



Behold **The Lamb**

The Wheat and the Tares in “The Day of the Lord”

by Leroy Surface



As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire;
so shall it be in the end of this world.

Matthew 13:40

The Wheat and the Tares



Leroy Surface
Founder/President
Calvary Outreach Ministries

Message by: Leroy Surface

Matthew 13:24-30: *“The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath*

done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.”

In the parable of the sower, which Jesus gave previous to this parable in Matthew 13:3-9, we see that the “*good seed*” cannot produce anything more than the soil it is sown in can bear. In this parable of “*The Wheat and the Tares*,” we will see that the best of soil cannot produce anything better or different than the seed that is sown in it. Good seed sown in good soil will always bring forth good fruit, but “*weed seeds*” sown in the same soil will always produce a “*bumper crop*” of weeds.

This parable of the wheat and tares cannot be understood in the light of a single generation. It begins with the ascension of Jesus Christ and will continue until His second coming. It gives a perfect depiction of “*the church*” from the Day of Pentecost, spanning the nineteen centuries until our generation, and continuing until the return of Jesus Christ. In order that we correctly understand the parable, I will begin this message with the interpretation exactly as Jesus gave it to His disciples;

Matthew 13:37-43: *“He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”*

“He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;” Jesus spoke of Himself repeatedly as *“the Son of man.”* Jesus Christ is the sower of good seed.

“The field is the world...” Jesus sent His disciples into the entire world to preach the gospel to every person in the world. Those who believed would be saved from the world (Galatians 1:3). A true believer is *“in the world”* (John 17:11), but they are not *“of the world”* (John 17:14). The good seed that Christ sowed *“in the world”* is His church, which is not *“of this present world.”*

The Good Seed

“...the good seed are the children of the kingdom...” The *“good seed”* that Jesus sowed into the world was the hundred and twenty, both men and women who believed that He is *“the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* They followed Him in His life and were witnesses to His death and His resurrection. They were with Him the day He ascended to the right hand of His Father, and they received the *“promise of the Father* (Acts 1:4) *”* when they were *“filled with the Holy Ghost* (Acts 2:4) *”* on the Day of Pentecost. These were the *“good seed”* which Jesus sowed into the field, which is *“the world.”* They were *“in the world,”* but they were not *“of the world.”* They were a *“New Creation,”* a people such as had never existed on earth since the transgression of Adam. The apostle Paul gives us an absolute truth concerning the *“New Creation.”* He wrote in II Corinthians 5:17-18, *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become*

new. And all things are of God....” Every man or woman who is “in Christ” is a “new creature” in a “new creation.” They are “of God,” which means they are “born of God,” the sons and daughters of God.

The “Promise of the Father”

Acts 13:32-33: *“We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again.”*

God made a promise to the children of Israel nearly fifteen hundred years before Jesus was born to Mary, but He could not fulfill His promise because of their unbelief. The children of Israel were delivered from Egypt the morning after they offered the original “Passover lamb.” Fifty days later they were standing at the foot of Mount Sinai (also called “Mount Horeb”) where God would speak to them out of the fire that was on the mountain. Three days previous to this, God had given a wonderful promise to the children of Israel, which was to be fulfilled on this day. He promised that if they would “obey His voice” and “keep His covenant,” they would be His “peculiar treasure above all people,” a “kingdom of priest unto God,” and a “holy nation” (Exodus 19:5-6). It was the fiftieth day after the Passover when God spoke audibly to them in a voice that every man, woman, and child could hear. The sight and sound from the mountain was so fearful to them that they refused to even listen to the voice of God. They cried to Moses, “Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die” (Exodus 20:19). Within two months after refusing to hear the voice of God, they created a golden calf to worship, saying, “This is the god that brought us up out of Egypt” (Exodus 32:4). For the next fifteen centuries, the children of Israel celebrated the day God came down to them as “The Day of Pentecost,” but they never received the promise which God had given for that day because of their unbelief and hardness of hearts.

Exodus 19:5-6: *“If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”*

The “Day of Pentecost”

Almost fifteen hundred years later, at the annual feast of Pentecost, God did for the hundred and twenty what He could not do for the children of Israel before that time. The thing that made the difference was that “*Christ our Passover*” had been offered. The Son of God, whom John the Baptist called “*The Lamb of God*” (John 1:29) had been offered to “*take away*” the sin of the people, and fifty days later, God poured His Spirit into the hundred and twenty whose hearts had been “*purified by faith* (Acts 15:9)” in the shed blood of Jesus Christ (Romans 3:25). God filled them with the Holy Ghost and His “*abiding presence*” made them to be everything God had promised they would be. The hundred and twenty became His “*peculiar treasure above all people.*” Though very small in number, they were “*kingdom of priests unto God*” and His “*holy nation*” (Exodus 19:6). Before the day was over, three thousand had been added to their number, and within days, five thousand others had believed and received Jesus as their messiah. They were the “*New Jerusalem* (Galatians 4:26)” which God had promised through the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 65:18). God commanded Isaiah, “*Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation (Christ) cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken*” (Isaiah 62:11-12). Again, in Isaiah 60:21 God speaks to the new Jerusalem, which is “*The Church of Jesus Christ*” saying, “*Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.*”

The apostle John tells us something more about those who are “*in Christ.*” He said, “*Whosoever abideth in Him (Christ) sinneth not*” (I John 3:6). These are absolute statements which are confirmed repeatedly in the epistles of all the apostles. The hundred and twenty who received the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost were the “*good seed*” of the church of Jesus Christ. We can know that they were not sinners because they were “*new creatures*” who “*abode in Christ.*” They received everything the children of Israel could have received almost fifteen hundred years before if their hearts had been pure before God. From the moment the hundred and twenty received the

Holy Ghost they were the “*body of Christ*” on earth, which the apostle Paul tells us is “...*the fullness of Him that filleth all in all*” (Ephesians 1:23). That describes the church before the “*tares*” were sown into it by the “*wicked one.*”

The Children of the Wicked One

“...**but the tares are the children of the wicked one...**” Jesus said, “...*while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat...*” (Matthew 13:25). The “*wheat*” represents the “*church*” in its purest and original form. The apostle Paul declared the church to be “...*His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all*” (Ephesian 1:23). The church which Christ planted it in the world is a “*flesh and blood manifestation of Christ*” exactly as Jesus was a “*flesh and blood manifestation of who God is*” (Hebrews 1:3). There has not been such a church in the world since the first generation because of the “*tares*” which were sown by the wicked one. They came into the churches with their “*false doctrines;*” doctrines which are “*seed*” that can only produce more tares. It was Satan who sent them and it was he who crafted the lies they taught. They found no place in the church while the great outpouring of the Holy Ghost continued, but they were “*waiting in the wings.*” When the original apostles began to pass from the scene, they moved in quickly. The apostle Paul said, “*For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them*” (Act 20:29-30).

Jesus said the “*tares*” are “*the children of the wicked one.*” On that basis, we know that Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10) were “*tares among the wheat.*” Simon the sorcerer was another (Acts 8:13-21), as were Hymenaeus and Alexander (I Timothy 1:20). In Paul’s second letter to Timothy, he names Hymenaeus and Philetus as teachers whose “*words will eat like a canker (cancer).*” Paul said their teachings were nothing more than “*profane and vain babblings*” which would “*increase unto more ungodliness*” wherever people believed them (II Timothy 2:16-17). These are only a few “*tares among the wheat*” which were named by the apostles. Many others came in, bringing with them doctrines of devils, every one of which would destroy the souls of those who believed them.

Tares in the church are produced by false doctrines and wrong believing. Just as the true gospel of Christ will always produce men and women in Christ who are “*free from sin*” to love and serve Christ in the Spirit, in that same way a “*perverted gospel* (Galatians 1:7)” will always produce a professing Christian that is not a “*possessor*” of Christ, and will never be “*free from sin.*” Peter describes in detail the false teachers that have filled the churches in this last generation;

II Peter 2:1-3: “...there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying (contradicting) the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious (ruinous) ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words (preaching prosperity as the gospel of Christ) make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”

II Peter 2:12-14: *“But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time (They will be judged as deceivers and common thieves). Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; Having eyes full of adultery, and **that cannot cease from sin**; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children.”*

“The enemy that sowed them is the devil...” The first instance of a false doctrine that actually destroyed many believers was in the churches of Galatia. The doctrine is defined in Acts 15:1; “*Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved*” (Acts 15:1). This was the message brought to the Gentiles by certain Jews from Judea, who later became known as the “*Judaizers.*” These professed to believe that Jesus was their Messiah, but their doctrine held that for a Gentile to be saved, he must first be circumcised and obey the Law of Moses. Paul warned that those who believed such doctrines had in fact, “*fallen from grace*” (Galatians 5:2-4), and Christ was made of “*none effect*” to them.

The second major incidence of gross heresy was exposed by Jude in his short letter. He tells us of ungodly men who “*crept in unawares,*” teaching a doctrine that had the effect of “*turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness.*” The “*fruit*” of this doctrine is that which is called “*licentiousness,*” or “*a license to continue in sin.*” The apostle Paul said, “***Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace***” (Romans 6:14). The “*new doctrine of grace*” is properly summarized as “***Sin shall not matter, because you are not under the law, but under grace.***” Paul shows that grace is the reason believers are “*freed from sin*” (Romans 6:7, 18, 22). False teachers teach that grace “*covers sin.*” Both “*legalism*” and “*lasciviousness*” were brought into the churches before the first generation had ended, scarcely thirty years after the Day of Pentecost. Both are “*tare seeds*” that can only produce “*weeds*” in the church.

A Two Headed Snake

In the spring of 1970 I received a vision from the Lord. I saw a “*sleeping church,*” and while it slept, a huge snake wrapped itself around the church and held it in its coils. The snake had two heads, one at each extreme, and both heads looked upon the church as though it were its own. In the vision, I woke up and saw the snake. I tried to escape by running from it as fast as I could. The snake bounded after me twenty yards at a time, and I could not escape. I knew my only hope was to turn and fight against it, but that was a futile effort, and just before the snake could gather me back into its coils, I found a great sword. I picked the sword up and with it I was able to wound one of the heads and was fighting against the other when I awoke out of the vision from the Lord. The vision was a “*wakeup call*” for me, one of several I received as God brought me out of a very legalistic ministry I had been involved with at the time. “*Legalism*” was the first “*head*” of the snake that I was delivered from. The second head of the snake proved to be even more vicious than the first, and I understood that it represented “*lasciviousness.*”

“*Legalism*” and “*lasciviousness*” are totally opposed to one another, but each of them are “*heads*” on the same snake. Many people believe that “*truth*” is “*middle road*” between legalism and lasciviousness, but that cannot be so because between the two heads is nothing but the body of the snake. The “*truth of Christ*” has no

relationship with either legalism or lasciviousness. Those who seek the “*middle road*” are more like the “*pendulum*” on a grandfather clock. It “*swings*” from one extreme to another, from legalism to lasciviousness, and from lasciviousness back to legalism. When they finally “*come to rest*” in the middle, it is because they are “*worn out*” by the struggle on one hand and by the guilt on the other. They are not “*resting*,” they are “*dead*.” The truth of the gospel of Christ does not “*set you free*” from one extreme to swing to the other; instead it “*makes you free*” from both sin and the law to serve God in “*newness of spirit, and not in oldness of the letter*” (Romans 6:22; 7:6).

“Tares” in the Reformation

After the great outpouring of the Holy Ghost in the first century the church quickly descended into a period of over twelve hundred years of gross spiritual darkness. During this time the church was overwhelmed with the “*tares*,” which false doctrines had brought in and very little “*wheat*” was to be found. In the sixteenth century, a Catholic monk named Martin Luther heard six words of truth that shook the world in his generation. Those six words, “*The just shall live by faith*,” were not a “*new revelation*.” They had been written by the prophet Habakkuk two thousand years before, and confirmed by the apostle Paul, who wrote, “*I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, **The just shall live by faith***” (Romans 1:16-17). This was not a “*new revelation*” even though it was a message that the church of the sixteenth century had never heard. It was, however, the heart of the message that “*turned the world upside down*” when Paul and the other apostles preached it in their generation. Those six words of truth from the mouth of Martin Luther delivered millions of people out of the bondage of religious darkness, and again “*turned the world upside down*” in his generation.

Certainly, the devil was not idle. Immediately he sent his ministers, “*transformed as ministers of righteousness*,” bringing doctrines that have held millions of people in bondage to sin for the past five hundred years. Just as the entire world was in spiritual darkness during the dark ages and held in bondage to the corrupt Roman

Catholic system, millions of people in our generation are also held in darkness by doctrines that were sown into the protestant reformation by false teachers almost five hundred years ago. Beyond any question, Martin Luther was a man moved by God in the early days of the reformation. God taught him, protected him, and worked through him to give a *“deadly wound”* to the head of the beast (Revelation 13:3). After him, however, others came to sow the seeds of both legalism and lasciviousness into the reformation, neither of which has the power to free the believer from their sin. Not every *“false teacher”* is a willful agent of the wicked one, but they are *“tares”* nonetheless. The doctrines of both Jacobus Arminius (Arminianism) and John Calvin (Calvinism), were seeds that have produced the evil fruit of both legalism and lasciviousness in the modern churches. Today, the pendulum has swung to a doctrine of *“grace”* that is nothing more than *“lasciviousness”* (Jude 1:4), which is the logical end of those who believe the redemption theory of *“penal substitution.”* The church in this twenty first century has been filled with sinners who believe they are saved, only because *“Jesus took my penalty.”* Oh, what a horrible day is coming soon for those who rejoice in that persuasion.

“...the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.” Jesus said the wheat and the tares would *“grow together”* until the time of harvest. This certainly explains something which many have wondered about. Why is it that so many in our churches today claim to be sinners who *“sin every day”* and actually feel *“spiritual”* when they make their claim? On the opposite end of this spectrum is the *“self-righteous,”* who also feel very *“spiritual”* when they present themselves as *“prime examples”* for others to follow. Christ is our righteousness, and those who have Christ and *“abide in Him”* are righteous. The apostle John clearly and simply says, *“Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not. Whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him”* (I John 3:6). How could this great apostle of Jesus Christ say such a thing? Only because he understood first hand why Christ came into the world. *“And ye know that **He was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin**”* (I John 3:5). Any person, man or woman, young or old, who understands and believes the simple truth the apostles understood and wrote so clearly in the scriptures, will be *“made free from sin”* (Romans 6:22). That

is the entire purpose for which Christ came into the world. It is the purpose for which He died on the cross to accomplish.

Is it just a coincidence that “*motivational speakers*” are building the largest churches in the world by preaching a totally “*humanistic*” gospel?” Does it seem strange that many churches which were formerly “*full gospel*” and “*charismatic*” are now decorated to look like “*night clubs*” instead of houses of worship? ...that former “*worship leaders*” have been replaced by high powered “*entertainers*” with the ability to create a state of frenzy among the people that is far more akin to devil worship than to Christ? On the flip side of the coin, many “*more traditional*” and “*respectable*” ministers have recently adopted a perversion of the gospel that has been around since the reformation, but has hit this generation of the church like a tidal wave. I speak of the doctrine, created by the corrupted imagination of men, that Christ has forgiven our sins, “*past, present, and future, even before we commit them.*” I cannot give a scriptural reference for this because there is none. The bible simply does not say what these ministers are saying, yet people are flooding to those ministers who say it best. Many small churches have been emptied of people because of huge television ministries telling them on a daily basis that sin doesn’t really matter. Many pastors of churches which seem to be failing are heartbroken over their inability to reach even their own flock with the truth. Oh man of God; “*Buy the truth, and sell it not*” (Proverbs 23:23). Keep on preaching “*Jesus Christ, and Him crucified*” (I Corinthians 2:2). The “*modern gospel*” is a lie, and very soon the entire world is going to know it. In the trouble that is coming, many will be searching for the “*truth*” that Jesus said “*will make you free.*” The prophet Isaiah said that gross darkness was in the land of Israel because “*truth is fallen in the street*” (Isaiah 59:10-14). Pick it up! Lift it up! Almost seven billion souls are waiting.

“As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.” Jesus said, “*...in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.*” (Matthew 13:30). According to all the prophecies of the end times, this event is very near. It should be noticed that the “*gathering of the tares into bundles*” takes place before they are actually “*cast*

into a furnace of fire” (Matthew 13:42). It also takes place before the “*wheat*” is gathered into the barn. It very likely that the “*gathering of the tares into bundles*” is beginning right now. Consider those churches which are built on the “*feel good*” message of humanism; and those who pattern their services after the night clubs of the world; along with those who preach the gospel of “*lasciviousness*” and think it is “*grace*:” consider that these may be huge bundles of tares that have been gathered together, just waiting for the fire that is to come. A horrible thought, but it is Jesus who said that it would come in the last days.

“The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity...” Jesus clearly identifies the “*tares*” among the wheat with the words “*all things that offend*” and “*them which do iniquity.*”

The church of this generation is a “*scandal ridden church.*” This is what Jesus called “*things that offend.*” The phrase was translated from the Greek word “*scandalon,*” which simply means “*a scandal.*” Scandals in the church that would have caused a “*tidal wave*” fifty years ago do not create even a “*ripple*” today because of the modern theology of the church. If our sins are truly forgiven “*past, present, and future*” as these teachers say, then why not “*continue in sin that grace may abound?*” (Romans 6:1-2). The doctrine that we are “*forgiven before we commit the sin*” is weaker than, yet as dangerous as the ancient doctrine of the Catholic Church that actually “*sold*” forgiveness for sins that were not yet committed. It was the practice of selling “*indulgences for sin*” that actually prompted the Protestant reformation. Very soon another “*reformation*” is going to shake the church, but it is Christ who will bring it. He has promised to “*send His angels*” to “*gather out of His kingdom (His church) all things that offend (every scandal), and them which do iniquity.*”

Does it seem to you that a large part of the church today has a very loose attitude regarding sin? Is it true that perhaps most of those who profess to be Christians believe that they are also sinners and will continue to sin for as long as they live in a body of flesh? Jesus is very clear in His parable that those who “*continue in sin*” are tares among the wheat. If this offends you, consider what grave danger you may be in because you have trusted in a doctrine that cannot purify

your heart. Your remedy is simply to do what Jesus commanded the devout Jews to do when He began His ministry; “*Repent, and believe the gospel*” (Mark 1:15).

Jesus gave another parable in this same chapter which confirms the parable of the wheat and tares. He said “*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and SEVER THE WICKED FROM AMONG THE JUST, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth*” (Matthew 13:47-50).

As the “*tares*” are separated from the wheat and gathered into bundles, sometimes the righteous man or woman feels they are forsaken and alone. I experienced that feeling almost twenty five years ago at this time. My wife and I attended a meeting in another state. I had looked forward to fellowship with other “*Christians*” of like faith, but I found very little in the week of that meeting. There were a few wonderful people who loved us dearly, but in general the meeting was dominated by those who practice gimmicks and deception to deceive the people. Traveling home in our motor home, I said to my wife, “*At least we have fellowship with the Father and His Son*” (I John 1:3). A few minutes later, my wife left me alone to get some rest while I drove, leaving me to my own thoughts. Within minutes I was overwhelmed with loneliness such as I had never experienced in my lifetime. I realize today that it was a trial of my faith, but I felt as though I didn’t have a friend in the world. I felt “*cast out*” and alone, without a place to preach or anyone who wanted to hear what I had to say. I know that these things were the lie of the enemy, but they were very real to me. It lasted for about three weeks. I was so overwhelmed by loneliness that tears would flow down my face for no reason. One day I was on a tractor mowing a large field when I became overwhelmed with loneliness and remembered that it seemed to begin when I spoke of having fellowship “*...with the Father and His Son.*” Immediately the Spirit spoke these words in my heart, “*Is that not enough?*” I was stunned! “*Yes Lord! That is enough!*” The Spirit of God came upon me so strong that I had to stop the tractor to rejoice. “*It’s enough that I have fellowship with*

you.” Again, the Spirit spoke, this time revealing a great truth to me; “*You also have fellowship with everyone who fellowships the Father and His Son.*” I have never again experienced that horrible loneliness since that day. It is enough to have fellowship with Him.

Matthew 7:22-23: “*Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, YE THAT WORK INIQUITY.*”

How can we argue against the rejection of sinners by Christ? How can we believe, contrary to the scriptures, that Christ will receive sinners if they “*believe in Jesus?*” The fact that they “*continue in sin*” is proof that their “*faith is not in Jesus Christ.*” The apostle John minced no words when he wrote, “***He that committeth sin is of the devil***” (I John 3:8). Three verses previously he wrote, “*And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not*” (I John 3:5-6).

If the “*tares*” are “*gathered into bundles to be burned*” (Matthew 13:30), those “*churches*” who teach that sin doesn’t matter must be among the “*bundles*” that are waiting to be burned. Why would any child of God attend such a church? They could not unless they were absolutely deceived. Yet, it is obvious that those churches which teach such heresies are often filled to capacity, needing several services on a Sunday to service the crowds.

“...And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

The “Furnace of Fire”

Malachi 4:1-3: “*For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be*

ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

The “*furnace of fire*” which Jesus spoke of is not “*Hell*.” It speaks instead of those times when God’s judgment falls upon people and nations that have turned away from Him. The three and a half years before the return of Jesus Christ will be the “*furnace of fire*” spoken of in the parables of Jesus. In Matthew 24:21, He called it “*great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be....*” The angel Gabriel told the prophet Daniel it would be “*a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time*” (Daniel 12:1). The prophet Malachi spoke of it as a “*day*” that shall “*burn as an oven*.” Malachi says of that day; “*...all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.*” These three, the “*furnace of fire*,” the “*day that shall burn as an oven*,” and the time of “*great tribulation*,” all speak of a worldwide “*holocaust*” that will come immediately before the second coming of Christ. We know the timing of these events is true, because Jesus told us, “***Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory***” (Matthew 24:29-30).

Isaiah 33:14: “*The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?*”

The “*sinners in Zion*” and the “*hypocrites*” are “*tares*” that grow among the wheat; one being “*the lascivious*” and the other “*the legalist*.” At present, they feel secure in their doctrines because they are surrounded by thousands of people who believe exactly as they do, but their fear will come gradually upon them as it becomes apparent that they have “*trusted*” in a lie. Millions of people are

waiting for the “*rapture of the church,*” an event that will not come until “*after the tribulation of those days*” at the second coming of Jesus when we “... *which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord*” (I Thessalonians 4:17). Within the past eighteen months the radical Islamic group called “*ISIS*” has risen to power. Wherever they conquer new territory they slaughter thousands of innocent men, women, and children alike. On several occasions they have cut off the heads of over a hundred people at a time. They have put them in cages and burned them; they have drowned them in the rivers; they have tortured them in every conceivable way. In Kenya, another radical Islamic group entered a school. They separated the children according to their religion. Those who confessed to being Christian were immediately shot through the head. Over a hundred teen agers “*confessed Christ,*” knowing they would be dead before another sixty seconds passed. Why didn’t the rapture take place before they suffered and died? Why do we think that it is only American Christians that must be spared such sufferings? People, we need to wake up. It is so much later than we think. The fifth trumpet is sounding, and the locust are swarming. The sixth trumpet is beginning to sound, and the locust army is gathering. After the sixth trumpet, which is the time of “*great tribulation,*” quits sounding, the seventh and last trumpet will sound, and Jesus Christ will return to earth in great glory.

The Righteous in “The Day of the LORD”

Isaiah 33:15-16: “*He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.*”

In the “*Day of the LORD,*” God is always in complete control. You will notice in the ninth chapter of Ezekiel, when God determined to destroy the city and the temple, He sent an angel to place a mark on the foreheads of His righteous people. Only after the righteous were marked with His name did God give instructions to the destroyers; “*Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare,*

neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house. LORD” (Ezekiel 9:5-6). It was God who commanded Nebuchadnezzar’s army in the destruction of Jerusalem. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Mordecai, Esther, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel were all among the righteous whom God spared in the day of His wrath against Jerusalem. God gave a warning to the backsliders in Israel of how it would be when Jerusalem was destroyed. *“Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit. And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord GOD shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name”* (Isaiah 65:13-15). The righteous were protected by God and blessed during the captivity. It was *“The Day of the LORD.”* God was in absolute control.

The second example of *“The Day of the LORD”* was the second destruction of Jerusalem. When Jesus entered Jerusalem for the last time before His sufferings and death, He *“wept”* over the city and foretold its destruction, which would be fulfilled to perfection forty years later; *“...the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; BECAUSE THOU KNEWEST NOT THE TIME OF THY VISITATION”* (Luke 19:43-44).

Again, it was God who was in charge. Jesus gave a sign to as many as would believe and trust in Him in Luke 21:20-22; *“When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.”*

It was the “*Day of the LORD;*” it was the “*days of vengeance.*” It wasn’t Rome that was taking “*vengeance;*” it was God. He was in complete charge of the Roman armies in that destruction. History shows that the Roman generals tried to restrain the soldiers from destroying the temple, but they could not. It was God who commanded the destruction, and it would be nothing less than Jesus had spoken forty years before. They had rejected God at Mount Sinai (Exodus 20:19); they rejected the “*former prophets,*” whom God had sent to warn them; (II Chronicles 36:14); they rejected Jesus Christ, whom God had sent to save them; and they rejected the apostles of Christ, persecuting and even murdering them. Nothing remained for them except God’s “*vengeance*” which always comes in the form of great “*wrath.*” Only those who believed and trusted in Jesus were spared, because He had instructed them what to do in that time of great trouble. They were safe in the mountains while the Romans besieged the city. Thousands in the city died of starvation and disease during the three and a half year siege, but the righteous were spared. “*Bread*” was given them; “*their waters were sure*” (Isaiah 33:15-16).

The Great and the Terrible Day of the Lord

One of the most famous novels of all time is “*A Tale of Two Cities*” which was written by Charles Dickens. It is the story of the French revolution with a contrast given between life as it was in London England and in Paris France during the same time period. The novel begins with the words “*It was the best of times, it was the worst of times....*” We can understand the “*great*” and the “*terrible*” day of the Lord in the same way. To one it will be a “*furnace of fire,*” but upon another, “*the sun of righteousness*” will be shining. While the nations are destroying one another, there will be a great outpouring of God’s Spirit upon His children and a great harvest of souls at the same time. “*And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered.*” It should be noted that it is “*The Day of the Lord,*” and Christ will be in absolute control of everything that happens in “*His day.*”

Joel 2:11: “*And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?*”

The “*Army of the Lord*,” as it is described in the second chapter of Joel is not the children of God. To the contrary, it is the same “*locust army*” that is revealed in the ninth chapter of Revelation. The horrible things that are happening in the world today is only a prelude to what is soon coming to every nation of the world that has rejected Christ. Very soon it will escalate into that which Jesus described as “...*great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be*” (Matthew 24:21). On one hand the locust army will be marching and a third part of all men will be slain (Revelation 9:15-16), but on the other hand “*The Lord*,” who commands the locusts (II Chronicles 7:13) has commanded them “...*that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads*” (Revelation 9:4). There is a place of safety for the righteous, which they are entering right now;

Isaiah 26:20-21: “*Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.*”

“Now...and Then”

Malachi 3:15: “*And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.*”

Does it sometimes seem that the world has been turned “*upside down*” by the devil himself? Everything we thought was “*good*” is said to be “*bad*,” but the things our God hates are promoted in modern day America as “*good*.” Freedom of speech, which for two centuries was the constitutional protection for the church, has been redefined and given to pornographers, flag-burners, and Christ haters, but has been taken away from those who love God and trust in Jesus Christ. Just a few days ago, a professor in a university was fired for referring to God in a farewell letter to his class. He could have safely promoted killing policemen, overthrowing the government, communism, radical Islam, immorality, perversion, or any other speech, but to use the word “*God*” in his farewell letter was not allowed. Little children

are banned from classes for talking about Jesus. A woman went to jail in Kentucky because she refused to deny her conscience and the word of God to approve marriage licenses for gay couples. It is exactly as the prophet Isaiah said over twenty-five hundred years ago; “...*judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey*” (Isaiah 59:14-15). When “*truth*” is cast down, it is the righteous who suffer. Even in the modern church system, those who “*cease from sin*” are often said to be “*self-righteous.*” In many Islamic nations, to “*trust in Christ*” brings a death sentence. In America, it may soon bring a prison sentence. The prophet Malachi said “*the proud are happy ...those who work wickedness are set up ...and those that tempt God are delivered.*” Notice that he used the word “*now*;” That’s the way it is “*now*” in the world of the twenty-first century, but there is coming another day, which Malachi will call “*then.*”

Malachi 3:16: “*Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.*”

When the children of God turn to Christ with all their hearts, and begin to seek Him daily, that is the beginning of another day. We cannot just wait until things get better, because they will never “*get better*” without us turning wholly unto the Lord. It is during the “*now*” of the world, that we must have our “*then.*” When iniquity has its way in the world and the “*tares*” in the church find pleasure in it, it is time for every child of God to “*humble themselves and pray.*” We have misunderstood the message of II Chronicles 7:14; “*If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*” President Reagan quoted this scripture in a call for a national day of prayer, and I wept to hear our president speak such words. I fasted and prayed for our nation for years, just as I know that some of you have, but our nation has only moved further away from Christ. Several years ago, I wept before God, “*Why have you not healed our land,*” and I heard the voice of the spirit say, “*I will heal **your** land.*” He speaks to us as individuals and even as churches, “*If you will seek*

*my face, and turn from your wicked ways...I will heal **your** land.”* Our “*land*” is the church of Jesus Christ. America has been rejected by God because she has rejected Jesus Christ. It is difficult to say these things because I love America, and have interceded for her for many years. I was so cast down the morning after the presidential election in 2012, that about noon I went to the church, lay across the altar and wept for our nation. I could find no comfort until I heard these words which the Spirit of God spoke clearly in my heart; “*That’s not your kingdom.*” I have always loved America, and grieve for her today, but “*America is not my kingdom.*” Our nation is being cast into a furnace of fire but God has promised to heal His church.

Malachi 3:17: “*And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.*”

According to the prophecy, a “*book of remembrance*” is written for those who “*fear God and think upon His name.*” These are those who love Him and seek Him with all their hearts. The idea that we can “*receive Christ*” and not “*love Him, seek Him, worship Him, and serve Him*” is ridiculous. The idea that we could be “*born of His Spirit*” and “*continue in sin*” is equally ridiculous. The church that Christ is returning for is the same church He planted. He “*gave Himself for it*” to “*present it to Himself, a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish*” (Ephesians 5:27).

The word “*jewels*” used in verse seventeen was translated from the same Hebrew word that was translated as “*peculiar treasure*” in Exodus 19:5. Literally translated from the Hebrew, God said, “***They shall be my peculiar treasure in the day when I do this, and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.***”

Now is the time to seek the Lord with our whole heart, and to “*make our calling and election sure*” (I Peter 2:10). Concerning the things of “*tomorrow,*” Jesus said, “***Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you***” (Matthew 6:31-33). Our

“tomorrow” is “*the day that shall burn as an oven*” for the wicked. In that day, however, “*the sun of righteousness shall arise*” upon those who seek the Lord “*with all their heart,*” and they will “*grow up as calves of the stall.*” Our only need is for “*more of Him.*”

“The Difference”

Exodus 11:7: “*But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth PUT A DIFFERENCE between the Egyptians and Israel.*”

When God determined to slay the firstborn child of every household in the land of Egypt, He “*put a difference*” between the children of Israel and the Egyptians on the basis of the blood of the Passover lamb. God forewarned Moses of the night the death angel would pass through the land and told the children of Israel to sprinkle the blood of a spotless lamb on their threshold and doorway. God gave the promise to Moses, “*When I see the blood, I will pass over you.*” In the “*great and terrible day of the LORD*” that is soon coming upon the inhabitants of the earth, God will once more “*put a difference*” between the “*children of the kingdom (wheat)*” and the “*children of the wicked one (tares).*” That “*difference*” will be known by the “*seal*” that God places on His children in that day. It will be the “*abiding presence of God*” which will be with His people who “*humble themselves, and pray, and seek His face...*” (II Corinthians 7:12). Moses understood this very well in his day. Concerning the presence of God, he pled with God, “*If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth*” (Exodus 33:15-16).

Please understand that I am speaking about spiritual realities and not doctrinal fables. Jesus spoke of the Holy Ghost as the “*abiding presence of God*” which He called the “*comforter*” in John 14:16; “*I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.*” The doctrinal fable says that every person who “*believes in Jesus*” receives the Holy Ghost the moment they “*believe,*” and He will be with them “*forever.*” The reality is quite different. Paul wrote to the believers at Ephesus; “*...after ye*

believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise...” (Ephesians 1:13). When the high priest and the Sanhedrin Court arrested the apostles and demanded that they not teach or preach in the name of Jesus, Peter and the others told them, “*We ought to obey God rather than men*” (Acts 5:29). Only three verses later Peter tells the court, “*We are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to **them that obey him***” (Acts 5:31). Any person who “*continues in sin*” does not have the Holy Ghost, even though they may “*pray their prayer language*” every time they pray. It is possible that they did “*receive the Holy Ghost*” at some time in the past, but the abiding presence of God is given only to those who “*obey Him.*” The call of the Spirit to His people today is to “*humble yourselves and pray*” (II Chronicles 7:14).

Malachi 3:18-4:2: “***THEN shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not. For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.***”

The “*day*” that “*burns as an oven*” is the “*furnace of fire*” which Jesus said the “*tares*” would be cast into. He will send His angels to “*...gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*” (Matthew 13:41-43). Can you hear what Jesus clearly said? Those in the churches who “*continue in sin*” and believe that “*grace abounds*” for them will be cast into the “*furnace of fire,*” which Jesus also called “*great tribulation.*” Jesus sent special messages to the seven churches of Asia in the second and third chapters of Revelation. The church in Thyatira had a woman named Jezebel who claimed to be a “*prophetess.*” She was a “*false teacher,*” and thus, a “*tare.*” Hear what Jesus said to this church concerning Jezebel and her followers; “*I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her **into great tribulation, except they repent of***”

their deeds” (Revelation 2:22). To the church in Philadelphia, He said, *“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth”* (Revelation 3:10). Two churches; one will be *“cast into great tribulation,”* and the other will be spared in that same day. They will *“shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”* This is the way He will separate between the wheat and the tares. This is not a *“new thing”* with God. He has always spared the righteous in the day of His wrath against the ungodly and sinners. It will be the *“Day of the LORD;”* God will be in complete charge, and He says to the tares, *“Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit”* (Isaiah 65:13-14).

One Taken ...One Left

Matthew 24:38-40: *“For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.”*

When the flood came in the days of Noah, it was the sinners and ungodly that were taken away, and only eight souls, Noah and his immediate family, were left, safe in the ark above the flood. In the *“Day of the Lord,”* the *“tares”* will be taken to the flames, and the *“wheat”* will be safe in the barn. The righteous will be as the prophet Malachi said, *“Calves of the stall.”* It is to these the promise of the ninety first Psalm is given;

Psalms 91:1-16: *“Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation.”*

Psalms ninety one, which many believe was written by Moses, is a promise to the righteous in the “*Day of the LORD.*” Moses dwelt in the “*secret place of the Most High (Psalms 91:1)*” from the day the presence of God came upon Him in the mountain with God. That same “*abiding presence of God*” is the “*hiding place*” for the children of God today. Has there ever been a generation that these words describe better than this generation? Terror (terrorism) by night, arrows (bullets, missiles) by day, pestilences (sickness and diseases) and destruction at noonday (entire cities destroyed with one bomb). It is concerning these things that God has said, “*A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation.*”

Revelation 17:14: “*These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful.*”

Those who are “*with Christ*” are safe. These are those who “*abide in Him*” and are not moved away to other things. They have “*made the Lord*” their “*habitation*” (Psalms 91:10). “*These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth*” (Revelation 14:4). These are sealed by God, having his name written in their foreheads (Revelations 7:3). These are not what may be called “*nominal Christians;*” they are “*called, and chosen, and faithful.*” They have found “*the pearl of great price,*” and with great joy have sold everything to possess the treasure (Matthew 13:44-46).

The Harlot

Revelation 17:16-17: “*And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.*”

The church, as long as the “*wheat*” and the “*tares*” continue to grow together, will consist of a “*bride*” and a “*harlot,*” which is called “*the whore*” in this verse. The “*wheat*” in the parable is the “*Bride of Christ,*” but the “*tares*” are the “*harlot.*” The horrible event that

is described in verses 16-17 is in our very near future. For nineteen hundred years it has been true that the children of God have been “*counted as sheep for the slaughter* (Romans 8:36)” by the adversary. Even now, many righteous people are perishing in Islamic nations, and we sorrow, apparently helpless as the children of God to do anything about it. The time is near, however, that God will say “*enough.*” He will command the “*locust armies* (radical Islam)” as he did the armies of Babylon in Ezekiel 9:6, “*Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.*” God placed His name in the foreheads of all those who “*sighed and cried*” because of the abominations that were committed in the house of God (Ezekiel 8:1-18). None of them were harmed in the blood bath that occurred in the utter destruction of Jerusalem. For the “*tares* (the harlot)” in the “*Great and terrible day of the LORD,*” which is just before us, it will be a different and tragic story. For them, there will be no “*hiding place.*” Osama Bin Laden is quoted as saying, “*Every Muslim the minute he can start differentiating, carries hate towards Americans, Jews and Christians, this is part of our ideology. Ever since I can recall, I felt at war with the Americans and had feelings of animosity and hate towards them.*” The scripture says the “*ten horns of the beast* (Islamic caliphate)” shall “*hate the whore,*” make her “*desolate and naked,*” shall “*eat her flesh and burn her with fire*” (Revelation 17:16). It is impossible to imagine such hatred coming from any entity other than one totally possessed, as these will be, with the “*angel of the bottomless pit*” (Revelation 9:11), yet the scripture is clear that God has “*put in their hearts to fulfill His will*” (Revelation 17:17).

The Point of No Return

II Chronicles 36:16: “*But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.*”

The fate of Jerusalem was settled well over a hundred years before she was destroyed by Babylon. Jesus foretold the second destruction forty years before it happened in 70 A.D. In 2001, months before “9-11,” the Spirit of God told me that the administration of George W

Bush would be a “*space of repentance*” for America. He said that if there was no repentance, the things that would follow would be “...*too horrible to speak of.*” I have known since the summer of 2008 that our nation has gone beyond the “*point of no return*” against God. God’s judgment against America is sure. During the years of Jeremiah’s prophetic ministry, God told him not to pray for Jerusalem because He would not hear him (Jeremiah 7:16). Many have said, “...*but what about II Chronicles 7:14? God has promised to ‘heal our land’ if we will pray.*” I questioned God concerning this several years ago. I thought surely that if enough of us prayed, God would spare America. “*After all, He must keep His promises!*” Again, the Spirit of the LORD spoke to me while I was interceding; “*I will heal your land,*” and His emphasis was on “*your land.*” God spoke through the prophet Joel to give His people a remedy in the time just before the “*great and terrible day of the LORD*” comes. He said, “...*turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?*” (Joel 2:12-14).

While the nations are being destroyed God will care for His people during “*the great and terrible day of the LORD.*” He is in complete charge. Nothing can happen that He does not allow. Those who are “*sealed by God*” will be safe. Notice the result for those who “*turn to Him with all their hearts;*”

Joel 2:18-19: “*Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people. Yea, the LORD will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen.*”

“Save Yourselves!”

Acts 2:40: “*And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.*”

We know that no one can “*save themselves*” from sin. Only Jesus Christ is the savior, and only He can “*save His people from their sins*” (Matthew 1:21). This verse is at the end of the recorded message that Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost. It becomes obvious that the writer of The Book Acts did not record Peter’s entire message. There were “*many other words*” in which Peter spoke of the pending judgment and wrath of God that was set to come against those who had rejected Christ and crucified the Son of God. That generation was going to end with the utter destruction and desolation of the city of Jerusalem, which was accomplished in 70 A.D. by the Roman soldiers under Titus. Peter’s message to those Jews who had rejected Jesus Christ and even demanded His crucifixion (Matthew 27:22), was to “*save themselves*” from the wrath and destruction that was coming upon them by turning to Jesus Christ. They could “*repent and believe the gospel*” (Mark 1:15), and if they did, they would know that Jesus, whom they had crucified, was indeed their Christ and the Son of God. He is merciful, and He would receive all those who would “*call upon Him*” (Acts 2:21). They would be spared in the day of God’s righteous judgment against Jerusalem.

This generation in which we live is going to end in the greatest time of trouble the world has ever seen for the nations that reject Christ. I cannot emphasize enough that America’s destiny has been determined. We can pray for God to spare America, but her sins have reached into heaven, and God will not spare. As God told Jeremiah concerning Jerusalem in his day, we can pray, but He “*...will not hear*” (Jeremiah 7:16). We can seek to change America, but she will not be changed for the good. The handwriting is on the wall, and our days are numbered. We can, however, do as Peter did on the day of Pentecost and use the pending judgment against America to bring a harvest of souls to repentance. Peter reached three thousand in one day as he cried out to the multitudes, “*Save yourselves from this untoward (twisted and warped) generation*” (Acts 2:40). The time has come in our generation that Jude spoke of; “*And others save with fear, **pulling them out of the fire**; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh*” (Jude 1:23).

What must we do to be made free from sin?

First: We must know who Christ is. The apostle John tells us in John 1:1-3, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*” Christ is the eternal Word of God, by whom God created all things. He is as eternal as God is.

Second: We must know what Christ came into the world to do. This is a message so precious that God sent His angel Gabriel to tell the prophet Daniel about it. Everything you need to know about the purpose of Jesus Christ is found in the prophecy of “*the Messiah (Christ)*” in Daniel 9:24-27. The twenty-fourth verse tells us what Christ came into the world to do. He came “*...to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness...*” (Daniel 9:24).

Third: We must know that Jesus, the “*son of Mary*” is “*the Christ, the Son of God,*” and that He accomplished everything He came into the world to do when He died on the cross. **1.** He “*finished the transgression*” when He abolished the Law of Moses which was “*added because of transgressions*” (Galatians 3:19). **2.** He “*made an end of sins*” in our heart when He died for us so that our old man of sin would be dead with Him (Romans 6:6). **3.** He “*made reconciliation for iniquity*” through His death on the cross to reconcile us to God (II Corinthians 5:18). **4.** He “*brought in everlasting righteousness*” through His “*obedience to the death of the cross*” (Philippians 2:8). Romans 5:19 says “*...by the obedience of one (Christ dying on the cross) shall many be made righteous.*”

Fourth: We must “*trust in Jesus Christ*” who did it all at Calvary. When Jesus cried from the cross, “*It is finished,*” everything He came into the world to do was accomplished. He now does it in the heart and nature of everyone who simply “*trusts in Him.*” The transgression is finished! He has “*made an end of sins;*” He has “*made reconciliation for iniquity;*” He has “*brought in everlasting righteousness,*” and He has done it all in the hearts of those who believe and trust in Him.

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Leroy Surface
Calvary Outreach
P.O. Box 750
Porter, Texas, 77365

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