

Salt that has lost its Savor



*A "Behold the Lamb" publication
Of Calvary Outreach Ministries*

Message by; By Leroy Surface

Jesus tells us that His church is the *"salt of the earth."* He also speaks of the value of salt that has *"lost its savor;"* it is *"good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."* Does this describe the plight of the church in twenty-first century America? Do recent events indicate that the church has been *"cast out"* and her rightful place given to another? If so, we will begin to see the church suffer many things as it is *"trodden under foot of men."* We wonder, *"How can these things happen in our America, which was established upon Christian principles?"* The answer to that question is given by the apostle Paul; *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting"* (Galatians 6:7-8). The church has sown in its doctrine many corruptible seeds of which we are reaping the harvest in this generation. Jesus would say to us in our generation, *"Repent ye, and believe the gospel"* (Mark 1:15).

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Matthew 5:10-13: *“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. **Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.**”*

These four verses, taken from Jesus’ *“Sermon on the Mount,”* give an amazing insight into the church of Jesus Christ in every generation, and most especially in this generation in which we live. The apostle Paul tells us in II Timothy 3:12, *“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”* Jesus told His disciples, *“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you”* (John 15:18). The apostle John, writing near the end of the first century A.D., about sixty years after Christ died on the cross, said, *“Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you”* (I John 3:13). Jesus did not present a life of popularity and prosperity to His disciples *“if they would follow Him.”* Instead, He prepared them for a life of rejection and persecution that would be inflicted on them by those who reject and hate Jesus. Before Saul of Tarsus met Jesus on the Damascus road, he had been the great *“persecutor”* of the church, and received great honor and respect from those Jews who

also hated Jesus. Within three days after Saul was converted, however, Jesus spoke of him to Ananias in a vision, in which He said, *“I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake”* (Acts 9:16). He was filled with the Holy Ghost that same day, and within a very few weeks he had to flee over the wall of Damascus in a basket to escape with His life from those who sought to kill him because of his *“testimony of Jesus.”* Within three years of his conversion Saul of Tarsus received the *“revelation of Jesus Christ,”* which has given to us the understanding of *“who Christ is, what He came into the world to do, and that He did it through His death on the cross.”* It is *“the gospel of Christ,”* which is *“the power of God unto salvation”* to everyone who believes it (Romans 1:16). Saul of Tarsus, the great persecutor of the church became the *“the apostle Paul,”* who was persecuted for the gospel of Christ more than any other in his day. He established churches in many cities throughout Asia, and exhorted each of them *“...to continue in the faith, and that **we must through much tribulation** enter into the kingdom of God”* (Acts 14:22).

It is not the purpose of this message to cause any to think they must *“suffer”* for salvation. Our salvation was purchased through the sufferings of Jesus. When the gospel message speaks of *“suffering with Christ,”* it does not speak of our present day *“sufferings”* which we may suffer *“for Christ;”* instead, *“suffering with Christ”* speaks of our *“crucifixion with Christ”* which was accomplished for the believer when Jesus died on the cross at Calvary. It was there that Jesus died in order that *“our old man of sin”* would die with Him (Romans 6:6). The apostle says in Romans 8:17 that we are *“joint-heirs with Christ; **if so be that we suffer with him,** that we may be also glorified together.”* These *“sufferings”* are imposed upon our *“old man”* through our faith in Jesus Christ who *“loved us and gave Himself for us”* (Galatians 2:20). *“Our old man is crucified with Him (Romans 6:6), that the body of sin might be destroyed,”* and the result of this is *“henceforth we should not serve sin. For (because) he that is dead (crucified with Christ), is freed from sin”* (Christ has taken their sin away; Romans 6:6-7). When Paul speaks to us about our *“sufferings”* in this present time, he

says, “*For I reckon that **the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared** with the glory which shall be revealed in us*” (Romans 8:18).

The apostle Paul suffered more than any of the apostles for the gospel of Christ. He described to the Corinthian church just a few of the things which he suffered; “*Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren*” (II Corinthians 11:24-26). Paul understood that none of these “*sufferings*” had any value whatsoever to “*purchase*” any part of his salvation or heaven to come. In fact, when he said to the Romans, “*I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy...*,” he was showing that being “*beaten*” with whips and rods, and being “*stoned and left for dead*” (Acts 14:19), had no value whatsoever to purchase salvation for him. Only the sufferings of Jesus Christ are sufficient for those who “*trust in Him.*” When the eye-witness apostles were “*beaten with whips,*” for the first time, the scripture says they “*...departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name*” (Acts 5:41).

Rejoicing in Persecution

Matthew 5:11-12: “*Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. **Rejoice, and be exceeding glad:** for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*”

Jesus did not suggest the “*possibility*” that His disciples would be persecuted. He said, “*...when men shall revile you....*” He told us what the proper response would be when persecution came for His sake; “*Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad.*” The apostle Paul wasn’t there when Jesus gave His “*sermon on the mount.*” He wasn’t

converted to Jesus until a good many years after this time, but in Romans 5:3 he wrote, “...we glory (rejoice) in tribulations also....” When Paul and Silas were in Philippi they were arrested for casting the spirit of divination out of a young fortune teller. The scripture gives the record of the event in Acts 16:23-26; “*And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.*”

This must be the greatest example of “rejoicing in persecution” I can imagine. Their backs were beaten raw; they were cast into the inner prison; their feet were fastened in stocks, yet they sang praises to God. This is exactly the result that Christ wanted from them. We recently witnessed, by television news, a most incredible event in Charleston South Carolina. A twenty one year old white man went to a bible study and prayer meeting in a black church. He was received with love by the congregation, and after the prayer meeting was over, he drew a gun and killed nine of the congregation, including the pastor of the church. When the young man was arraigned for murder, the families of the slain were allowed to speak to him. They looked him in the eye and one by one they told him how deeply he had hurt them. One mother said words to the effect that, “*I will never hold him in my arms again; I will never hear his voice again; I will never see him again. You have hurt me so deep; ...but I forgive you, and God will forgive you.*” One by one the grieving loved ones told him basically the same thing. What could have better fulfilled the words of Jesus which say, “*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you*” (Matthew 5:43-44). I have

never seen a greater demonstration of the love of Christ than that which was manifested by these people.

Great persecution is coming to the church in America. How the persecution is received will tell so much about the reality of those who are persecuted. Not everyone who is persecuted can *“rejoice, and leap for joy,”* as Jesus told us to do. No one can do such things in pretense. I actually heard it said that those who forgave the one who murdered their loved ones only did so in pretense. I tell you, no one can pretend in such times. I have heard the voices of those who, in similar circumstances, spoke out in great hurt and rage, *“I hope you burn in hell forever.”* I know that eternal damnation is the destiny of the wicked and all those who do not receive Christ, but I also know that no child of God could wish such punishment upon even their worst enemies. Jesus died on the cross praying, *“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”* (Luke 23:34). Stephen used his last breath to ask forgiveness for those who took his life; *“Lord, lay not this sin to their charge”* (Acts 7:60). Such things cannot be done in pretense. They express a reality in a way that cannot be denied.

The Salt of the Earth

“Ye are the salt of the earth...” These words, which Jesus spoke to His disciples, are commonly spoken about those who are hardworking, honest, reliable, trustworthy and morally clean. They are not the famous nor the powerful of the world, but they are the sort of people who are the *“glue”* that holds the culture together. When Jesus spoke these words to His disciples, however, He went far beyond that which has become the common understanding. They were everything that is spoken above, but they were more. A great task would be committed to them. They would be *“filled with the Holy Ghost,”* and given the commission to *“go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”* In doing so they would *“salt the earth”* with the gospel of Christ, which is *“the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth* (believes it).” They would become the *“keepers of the earth.”* As long as those

ministers of Christ in that first generation preached Christ, *“who He is, and what He came into the world to do,”* they prevailed over all the power of their enemies. They did so at great cost to themselves, however, and in the midst of great tribulation. Every apostle, with the single exception of John, died a martyr’s death for their testimony of Jesus, yet the entire known world of their day was shaken by the preaching of their gospel. It was said of Paul and Silas, neither of whom were numbered with the *“eyewitness apostles,”* that *“those who have turned the world upside down have come here also”* (Acts 17:6).

In the Apostle Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians, he gives us several *“glimpses”* of what the church of Jesus Christ truly is. I am not speaking about something that is simply a *“utopian hope,”* but about what the church of the first generation actually was. Notice the following facts which Paul gave to the Ephesians about the *“true church”* of Jesus Christ. I must hasten to add that I have never seen such a church in our day, but I seek one to come.

The existence of a “true church” brings great glory to God

Ephesians 1:12: *“...that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ.”*

A “true church” is the “body of Christ,” the “fullness of Him that filleth all in all”

Ephesians 1:22-23: *“...And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”*

A “true church” is God’s dwelling place on earth

Ephesians 2:22: *“In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”*

A “true church” is both filled with love and filled into all the fullness of God

Ephesians 3:19: “...And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be *filled with all the fulness of God.*”

A “true church” is the stature of the fullness of Christ

Ephesians 4:13: “...till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto *the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*”

A “true church” is a glorious church; It is a flesh and bone manifestation of God

Ephesians 5:27: “...that he might 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 5:30: “For we are members of his body, of *his flesh*, and of *his bones.*”

A “true church” is “the church triumphant”

Ephesians 6:13-15: “...and having done all to stand, stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.”

Savorless Salt

“...but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?” The “savour” of the church is “*the presence of God*” and the “*reality of the gospel message.*” These two must go together if “*the church*” is to “*salt the earth.*” The “*church*” which Jesus “*purchased with His own blood*” (Acts 20:28), literally “*exploded*” upon the earth on the Day of Pentecost, with great power and anointing. It was only a hundred and twenty in number when God

poured His Spirit upon them, but before the day was finished, over three thousand souls had been saved and added to the church. Jesus spoke of His church when He gave the parable of the leaven; *“The kingdom of heaven (His church) is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened”* (Matthew 13:33). He was verbally demonstrating the effect of His church upon the world around it if it continued in the reality of that first generation church. Before the first century B.C. ended, however, the church had lost its powerful effect on the world around it. The *“salt”* had lost its savor, and the *“leaven”* had lost its power. Even before the eyewitness apostles had passed on, false teachers came in, teaching *“damnable heresies”* (II Peter 2:1). Jude said that they were *“turning the grace of God into lasciviousness”* (Jude 1:8). The apostle Paul warned, *“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”* (Acts 20:29-30). Before the end of the first century, the course of the church into apostasy had already been established. Under the doctrine of false teachers the people entered into gross darkness which prevailed over the entire earth for over a thousand years. Not only had the *“salt lost its savor,”* but the church that had once been persecuted became the persecutor.

Notice the question Jesus asked of His disciples concerning the salt; *“if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?”* The word *“wherewith”* is somewhat obscure in this verse, but should be properly understood to say *“...by whom and with what shall the earth be salted.”* Somebody will *“salt the earth”* with something. One of the first examples of the *“savorless salt”* was in the Corinthian church. The apostle Paul tells us just a few of the things that filled the void in Corinth when the *“church”* lost its savor.

Another Gospel

II Corinthians 11:3-4: *“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh*

*preacheth **another Jesus**, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive **another spirit**, which ye have not received, or **another gospel**, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.*”

Apostasy always begins with “*another gospel.*” The first instance of such apostasy in the churches was discovered less than thirty years after the Day of Pentecost. It brought the decline and fall of the church in Galatia, which had been brought out of heathenism and idol worship by the gospel preaching of the apostle Paul. Paul came straight to the point in his letter to the Galatian churches. “*I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto **another gospel***” (Galatians 1:6). Paul continued to say that it wasn’t really “*another gospel,*” but a “*perversion*” of the gospel of Christ. The most powerful force to ever touch planet earth is the power of the gospel of Christ to save a soul from sin, and to do it in an instant of time at the moment of true faith. As powerful as the gospel is, however, it can be totally destroyed in its effect by simply adding something to it, or taking something away from it. Those who “*perverted the gospel*” in Galatia were preaching the necessity of circumcision “*after the manner of Moses.*” Their continual “*mantra*” was “*Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved*” (Acts 15:1). Paul said that those who believed their message and accepted circumcision “*fell from grace,*” and “*Christ became of no effect to them*” (Galatians 5:4). As strange as it may seem to some, what you believe can withhold the grace of God from you. If that happens, everything that Christ “*freely gives*” in salvation will come to you only with “*great struggle*” and “*frequent failure,*” and even then it will be only an “*imitation*” of which Christ is the reality. Paul said in Galatians 2:20, “*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*” This is grace; “*Christ liveth in me.*” He did not struggle and he did not sin, because “*Christ liveth in me.*” Paul continues to explain exactly what this means in the remainder of the same verse; “*...the life which I now live in the flesh* (his physical body) *I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*”

Jude 1:4: “*For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness....*”

It is Jude, the half-brother to Jesus, who sounded the warning against the second instance of apostasy in the first century church. He found that false teachers were teaching a false view of grace that made it to be a “*lascivious doctrine.*” In the Galatian church, false teachers had led the people into the Law of Moses for salvation, forever damning the souls of those who believed them. It was in Corinth that the lascivious doctrine of grace was being taught by those whom Paul called “*false apostles*” (II Corinthians 11:13). They claimed their “*authority*” from Christ, but they were, in reality, the “*ministers of Satan*” (II Corinthians 11:14-15). Their doctrine was the extreme opposite of the error of the Galatians; the Corinthians became completely “*lawless*” under their lascivious teachers. Paul had to remind them, forcefully, that “*the unrighteousness shall not inherit the kingdom of God*” I Corinthians 6:9). In the previous chapter, Paul rebuked them over a man in the church that was living in an incestuous relationship with “*his father’s mother,*” probably his “*step-mother.*” Paul reveals the attitude of the Corinthian “*church*” concerning this abomination by saying, “*And ye are puffed up* (proud), *and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you*” (I Corinthians 5:2). Paul continued in I Corinthians 6:9 to specifically name ten sins that those who are guilty of them will never inherit the kingdom of God. It seems that the “*pendulum of religion*” swings from one extreme to the other, from “*law*” to “*lasciviousness,*” and from “*lasciviousness*” back to “*law.*” The apostle Paul warned Timothy against those who are “*...ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (II Timothy 3:7). He speaks of “*the truth*” that Jesus said will “*make the believer free*” from sin. It is the “*grace of God*” to take sin out of the heart and nature of a believer, and they have it no more.

It was during the fourth century A. D. that the “*church*” was “*taken over*” by Rome when Constantine adopted Christianity as the state

religion. The direct result of this action was the paganization of the church as it entered into over twelve hundred years of gross spiritual darkness, which continued until the reformation, led by Martin Luther. Certainly "*justification by faith*" was a great revelation to Martin Luther, which led him to understand that God did not require that forgiveness be purchased by either money or acts of penance. "*Believing the record which God gave of his Son (I John 5:10)*" was sufficient "*purchase price*" for salvation. Had Martin Luther continued as at the beginning, he would have certainly received a complete revelation of the grace of God and of the apostle's doctrine, but such was not to be. Other things captured his attention, and while he is to be honored for the great service which he did for the medieval people, he fell far short of the truth of Christ. Those who came after Luther were the ones who actually formulated the "*reformation doctrine*" that has effected the protestant churches unto this present day. The man with the greatest impact on our modern church was John Calvin with his doctrine of "*penal substitution.*" Whether or not a person claims to believe Calvin, they have almost certainly been influenced by Calvinist doctrines in one form or another. The most common, and the one which is most dangerous, is the belief that "*Jesus died to take the penalty for our sins.*" Before you discard my words as the rantings of a foolish old man, consider that there is not a single verse in the scriptures that say such a thing. John Calvin did indeed preach against philosophy, but he was very much a "*philosopher*" and a product of philosophy himself. Many of the ancients believed that "*truth*" could be received from three co-equal sources; "*philosophy, nature, and the scriptures.*" Certainly the doctrines of predestination, unconditional eternal security, and penal substitution had to come from sources other than the scriptures. I challenge anyone to teach such things by referring to the scriptures alone. It cannot be done without referring to the writings of John Calvin, which are not scripture. While I personally know a few devout Calvinists whom I believe to be very good and moral people that seek to be faithful to God with such light as they have, I also know that Calvin's doctrines have also filled America with people who almost never attend church and live their

lives strictly for pleasures while they claim to “*love Jesus.*” They do not worship, they do not pray, and they do not believe the truth, but no one can reach them for Christ because they believe just enough to believe their sins have been forgiven them “*past, present, and future,*” even before they commit them, and as long as they “*believe in Jesus*” they will go to a “*better place*” when they die. Sadly, their belief system is confirmed at almost every funeral service they have attended, which is as close to attending church most of them ever come. I do not believe Calvin’s doctrines, but I do believe that he would hate the thing that has come out of what he taught.

Matthew 13:24-25: “*Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, 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.*”

Peter tells us we are “*born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever*” (I Peter 1:23). He concludes his thought two verses later, saying, “*And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you*” (I Peter 1:25). The parable of the sower spans a period of time from the first coming of Christ until His second coming. The “*good seed*” that was sown in the field was said to be the children of God, but they were “*sown*” by the preaching of the gospel in that first generation after Calvary. The scripture says “*while men slept,*” an enemy came and “*sowed tares among the wheat.*” Those who actually sowed the tares were inspired and sent by our adversary, the devil, who sent false teachers among the children of God with “*another gospel,*” which is always the “*seed*” to bring forth tares. This “*sowing of the tares*” began within the first century A.D. It led to over a thousand years of spiritual darkness which continued until the reformation came. Satan did not lie down and give up because of the reformation, however. A second time he send his messengers in among the children of God with another gospel, one that could only produce more tares. Jesus told us that the tares and the wheat would grow together until the time of harvest, which He

called “*the end of the world.*” “*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*” (Matthew 13:30). Jesus then gave his disciples the “*key*” to understand His parable:

Matthew 13:38-43: “*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.***”

The “*harvest*” spoken of in this parable is at “*the end of the world.*” Christ will send forth His angels to gather out of “*His Kingdom,*” which is the Church, “*all things that offend, and them which do iniquity.*” These are the “*tares*” that were sown into the church by “*another gospel.*” Jesus said they will be cast “*...into a furnace of fire.*” Who are they? Jesus said, “*...they which do iniquity.*” Speaking to the unbelieving Jews in John 8:34-36, “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*” According to the Greek text, Jesus said that those who “*commit sin*” are “*slaves to sin.*” Notice His words in the next verse; “*The slave does not abide in the house forever, but the Son abideth ever.*” Christ came into the world to deliver the slaves from sin and thus make them “*free from sin.*” He told those unbelieving Jews, “*If the Son shall make you free, you will be free indeed.*” If they never received Jesus as “*The Christ*” who came into the world to “*make an end of sins* (Daniel 9:24)” and to “*take away their sin*” (I John 3:5), nothing would remain for them but to be “*cast out of*

the house” into a furnace of fire. The analogy is not pretty, but Jesus Christ, the Son of God is the one who gave it, and we should certainly heed it. The wonderful truth is, however, is that no one needs to continue as a “tare.” What a person is, is determined by what they believe about Jesus Christ. If they believe the truth of the gospel, they know that the eternal Christ came into the world to “*make an end of sins*” (Daniel 9:24), and that He died on the cross as the sinless “*Lamb of God,*” to “*take away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29, I John 3:5). Those who believe this truth and trust in Christ will certainly be made free from sin without their labors and struggle.

Another Jesus

The term “*another Jesus*” does not speak of another man who was given the name “*Jesus.*” Instead, it speaks of the mental image of Jesus Christ that is held by the people. The children of Israel accepted a “*wrong image*” of God when they worshiped the golden calf (Exodus 32:3-6). Less than two months before, they had refused to hear the voice of God when He spoke to them from Mount Sinai (Exodus 20:19). The apostle Paul referred to this event in his epistle to the Romans; “*Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves*” (Romans 1:22-24). Notice that Israel’s sin was their corrupt image of God, and sexual immorality was their punishment. Many godly men and women of God have cried out against the sins of America in this generation. Many of them have overlooked the real problem, however, which is the present day theology of the church. Old Testament Israel also changed its “*theology*” into something that God could not accept; “*Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is*

against nature. And likewise also **the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another**; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet” (Romans 1:25-27). Israel’s wrong image of God was the source of gross immorality and sexual uncleanness that became a part of their culture. When they “*changed the truth of God into a lie,*” it was God who “*gave them up to vile affections.*” Their lascivious doctrines led to the “*vile affections*” which God gave them up to. The first judgment of God against His people was “*heterosexual sins;*” His second judgment was to “*give them up to vile affections,*” which speaks of “*homosexual sins.*” The church in America has followed the same pattern as Old Testament Israel, and we have received the same judgment of God against our nation.

What is your “*image*” of Jesus Christ? Was He only a “*natural man*” while upon earth? Was he “*tempted*” to sin? Did He “*live His life*” and “*do His works*” as a natural man? Was he an example to us of what a “*natural man*” can do through “*faith, fasting, and prayer?*” I ask these questions for a reason. What I have described, and what millions of people have been led to believe, is a “*corruptible image*” of Jesus Christ. If these things are true about Jesus, His death on the cross was in vain. If He could do everything He did as a “*natural man,*” it follows that we can also, and Christ would never have died on the cross to take away our sin. Jesus could not be “*tempted to sin,*” because there was no sin in Him. He was, however, “*tested with sin*” in every way that we are, “*yet without sin.*” Jesus could not sin because He was “*born of God.*” Adam’s nature was not in Him as it is in us until such time as “*our old man (Adam) is crucified with Christ*” (Romans 6:6). Jesus told Nicodemus (and us), “*Ye must be born again.*” When we were born the first time, we were born into the family of Adam. When we are “*born again,*” we are born into the family of God. Our “*old man (Adam)*” is “*crucified with Christ,*” and we are “*born again*” into the family of God “*by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*” (I Peter 1-3). The apostle John tells us, not once, but several times, that “*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin*” (I John

3:9; I John 3:6; I John 5:18). It is the apostle Paul, however, that reveals how those who “*know the truth*” are “*made free from sin:*”

Romans 6:6-7: “*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.*”

Romans 6:14: “*For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*”

Romans 6:18: “*Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*”

Romans 6:22: “*But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.*”

The Record that God Gave of His Son

I John 5:10: “*He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.*”

The first “*record*” that God gave of His Son is found in Genesis 3:15. It is the promise of “*the seed of the woman*” that would “*bruise the head of the serpent,*” a promise which God gave in the same day that Adam disobeyed God and sin entered into the world. God revealed more about the “*seed of the woman*” to the prophet Isaiah:

Isaiah 7:14: “*Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (God with us).*”

Isaiah 9:6: “*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*”

Isaiah 11:1-4: “*And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the*

fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth....”

Isaiah 52:13-15: *“Behold, my servant (the seed of the woman; the child of the virgin) shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; **his visage** (his face) **was so marred more than any man, and his form** (his body) **more than the sons of men: So shall he sprinkle many nations;** the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.*

Isaiah 53:2-5: *“For he (the seed of the woman; the child of the virgin) shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. **But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.**”*

This is the “*record*” that God gave of His Son. More than being simply “*the seed of the woman,*” however, Jesus is also “*The Christ, the eternal Word of God,*” who was “*in the beginning with God*” and who “*was God*” (John 1:1). It is the “*record*” that God gave of His “*Christ*” that tells us all we need to know about the purpose of the death of Jesus on the cross.

Daniel 9:24-25: *“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, **to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and***

*prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto **the Messiah the Prince** (The Christ) shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.”*

The things I have placed in bold print in the twenty-fourth verse tell the mission of Christ when God sent Him into the world. This also is the “*record that God gave of His Son.*” To deny that Jesus did these things through His death on the cross for “*everyone who believeth*” (Romans 1:16), is to “*make God a liar*” (I John 5:10). The apostle Paul questions, “*For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar*” (Romans 3:3-4). Believe the record that God gave, even if every doctrine of man denies it; “*Let God be true, but every man a liar.*” Christ will make you free from sin and you can enjoy that freedom, even if everyone you know denies the truth that makes you free.

The correct image of Jesus Christ has been given to us by God through the true prophets of Israel. The false image of Jesus puts Him in conflict with the Father, hiding us from God, covering our sins so God can’t see them, warding off the wrath of God against us, etc. The teaching of penal substitution, that Jesus died to “*take the penalty for our sins,*” to “*take our punishment,*” or even to “*pay the sin debt*” that we owed to God, is wrong. It gives a false image of Jesus, the Son of God. The true image is found in this: “*...God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.*” God’s purpose has never been to “*punish us for our sins,*” but to “*save us from our sins.*” Those who refuse His salvation, however, will certainly be “*...punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power*” (II Thessalonians 1:9).

Why Sin must be Destroyed

Have you ever destroyed a wasp nest? If you have ever come into personal contact with a wasp you have probably tried to destroy them. Why were you “*punishing*” the wasps? What did they do to

you? Perhaps one of the wasps did sting you, but why destroy the entire nest? Wouldn't it be better to punish only the wasp that was guilty of stinging you? Most of the wasps on the nest have never stung anyone, so how could a "*righteous person*" destroy the innocent along with the guilty? I realize that this line of thinking is absurd, but so is the modern thought about sin in the heart of man. A lost person will not be judged based upon their guilt or innocence, but based upon what they are. If sin remains in their heart they are a sinner, but Christ came into the world to save sinners "*from their sins*" (Matthew 1:21). The eternal Christ became a man and died on the cross to take sin out of the heart of all those who would simply believe and trust in Him. If a person refuses to believe and will not receive in their heart what Christ died to do, they will be cast away from God at the judgment based upon what they are. They will be destroyed "...with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." We destroy wasps simply because they are "*wasps.*" If you live in the south, it is the same with "*fire-ants.*" No one has compassion on the fire-ant. If we could, we would eradicate them from the face of the earth. With God, it is the same with sin. If sin could be eradicated from earth, what a wonderful place this would be. It would become the paradise that God made it to be, but sin entered and the paradise was destroyed. Sin, however, is irrevocably connected with the soul of man, and there is nothing that man can do to deliver himself. God sent Christ into the world to "*take away our sin.*" If we hold to our sin, there remains no remedy but to "*take us away.*" The entire planet has been destroyed by sin. It has been so since the first day sin entered through Adam's disobedience to God. There will be a "*new heavens and a new earth,*" however, and "*sin*" will not enter there. If Jesus only "*took the penalty for sin*" so that sinners could "*go to heaven when they die,*" then "*the new heavens and the new earth*" would be just as corrupt as this one is. When God destroyed the earth with a flood, He destroyed every living creature except for those who were on the ark with Noah. It should be noticed that God did not destroy them for what they did, but for what they were. The scripture gives the reason for the great destruction; "*And GOD saw that the wickedness*

of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart” (Genesis 6:5-6). The things they did must have been abominable but God destroyed them because of the total depravity of their hearts. The fact is that sin came through the flood in the hearts of those who were saved from the flood, and in a short time the earth once again was filled with violence. Christ came into the world to save us “*from our sin,*” and only those who have been thus saved will enter the new heavens and the new earth.

Another Spirit

The promise of redemption that was given through the prophet Ezekiel says, “*...A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them”* (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

The “*new heart*” and the “*new spirit*” that God gives to all who are “*born again*” of the Spirit of God is not “*polluted*” with sin like the “*old heart*” was. Neither does a child of God have both an “*old heart*” and a “*new heart,*” because God said, “*I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh....*” We are “*new creations,*” with “*new hearts*” and “*new spirits,*” with the promise of God to “*...put My Spirit within you.*” This of course is speaking about the “*Holy Ghost*” which is given to man contingent upon their having received a “*new heart*” and a “*new spirit*” from God. God tells us that as a result of our receiving a new heart and a new spirit, and being filled with His Spirit, we will “*walk in His statutes, and do His judgments.*” His laws will be written in our new hearts

At the very beginning of the twentieth century, God began to “*pour out of His Spirit*” upon His people once again. It began almost simultaneously in several places across America, wherever believers were diligently seeking God. That “*revival*” continued for over fifty years before dying off. I was saved and filled with the Holy

Ghost in 1958, very near the end of that great outpouring. A couple of years later, probably in 1960, I was visiting with a close friend, a highly respected and honorable man of another denomination. This man was probably old enough to be my father, and was one I held in great regard. He told me something that I have never lost in my memory. He said, *“Leroy, I like Pentecostal people. They are a hardworking, honest, and reliable people. They pay their bills and they do what they tell you they will do. You can count on what they say. They live clean moral lives and they are just good people, but there is one thing I do not understand about them. It is that ‘speaking in tongues.’ I just don’t like it when they speak in tongues.”* I told him, *“Mister Moore, you have told me something that to me is very strange. You like what we are, but you don’t like what makes us what we are.”* He wasn’t prepared for my answer, and could only reply, *“I never thought about it that way.”*

Over fifty years have passed since my conversation with that man. His observation about Pentecostal people was a testimony to the reality of what they possessed in those days. Of course, there were exceptions to the rule, but only in those who did not possess the reality of Christ. Something has changed during the past fifty years that has utterly destroyed the testimony of so-called *“Spirit-filled”* people. Very few of them are any different than the world around them. In general, they have accepted *“another gospel,”* which gave them the image of *“another Jesus,”* and prepared them for *“another spirit.”*

The first *“prophetic word”* that I received from the Lord was in June, 1965. I was attending the wedding of a friend in a Catholic church. I saw for the first time the images of the *“saints”* that stood around the perimeter of the church. I saw the pictures depicting the *“stations of the cross”* on the walls above. The last of them was a depiction of Jesus being placed in the tomb. I looked in vain for the one depicting the resurrection, but I found none. As a young Pentecostal preacher, I became very *“indignant”* at what I perceived to be the *“ignorance”* of these people. I wanted to stand up and shout, *“Don’t you know that He is alive?”* but I did not. In that

moment I distinctly heard the voice of God speaking to me, *“In the last days, a harlot will arise out of Pentecost that will be more vile in her affections than the Roman Catholic Church of the dark ages.”* I was absolutely shocked by what I had heard, but I knew that I had heard from God.

In the month of July, 1969, I was seeking the Lord in a time of fasting and prayer. One night I was carried out in the Spirit into a vision from the Lord. In the vision, I saw *“another spirit”* come to the churches, pretending to be the Holy Ghost. At first I thought it was a wonderful thing that happened until I noticed that those who received this *“spirit,”* began to exalt themselves, seeking to get others to look to them and follow them. I know that a spirit of self-exaltation is the original sin that was found in God’s *“anointed cherub that covereth”* (Ezekiel 28:14-15). This is the one called *“Lucifer”* in Isaiah 14:13-14, whose *“sin”* was first discovered in his heart; *“For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.”* When Lucifer said, *“I will exalt my throne above the stars of God,”* God said, *“thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit”* (Isaiah 14:15). Jesus said, *“Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted”* (Luke 14:11). It will never fail. Those who exalt themselves will certainly be brought low. When a person seeks to *“exalt themselves”* above others, they are actually partaking of the spirit of the serpent, and they will be brought down in shame.

Forty six years have passed since I received that *“vision”* from the Lord. During that time I have seen many in the Pentecostal movement also *“lose their savor.”* Almost immediately after I received the vision, another *“revival of religion”* began sweeping America. Its leaders claimed it to be the great last day revival and the greatest *“outpouring of the Spirit”* in history. Pentecostal people had suffered much rejection and persecution over the things they believed and experienced from God. Suddenly it seemed that

people from every denomination and social class were “*receiving the spirit*” and “*speaking in tongues*,” but they called the experience by different names. They spoke of “*charismatic renewal*,” and “*practicing glossolalia*” in those early years of the movement. In time the terms changed and the experience became known as “*receiving your prayer language*.” The original Pentecostals (at the beginning of the twentieth century) had believed in “*entire sanctification*,” which was received from God before the Holy Ghost came upon them. Sixty years later people were “*learning how*” to imitate everything that the Holy Ghost was given to do. Ministers arose to prominence with the promise that they could “*teach*” the people, not only to “*speak in their prayer language*,” but to operate all nine “*gifts of the Spirit*.” Suddenly man was in control of what only God could do in the past, and the churches became filled with unregenerate men and women who seemed able to do spiritual things. Today, those same churches are filled with sinners, all of which are taught that sin doesn’t really matter, because God has forgiven them even before they commit their sins. The presence of God has departed because the truth of the gospel has been rejected, and by large, Christianity has become just another philosophy of life and the church an assembly of sinners without the power to affect the nation. The “*gospel of Christ*” as Paul preached it has been replaced with a message that is nothing more than a philosophy of life which is in tune with the wisdom of this present evil world that is perishing. Many, and perhaps most ministers, have become nothing more than “*counseling psychologists*.” It is what Jesus warned against in His “*Sermon on the Mount*.” The “*salt has lost its savor*.”

How We Lost America

The following is the text of a full page ad which we ran in the August 2015 issue of Charisma

With the Supreme Court decision on June 26, 2015, two things became evident. The first is that the United States of America has been fundamentally changed forever. The second is that the church

has lost the nation that God had given us to keep. Jesus told his disciples *"Ye are the salt of the earth."* He continued to say, *"but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden underfoot of men."* We will understand the words of Jesus better in the months and years to come as the process of *"casting out"* a savorless church and *"treading it under foot"* begins. This can only happen when the church, like the salt that *"loses its savor,"* has lost the presence of God and the reality that the gospel of Jesus Christ brings. Many will say that God is going to judge America because of gay marriage. The truth is, however, that God has already judged America, and gay marriage is only a confirmation that we have been judged.

As Israel did three thousand years ago, the American church has committed two sins that have brought two distinct judgments from God. The first is a wrong image of God, and the second is a wrong view of the gospel. The children of Israel turned away from the invisible God to worship a *"golden calf,"* and God's righteous judgment was that He *"gave them up to uncleanness...to dishonor their own bodies between themselves"* (Romans 1:24). Many in this generation of the church have *"changed the glory of Jesus Christ"* into the *"image of a corruptible man."* Instead of *"Christ the creator,"* the *"Lord from heaven"* who came to *"take away the sin of the world,"* the new image of Jesus is that of a *"natural man that could have sinned and had sinful desires just like every one of us and therefore understands when we sin."* Because of this wrong and twisted image of Christ that has issued from America's pulpits, our nation has long ago been given up by God to uncleanness.

The second sin of the church, the wrong view of the gospel, is the one that has brought America to the June 26th decree by the Supreme Court. Because the church, like Old Testament Israel before, *"changed the truth of God into a lie,"* God's judgment was that he *"...gave them up to vile affections"* (Romans 1:25-26). Jude warned that false teachers had succeeded in *"turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness."* The modern doctrine that *"we are all*

sinner and must sin everyday" is not "grace;" it is "lasciviousness," a license to continue in sin. It has "changed the truth of God into a lie" and filled the churches with those who continue in sin because they have never been "born again." Why did Christ leave eternity to become a man? What did He come into the world to do? The correct answer to this question is "the truth" that Jesus said "will make you free" from sin. Did Christ come to "take away our sin," or did He come to "take the penalty for our sin?" One is the truth of the gospel. The other is the "lie" that has caused God to give our nation up to "vile affections," which is where we are in America today. Gay marriage is not our "national sin;" it is the judgment of God because of a church that has "lost its savor," and thus, has "lost our nation."

End of Charisma ad

Decades ago I began to preach that because of the modern church's position that the children of God are, and will always be, sinners, there would come a day that homosexuality would have to be accepted in the church. Consider what I say. If someone commits adultery we have said "*but we are all sinners.*" If two people cohabit outside of marriage we say "*we cannot judge them.*" Pornography, drunkenness, drug abuse, covetousness, and more, have all become acceptable in the church because of an erroneous and unscriptural interpretation of grace. Of course we say they should not do these things, but we assure them we will not judge them and neither will God. If one believes such an interpretation of grace is true, and claims such things are covered by God's love and grace, then it is hypocrisy for them to say that homosexuality and even gay marriage is not covered by the same grace. Do not think I am advocating that the church accept homosexuality or gay marriage. Absolutely not! Instead, we must once again return to presenting the simple gospel declared by the Holy Scriptures, that Jesus Christ was manifested and crucified to take away the sin that is in our heart and nature. His blood truly does cleanse us from all unrighteousness. True grace changes everything!

Law and Grace Contrasted

Romans 8:3: *“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”*

What did God send Christ into the world to do? Paul gives the very simple answer to the question in this verse; He came to do what the law could not do. The law could judge the sinner, but it could not save the sinner. The law could condemn the sinner, but it could not forgive the sinner. The law could define sin, but it could not give righteousness. The law could take life from man, but it could not give life to man. Paul said, *“...if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law”* (Galatians 3:21). Finally, the law could destroy the sinner, but it could not destroy the sin that was in the sinner. That is exactly what Christ came into the world to do, and that properly defines grace, that Christ does in the believer what the law could never do.

In Ezekiel 18:31, God said to backsliding Israel, *“Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and **make you a new heart and a new spirit**: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”* It is incredible that God commanded His people to do something they absolutely could not do. A man or woman may change their mind, but they can never change their heart. Even Jesus, when preaching to the scribes and Pharisees, commanded them to do something that was totally impossible; *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, **cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter**, that the outside of them may be clean also”* (Matthew 23:25-26). All such commands are law, and require such works as man cannot do in order to fulfill them. Man must have a savior, and impossible commands are designed to drive them to the savior. The work of grace is foretold in Ezekiel 36:26-27; *“...from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A **new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you**: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give*

you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.”

Hebrews 10:4: *“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”*

It was through the continual sacrificing of bullocks, goats and lambs that a covering was made for the sins of the people. That was *“the law.”* Two lambs had to be offered every day, one in the morning, and one in the evening, and because their blood could not take away sins, two more had to be offered the next day, yet the people continued to sin, because there was nothing that could take their sin away. That was *“the law.”* Jesus offered one sacrifice forever. Only one was necessary, because His blood was sufficient to take sin away. Paul explained it this way in Hebrews 10:11-14; *“And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”*

Law says, *“Make you a new heart and a new spirit.”* Grace says, *“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you.”* Law says *“work;”* Grace says *“trust.”* Law demands of man what only grace can give to man. Both law and grace have a common goal, but only grace can deliver what the law promises. The law demands that man cease from sinning. Christ came into the world to *“make an end of sins”* (Daniel 9:24), to *“take away our sins”* (I John 3:5), and to *“make us free from sin”* (Romans 6:22). Let’s look at Romans 8:3 one more time to clearly see what the apostle is saying; *“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”*

Romans 6:14: *“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”*

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