

The Trouble That Lies Just Ahead

By

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(Emphasis added)

The time of this writing is August, 2007. A few years ago, the Lord showed me that the end of the world as we know it is near. People have been preaching this message on and off since Jesus walked the earth in human form. However, for the first time in history the things that are spoken of in the Bible, especially in the books of the prophets and the book of Revelation, can actually take place. Prior to this time, some of the things discussed there simply were not possible. Now ALL the things are possible. The focus of this teaching is the time just prior to and including what Jesus called a time of 'great tribulation'. The time period just prior to this great tribulation is what Jesus calls the 'beginning of sorrows'. I believe that the Lord spoke to me just over two years ago and said that 'the beginning of sorrows has begun'. Many people will probably criticize me for attempting to place a timeline on these events as they mistakenly believe that Jesus said that we will not know the times or the seasons for these things, (see Acts 1:7).

Acts 1:4-8 (Speaking of Jesus) –

⁴And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “**which,**” *He said,* “**you have heard from Me;**”⁵“**for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.**”⁶Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”⁷And He said to them, “**It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.**”⁸“**But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.**”¹

However, I believe that we WILL know how these events are going to unfold, because Jesus Himself told us! The reason that He told us is so we can be prepared both spiritually and physically. If we know these things, along with other Biblical ‘mysteries’, we may be able to be protected from the times of tribulation that Jesus spoke of. Please read on and see how most of the Christian Church of today will miss the signs of the times and with that, the chance to escape the trouble that lies just ahead.

The Church is supposed to know, but they are unprepared -

The state of being unprepared that the modern Christian Church is in, is just like the Pharisees and Sadducees, who were the religious teachers at the time Jesus first came to the earth in human form. They did not recognize that Jesus was the Messiah, or the Christ. They failed to recognize Him as such, because they did not know the scriptures as

¹The Holy Bible, New King James Version, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

they should have known them, and therefore were unprepared spiritually when He came the first time. They wanted Him to give them a 'sign' that He was the Messiah. However, people who do not know how God works will not believe even if He does something different. God has always confirmed the word of His prophets with divine power in the form of 'signs and wonders'. This is why Jesus performed so many miracles. The miracles confirmed the words that He spoke, just as the miracles confirmed the words that Moses spoke to the Egyptians. God always confirms His word with miracles, (see Mark 16:14-20).

Mark 20:14-20 –

¹⁴Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. ¹⁵And He said to them, **“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷“And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸“they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”**

¹⁹So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. ²⁰And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them* and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.²

The modern day Christian Church is similarly unprepared for Jesus' second coming, and the worldwide problems that will precede His return, because they are looking for a 'pre-tribulation rapture' that will NOT happen, (see Exodus chapters 1-14 and Matthew 16:1-4).

Matthew 16:1-4 –

¹Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. ²He answered and said to them, **“When it is evening you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red’; ³“and in the morning, ‘It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. ⁴“A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.”** And He left them and departed.³

If we know the scriptures, then we will know that Jesus will only return AFTER the tribulation, (see below and the handout 'Revelation Revealed'). In Acts 1:7 above, we see that Jesus is answering a question about the timing of a specific event, which is the

²*The Holy Bible, New King James Version, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.*

³*The Holy Bible, New King James Version, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.*

restoring of the kingdom of Israel, (a.k.a., the 'Kingdom of God'). He told the disciples that they were not to know the times or the seasons that the Father had decided upon for this event. Like this, only the Father will know when Jesus will return, which is the event that precedes the setting up of the Kingdom, (see Matthew 24:36-44 and Mark 13:32-37). One other thing to note in Acts above is that we need the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire in order to get prepared for these times of trouble, (see 'The path to Perfection' handout).

Matthew 24:36-44 (speaking of Jesus' second coming) –

³⁶“**But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.** ³⁷“But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸“For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹“and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁰“Then two *men* will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹“Two *women* will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. ⁴²“**Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.** ⁴³“But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴“Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”⁴

Mark 13:32-37 –

³²“**But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.** ³³“Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. ³⁴“*It is* like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. ³⁵“Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning— ³⁶“lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. ³⁷“And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!”⁵

Even though we will not know the day or time of Jesus second coming, what I am speaking of in this teaching is the series of events that lead up to and include the time of 'great tribulation' that Jesus speaks about in Matthew 24 and that the apostle John refers to in Revelation chapter 7, (see Matthew 24:21 and Revelation 7:14).

Matthew 24:21 –

⁴The Holy Bible, New King James Version, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

⁵The Holy Bible, New King James Version, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

21“**For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.** 6

Revelation 7:9-14 –

⁹After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” ¹¹All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹²saying:

“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom,
Thanksgiving and honor and power and might,
Be to our God forever and ever.
Amen.”

¹³Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?” ¹⁴And I said to him, “Sir, you know.” So he said to me, “**These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.** 7

These events PRECEDE the return of Christ and the setting up of the Kingdom. We SHOULD know the timing of these events. The message of Revelation chapter 7 here is that, unlike what is taught in most Christian churches today, Christians will go through the time of great tribulation. They will ‘wash’ their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. There is symbolism here that one needs to understand in order to know what the angel was saying to the apostle John in these verses.

The importance of the blood of Jesus –

The blood of the Lamb is the blood of Jesus as He is referred to by John the Baptist as the Lamb of God, (see John 1:29 and 35-36).

John 1:29 & 35-36 –

²⁹The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!8

³⁵Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. ³⁶And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God!” 9

6*The Holy Bible, New King James Version, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.*

7*The Holy Bible, New King James Version, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.*

8*The Holy Bible, New King James Version, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.*

Thus the blood of Jesus that He shed for us is what will help us to get 'clean'. It cleanses us of our sins. Jesus is also known as the Word of God. His blood is in reality the life essence of God, that is to say the love of God, (see John 1:1-5 and 3:16).

John 1:1-5 –

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴**In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.** ⁵And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. ¹⁰

The 'life' that was in Jesus was the blood. Blood is the life essence of all higher creatures in the earth. It symbolizes the Father and has characteristics of His person, (see Genesis 4:1-11).

Genesis 4:1-11 –

¹Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD." ²Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. ³And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. ⁴Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, ⁵but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. ⁶So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? ⁷"If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire *is* for you, but you should rule over it." ⁸Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

⁹Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where *is* Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" ¹⁰And He said, "What have you done? **The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground.** ¹¹

The blood that God gave us as human beings symbolizes not only life and the light of the Father, but really the love of God, (see John 3:16).

John 3:1-21 –

⁹*The Holy Bible, New King James Version, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.*

¹⁰*The Holy Bible, New King James Version, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.*

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¹There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ²This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” ³Jesus answered and said to him, “**Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**” ⁴Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵Jesus answered, “**Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.**” ⁶“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” ⁷“Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’” ⁸“The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” ⁹Nicodemus answered and said to Him, “How can these things be?” ¹⁰Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?” ¹¹“Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness.” ¹²“If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?” ¹³“No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, *that is*, the Son of Man who is in heaven.” ¹⁴“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,” ¹⁵“that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” ¹⁶“**For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**” ¹⁷“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” ¹⁸“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” ¹⁹“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” ²⁰“**For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.**” ²¹“**But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.**”¹²

Therefore the blood of the Lamb, (i.e., Jesus), can cover our sins, as ‘love covers all sins’, (see Proverbs 10:12 & I Peter 4:8).

Proverbs 10:12 –

¹²Hatred stirs up strife,
But **love covers all sins.**¹³

I Peter 4:8 –

¹²*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

¹³*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

⁸ Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for **love covers a multitude of sins**.¹⁴

Again, blood is symbolic of the Father, and the love of God. Through the blood of Jesus and by the power of God following the baptism of the Holy Spirit, (i.e., the anointing, or grace of God), we can become obedient to God. It is through obedience to God that we show our love for Him, (see I John 2:1-11 and 2:15-5:5 inclusive, and the handout 'OBEDIENCE – the Key to Righteousness').

I John 2:1-11 –

¹**My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. ²And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.**

³Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. ⁶He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. ⁷**Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning. ⁸Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining. ⁹He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. ¹⁰He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. ¹¹But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.**¹⁵

I John 2:15 – 5:5 –

¹⁵**Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.**

¹⁸**Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. ¹⁹They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. ²⁰But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know**

¹⁴*Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1996.

¹⁵*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

all things. ²¹**I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.** ²²**Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.** ²³**Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.**

²⁴Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life. ²⁶These things I have written to you concerning those who *try to* deceive you. ²⁷**But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.**

²⁸And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. ²⁹If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

Chapter 3

¹Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

²Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

⁴**Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.** ⁵**And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.** ⁶**Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.** ⁷**Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.** ⁸**He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.** ⁹**Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.**

¹⁰**In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.** ¹¹**For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,** ¹²**not as Cain *who* was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.** ¹³Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. ¹⁴We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love *his* brother abides in death. ¹⁵Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

¹⁶**By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.** ¹⁷**But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?** ¹⁸**My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.** ¹⁹And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. ²⁰For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. ²¹Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.

²²And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. ²³And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

²⁴**Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.**

Chapter 4

¹Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ²**By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,** ³**and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.** ⁴You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. ⁵They are of the world. Therefore they speak *as* of the world, and the world hears them. ⁶We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

⁷**Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.** ⁸**He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.** ⁹**In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.** ¹⁰**In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.** ¹¹**Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.**

¹²**No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.** ¹³**By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.** ¹⁴**And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *as* Savior of the world.** ¹⁵**Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.** ¹⁶**And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.**

¹⁷**Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.** ¹⁸**There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.** ¹⁹**We love Him because He first loved us.**

²⁰**If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?** ²¹**And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.**

Chapter 5

¹Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. ²By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. ³For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not

burdensome. ⁴For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

⁶This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. ⁷For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. ⁸And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one. ⁹If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. ¹⁰He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. ¹¹And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹²He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue to* believe in the name of the Son of God.¹⁶

So we see especially in I John 5:7-8 above that there are three persons in the 'family' of God in heaven who agree as one – the Father, the Word, (or Jesus), and the Holy Spirit. The three who agree on earth are the Spirit, (or the Holy Spirit), the water, (which is the Word of God, or Jesus), and the blood. Thus, you can see that in the earth the blood is representative of the Father, since only Jesus and the Holy Spirit have actually been here. Since it says in I John 4:8 & 16 above that 'God is love', then you can see that the blood represents the love of the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ, (see John 3:16 above). God has created much symbolism in the world, but this is one of the most important symbols. Any religion that denies the blood of Jesus as representing the love of the Father, denies the existence of the true God and Father of lights. If they deny Jesus Christ as the Son of God, then they deny the only sacrifice for their sins that God the Father has provided for us. Those who deny Jesus as the Son of God are therefore operating by the antichrist spirit, which is of the Devil. They will end up in hell when they die. This includes Muslims, Hindus, atheists, etc. This may sound harsh, but it is true. Unlike what many believe, Muslims do not worship the same God that Christians worship. Allah is a demonic spirit and has led many people astray. The man who will be the Antichrist will claim to be a Muslim, but will be so in name only, (see 'Revelation Revealed' handout). Most people in the Church believe that the Antichrist will be a ruler in the European Union, but this does not make sense with the Scriptures and the symbolism that God has set up in the earth, (see handout, 'Revelation Revealed').

A very important warning found in the Bible is that anyone who calls themselves a Christian and willfully sins, (and sin is defined as anything that by faith or belief we know to be wrong, See Romans 14:23), is trampling on the blood of Jesus, hanging Him again on the cross, considering this great sacrifice as common and therefore no longer

¹⁶*The Holy Bible, New King James Version, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.*

has a sacrifice for those sins. Unless they repent, which will be essentially impossible, they will end up in the lake of fire, (see Hebrews 6:4-8 and chapter 10).

Hebrews 6:4-8 –

⁴For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, ⁵and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put *Him* to an open shame. ⁷For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; ⁸but if it bears thorns and briars, *it is* rejected and near to being cursed, whose end *is* to be burned.¹⁷

Hebrews chapter 10 –

Chapter 10

¹For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. ²For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. ³But in those *sacrifices there is* a reminder of sins every year. ⁴For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

⁵Therefore, when He came into the world, He said:

“Sacrifice and offering You did not desire,
But a body You have prepared for Me.

⁶ In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin
You had no pleasure.

⁷ Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—
In the volume of the book it is written of Me—
To do Your will, O God.’ ”

⁸Previously saying, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and *offerings* for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure *in them*” (which are offered according to the law), ⁹then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He takes away the first that He may establish the second. ¹⁰By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

¹¹And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹²But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. ¹⁴For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. ¹⁵But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, ¹⁶“This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the

¹⁷*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,” ¹⁷*then He adds*, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” ¹⁸Now where there is remission of these, *there is* no longer an offering for sin.

¹⁹Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹and *having* a High Priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful. ²⁴And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

²⁶**For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. ²⁸Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. ²⁹Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? ³⁰For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. And again, “The LORD will judge His people.” ³¹It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. ³²But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: ³³partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; ³⁴for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. ³⁵Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. ³⁶For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:**

³⁷ “For yet a little while,
And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.
³⁸ Now the just shall live by faith;
 But if *anyone* draws back,
 My soul has no pleasure in him.”

³⁹But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.¹⁸

In chapter 10, we see the writer of Hebrews speaking of living under the Law of Moses vs. the living under grace and the Law of life in the Spirit through Jesus, (see also Romans chapters 7-8). Living in the Spirit under the grace of Jesus’ sacrifice for our sins is better and more precious to God, than trying in the flesh to please Him through trying to keep the Law of Moses. Therefore, breaking the Law of life in the Spirit through Christ carries more severe consequences if we disregard it. Many so called Christians act as

¹⁸*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

though this salvation is common, and therefore are at risk for giving up that same salvation. People who believe that 'once saved, always saved' do not know these scriptures. These people, though they call themselves Christians, if they purposely break God's commandments, are going to be judged according to the Law of Moses, as they have given up the grace of the blood of Christ. If they die in their sins, then they will be headed for hell and ultimately on Judgment Day, the lake of fire, which is the second death, (see Revelation 20:11-15).

Revelation 20:11-15 –

¹¹Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. ¹²And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.¹⁹

Even though Christians will suffer and die during the tribulation at the hands of Satan, they will still be able to overcome the Devil and be saved. It is through the blood of Jesus and by what we say to others that we will be able to overcome the Devil, especially during those turbulent times, (see Revelation 12:7-12).

Revelation 12:7-12 –

⁷And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, ⁸but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. ⁹So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. ¹⁰Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. ¹¹**"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.** ¹²*"Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."*²⁰

¹⁹*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

²⁰*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

It is the precious blood of Jesus that we must hold in the highest regard. It is because of the blood of Jesus that we must work toward perfection, and help others to do so as well. It is imperative that we keep ourselves clean and holy.

Since the blood of Jesus represents the love of the Father, we must learn to become perfected in love, through the blood of Christ, in order to avoid the trouble of the tribulation.

How will we know when the tribulation comes? -

Unlike the actual return of Christ and the restoration of the kingdom of Israel, the times of 'the beginning of sorrows', the 'tribulation', and the 'great tribulation' will be times that we ARE supposed to be able to discern. Jesus Himself laid this out for us, (see Matthew chapter 24 and Luke 21:5-38).

Matthew chapter 24 –

Chapter 24

¹Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. ²And Jesus said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not *one* stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

³Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” ⁴And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵“For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. ⁶“And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷“For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. ⁸“All these *are* the beginning of sorrows. ⁹“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. ¹⁰“And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹“Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹²“And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³“But he who endures to the end shall be saved. ¹⁴“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

¹⁵“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶“then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷“Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. ¹⁸“And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. ¹⁹“But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰“And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹“For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²²“And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.

²³“Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here *is* the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe *it*.
²⁴“For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵“See, I have told you beforehand. ²⁶“Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; *or* ‘Look, *He is* in the inner rooms!’ do not believe *it*. ²⁷“For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ²⁸“For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

²⁹“**Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.** ³⁰“Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹“And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

³²“Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer *is* near. ³³“So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! ³⁴“Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. ³⁵“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

³⁶“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. ³⁷“But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸“For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹“and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁰“Then two *men* will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹“Two *women* will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. ⁴²“Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. ⁴³“But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴“Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

⁴⁵“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? ⁴⁶“Blessed *is* that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. ⁴⁷“Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. ⁴⁸“But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ ⁴⁹“and begins to beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, ⁵⁰“the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him* and at an hour that he is not aware of, ⁵¹“and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.²¹

Luke 21:5-38 –

⁵Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, ⁶**“These things which you see—the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down.”**

⁷So they asked Him, saying, “Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign *will there be* when these things are about to take place?” ⁸And He said: **“Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He,’ and, ‘The time has drawn near.’ Therefore do not go after them. ⁹“But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end *will not come* immediately.”** ¹⁰Then He said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. ¹¹“And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. ¹²“But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute *you*, delivering *you* up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name’s sake. ¹³“But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. ¹⁴“Therefore settle *it* in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; ¹⁵“for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. ¹⁶“You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put *some* of you to death. ¹⁷“And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. ¹⁸“But not a hair of your head shall be lost. ¹⁹“By your patience possess your souls.

²⁰**“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near.** ²¹“Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. ²²“**For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.** ²³“But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! **For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people.** ²⁴“And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

²⁵“**And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; ²⁶“men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. ²⁷“Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸“Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”**

²⁹**Then He spoke to them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees.** ³⁰**“When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near.** ³¹**“So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near.** ³²“Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. ³³“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

³⁴“But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. ³⁵“For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶“**Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”** ³⁷And in the

daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet. ³⁸Then early in the morning all the people came to Him in the temple to hear Him.²²

You can see from these scriptures that Jesus showed us the order in which the things preceding His return would come to pass. Even the early Church had issues with watching for these events to take place. Paul had preached the order of these events, but some people were trying to change things even just a few years after Jesus was here the first time, (see II Thessalonians chapter 2).

II Thessalonians chapter 2 –

Chapter 2

¹Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, ²not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. ³Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. ⁵Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? ⁶And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. ⁷For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains *will do so* until He is taken out of the way. ⁸And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. ⁹The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹²that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

¹³But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, ¹⁴to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵**Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.** ¹⁶Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, ¹⁷comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.²³

²²*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

²³*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

We can see from these scriptures, that even during the time of the first century Church just after Jesus was here the first time, people were confusing what Jesus and the apostles taught. It then is no wonder that today, some 2,000 years later, there are people who speak things that differ from what Jesus and the apostles taught about the return of Christ, and the events preceding His second coming.

*If we keep these things in mind and review the other scriptures in the books of the prophets, (especially Daniel), the words of the apostles, and the book of Revelation, we will see that there is no evidence that the Church at large will be removed from the earth before the trouble begins, (see the handout, 'Revelation Revealed'). First will come the **beginning of sorrows**, which is - 1) the deception by people claiming to be Christians, 2) wars and rumors of wars, 3) earthquakes in various places, famines and the seas and waves roaring, 4) pestilences, (diseases), and then the **great tribulation**, which is 5) the persecution of Christians. Immediately following the great tribulation of the persecution of the Christians, there will be heavenly signs in which the sun and moon will be blotted out and people will know that the wrath of God through Jesus is about to come. This wrath of God is known as the 'Day of the Lord', (a.k.a., the 'Day of Christ' or the 'Day', see II Thessalonians 2:2-3 above and the handout 'Revelation Revealed'). It will only be after these things that Jesus will return and the Christians will be gathered together, (see Mathew 24:29-31 above). These things are also outlined in Revelation chapter 6 as the first six seals that Jesus, (i.e., the 'Lamb') will open to bring about these end time events.*

Revelation chapter 6 –

Chapter 6

¹Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." ²And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

³When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." ⁴Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that *people* should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

⁵When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine."

⁷When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." ⁸So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.

⁹When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. ¹⁰And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our

blood on those who dwell on the earth?”¹¹ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both *the number of* their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they *were*, was completed.

¹²I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.¹³ And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.¹⁴ Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!”¹⁷ “For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”²⁴

The first four seals and events that they represent are called the ‘four horsemen of the Apocalypse’. They are 1) the rider of the white horse – which is the deception of many by those coming in the name of Christ, 2) the rider of the red horse – or wars and rumors of war, 3) the rider of the black horse - which represents famines, and 4) the rider of the dapple or pale horse – which represents plagues or sickness. These four horsemen are given authority to kill one fourth of the populations of the earth.

*The next or fifth seal is the persecution of Christians, which will escalate to culminate in the ‘great tribulation’ which will be perpetrated by the Antichrist himself, (a.k.a., the beast), who contrary to popular teaching in the Church that he will be a leader in the European Union, will be a Muslim. Currently, Osama Bin Laden fits the description better than anyone currently in the forefront of the struggle between the Christians and the Muslims. However, I believe the real Antichrist will be someone who will be like Bin Laden, but even more powerful and ruthless, (please see the handout ‘Revelation Revealed’). The length of the great tribulation will be about 3½ years, (i.e., 42 months). **It will begin along about the time that Jerusalem is surrounded by Muslim armies, (see Luke 21:20 above).** The great tribulation is where true Christians will wash their robes clean in the blood of the Lamb’, they will be blessed to die in this way, (see Revelation 13:1-10 and 14:13).*

Revelation 13:1-10 –

¹Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.² Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like *the feet of* a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.³ And *I saw* one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.⁴ So they

²⁴*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, **“Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”** ⁵**And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.** ⁶**Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.** ⁷**It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.** ⁸**All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.** ⁹**If anyone has an ear, let him hear.** ¹⁰**He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.**²⁵

Revelation 14:6-13 –

⁶Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—⁷saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.” ⁸And another angel followed, saying, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” ⁹Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰“he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹“And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.” ¹²Here is the patience of the saints; here *are* those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. ¹³**Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed *are* the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.”**²⁶

The Antichrist is currently being restrained by something, (see II Thessalonians 2:6-7 above). What is restraining the Antichrist from being revealed is the arc angel, Gabriel, (see the handout ‘Revelation Revealed’, and Daniel chapters 8 and 10 through 11:4).

Daniel chapter 8 –

Chapter 8

¹In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared *to me—to me*, Daniel—after the one that appeared to me the first time. ²I saw in the vision, and it so

²⁵*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

²⁶*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

happened while I was looking, that I *was* in Shushan, the citadel, which *is* in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision that I was by the River Ulai. ³Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns *were* high; but one *was* higher than the other, and the higher *one* came up last. ⁴I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor *was there any* that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great.

⁵And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat *had* a notable horn between his eyes. ⁶Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power. ⁷And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand. ⁸Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven.

⁹And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land. ¹⁰And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down *some* of the host and *some* of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. ¹¹He even exalted *himself* as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily *sacrifices* were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. ¹²Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily *sacrifices*; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did *all this* and prospered.

¹³Then I heard a holy one speaking; and *another* holy one said to that certain *one* who was speaking, "How long *will* the vision *be*, concerning the daily *sacrifices* and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled under foot?" ¹⁴And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."

¹⁵Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. ¹⁶And I heard a man's voice between *the banks of* the Ulai, who called, and said, "Gabriel, make this *man* understand the vision." ¹⁷So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was afraid and fell on my face; but he said to me, "Understand, son of man, that the vision *refers* to the time of the end." ¹⁸Now, as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me, and stood me upright. ¹⁹And he said, "Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end *shall be*. ²⁰"The ram which you saw, having the two horns—*they are* the kings of Media and Persia. ²¹"**And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king. ²²"As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power.**

²³ **"And in the latter time of their kingdom,
When the transgressors have reached their fullness,
A king shall arise,
Having fierce features,**

Who understands sinister schemes.

²⁴ **His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power;**

He shall destroy fearfully,

And shall prosper and thrive;

He shall destroy the mighty, and *also* the holy people.

²⁵ **“Through his cunning**

He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule;

And he shall exalt *himself* in his heart.

He shall destroy many in *their* prosperity.

He shall even rise against the Prince of princes;

But he shall be broken without *human* means.

²⁶ **“And the vision of the evenings and mornings**

Which was told is true;

Therefore seal up the vision,

For it refers to many days in the future.”

²⁷And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king’s business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it.²⁷

The male goat here represents the kingdom of Alexander the Great. When he died, his kingdom was divided up into four smaller, weaker kingdoms. The Antichrist, referred to here as a king having fierce features, will come from one of these kingdoms. Therefore, he is referred to elsewhere as the ‘prince of Greece’, since he descends from the kingdom of Alexander the Great, who was Greek. Alexander the Great conquered the Middle East and most of the Far East. He mixed Greek blood with all the peoples of these regions through intermarriage. Therefore, the Antichrist will be a Muslim who has a Greek heritage from the peoples of the army of Alexander the Great, (see Daniel chapter 10 through 11:1-4).

Daniel chapter 10 through 11:1-4 –

Chapter 10

¹In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message *was* true, but the appointed time *was* long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision. ²In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. ³I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

⁴Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that *is*, the Tigris, ⁵I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist *was* girded with gold of Uphaz! ⁶His body *was* like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude. ⁷And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great

²⁷*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. ⁸Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength. ⁹Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

¹⁰Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and *on* the palms of my hands. ¹¹And he said to me, “O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.” While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling. ¹²Then he said to me, “Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. ¹³“But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. ¹⁴“Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision *refers to many days yet to come.*”

¹⁵When he had spoken such words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. ¹⁶And suddenly, *one* having the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke, saying to him who stood before me, “My lord, because of the vision my sorrows have overwhelmed me, and I have retained no strength. ¹⁷“For how can this servant of my lord talk with you, my lord? As for me, no strength remains in me now, nor is any breath left in me.”

¹⁸Then again, *the one* having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me. ¹⁹And he said, “O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace *be* to you; be strong, yes, be strong!” So when he spoke to me I was strengthened, and said, “Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.” ²⁰**Then he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come.** ²¹“But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince.

Chapter 11

¹“Also in the first year of Darius the Mede, I, *even* I, stood up to confirm and strengthen him.) ²“And now I will tell you the truth: Behold, three more kings will arise in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than *them* all; by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece. ³“Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. ⁴“And when he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken up and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not among his posterity nor according to his dominion with which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be uprooted, even for others besides these.²⁸

The prince of Persia spoken of here is a powerful demonic spirit who rules in the region of what is today known as Iran. This is why the Muslims there are so militant, as they are led by this demon. When Gabriel steps out of the way from restraining this powerful demon, then the ‘prince of Greece’, (otherwise known as the Antichrist or the Beast), will

²⁸*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

come on the scene, and the tribulation will begin, (see Daniel 10:20 and II Thessalonians 2:6-7 above, and the handout 'Revelation Revealed').

Following the great tribulation, the sixth seal will be opened and will bring about the heavenly signs which will usher in the Day of the Lord, and the time of God's wrath on the earth, (see Matthew 24:29, Luke 21:26, and Revelation 6:12-13 above).

Now Jesus told us in the scriptures quoted above that when we see these things happening, then we must be prepared for His return, (see Luke 21:29-31 above). The beginning of sorrows will NOT bring the end immediately, (see Matthew 24:6 above). However, we ARE supposed to know about these series of events and get ready for His return, as it will come 'like a thief' upon those who are not prepared, (see I Thessalonians 5:1-11 and Revelation 16:15).

I Thessalonians 5:1-11 –

¹But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ²For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. ⁴But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. ⁵You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. ⁶Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober. ⁷For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. ⁸But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and *as* a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. ¹¹Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.²⁹

Revelation 16:15 –

¹⁵"Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."³⁰

So you can see from these scriptures that WE ARE SUPPOSED TO KNOW ABOUT THESE EVENTS AND BE READY FOR THEM. The actual return of Christ and the setting up of the kingdom of Israel, (or Kingdom of God) is the event that we will not know much ahead of time, but the rest of the events preceding His second coming we ARE supposed to discern. Those times are upon us and the Church is NOT ready for them.

²⁹*The Holy Bible, New King James Version, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.*

³⁰*The Holy Bible, New King James Version, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.*

How can we get prepared? -

*One of the commandments that Jesus gave us is to **love one another as He loved us**, (see John 13:34-35, and the 'The New Commandment' handout). He also told us that **we need to be perfect**, and we can show our perfection in part by showing love even for our enemies, (see Matthew 5:43-48 & 'The Path to Perfection' handout).*

John 13:34-35 –

³⁴“**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.**”³⁵“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”³¹

Matthew 5:43-48 –

⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’”⁴⁴“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,⁴⁵“that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”⁴⁶“For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?”⁴⁷“And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more *than others*? Do not even the tax collectors do so?”⁴⁸“**Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.**”³²

It is only through this perfection by the blood of Jesus, and walking in perfected love, that we can avoid the tribulation, (see the handouts 'Life in Christ', 'The Path to Perfection' and 'Revelation Revealed'). There are only 144,000 people, (I believe these will be men, not counting women and children), who will avoid the entire tribulation. The rest of the Christians will go through part or all of the tribulation, (see Revelation chapter 7).

Revelation chapter 7 –**Chapter 7**

¹After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. ²Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, ³saying, “**Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.**” ⁴**And I heard the number of**

³¹*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

³²*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

those who were sealed. One hundred *and* forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel *were* sealed:

- ⁵ of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand *were* sealed;
⁶ of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand *were* sealed;
⁷ of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand *were* sealed;
⁸ of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand *were* sealed.

⁹**After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”¹¹ All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,¹² saying:**

“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom,
Thanksgiving and honor and power and might,
Be to our God forever and ever.
Amen.”

¹³Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?”¹⁴ And I said to him, “Sir, you know.” So he said to me, “**These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**¹⁵ “Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.¹⁶ “They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat;¹⁷ “for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”³³

The 144,000 who are sealed by God and protected from the tribulation will be those Christians who receive this message and become perfected in love. They are mentioned in Revelation 3:7-13 and referred to as the Philadelphia Church, (Philadelphia means brotherly love)...

Revelation 3:7-13 –

³³*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

⁷“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write,
 “These things says He who is holy, He who is true, “He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens”:
⁸“I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. ⁹“Indeed I will make *those* of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. ¹⁰“**Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.**
¹¹“Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. ¹²“He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. *And I will write on him My new name.* ¹³“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’³⁴

These 144,000 are described in Revelation chapter 14:1-5.

Revelation 14:1-5 –

¹Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred *and* forty-four thousand, having His Father’s name written on their foreheads.
²And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. ³They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred *and* forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. ⁴**These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from *among* men, *being* firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. ⁵**And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.**³⁵**

The characteristics of these people are defined in these verses. They do not defile themselves with the woman, Mystery Babylon, which is operating in the principle of credit and debt to have worldly things. They follow the Lamb wherever He goes, (i.e., they obey Jesus at all times), and in their mouths is found no deceit, that is they NEVER lie. These things are spelled out in the handouts ‘The Path to Perfection’ and ‘Revelation Revealed’. In order for the Church of Christ to get to this place, people must receive this message and learn to operate in the principles laid out by Jesus and the apostles. The first step to this end will be to recognize the problem and move toward the solution.

We must judge ourselves, and sometimes other Christians -

³⁴*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

³⁵*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

We must judge ourselves by God's Word, and even in some cases, if we are in the right place with the Lord, we must judge other Christians in order to get the Church ready for Jesus to come back. We are NOT to judge non-believers. If those in the Church are unwilling to repent and allow God to change them, then we are not even supposed to share a meal with these people, (see I Corinthians chapters 5-6).

I Corinthians chapters 5-6 –

5 I can hardly believe the report about the sexual immorality going on among you, something so evil that even the pagans don't do it. I am told that you have a man in your church who is living in sin with his father's wife. ² And you are so proud of yourselves! Why aren't you mourning in sorrow and shame? **And why haven't you removed this man from your fellowship?**

³ Even though I am not there with you in person, I am with you in the Spirit. Concerning the one who has done this, I have already passed judgment ⁴ in the name of the Lord Jesus. You are to call a meeting of the church, and I will be there in spirit, and the power of the Lord Jesus will be with you as you meet. ⁵ Then you must cast this man out of the church and into Satan's hands, so that his sinful nature will be destroyed and he himself will be saved when the Lord returns.

⁶ **How terrible that you should boast about your spirituality, and yet you let this sort of thing go on. Don't you realize that if even one person is allowed to go on sinning, soon all will be affected?** ⁷ **Remove this wicked person from among you so that you can stay pure. Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us.** ⁸ **So let us celebrate the festival, not by eating the old bread of wickedness and evil, but by eating the new bread of purity and truth.**

⁹ **When I wrote to you before, I told you not to associate with people who indulge in sexual sin.** ¹⁰ **But I wasn't talking about unbelievers who indulge in sexual sin, or who are greedy or are swindlers or idol worshipers. You would have to leave this world to avoid people like that.** ¹¹ **What I meant was that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a Christian yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or a drunkard, or a swindler. Don't even eat with such people.**

¹² **It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your job to judge those inside the church who are sinning in these ways.** ¹³ **God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, "You must remove the evil person from among you."**

Avoiding Lawsuits with Christians

6 When you have something against another Christian, why do you file a lawsuit and ask a secular court to decide the matter, instead of taking it to other Christians to decide who is right? ² Don't you know that someday we Christians are going to judge the world? And since you are going to judge the world, can't you decide these little things among yourselves? ³ Don't you realize that we Christians will judge angels? So you should surely be able to resolve ordinary disagreements here on earth. ⁴ If you have legal disputes about such matters, why do you go to outside judges who are not respected by

the church? ⁵ I am saying this to shame you. Isn't there anyone in all the church who is wise enough to decide these arguments? ⁶ But instead, one Christian sues another—right in front of unbelievers!

⁷ To have such lawsuits at all is a real defeat for you. Why not just accept the injustice and leave it at that? Why not let yourselves be cheated? ⁸ But instead, you yourselves are the ones who do wrong and cheat even your own Christian brothers and sisters.

Avoiding Sexual Sin

⁹ **Don't you know that those who do wrong will have no share in the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, who are idol worshipers, adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexuals, ¹⁰ thieves, greedy people, drunkards, abusers, and swindlers—none of these will have a share in the Kingdom of God. ¹¹ There was a time when some of you were just like that, but now your sins have been washed away, and you have been set apart for God. You have been made right with God because of what the Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of our God have done for you.**

¹² You may say, "I am allowed to do anything." But I reply, "Not everything is good for you." And even though "I am allowed to do anything," I must not become a slave to anything. ¹³ You say, "Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food." This is true, though someday God will do away with both of them. But our bodies were not made for sexual immorality. They were made for the Lord, and the Lord cares about our bodies. ¹⁴ And God will raise our bodies from the dead by his marvelous power, just as he raised our Lord from the dead. ¹⁵ Don't you realize that your bodies are actually parts of Christ? Should a man take his body, which belongs to Christ, and join it to a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶ And don't you know that if a man joins himself to a prostitute, he becomes one body with her? For the Scriptures say, "The two are united into one." ¹⁷ But the person who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

¹⁸ **Run away from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. ¹⁹ Or don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, ²⁰ for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.**³⁶

One thing we must be wary of is that if we are not in the place with the Lord that we are supposed to be, then we must NOT judge other Christians. Jesus said that if we see a speck in our brother's eye, (i.e., some small fault), then we must make sure that we do not have a plank in our own eye, (i.e., a larger fault). We have to first be clean before we can judge fellow Christians and help them with their faults. It is better not to judge people at all, if there is a chance that we have greater faults, (see Matthew 7:1-6).

Matthew 7:1-6 –

³⁶*Holy Bible, New Living Translation, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1996.*

¹“Judge not, that you be not judged. ²“For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. ³“And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? ⁴“Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank *is* in your own eye? ⁵“Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.³⁷

We are supposed to live holy lives operating in the fruit of the Holy Spirit devoted to God and not following our fleshly sinful desire chasing after fleshly happiness, (see Galatians 5:16-26).

Galatians 5:16-26 –

¹⁶So I advise you to live according to your new life in the Holy Spirit. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves. ¹⁷The old sinful nature loves to do evil, which is just opposite from what the Holy Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are opposite from what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict. ¹⁸But when you are directed by the Holy Spirit, you are no longer subject to the law.

¹⁹**When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, your lives will produce these evil results: sexual immorality, impure thoughts, eagerness for lustful pleasure, ²⁰ idolatry, participation in demonic activities, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, divisions, the feeling that everyone is wrong except those in your own little group, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other kinds of sin. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.**

²²**But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. Here there is no conflict with the law.**

²⁴Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. ²⁵If we are living now by the Holy Spirit, let us follow the Holy Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, or irritate one another, or be jealous of one another.³⁸

We as Christians are supposed to look different to the world. We are supposed to live clean holy lives and not get into conflicts with others, especially members of the body of Christ, (see I Corinthians 6:1-8 above, and Hebrews 12:14-13:17).

Hebrews 12:14-13:17 –

³⁷*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

³⁸*Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1996.

¹⁴ Try to live in peace with everyone, and seek to live a clean and holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord. ¹⁵ Look after each other so that none of you will miss out on the special favor of God. Watch out that no bitter root of unbelief rises up among you, for whenever it springs up, many are corrupted by its poison. ¹⁶ Make sure that no one is immoral or godless like Esau. He traded his birthright as the oldest son for a single meal. ¹⁷ And afterward, when he wanted his father's blessing, he was rejected. It was too late for repentance, even though he wept bitter tears.

¹⁸ You have not come to a physical mountain, to a place of flaming fire, darkness, gloom, and whirlwind, as the Israelites did at Mount Sinai when God gave them his laws.

¹⁹ For they heard an awesome trumpet blast and a voice with a message so terrible that they begged God to stop speaking. ²⁰ They staggered back under God's command: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death." ²¹ Moses himself was so frightened at the sight that he said, "I am terrified and trembling."

²² No, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to thousands of angels in joyful assembly. ²³ You have come to the assembly of God's firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge of all people. And you have come to the spirits of the redeemed in heaven who have now been made perfect. ²⁴ You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which graciously forgives instead of crying out for vengeance as the blood of Abel did.

²⁵ See to it that you obey God, the one who is speaking to you. For if the people of Israel did not escape when they refused to listen to Moses, the earthly messenger, how terrible our danger if we reject the One who speaks to us from heaven! ²⁶ When God spoke from Mount Sinai his voice shook the earth, but now he makes another promise: "Once again I will shake not only the earth but the heavens also." ²⁷ This means that the things on earth will be shaken, so that only eternal things will be left.

²⁸ Since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be destroyed, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe. ²⁹ For our God is a consuming fire.

Concluding Words

13 Continue to love each other with true Christian love. ² Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it! ³ Don't forget about those in prison. Suffer with them as though you were there yourself. Share the sorrow of those being mistreated, as though you feel their pain in your own bodies.

⁴ Give honor to marriage, and remain faithful to one another in marriage. God will surely judge people who are immoral and those who commit adultery.

⁵ Stay away from the love of money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said,

**"I will never fail you.
I will never forsake you."**

⁶ That is why we can say with confidence,

**“The Lord is my helper,
so I will not be afraid.
What can mere mortals do to me?”**

⁷ Remember your leaders who first taught you the word of God. Think of all the good that has come from their lives, and trust the Lord as they do.

⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. ⁹ So do not be attracted by strange, new ideas. Your spiritual strength comes from God’s special favor, not from ceremonial rules about food, which don’t help those who follow them.

¹⁰ We have an altar from which the priests in the Temple on earth have no right to eat. ¹¹ Under the system of Jewish laws, the high priest brought the blood of animals into the Holy Place as a sacrifice for sin, but the bodies of the animals were burned outside the camp. ¹² So also Jesus suffered and died outside the city gates in order to make his people holy by shedding his own blood. ¹³ So let us go out to him outside the camp and bear the disgrace he bore. ¹⁴ For this world is not our home; we are looking forward to our city in heaven, which is yet to come.

¹⁵ With Jesus’ help, let us continually offer our sacrifice of praise to God by proclaiming the glory of his name. ¹⁶ Don’t forget to do good and to share what you have with those in need, for such sacrifices are very pleasing to God.

¹⁷ Obey your spiritual leaders and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they know they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this joyfully and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit.³⁹

The Church at large is not compliant with the commands of Jesus and what was taught by the apostles to the first century Church.

There should be unity in the Body of Christ -

We as Christians are supposed to live in unity, (see Ephesians 4:1 – 6:18).

Ephesians 4:1 – 6:18 –

Unity in the Body

4 Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. **2 Be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love. 3 Always keep yourselves united in the Holy Spirit, and bind yourselves together with peace.**

4 We are all one body, we have the same Spirit, and we have all been called to the same glorious future. 5 There is only one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 and there is only one God and Father, who is over us all and in us all and living through us all. 7 However, he has given each one of us a special gift according to the generosity of Christ. **8** That is why the Scriptures say,

“When he ascended to the heights,

³⁹*Holy Bible, New Living Translation, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1996.*

he led a crowd of captives
and gave gifts to his people.”

⁹ Notice that it says “he ascended.” This means that Christ first came down to the lowly world in which we live. ¹⁰ The same one who came down is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that his rule might fill the entire universe.

¹¹ He is the one who gave these gifts to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. ¹² Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ, ¹³ until we come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature and full grown in the Lord, measuring up to the full stature of Christ.

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be like children, forever changing our minds about what we believe because someone has told us something different or because someone has cleverly lied to us and made the lie sound like the truth. ¹⁵ Instead, we will hold to the truth in love, becoming more and more in every way like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. ¹⁶ Under his direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

Living as Children of Light

¹⁷ With the Lord’s authority let me say this: Live no longer as the ungodly do, for they are hopelessly confused. ¹⁸ Their closed minds are full of darkness; they are far away from the life of God because they have shut their minds and hardened their hearts against him. ¹⁹ They don’t care anymore about right and wrong, and they have given themselves over to immoral ways. Their lives are filled with all kinds of impurity and greed.

²⁰ But that isn’t what you were taught when you learned about Christ. ²¹ Since you have heard all about him and have learned the truth that is in Jesus, ²² throw off your old evil nature and your former way of life, which is rotten through and through, full of lust and deception. ²³ Instead, there must be a spiritual renewal of your thoughts and attitudes. ²⁴ You must display a new nature because you are a new person, created in God’s likeness—righteous, holy, and true.

²⁵ So put away all falsehood and “tell your neighbor the truth” because we belong to each other. ²⁶ And “don’t sin by letting anger gain control over you.” Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ for anger gives a mighty foothold to the Devil.

²⁸ If you are a thief, stop stealing. Begin using your hands for honest work, and then give generously to others in need. ²⁹ Don’t use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

³⁰ And do not bring sorrow to God’s Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he is the one who has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of malicious behavior. ³² Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

Living in the Light

5 Follow God's example in everything you do, because you are his dear children. ² Live a life filled with love for others, following the example of Christ, who loved you and gave himself as a sacrifice to take away your sins. And God was pleased, because that sacrifice was like sweet perfume to him.

³ Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people. ⁴ Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God. ⁵ You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is really an idolater who worships the things of this world. ⁶ Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the terrible anger of God comes upon all those who disobey him. ⁷ Don't participate in the things these people do. ⁸ For though your hearts were once full of darkness, now you are full of light from the Lord, and your behavior should show it! ⁹ For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true.

¹⁰ Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, rebuke and expose them. ¹² It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret. ¹³ But when the light shines on them, it becomes clear how evil these things are. ¹⁴ And where your light shines, it will expose their evil deeds. This is why it is said,

“Awake, O sleeper,
rise up from the dead,
and Christ will give you light.”

Living by the Spirit's Power

¹⁵ So be careful how you live, not as fools but as those who are wise. ¹⁶ Make the most of every opportunity for doing good in these evil days. ¹⁷ Don't act thoughtlessly, but try to understand what the Lord wants you to do. ¹⁸ Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, let the Holy Spirit fill and control you. ¹⁹ Then you will sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, making music to the Lord in your hearts. ²⁰ And you will always give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Spirit-Guided Relationships: Wives and Husbands

²¹ And further, you will submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. ²² You wives will submit to your husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³ For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of his body, the church; he gave his life to be her Savior. ²⁴ As the church submits to Christ, so you wives must submit to your husbands in everything.

²⁵ And you husbands must love your wives with the same love Christ showed the church. He gave up his life for her ²⁶ to make her holy and clean, washed by baptism and God's word. ²⁷ He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. ²⁸ In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man is

actually loving himself when he loves his wife.²⁹ No one hates his own body but lovingly cares for it, just as Christ cares for his body, which is the church.³⁰ And we are his body.

³¹ As the Scriptures say, “A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.”³² This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one.³³ So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Children and Parents

6 Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do.² “Honor your father and mother.” This is the first of the Ten Commandments that ends with a promise.³ And this is the promise: If you honor your father and mother, “you will live a long life, full of blessing.”

⁴ And now a word to you fathers. Don’t make your children angry by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction approved by the Lord.

Slaves and Masters

⁵ Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ.⁶ Work hard, but not just to please your masters when they are watching. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart.⁷ Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.⁸ Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free.

⁹ And in the same way, you masters must treat your slaves right. Don’t threaten them; remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he has no favorites.

The Whole Armor of God

¹⁰ A final word: Be strong with the Lord’s mighty power.¹¹ Put on all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies and tricks of the Devil.¹² For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world, and against wicked spirits in the heavenly realms.

¹³ Use every piece of God’s armor to resist the enemy in the time of evil, so that after the battle you will still be standing firm.¹⁴ Stand your ground, putting on the sturdy belt of truth and the body armor of God’s righteousness.¹⁵ For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News, so that you will be fully prepared.¹⁶ In every battle you will need faith as your shield to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan.¹⁷ Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.¹⁸ Pray at all times and on every occasion in the power of the Holy Spirit. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all Christians everywhere.⁴⁰

Instead of unity in the Church of God, the body of Christ is currently in disarray. There are divisions and antagonism throughout the Church. Wives do not submit to their

⁴⁰*Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1996.

husband's authority, as is the order of God. Instead they try to rule and reign in the household, which is following a demonic spirit known as the spirit of Jezebel. Husbands likewise do not know the Word or ways of God, and therefore do not love their wives as they should. They do not give their wives direction by 'washing them with the water of God's Word, because they do not know the Word. Therefore there is no unity in the home, and the children are rebellious. These are real issues for modern day Christians, as they were in the first century Church when the epistles were written. The divisions in the homes of Christians spill over into the Church. Even the leaders of the Church are out of order. Therefore, if the headship is sick, then the whole body will be sick. That is why there is so much sickness, misery and financial turmoil in the body of Christ. When someone identifies themselves as a Christian to another Christian, the usual response is 'what denomination are you?' Denominations and division are manmade, coming from human wisdom of the world, which ultimately comes from the Devil. These divisions are caused by the selfish ambitions of those who lead the Church. They are doing their own thing, instead of obeying God, They will be judged by God, (see James 3:13 – 4:10, Psalms 58 and Ezekiel 34:1-24).

James 3:13 – 4:10 –

True Wisdom Comes from God

¹³ If you are wise and understand God's ways, live a life of steady goodness so that only good deeds will pour forth. And if you don't brag about the good you do, then you will be truly wise! ¹⁴ But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your hearts, don't brag about being wise. That is the worst kind of lie. ¹⁵ **For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and motivated by the Devil.** ¹⁶ **For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and every kind of evil.**

¹⁷ **But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no partiality and is always sincere.** ¹⁸ And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of goodness.

Drawing Close to God

4 What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Isn't it the whole army of evil desires at war within you? ² You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous for what others have, and you can't possess it, so you fight and quarrel to take it away from them. And yet the reason you don't have what you want is that you don't ask God for it. ³ And even when you do ask, you don't get it because your whole motive is wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure.

⁴ You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with this world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again, that if your aim is to enjoy this world, you can't be a friend of God. ⁵ What do you think the Scriptures mean when they say that the Holy Spirit, whom God has placed within us, jealously longs for us to be faithful? ⁶ He gives us more and more strength to stand against such evil desires. As the Scriptures say,

“God sets himself against the proud,

but he shows favor to the humble.”

⁷ So humble yourselves before God. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw close to God, and God will draw close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, you hypocrites. ⁹ Let there be tears for the wrong things you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy. ¹⁰ When you bow down before the Lord and admit your dependence on him, he will lift you up and give you honor.⁴¹

Psalms chapter 58 –

58 *For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be sung to the tune “Do Not Destroy!”*

¹ Justice—do you rulers know the meaning of the word?
Do you judge the people fairly?

² No, all your dealings are crooked;
you hand out violence instead of justice.

³ **These wicked people are born sinners;
even from birth they have lied and gone their own way.**

⁴ They spit poison like deadly snakes;
they are like cobras that refuse to listen,
⁵ ignoring the tunes of the snake charmers,
no matter how skillfully they play.

⁶ Break off their fangs, O God!
Smash the jaws of these lions, O LORD!

⁷ May they disappear like water into thirsty ground.
Make their weapons useless in their hands.

⁸ May they be like snails that dissolve into slime,
like a stillborn child who will never see the sun.

⁹ God will sweep them away, both young and old,
faster than a pot heats on an open flame.

¹⁰ The godly will rejoice when they see injustice avenged.
They will wash their feet in the blood of the wicked.

¹¹ Then at last everyone will say,
“There truly is a reward for those who live for God;
surely there is a God who judges justly here on earth.”⁴²

Ezekiel 34:1-24 (Here Israel is symbolic of the Church) –

The Shepherds of Israel

⁴¹*Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1996.

⁴²*Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1996.

34 Then this message came to me from the LORD: ²“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds, the leaders of Israel. Give them this message from the Sovereign LORD: Destruction is certain for you shepherds who feed yourselves instead of your flocks. Shouldn’t shepherds feed their sheep? ³ You drink the milk, wear the wool, and butcher the best animals, but you let your flocks starve. ⁴ You have not taken care of the weak. You have not tended the sick or bound up the broken bones. You have not gone looking for those who have wandered away and are lost. Instead, you have ruled them with force and cruelty. ⁵ So my sheep have been scattered without a shepherd. They are easy prey for any wild animal. ⁶ They have wandered through the mountains and hills, across the face of the earth, yet no one has gone to search for them.

⁷ “Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: ⁸ As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, you abandoned my flock and left them to be attacked by every wild animal. Though you were my shepherds, you didn’t search for my sheep when they were lost. You took care of yourselves and left the sheep to starve. ⁹ Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD. ¹⁰ This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I now consider these shepherds my enemies, and I will hold them responsible for what has happened to my flock. I will take away their right to feed the flock, along with their right to feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths; the sheep will no longer be their prey.

The Good Shepherd

¹¹ “For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search and find my sheep. ¹² I will be like a shepherd looking for his scattered flock. I will find my sheep and rescue them from all the places to which they were scattered on that dark and cloudy day. ¹³ I will bring them back home to their own land of Israel from among the peoples and nations. I will feed them on the mountains of Israel and by the rivers in all the places where people live. ¹⁴ Yes, I will give them good pastureland on the high hills of Israel. There they will lie down in pleasant places and feed in lush mountain pastures. ¹⁵ I myself will tend my sheep and cause them to lie down in peace, says the Sovereign LORD. ¹⁶ I will search for my lost ones who strayed away, and I will bring them safely home again. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak. But I will destroy those who are fat and powerful. I will feed them, yes—feed them justice!

¹⁷ “And as for you, my flock, my people, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will judge between one sheep and another, separating the sheep from the goats. ¹⁸ Is it not enough for you to keep the best of the pastures for yourselves? Must you also trample down the rest? Is it not enough for you to take the best water for yourselves? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? ¹⁹ All that is left for my flock to eat is what you have trampled down. All they have to drink is water that you have fouled.

²⁰ “Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will surely judge between the fat sheep and the scrawny sheep. ²¹ For you fat sheep push and butt and crowd my sick and hungry flock until they are scattered to distant lands. ²² So I will rescue my flock, and they will no longer be abused and destroyed. And I will judge between one sheep and another. ²³ And I will set one shepherd over them, even my servant David. He

will feed them and be a shepherd to them. ²⁴ And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David will be a prince among my people. I, the LORD, have spoken!⁴³

The divisions and disorder in the homes of Christians and in the Church will need to be corrected BEFORE Jesus comes back. Christians will have to grow up in Christ and become perfected BEFORE the return of Christ, (see I Corinthians 14:33, and again Ephesians 4:11-16 in another translation, and see also 'The Path to Perfection' handout).

I Corinthians 14:33 –

³³For God is not a God of disorder but of peace, as in all the other churches.⁴⁴

Ephesians 4:11-16 (*Speaking of the gifts Christ gave to the Church*) –

¹¹And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.⁴⁵

Suffering in integral to being a Christian, and will lead to salvation -

The interesting thing about being a Christian is that suffering is a part of the process of becoming perfected, or mature in Christ. Although most Church leaders of today are trying to put forth the message of enjoying the Christian life and the message of prosperity, they are going to find that this approach will ultimately NOT work. The reason it will not work is that it is contrary to what God says in His Word! God tells us in His Word that He refines us through our suffering. This is the way Jesus learned obedience to God, (see, Psalms 34:19, 66:11-12, Isaiah 48:10 and Hebrews 5:8-9).

Psalm 34:19 –

¹⁹ Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous,

⁴³*Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1996.

⁴⁴*Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1996.

⁴⁵*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

But the LORD delivers him out of them all.⁴⁶

Psalm 66:11-12 –

- ¹⁰ **For You, O God, have tested us;**
You have refined us as silver is refined.
¹¹ **You brought us into the net;**
You laid affliction on our backs.
¹² You have caused men to ride over our heads;
We went through fire and through water;
But You brought us out to rich *fulfillment*.⁴⁷

Isaiah 48:10 –

- ¹⁰ **Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver;**
I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.⁴⁸

Hebrews 5:8-9 (*Speaking of Jesus*) –

⁸though He was a Son, *yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.*
⁹And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,⁴⁹

No one that I know of is preaching that suffering is the most important part of being a Christian, because it is through our suffering that we learn to rely totally on God, and to truly become obedient to Him. Just enjoying life and living in prosperity will not increase our faith. It is through trials and tribulation that we become faithful to God, (see Romans 5:1-5, James 1:2-8 and I Peter 4:12-19).

Romans 5:1-5 –

¹Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³**And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;** ⁴**and perseverance,**

⁴⁶*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

⁴⁷*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

⁴⁸*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

⁴⁹*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

character; and character, hope. ⁵Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.⁵⁰

James 1:2-8 –

²My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. ⁵If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸*he is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.⁵¹

I Peter 4:12-19 –

¹²Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; ¹³but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. ¹⁴If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed *are you*, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. ¹⁵But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. ¹⁶Yet if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. ¹⁷For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

¹⁸ Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved,
Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

¹⁹Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls *to Him* in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.⁵²

Thus, suffering is an integral, probably the most important part, of being a Christian. It is through Godly suffering, (not suffering for our own stupidity) that we learn to obey God and become perfected, (see I Peter 1:3-25).

I Peter 1:3-15 –

³Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade

⁵⁰*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

⁵¹*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

⁵²*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. **6In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8whom having not seen you love.** Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls. ¹⁰Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you, ¹¹searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. ¹²To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.

¹³Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ¹⁴as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, *as* in your ignorance; ¹⁵but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct,

¹⁶because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.” ¹⁷And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* in fear; ¹⁸knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. ²⁰He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you ²¹who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

²²Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, ²³having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, ²⁴because

“All flesh *is* as grass,
And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass.
The grass withers,
And its flower falls away,
²⁵But the word of the LORD endures forever.”

Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.⁵³

You can see from these scriptures that God cannot live with people who sin, as it is contrary to His character. Therefore, it is only through the blood of Jesus being shed to cover our sins that allows us to come into the presence of God. We as humans are incapable of keeping the Law of Moses. This why it is so important to hold precious the sacrifice that Jesus made for us, because there is no other way to God the Father, (see John 14:6).

⁵³*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

John 14:6 –

⁶Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”⁵⁴

Anyone who does not accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for their sins, and allow Him to be Lord in their life will end up in the lake of fire! Again, this may seem harsh, but it is the truth according to the Word of God. People who deny the existence of hell/hades, will believe when they get there, but then it will be too late, (see Luke 16:19-21 where Jesus speaks a parable or riddle about Lazarus and the rich man).

Luke 16:19-21 –

¹⁹“There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. ²⁰“But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, ²¹“desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. ²²“So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³“And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴“Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’ ²⁵“But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. ²⁶“And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’ ²⁷“Then he said, ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house, ²⁸“for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’ ²⁹“Abraham said to him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’ ³⁰“And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ ³¹“But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise.’”⁵⁵

In order to avoid ending up in hell, people must accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ dying for us and receive Him into their heart. Then they must tell others about this process. They must believe in their heart that Jesus died for their sins and was raised from the dead after 3 days, because if God did not raise Jesus from the dead, then we have no hope of resurrection. This is how we are made right with God through faith in Jesus. Then they must confess Jesus is Lord and Savior of their life, because Jesus commanded us to tell others and be a witness of Him to the entire world. This confession shows that

⁵⁴The Holy Bible, New King James Version, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

⁵⁵The Holy Bible, New King James Version, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

they believe it. People will not tell others if they do not believe the gospel or good news of salvation through Jesus, (see Romans 10:5-17 and Acts 1:8 above).

Romans 10:5-17 –

Salvation Is for Everyone

⁵ For Moses wrote that the law's way of making a person right with God requires obedience to all of its commands. ⁶ But the way of getting right with God through faith says, "You don't need to go to heaven" (to find Christ and bring him down to help you). ⁷ And it says, "You don't need to go to the place of the dead" (to bring Christ back to life again). ⁸ Salvation that comes from trusting Christ—which is the message we preach—is already within easy reach. In fact, the Scriptures say, "The message is close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart."

⁹ **For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.** ¹⁰ **For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved.** ¹¹ **As the Scriptures tell us, "Anyone who believes in him will not be disappointed."** ¹² **Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They all have the same Lord, who generously gives his riches to all who ask for them.** ¹³ **For "Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."**

¹⁴ But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? ¹⁵ And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

¹⁶ But not everyone welcomes the Good News, for Isaiah the prophet said, "Lord, who has believed our message?" ¹⁷ Yet faith comes from listening to this message of good news—the Good News about Christ.⁵⁶

However, salvation is only the beginning. From salvation, we are supposed to grow up in Christ according to Ephesians 4 above. We are supposed to become so mature in Christ by 'living in Him', that we are 'perfected' in God's eyes, (see John chapter 11 and the handout 'Life in Christ'). Then, and only then, will we be able to 'dwell' with God in the Spirit, even though we are still in human form. It is through suffering that we learn to obey God, and grow up in Christ. Suffering is supposed to drive us away from the Devil and towards God. Suffering can help us to avoid hell and the lake of fire. People who suffer will sometimes repent and turn from their sins. However, this is not always the case. Some people get mad at God because of their suffering. If the Church taught us that we were supposed to suffer, then we could learn from our suffering and realize that God is only trying to correct us and make us eternally better people. If we punish our children when they are out of line, it shows we love them. If God punishes us when we are out of line, it shows similar, although much greater, love, (see Hebrews 12:1-17, Revelation 3:19, and the handout 'The Truth About Healing').

⁵⁶Holy Bible, New Living Translation, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1996.

Hebrews 12:1-17 –

¹Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

³**For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. ⁴You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. ⁵And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:**

**“My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD,
Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;
⁶ For whom the LORD loves He chastens,
And scourges every son whom He receives.”**

⁷If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ⁸But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. ⁹Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected *us*, and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰For they indeed for a few days chastened *us* as seemed *best* to them, but He for *our* profit, that *we* may be partakers of His holiness. ¹¹Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

¹²Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, ¹³and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be *dislocated*, but rather be healed. ¹⁴Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: ¹⁵looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; ¹⁶lest there *be* any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. ¹⁷For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.⁵⁷

Revelation 3:19 –

^{19c}As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. 58

Once God’s work gets to a certain point here on earth, and enough people in the Church reach perfection, then Jesus can come back and the time of restoration of the earth can begin, (see Revelation chapters 19-22, the handouts ‘Revelation Revealed’ and

⁵⁷*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

⁵⁸*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

“Christianity 101’). *Again, it is through suffering that we as Christians become perfected. It may not sound like a good deal, but it is how God created us and it is how the process works. God gives us help, or grace, every step of the way. Grace is not only unmerited favor, but it is the power of God through the Holy Spirit to get things done, (see John 14:15-29 and Hebrews 13:5 above).*

John 14:15-29 –

Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

¹⁵“If you love me, obey my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, who will never leave you. ¹⁷ He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world at large cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you do, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. ¹⁸ No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. ¹⁹ In just a little while the world will not see me again, but you will. For I will live again, and you will, too. ²⁰ When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹ Those who obey my commandments are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them, and I will love them. And I will reveal myself to each one of them.”

²² Judas (not Judas Iscariot, but the other disciple with that name) said to him, “Lord, why are you going to reveal yourself only to us and not to the world at large?”

²³ Jesus replied, “All those who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and live with them. ²⁴ Anyone who doesn’t love me will not do what I say. And remember, my words are not my own. This message is from the Father who sent me. ²⁵ I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. ²⁶ But when the Father sends the Counselor as my representative—and by the Counselor I mean the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I myself have told you.

²⁷ “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn’t like the peace the world gives. So don’t be troubled or afraid. ²⁸ Remember what I told you: I am going away, but I will come back to you again. If you really love me, you will be very happy for me, because now I can go to the Father, who is greater than I am. ²⁹ I have told you these things before they happen so that you will believe when they do happen.⁵⁹

The caveat here is that we must obey God. This is how we show our love for Him. If we become absolutely obedient to the leading of the Holy Spirit, then we will become perfected and live patiently through the suffering that God wishes to take us through for the process of becoming perfected. Patience or ‘longsuffering’ is the first and most important characteristic of love, (see I Corinthians 13:4-7). It is the ability to walk in perfect Spirit filled love, that God wants us to achieve. This is the true objective of God for all His Christian children. That is why the tribulation is for the Church and they will not escape, because they blatantly refuse to obey God and continue to do their own

⁵⁹Holy Bible, New Living Translation, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1996.

thing, especially the leaders of the Church who are supposed to be the shepherds, (see Ezekiel 34 above and Isaiah 56:9-12).

I Corinthians 13:4-7-

⁴**Love is patient and kind.** Love is not jealous or boastful or proud ⁵or rude. Love does not demand its own way. Love is not irritable, and it keeps no record of when it has been wronged. ⁶It is never glad about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. ⁷Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.⁶⁰

And again in another translation -

⁴**Love suffers long *and* is kind;** love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁶¹

Isaiah 56:9-12 –

⁹ All you beasts of the field, come to devour,
All you beasts in the forest.
¹⁰ His watchmen *are* blind,
They are all ignorant;
They *are* all dumb dogs,
They cannot bark;
Sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.
¹¹ Yes, *they are* greedy dogs
Which never have enough.
And they *are* shepherds
Who cannot understand;
**They all look to their own way,
Every one for his own gain,**
From his *own* territory.
¹² “Come,” *one says*, “I will bring wine,
And we will fill ourselves with intoxicating drink;
Tomorrow will be as today,
And much more abundant.”⁶²

⁶⁰*Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1996.

⁶¹*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

⁶²*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

Therefore, anyone who subscribes to the concept that God is going to suddenly take all Christians out of the earth BEFORE the Antichrist comes on the scene, simply does not know the Bible or God! One question that needs to be answered is why would the man be called the 'Antichrist', if there were no true Christians in the earth during his reign? It simply does not make sense any more than Muslims saying that Jesus was a prophet, but not believing Him when He claimed to be the Son of God. It is ridiculous. None the less, these are prevailing beliefs in the two religions. It shocks me to find so many people deceived by a concept that is so easily shown to be wrong simply by reading God's Word! However, even this is part of God's plan. If so many people were not deceived, then the scriptures about people falling away from the faith could not come to pass, (see II Thessalonians 2:3 above). People will fall away from the faith when the persecution of the tribulation begins, as they will then know that they were lied to by the Church. They will see that there is no such thing as a pre-tribulation rapture, and they will find themselves in great peril. They will think that the leaders of the Church do not know what they are talking about, and they will try to find safety from the persecution of Christians. This persecution of the saints will come at the hands of the Muslims, as directed by the Antichrist. The false Christians will betray one another and chaos will cover the earth once again. Many will die, be put in prison and otherwise persecuted. It is through this suffering that the real Christians will be separated from the false. These things are on the horizon.

The beginning of sorrows has begun. The Tribulation will be upon us soon. The only way to avoid it is to become perfected in Christ's love, then the protection promised in Psalm 91 will kick in. This teaching is a warning to all who read it. If you do not believe it now, you will when it comes to pass. Unfortunately, then it will be too late. We must know the times, just as the sons of Issachar, (see I Chronicles 12:32).

I Chronicles 12:32 –

³²of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command;⁶³

It is time to prepare for the trouble that lies just ahead. Consider yourself warned! Amen.

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⁶³The Holy Bible, New King James Version, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.