an American may not think that you commit idolatry, but according to the Word of God if you covet anything--say your neighbor's wife or house or job, etc.--then you are also an Idolater**}.

(4). Put off all these things, and again we recognize the similarity to Ephesians: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth, and do not lie.

As your One Baptism of salvation continues in Christ, the process we like to call sanctification, an opposite of no root and stumbling and the cares of this world, these bad identifications with death should fall by the wayside.

(5). Ah, the famous "new man" of Colossians and Ephesians.

"...and have put on the new man, who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all in all." (Colossians 3:10,11)

"...and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness." (Ephesians 4:24)

18-4: How To Walk?

Whatever you do in the home and at work under supervision, do all "in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (3:17) based on Colossians 3:18 through 4:18.

1. How to Walk in Ephesians?

(1). Walk by "not grieving the Holy Spirit" (Ephesians 4:25-32)

Goodness we will be without the Holy Spirit here on earth soon enough well into the Falling Away, as according to Daniel "the power of the holy people is completely shattered", having then only the Spirit that remains in our heart. Let us not also cause His withdrawal from our own heart!

(2) Walk in Love (Ephesians 5:1-7).

Walk in love as Christ also loved us and gave Himself for us.

(3). Walk in Light (Ephesians 5:8-14).

Part of the rising from the dead of the One Baptism, a matter also of waking up to the differences between light and darkness, is that as you ask for it "Christ will give you light." {Wow, there are a lot of implications of the Gospel of the One Baptism; far too many, to give over to the unnecessary and man-made requirements of extrabiblical revelations.}

(4). Walk in Wisdom (Ephesians 5:15-21).

Walk with a positive goal and goals and then circumspectly, carefully choosing each decision and each path of your life, asking for and receiving the guidance of Christ and the Spirit.

(5). Walk in the pattern and guidelines of marriage, church, and supervision as originally given by God, as reinforced by Christ, as echoed again here in the Word of God through the Apostle Paul (Ephesians 5:22-6:9).

(6). Live daily by each day putting on practically the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-20).

2. How to Walk in Colossians?

You will find even as the whole content of Ephesians and Colossians are similar, so also is the how to walk of Colossians similar to the how to walk of Ephesians.

(1). Put on tender mercies, kindness, humility {oh, there is that word again}, meekness {**now, how can a civil service worker or a military man be meek today if he wants to get anywhere, although bearing the name of Christ--I jest according to what the men's' Sunday school class at Lexington Park told me**}, longsuffering, bearing with one another and forgiving one another. (Colossians 3:12,13)

18-5: One Hope of the Christian Calling, the Message of Ephesians 4:1-16.

It is easy to get lost in the details of Ephesians 4:1-16, not recognizing the connection between the first words of "walk worthy of the calling with which you were called" to the last words of a (1) unity of individual growth "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"; and (2) unity of church growth (a) the growth the whole body, "joined and knit together" as every joint {**every member and every gift and every grace**}, and (b) with every member of the total body doing their share, the whole body grows.

Rich Warren with his now famous "protect the church" concept based on the seemingly rapid success of an isolated local church called Saddleback has missed completely the difference between a stable unity built on borders and extrabiblical requirements and a dynamic and growing unity as we find in the message of 4:1-16. For one thing you can only have the peace and unity of 4:1-16 when it is the total church body: it can not possible apply to such an isolated church as at Saddleback. Not only do they not have and can not have all the members--recall the arguments of I and II Corinthians--where it takes all the toes, fingers, eyes, and ears of the larger body of Christ, alias all the gifts, all the graces, and all the members.

As we consider again Ephesians 4:1-16, let us proceed in such a manner as to keep the first connected to the last, the one calling to the one church fulfillment in this life. {**Remembering that Paul's knows that this will be his last if not one of his last opportunities in the writing of Scriptures to promote understanding of how the call of one Christian can find the dream of the fulfillment of "growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love".**} What Warren seeks is "protection": what the Apostle Paul seeks is "promotion"! With all the denominations and churches in America, is it futile to even have such a dream, muchless to expect to realize it. Just the vast denominational organizations alone would prevent such a fulfillment in the name of survival of their own positions and organization. Yet, I think, the message is that we can operate in our own "hope of the one calling" as if it is so and as if it is possible! It will not happen on earth, especially during this time of the Falling Away as the gap between church members and local churches and the Christ widens; but our focus comes more on the kingdom of Christ where it should be in the first place, and on the church which is the "assembly of the firstborn written in heaven". Mr. Warren, one overwhelming reason that you can never have the unity in your local

church ordained for only the unity of the one church is that you will never be able to contain the Apostle Paul alone to Saddleback, muchless Peter and James and John, nor will you be able to have all gifts and graces in your church, nor will you even be able to say we have all the members of the physical body in our local church, surely you will at least be missing one finger, toe, eye, or brain that is in another local church.

1. First and last, from “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” to “may grow in all things into Him who is the head--Christ”. This was not even achievable during the time of Paul as we know all the divisions and disputes in local churches and lack of unity with other first century churches. Yet this is our goal. This is what we work for; and as we work for it and make it a primary goal, we will come much closer than if we ignore it completely, or work against it. Any local church can, or any denomination as far as that goes, can just go so far in the achievement of this goal, although each may start with the “one hope of the calling”. A local church like Saddleback or Prestonwood gets quickly to their limitation, not based on the quantity of their members, but based on the quality of their members in having all the graces. A small local church with all the gifts, graces, and physical members could come closer to achievement of the goal; however, it is still impossible for any one local church to get all the way to the goal.

2. First and last, from “with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love” to “speaking the truth in love” in the larger body.

Something no local church or church pastor wants to admit, that he and his local church are accountable to the total church body. He needs their approval for what he does and says, as does every deacon and semi-member of that local church. You see, though, if you think you have all the truth, then this becomes difficult.

3. First and last, from even as there is one hope of your calling with the inherent unity of one body and one Spirit (4:4) to “for the edifying of the body of Christ” (4:12).

4. First and last, from “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (4:5) to “till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God” (4:13).

5. First and last, beginning and fulfillment, from “one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (4:6) to “for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry” (4:12).

6. First and last, beginning and fulfillment, from “to each of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift (4:7) to “a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (4:13b).

7. First and last, beginning and fulfillment, from “He gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers” (4:11) to “that we should no longer be children **{be children in our group}**, tossed to and from and

carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting..." (4:14).

18-6: A "Learn Christ" equivalent in Colossians of Ephesians 4:17-24?

This is critical as it is maintained by this writer than "Learn Christ" is the main theme of Ephesians even as it is used as half of the main theme of the five LEARN CHRIST commentaries, LEARN CHRIST FROM THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS.

1. The LEARN CHRIST of Ephesians.

It is impossible to learn Christ properly if you learn any of Christ by the examples of the other Gentiles around you, church members or not. You just can not walk or live like the majority of Gentile Americans.

"This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." (Ephesians 4:19)

Even if you desire to be nice to your American neighbors, this is the adequate description of all who have not made a wheat and sheep commitment to learning Christ: (1) although wisdom seeking often and miracle seeking also it is the walk of a Gentiles without Christ, though American and based on the American Mind and character, it is a "futility of the mind"; (2) dark understanding is hard to measure but it is there in the American Gentile mind; (3) alienated from the life of God, and that is most often obvious to you as God is never spoken of, thought of, or considered, though they may be called "good people" and may be a community of good ole boys; (4) yes, it is based on the ignorance of God, Christ, and the Bible; (5) but their heart was blind before their minds became ignorant as people do more what they want to, based on the heart, than they do what they should, based on the mind; (6) long ago your American Gentile neighbors ceased to have real feelings on these spiritual matters of God, Christ, and the Bible; and (7) becoming the victims of lewdness, uncleanness, and greediness.

You must be different from the American Society and community around you.

"But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus..." (Ephesians 4:20,21)

How do you learn Christ? (1) You must hear Christ for yourself, personally and in your own heart; (2) You must be taught by Christ, as He and God the Father knock on your door and come in to live with you and teach you; and (3) as the truth is in Jesus, the job of communicating the truth to you today is the job of the Holy Spirit. And we will explain these aspects from the teachings of Christ Himself below as given in

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John 14. It revolves around three apostles--Thomas, Philip, and Judas {not Iscariot}; around three questions asked by these 3 apostles near the end of Jesus life; and in particular on the three answers of Jesus Himself to the three questions.

2. The LEARN CHRIST of Christ and of John 14.

(1). Question #1 from the Apostle Thomas.

"Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" (John 14:5)

(2). Answer from Jesus to the question #1 of Thomas.

"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one come to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6)

(3). Question #2 from the Apostle Philip.

"Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.'" (John 14:8)

(4). Answer from Jesus to the question #2 of Philip.

"Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.'" (John 14:9-11)

(5). Question # 3 from the Apostle Judas.

"Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" (John 14:22)

(6). Answer from Jesus to the third question from the Apostle Judas.

"Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make our home with him.'" (John 14:23)

3. The LEARN CHRIST of Colossians.

Since I hope we have come to believe that Colossians was written after Ephesians, then with what we have of the Learn Christ in Colossians will have to be the bottom line for us. We can recognize where the passage is in Colossians by identification with the new man of Ephesians, with the putting on and putting off.

"...that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind {yes, your mind has a spirit}, and that you put on the new man which was

created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.” (Ephesians 4:22-24)

The beginning of the end Colossians version is in Colossians 3:10 and following.

“...and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him...” (Colossians 3:10)

- (1). Put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, and longsuffering (3:12)
- (2). Bearing with one another and forgiving one another even when there is a legitimate complaint for that is the way Christ forgave you (3:13).
- (3). The individual bond of personal and individual perfection is love, so put on this bond of love (3:14).
- (4). Let the peace of God rule in your heart as that is the calling of the one body (3:15a).
- (5). Ever and in always and in all words of prayer, be thankful to God (3:15b).
- (6). Allow the word of Christ and of God {the teachings of Christ and of God in the Word} dwell inside of you like God and Christ want to dwell inside of you, and teach you, but make sure that it is based on the revealed wisdom that is in the Word, not any extrabiblical wisdom (3:16a).
- (7). Then you can teach and worship properly (3:16b).
- (8). Whatever you do in word and deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (3:17).

18-7: Philemon, Colossians, and Philippians and I, II, and III John harmonized.
By the way, three of the last epistles from Paul--Philemon, Colossians, and Philippians will not be covered in this volume as they were covered as part of the harmony between the little epistles of the Apostle John with some of the last epistles from Paul under the chapter headings of “The Security of the Believer” in the second volume of the LEARN CHRIST FROM THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS commentaries, the “Christ for Individuals” that deals primarily with the five books written by the Apostle John. Those five, which I like to call the new Pentateuch since there are five and because of the preface of the book of John where “while the law came by Moses, grace and truth came by the Lord Jesus Christ, of course, are in the order most likely written if not distributed of Revelation, the Gospel of John, and the three little epistles of I, II, and III John. And why does it take 19 chapters to cover only 14 epistles of Paul which he personally wrote; that is with the three of Philemon, Colossians, and Philippians not covered in this volume for deference to volume 2, why does it take 19 chapters to cover 11 epistles. Well, I could blame it on the wordiness of Paul, and myself, especially in I and II Corinthians where three chapters were required to be adequate on Bible understanding, Revelation and wisdom, and with

many other problems caused by an inadequate concept of where Revelation came from and how they came; likewise by the necessity to include some of the Old Testament from which Paul so often quoted in two chapters, one on Isaiah and one on "The Message of the Writing Prophets", you guessed it most of the 16 major and minor Prophets. Always, the effort has been to keep in total context, that of the OT and NT, that of the book of Acts, and to follow the flow of the life of the Apostle Paul as he carried out his commission as chief editor of the NT, a Ministry of an Apostle that was called and commissioned and trained by the Ascended Christ Himself to complete the profitable work of the Hebrew and Jewish people as "custodians of the oracles of God". A part of the Ministry of an Apostle, the Apostle Paul, that has reached more people and exerted more influence on the churches and Christians; that is as chief editor of the NT, than has even the missionary journeys of Paul. **{In the first few centuries were converted in the short period after the Crucifixion, 5,000 at the first day of Pentecost after the Resurrection.} Paul would be the Apostle of choice by the Ascended Christ, and His "alter ego"—the Holy Spirit--to take the Gospel of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ to the Gentiles; at the same time, explaining what both happened to the Jews as the former chosen nation of God, and how the Gentiles would with the "Fullness of the Gentiles" take their place in the kingdom of God. {That mantle of Gentile leadership we know from history and church history fell on the United States, until recently, as America became the leader among the believers of the world; and as the US sent missionaries to every nation of the world in obedience to the great commission.}**

"Believe and be baptized", words from Jesus Himself, best summarize the message that Paul delivered to the Roman Empire. It also best summarizes the many messages that Paul delivered in Jewish synagogues and Gentile houses throughout the Empire in two missionary journeys; and in the most significant and lasting influence in the Gentile world with a few Jews, the writing of 14 New Testament books and the sponsorship of 3 more. You know how a decision made by early church fathers about a New Testament Canon included the criterion of authorship by an apostle or an associate of an Apostle; but a little known fact which can only come out of the internal evidences of the New Testament is the supposition that Paul left manuscripts and parchments **{those same books and parchments that Paul requested Timothy to bring to prison in Rome while Dr. Luke was there, and at the same time to bring John Mark since he was profitable to Paul's ministry as chief editor of the New Testament (II Timothy 4:11-13)}** for John Mark and Dr. Luke to write respectively Mark, Luke, and Acts. Stop to think about it a few moments since hindsight is better than foresight; and since we can look back over the actual history of the last two thousand years, realizing that the total influence the books of the Apostle Paul is much greater, by any measure you might chose, than the influence of his missionary journeys. Instead of extending approximately

one century as did the influence of His immediate life and journeys, the 14 letters with three supplements have extended for over two thousand years. And to think that this was not in the plan of God and the implementation in the kingdom of Christ is as foolish as overlooking the ways God has worked and continues to work in history as the Great Maker of History, the same truth noted by the Apostle James at the great Jerusalem conference when after quoting from Amos 9:11,12, says "known to God from eternity are all His works." (Acts 15:18)

"Believe and be baptized" best summarizes the message that is needed today to explain why the local churches and denominations are about to be overwhelmed by the tares as in the Falling Away of I I Thessalonians and Daniel, as "the power of the holy people is completely shattered" (Daniel 12:7). We in the kingdom of God and of Christ have never learned the details of the parable of the seed and the sower, or some of the details of that parable has become part of the time and doctrine we will no longer be endured during the Falling Away. Remember the part where church members, whose hearts like seed sown on stony ground, receive initially the Word with so much enthusiasm {the exact words of the explanation of Jesus in Mark 4:13-20 is "immediately receive it with gladness"} that it is interpreted by the evangelist and local church as a conversion, then how Jesus explains that, having no root and because of persecutions and tribulations for the word's sake, they endure only for a time and stumble. Like the citizens of Jerusalem during the day of the Prophet Jeremiah, who lived as they wanted during the week then came to the temple on the Sabbath to say "We Are Safe" (Jeremiah 7:10), we also think we are safe in our beautiful, comfortable, and many church buildings, not realizing that the bad behavior of church members, like of the temple attendees, has overtaken us (I I Timothy 3:1-9), that our intolerance of sound doctrine has sealed the God determined fate of our demise (I I Timothy 4:1-4), that we have completed our usefulness as a nation to God in the evangelization of the world and in the Fullness of the Gentiles, and that our pride in Bible knowledge, Bible teachers, and preachers has really become more the vast "heaping up of teachers with itching ears" (I I Timothy 4:1-4) of the end time false prophets and teachers more than any signs of revival. What we really have in our nation is not signs for encouragement among the few truly members of God's kingdom who remain, sort of like the thousands who had not bowed to Baal during the time of Elijah, is a like in all the times of the OT Prophets a lot of false prophets saying peace when there is no peace, a lot of pastors and teachers convincing their audiences that they are the people of God when there is only a remnant of those people left in the whole nation, and an innumerable heaping up of misleading teachers that help place a fortress of protection and security, and by the way ignorance, around the so-called "people of God" of many churches and denominations.

We are far too “tolerant” today and in our country to admit that Satan has placed the tares in the churches and kingdom for the very purpose of subversion and destruction. Look again carefully at the parable of tares and wheat taught by Jesus and as explained by Jesus to His disciples, and if you can not find eyes to see and ears to hear this parable with explanation then you like most religious leaders of Jesus’ day do not have the spiritual understanding of the ASI **{Authorized Semi-Public Interpretation}**. What you see and hear Jesus saying is that “the enemy who sowed them is the devil” (Matthew 13:39), and if the Devil sowed those tares in the churches as well as in the larger kingdom then like the nature of Satan Himself as destructive and as a liar, then the tares in the local churches and denominations have the same goals as Satan himself, that of THE LIE and lies, deception, and destruction. Of course, if your sound doctrine has never progressed to the extent of believing in Satan as the prince and power of this world, then your doctrine will also “be slow to believe” all the Prophets and Apostles said of both Jesus and Satan!

“Believe and be baptized” is the message that Jesus wants to spread His influence in this time as in the time of the 12 Apostles. It is the complete message that will go beyond initial “belief” only which can not save to the “uttermost”; that is, can not save to the extent of a corresponding inner change which is nothing less than a 9 month new birth, a progressing sanctification, and then a glorification that is a real visual of Christ in the finalized kingdom of the new heavens and new earth! As I told a Chinese friend recently, one who was surprised that a simple belief could bring salvation, there are two “beliefs” in the Bible as the Apostle James makes clear. There is one belief which the devil have and tremble, knowing the facts of hell and their God determined fate there and of their fall; and then there is another faith, one which shows itself in works and that is a righteousness by faith apart from works. This later faith which saves and converts all the way, and with an adequate concept and more importantly practice of a 9 month new birth as contrasted to an instantaneous new birth of the fundamentalists and of the immediate joy of the seed on stony ground, is the “believe” of Jesus that is coupled with the power of God acting on that individual belief summarized as “and be baptized”. Sorry if you thought “and be baptized” related to water baptism. NO, NO, and NO, NO, NO. It is the “baptism” that Paul speaks of most often in the book of Romans; it is the baptism that Paul writes of most often in his 14 letters; it is the “one baptism” of Ephesians; and most importantly it is the “and be baptized” that Jesus gives to all His disciples as a great commission. If you do not see this on the positive side of Mark 16:16 where you have the two divisions in “believe and be baptized”, one you do in the exercise of your freedom of choice and then the second which God does on you in response to the proper belief and attitude of repentance and belief which when He sees, He starts an act of God in you; then you should see it in the negative side of Mark 16:16—that is, in the “but he who does not believe

will be condemned." You know and I know if Jesus had made water baptism necessary for salvation, in spite of all seeing it as a work rather than of grace, he would have said something like, "but he who does not believe and be baptized will be condemned". Right, you know it to be true even though you must face up to an onslaught on unsound doctrine to the contrary.

Popularity of Bible teaching, like a best-seller, is now a bad sign; and the popularity of many Bible teachers, both male and female, is a sign of how far we are into itching ears and the time of itching ears teachers as in "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables." (II Timothy 4:3,4) I would have to say, like Jesus said of His first disciples who at first would not endure the sound doctrine of His resurrection, that you "are slow to believe" the signs in your local churches, in the denominations, and in particular the signs of the warfare in the SBC, if you can not see in all this, and more, the signs of the Falling Away as given by the Apostle Paul and the Holy Spirit of God in the two verses of II Timothy 4:3,4. What you do see in your local churches, denominations, and the larger kingdom of God is: (1) a vast heaping up of popular Bible teachers in conferences, on television, and in books and on the radio {have you ever seen or heard of so many Bible teachers and preachers, and does it not for even one second make you stop to think of how Jesus and the Apostles, especially Paul, told you that there would be many false prophets and teachers—and where do you think those are coming from}; (2) the motivation for such church members is twofold—(a) they have passed beyond ignorance of sound doctrine to a point of no return where they "will not endure sound doctrine", and this intolerance toward sound doctrine is aided by an increased popularity in the churches and denominations which they detect so that they "can come out", so to speak; and (b) it is motivated by "their own desires" for comfort, security, inertia—in that they have a desire for things to stay like they know them, they like their lack of root convictions, they have become comfortable with their cares of this world and the things of this world, they like the deceitfulness of riches of the Gospel of Prosperity and the corollary of success; (3) the turning of ears away from truth while like the religious leaders of Jesus' day practicing vain worship with a substitution of the teachings of men for the doctrines of God came so slow and gradual with years as to be unnoticed, and they like the people of Plato who lived under ground so that they thought the reflected light to be the real light, the vast number of church members today do not know that they have turned into fables.

Jesus said certain "signs" would follow along with the believers.

“And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” (Mark 16:17,18)

Instead of these signs in our churches today, we have the signs of the Falling Away such as (1) distortions of God's concept of marriage among church members; (2) the taking of God's name in vain as a common practice among church members so that like in Romans 1, men consider by themselves as teachers of the law have become something else, the name of God is blasphemed throughout the world; (3) the popularity of Bible teachers with itching ear teachings, especially as related to the Gospel of Prosperity, success, the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, in churches and outside in the larger kingdom; (4) the rebellion against the authority of Christ in churches as trusted in the pastors with the unheard of large number, in the name of democracy, who run off their pastors, choosing ones less demanding in the preaching of the Word; (5) the accepted but bad church behavior of church members like that enumerated in I Timothy 3:1-9 where they exhibit a form of godliness but deny the power and presence of God; (6) the unrighteous and rebellious gap between churches and Christ that most see with any spiritual understanding at all; and (7) the warfare between “fundamentalists” and “moderates”, between the Texas State Baptist Convention and the present leadership of the SBC, a warfare that started in this largest Protestant denomination in the world 20 years ago as Criswell announced for his cohorts like Stanley, Rogers, Falwell, and LeHaye that “they would keep fighting until one side or the other won”, and which the fundamentalists did until they took control of the SBC, the kind of fighting which shows a bad spirit even if you can not see the non-conservative nature of the fundamentalist's superficial, hunt and peck method of Bible interpretation, a method based more on Scofield notes than on real ASI Bible. **{You don't think this has hurt the SBC; well, it is all over in a matter of a short time for the SBC unless the real southern Baptists rise up to take control of their own convention, which can hardly take place during the time of the Falling Away as the Holy Spirit is withdrawn and as the power of the holy people is completely shattered. In other words, don't plan for it to happen!}** Granted that some of the signs which follow legitimate believers mentioned above are still going on with a very small scale and hidden from most, even like the healing work of God that Jesus said He saw God doing before His life on earth and which is still going on. Granted likewise that many tares and the leaders of tares have learned to simulate the signs of Jesus, like Jannes and Jambres to simulate the works of God up to a certain point, and then join the people of God when they can no longer simulate. However these signs did follow the life, teaching and preaching of the Apostle Paul as we have looked at in this volume from the book of Acts.