

# FAITH FOR THE FUTURE

## The Comfort of Christ's Coming

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no



hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means

precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Therefore comfort one another with these words. (II Thessalonians 4:13-18)

Dedicated to all those who like myself grieve over the loss of James Thomas McMichael, recently gone to heaven to be with his Mom; and by the way with his grandfather Mr. Steelman who most do not realize was one that he also looked like most.

## Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Security of the Believer from John and Paul.....	204
1-1: A PARAPHRASE OF SIX SMALL EPISTLES FROM PAUL and JOHN. ....	204
1-2: Security. ....	210
1-3: I JOHN: FAITH CONTENDING AND SECURITY. ....	212
1-4: Eternal Life in I John.....	215
1-5: Starting an Outline of I John, “From the Beginning” .....	220
1-6: Startling Statements from I John. ....	221
Chapter 2: Complete Outline of I John. ....	229
2-1: EVEN IN SECURITY A MIX OF FAITH CONTENDING. ....	229
2-2: The next long section on pure security that we noted was in I John 5:1-12a.....	238
2-3: These are the Overcomers or Secures— .....	242
2-4: A COMPLETE OUTLINE OF I JOHN. ....	246
Chapter 3: Faith and Faith Contending in the Bible.....	252
3-1: THE BIBLE’S OWN DEFINITION OF FAITH. ....	252
3-2: The Word “Faith” in the Bible.....	254
3-3: FIRST CENTURY HISTORY OF FAITH CONTENDING.....	267
Chapter 4: The Sound of a Sound Faith.....	272
4-1: THE BIBLE (I Timothy 2-4). ....	273
4-2: Christ (Ephesians 1, 2). ....	275
4-3: God the Father (Matthew 4,5).....	283
4-4: SALVATION (Ephesians 4).....	291
4-5: THE DAY OF THE LORD.....	306
4-6: THE SOUND OF A SOUND FAITH. ....	312
4-7: The Church or Assembly of the Firstborn. ....	318
Chapter 5: What Do You Do?.....	326
5-1: What Do You Do If You Are in A Church Like Ephesus (Rev 2:1-7). ....	326

5-2: What Do You Do If You Are in A Church Like Smyrna (Rev 2:8-11). .....	329
5-3: What Do You Do If You Are in A Church Like Pergamos. (Rev 2:12-17).	329
5-4: What Do You Do If You Are in A Church Like Thyatira (Rev 2:18-29). ....	333
5-5: What Do You Do If You Are in A Church Like Sardis (Rev 3:1-6).....	334
5-6: What Do You Do If You Are in A Church Like Philadelphia (Rev 3:7-25).	335
5-7: What Do You Do If You Are in A Church Like Laodicea (Rev 3:14-22). ...	336
5-8: <b>THE FUTURE</b> .....	337
Chapter 6: A Virtual Baptism for James Thomas McMichael. ....	342
Christ Is Preached to an Ethiopian .....	343

**NOTE: Do not let the numbers scare you to the right in the TOC as the original numbers are retained from this part in a commentary of the 5 books of the Apostle John, here the ones on the Little Epistles. It is from a much earlier book, second in the series of the Learn Christ Commentaries and published on Amazon as “Christ for Individuals”. The book is only 144 pages long in easy for reading 6”by9” format.**

## **Chapter 1: Security of the Believer from John and Paul.**

Years ago I wrote a commentary entitled, IF TWO AGREE, A HARMONY OF JOHN AND EPHESIANS, because I thought the ultimate in a illustration of agreement or the harmony of the Bible would be books like John and Ephesians where the two Apostles never met. After all these years I am still impressed with the harmony of all the 14 books from Paul, the three Paul edited, and the 5 books from the Apostle John. Indeed, I am impressed with the harmony of the Bible as a collection of 66 books from one author, the Spirit of Christ.

### **1-1: A PARAPHRASE OF SIX SMALL EPISTLES FROM PAUL and JOHN.**

The security of the believer is taught throughout the Bible. Six books, three from Paul and three from John, are chosen to illustrate the security of the believer.

#### **Philemon:**

Paul and Timothy to Philemon, to Apphia, Archippus, and to the church in your house, grace and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God that the knowledge of your faith becomes even more effectual as the good from your faith is acknowledged as what is in you is in Christ Jesus. Brother, all the saints are encouraged by your faith.

I, Paul the aged and a prisoner, beseech you more than enjoin you for the sake of Onesimus that you might receive him even as me. He departed for a season that you might receive him forever: receive him as myself, your partner, and receive him as above a servant, as a brother. Any wronging of you or debt, put that on my account. Let me have joy of you in the Lord, refresh my bowels in the Lord. I have confidence that you will do more than I say, and prepare me lodging as I trust to be delivered to you. At your house

salute: Epaphras, Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

### **III John:**

The elder to Gaius: Beloved, I wish that you may prosper and be in good health directly proportional to the prospering of your soul. It was rejoicing to listen to the brethren tell of the truth in you and of the walk-in truth. That my children walk in the truth, there is no greater joy. What you have done for brethren and strangers has been witnessed before the church. These brethren go forward taking nothing of the Gentiles, by receiving such we become fellow helpers to the truth. Diotrephes does not receive us because he wants all the preeminence. I will remember what he does: (1) the malicious words; (2) failing to receive the brethren; (3) forbidding others to receive the brethren; and (4) casting the brethren and those that receive them out of the church. Beloved, follow not evil but good; for the good doer is of God and the evil doer has not seen God. Demetrius has a good report and we give him a good reference. Other things I will say when I see you face to face. Our friends salute you. Greet the friends by name.

### **II John:**

From the elder to the elect lady and her children, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Father. Truth: (1) I love in the truth; (2) as do all those that have known the truth; and (3) for the sake of the truth which: (a) dwells in us; and (b) shall be with us forever; and (4) of your children walking in the truth I rejoiced greatly. We must love one another. Love is to live in the commandments of Jesus as we heard from the beginning; and I say this because many deceivers have entered into the world. These deceivers or Antichrist confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. Be careful that you are not deceived by these into losing our full reward. There is no relationship with God of those who have not the doctrine of Christ. Who abides in the doctrine of Christ: he has the Father and the Son. Don't receive

anyone into your house, or even wish them God speed that does not bring this doctrine of Christ, otherwise you become a partaker in his evil deeds. I trust to say more when I see you face to face.

### Philippians:

Paul and Timothy to all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi with the bishops and deacons, grace and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. You are gratefully in my prayers, being confident that the God who started a good work in you will continue it until the day of Christ. Specifically I pray that: (1) that your love abounds in knowledge and judgment; (2) that you approve excellent things; (3) that you remain sincere and without offence until the day of Christ; and (4) that you be filled with the fruits of righteousness.

The things that have happened to me in Rome and in prison have helped in the spread of the gospel: (1) My bonds in Christ are shown in the palace and other places; (2) Christ is preached without pretense and in truth; (3) All this will turn to my salvation through your prayer and the supply of the "Spirit of Jesus Christ"; (4) That Christ will be magnified in my body whether in life or death. Life in Christ or gain in death: (1) When I live it is really Christ living in my circumstances; (2) I don't know which to chose since I have the desire to depart to be with Christ, but since it is better for you that I remain. Let your conversation be as an adornment to the Gospel of Christ: (1) Stand fast in one spirit and one mind; (2) Strive together for the faith of the gospel; (3) Never terrified by your enemies; (4) Suffer for Christ as well as believe in Him; and (5) You will have the same conflict over the gospel which you now hear that I have. **{\*\*NOTE: We see in this "strive for the gospel" an equivalent of the "contend for the faith" of the book of Jude; but unlike the faith contending of Jude, we also see here an element of persecution for the cause of the Gospel; that is, a contending with the faith and with persecution.\*\*}**

Be like-minded only if these are true; and they are: (1) consolation in Christ; (2) comfort of love; (3) fellowship of the Spirit; and (4)

bowels and mercies. Then there is a preface to having the same mind as Christ: (1) like-minded; (2) same love; (3) of one accord; and (4) of one mind. The mind of Christ is essentially giving up temporarily equality with God to come to earth, and then dying on the cross. God the Father has highly exalted Jesus for what He did by: (1) Giving him the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, above every name; (2) By commanding that every knee on earth and in heaven bow to the Lord Jesus Christ; and (3) By commanding that every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, and that this gives the glory to God the Father. Salvation is to be worked with and worked out with “fear and trembling”. (Here something should be parenthetically mentioned that will become more important as we go along, and that is the balance between Security of the Believer and Cautions. Here is a caution to work with what you have in salvation already for fear or trembling that it may not be completed in you!) How to be cautious about your salvation?

- \* Acknowledge that it must be God working in you to do His good pleasure and will, the equivalent of Christ in you.
- \* Don't murmur and dispute as that is not the sort of thing God or Christ would be doing in you.
- \* Seek to be blameless and harmless.
- \* The sons of God.
- \* Be without rebuke in the midst of crookedness and perverseness.
- \* Shine as lights in the world.\* Hold forth the Word of life...

**“...that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.” (Philippians 2:16 KJV)**

Rejoice in the Lord and beware of: (1) dogs; (2) evil workers; and (3) the concision – we are of the circumcision that worship God in spirit and rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ, having no confidence in the flesh. **{\*\*NOTE: Since later in I John it will become very**

**important to test the spirits, we see here preparatory to John's epistles the three characteristics of a good spirit: (1) worship God with that spirit; (2) rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ; and (3) have no confidence in the flesh.\*\*}** Some confidences in the flesh: (1) circumcision of the flesh; (2) of Israel; (3) of the tribe of Benjamin; (4) a Hebrew of the Hebrews; (5) a Pharisee about the law; (6) religious enthusiasm that persecutes the church; and (7) blameless under the legal requirements of the law. THE EXCELLENCY OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST (still another way to talk about the mystery of Christ in you, the hope of glory): (1) personal gains are losses here; (2) causes the loss of all other things; (3) all other things become as dung compared to the winning of Christ; (4) to be found "in him"; (5) having not personal righteousness under the law; (6) having the righteousness of faith, the righteousness which is of God and by faith; (7) to know Christ; (8) to know the power of Christ's resurrection; (9) to know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings; (10) the end goal in the resurrection from the dead; (11) a recognition of incomplete salvation or perfection; (12) to follow after perfection and completed salvation; (13) to apprehend what Jesus apprehended us to have; (14) forget the past and look forward to the future; and (15) press toward the target of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

The problem children in the church are (same as the evil spirits of I John): (1) those who claim perfection but who will not listen to God letting them know differently; (2) those who live habitually the opposite of the examples of Paul and Timothy; (3) the enemies of the cross of Christ; (4) those whose end is destruction; (5) those whose God is their belly; (6) those who glory in their shame (here is an opposite of the hope of glory, Christ in you with a hope of glory built on shame); and (7) who mind earthly things.

Our conversation is in heaven.

CHANGE: (Here is a short summary of some of the hope!)

**“the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” (Philippians 3:20,21 KJV)**

Stand fast in the Lord, be of the same mind, and rejoice in the Lord. Be moderate since the Lord is at hand; pray about everything to God with the peace that will ensue; think on good and true things; and do what you have heard and seen.

### **Colossians:**

From Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse. We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ since we heard of your faith and love, praying for the hope laid up for you in heaven: (1) the hope you heard of at first in the gospel; (2) the hope to you and all the world; (3) the hope that brings forth fruit in you; and (4) the hope after you knew the grace of God in truth. Our prayer is that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in wisdom and spiritual understanding: (1) to walk worthy of the Lord fruitfully (2) increasing in the knowledge of God; (3) glorious power for patience, longsuffering, and joy; and (4) giving thanks to the Father. What the Father has done for us: (1) Made us partakers of the inheritance of saints; (2) delivered us from the power of darkness; (3) translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son; and (4) given us redemption through the blood of the Son with forgiveness of sins.

Who is this Jesus? (1) The image of the invisible God; (2) Firstborn of all creatures; (3) Medium of all creation; (4) Recipient of all created things; (5) Preeminent to all; (6) All things have their continuing existence by Him; (6) Head of the church; (7) The beginning of new creations as the Firstborn from the dead; and (8) The Father’s focal point for all fullness. NOTE: Right here is

something we want to do more of since it is the Bible way, a balance between security and “if”.

1-2: Security.

**“And you...yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and irreproachable in His sight...” (Colossians 1:21,22 NJKV) IF**

**“if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard...” (Colossians 1:23 NJKV)**

Granted the conditional “if” of security is only one verse long while the security is three verses long; but this is the consistent trend in the Bible, and this is the way we must look at the Security of the Believer in order to look at it in the total context of the Bible. A special note about this hope of the Gospel **“WHICH YE HAVE HEARD, AND WHICH WAS PREACHED TO EVERY CREATURE WHICH IS UNDER HEAVEN; WHEREOF I PAUL AM MADE A MINISTER”**. Let this serve as preparatory to the main theme and sub-theme that we are rapidly approaching of, “Who are you listening to?” I rejoice to suffer for you and strive to catch up on afflictions for the sake of the church, the body of Christ – the reason I am a minister, “great things you must suffer for me”; and declare the mystery of the ages, **“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”**

You should know what great conflict I have for you at Colosse and for Laodicea, even for those who have never seen me in order to have comfort and “full assurance of understanding”. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ. I Paul am there in spirit so even as you have received Christ, walk in Him; and do not let any man spoil you through: (1) philosophy; (2) vain deceit; (3) according to the traditions of men; (4) according to the rudiments of the world; and (5) not according to Christ. This Christ has embodied in Him all the fullness of the Godhead, and therefore this means for you: (1) completeness in Christ the head of

principalities and powers; (2) circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands; (3) taking away from the body the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; (4) buried and raised with Christ by baptism through faith; and (5) made alive again with your sins forgiven. **{\*\*NOTE: This “completeness in Christ” is obvious in context. Nothing but Christ is needed, not Christ plus philosophy, not Christ and circumcision, not Christ and principalities, not Christ and powers, and not Christ and angel worship.\*\*}**

Christ: (1) took the ordinances against us and nailed them to the cross; and (2) made an open show of the principalities and powers and He triumphed over them. So don't worry about these ordinances as meat, drink, holidays, etc. There were a shadow of things to come. Now, the real Christ is here. Don't worship angels. **{\*\*NOTE: Here in Colossians 3:1 is another conditional “if” of the security of the believer that should be added to our eventual complete list. While it is true that anyone baptized in the full spiritual sense of risen with Christ has the security of the believer, then you must be the kind of person who is seeking those things which are above.\*\*}**

The Secure Believer: (1) is seeking things above where Christ is; (2) has set their affections on things above rather than on things on the earth; (3) is dead to the world; (4) their life is hid with Christ in God.

The next statement by the Apostle Paul in Colossians 3:4 is closely related to the “glory” statement of Colossians 1:27 – **“Christ in you, the hope of glory”**. While it is a hope of glory in 1:27 by the time Paul has weeded out with the conditional if's those not consistent with the conditions, it is in 3:4 LIFE AND GLORY WHEN CHRIST APPEARS!

**“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” (Colossians 3:4 KJV)**

Because Christ has glory at the Second Coming, and power and etc., we also have glory because of our identification with Him!

Some things for us to do: (1) Mortify your members on the earth as covetousness, idolatry, etc. (it sounds almost like the members of the church at Colosse that are doing these things are to be mortified, but it is rather that part of you, generally called the flesh, that is do these inordinate things); (2) Put off all these things as anger, malice; (3) Put off the old man, including lying; (4) Put on the new man; (5) Let the peace of God rule in your hearts; (6) Let the word of Christ dwell in you; (7) Do everything in the name of Jesus with special admonitions for wives, husbands, children, fathers, servants, and masters; (8) Prayer continually and with thanksgiving; (9) Walk in wisdom toward those outside the Christian faith, buying back each opportunity; and (10) Carefully answer each man.

I have sent Tychicus a beloved brother, and Onesimus. Those with me that greet you are Aristarchus, Marcus, Justus, Epaphras, Luke, and Demas. Salute the brothers in Laodicea, also salute Nymphas and the church which is in his house. Switch this epistle with the one to Laodicea, and read them both. Archippus, fulfil your ministry.

## **I John:**

Since the discussion of I John will be much more than a paraphrase, with many comments, notes, and a further setting forth of the prime theme of the relationship between faith contending and security, it is in the next chapter and introduced below in the next section.

### 1-3: I JOHN: FAITH CONTENDING AND SECURITY.

We Apostles from the very beginning hears, saw, and even handled the Word of life. Since this life was manifested, we bear witness and testify to you of eternal life which was with the Father. We

pass on to you what we have seen and heard in order that you may have fellowship with us since our fellowship is with the Father and His Son. These things are written for “full joy”. (NOTE: Before in Colossians we have completeness in Christ and now full joy. Our cup is running over!)

The message that Jesus delivered and which you heard was: (1) God is light; and (2) There is no darkness of sin in God; (3) Those that have fellowship with God live in that light of a sinless habit; (4) They have fellowship with other Christians; and (5) The blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin. (NOTE: The blood of Jesus takes on an even larger emphasis later on in I John as a witness to Jesus.)

What to do in case of sin – and we will sin, further if any says that he does not sin, he is a liar and the truth is not in him: **CONFESS OUR SINS TO GOD.**

What God will do when we confess our sins to Him: (1) Forgive us our sins; and (2) Cleanse us from all unrighteousness, internally and externally. **{\*\*NOTE: Here is another case of persons who may feel secure, but who can not be among the secure as they say that they do not sin, making God and the Word of God a liar. Since the truth can not be in them that is the same as Christ can not be in them, and therefore there is no security of the believer. The book of I John as supplemented with II and III John is the ultimate clarification of the security of the believer.\*\*}** Don't sin and don't make it a habit to sin, but if it happens you have the Advocate with God the Father, and that Advocate is the Righteous Jesus Christ. He Himself is the Propitiation for our sins and the sins of the whole world. Not to sin is to keep the commandments of Jesus; and we know that we know Him – the Security of the Believer – if we keep His commandments, and the person who claims to know Him – the insecure believer – while not keeping his commandments is a liar. (NOTE: In order to see how much the Apostle John is faith contending – that is, is after the elimination of contentious faith, we need only look at how often up to this point he has called these practitioners of contentious faith “liars”. Rather,

he does not call them liars, only identifies the type of individual who is a liar).

The Kind of Person Who is a Liar, the same kind of person who is a practitioner of Contentious Faith—

1. Walk in darkness while claiming to have fellowship with God, I John 1:6. **{\*\* Also carefully note what a lie is: it is the opposite of doing the truth. You might say it is also the opposite of the good Christian Conscience that is willing to live honestly in all things!\*\*}**

2. To say we have no sin is self deception with the truth not in us, which is the equivalent of a lie, I John 1:8.

3. If we say that we have not sinned, worse than being a liar, we make God a liar, and that is the ultimate in contentious faith, I John 1:10.

4. The person who says he knows Jesus, and yet does not keep Jesus's commandments is a liar, and once again the truth is not in him. And in order to see how much the Apostle John under the leadership of the Holy Spirit is after the liar, alias practitioners of Contentious faith, we briefly trace the liars through the rest of I John.

5. He is a liar and an antichrist who denies that Jesus is the Christ, I John 2:22.

6. The man who says that he loves God yet hates his brother is a liar, I John 4:20.

On the more positive side, THE PERSON WHO KEEPS THE WORD OF GOD IN HIM IS THE LOVE OF GOD PERFECTED; AND EVEN AS WE HAVE TRACED THE LIAR THROUGHOUT THE BOOK OF I JOHN, WE SHOULD NOW TRACE THE PERFECTING OF THE LOVE

OF GOD. How the Love of God is Perfected inside the human spirit?

1. By the keeping of the Word and words of Jesus, I John 2:5.
2. I John 3:2 does not use the word perfected, but perfection is there –

**“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” (I John 3:2 KJV)**  
**{\*\*NOTE: We will find the necessity to separate perfection in love from perfection.\*\*}**

3. If we love one another, God dwells in us, and the love of God is perfected in us, I John 4:12.
4. This is the way our love is made perfect: since God is love, those that dwell in God dwell also in love, I John 4:16,17.
5. Perfected love has no fear of the Day of Judgment, I John 4:17,18.

1-4: [Eternal Life in I John.](#)

Surely as we would see Eternal Life in I John, we would also see the Security of the Believer in I John; and in doing so it would become apparent from the Word of God itself the relationship between the Security of the Believer, Faith, and Faith Contending. Why is Faith Contending necessary? Because some who claim to be Christians are liars, and the truth is not in them, not in their spirits.

### 1. Eternal Life in I John 2:13.

Note where this is approximately halfway in the epistle of I John as if to divide it in two parts, and that helps to stress another interesting aspect of I John in that unlike Paul’s epistles those

addressed are mentioned shortly before this beginning of an eternal life emphasis, in I John 2:12-14- -

**“I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name’s sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.” (I John 2:12-14 KJV)**

\* Little children have two characteristics: (1) Their sins are forgiven in the name of Jesus; and (2) They have known the Father.

\* Young men addressed have three characteristics: (1) They have overcome the wicked One, Satan, mentioned twice; (2) They are strong; and (3) The Word of God abides in them.

\* Fathers, the elders, have the single characteristic repeated twice that they have “known him that is from the beginning”. We naturally take that to mean that these are first Christians that knew Jesus Himself.

So there is little doubt as to who the epistle of I John is addressed to: (1) It is addressed to many Christians who knew Jesus at the same time that the Apostles knew Jesus; (2) It is addressed to their young men that have the Word of God abiding in themselves, being strong in the Lord and having overcome Satan; and (3) It is addressed to little children below the age of youth who have reached the age of accountability having come to know God the Father personally and having been forgiven of their sins.

Now with this background of who John wants to feel secure about their salvation of eternal life, we come to the first usage in I John of Eternal Life –

**“Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. “ (I John 2:24,13 KJV)**

Also the point is made here by the Apostle John has been emphasized previously from the epistles of Paul: that is, that eternal life is conditional. Notice the conditional “if”, “if that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you...” See that, it must remain! What you heard from the beginning, and this is especially to those Fathers who heard Jesus for themselves, must remain in you, and that is when you receive security and eternal life.

## 2. Eternal Life in I John 3:1-3.

Here the words “eternal life” are not found; but the substance as first we find the assurance of being “sons of God” (I John 3:1) and then those who have this hope, which also reminds us of the Apostle Paul’s “Christ in you, the hope of glory”. Look at it closely and then a few comments will be made about it—

**“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.**

**Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.**

**And every man that hath in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” (I John 3:1-3 KJV)**

\* You can see how I John comes behind the Gospel of John where the Apostle has made it clear that “as many as received him to them gave he power to become sons of God”.

\* The Hope assured us by Christ being inside us is the assurance that at the Second Coming we shall be like Him for we will see Him as He is. The internal image of Christ in us becomes also an external image at the Second Coming.

\* Again a conditional statement about those who are secure in this hope are also those that purify themselves. They purify themselves because Jesus is pure, and if the image is to reflect the pure Jesus, it must also be pure.

### 3. Eternal Life in I John 3:14.

Here while only the word “life” is used instead of “eternal life”, we know it is eternal life since this life is the opposite of death –

**“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.” (I John 3:14 KJV)**

### 4. Eternal Life in I John 3:15.

Eternal life is negative here, letting us know that faith contending is also involved as certain practitioners of contentious faith are eliminated from the security of the believer by being murderers in that they hate Christian brothers –

**“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.” (I John 3:15 KJV)**

\* This theme of lack of respect for other Christians, the same as hate or the lack of love for Christian brothers, is not only in I John, but is an echo of what the Apostle James writes in the book of James –

**“But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.” (James 2:9 KJV)**

\* It is also significant that the words before I John 3:15, and introduction to murder and to John 3:15 is a reference to Cain and

Able, also a characteristics of those of contentious faith condensed with in the prime book on faith contending, Jude and Jude 11.

**“Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.” (Jude 11 KJV)**

\* This is a good one verse summary of practitioners of contentious faith: (1) They commit murder by hate because of lack of love of other Christian brothers; (2) They work greedily for personal gain in the ministry like Balaam; and (3) They like Core strive to identify themselves and their group as the real people of God.

#### 5. Eternal Life in I John 3:24.

Once again this is the concept but not the words “eternal life” itself, or perhaps we should say this is the Security of the Believer again –

**“And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, be the Spirit which he hath given us.” (I John 3:24 KJV)** \* Notice “pneuma” for “Spirit” is capitalized here since it refers to the Holy Spirit.

\* It provides the background for the spirits to be tested in the next verse which are human spirits and spirits of those who falsely claim to be Prophets and Apostles.

#### 6. Eternal Life in I John 5:11-13.

Three times eternal life is mentioned in these three verses as if having started on eternal life in the second chapter, it increases in intensity, and comes to a climax in this fifth chapter – **“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know**

**that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” (I John 5:11-13 KJV)**

1-5: Starting an Outline of I John, “From the Beginning”

A very good preliminary outline of I John can be made based on the places in I John where the words “From the beginning” are mentioned.

I. I John 1:1, We Apostles are declaring to you the Christ-Word which was “From the beginning” in order that we may have fellowship with us which is with God the Father and the Son. [The Fellowship of the Apostles, God the Father, and the Son of God.]

II. I John 2:7, “From the beginning” twice, once with no new commandment and then with a new commandment with the challenge of the presentation of perfected love. [While sinlessness of life can not be perfected, the challenge of the fellowship of the Apostles, God the Father, and God the Son does entail the possibility of perfected love while still on earth.] (NOTE: We must realize that this is the Apostle John, the Apostle whom over a half of a century previously Jesus had noted as the Apostle of love; the person to whom Jesus had entrusted His own mother; and who over fifty years later had worked on perfected love to the extent that he had for himself eliminated any dread of the Day of Judgment.)

III. I John 2:12-14, John writes to them, has written to them, and continues to write to them about what has been “from the beginning” because the fathers were there at the beginning. [How well do you remember the Traditions of Jesus which were from the beginning?] (NOTE: It is obvious that with the close of the First Century near at hand, approximately 94 A.D. when the Apostle John writes this epistle, that John is emphasizing “from the beginning” because the Traditions of Jesus are about to be distorted. It is time to remind all Christians – fathers, young, and children, what the beginning traditions of Christianity are all about.)

IV. I John 2:24, Let the same Holy Spirit abide in you that you heard “from the beginning, and if that same Spirit of the Son of abides in you then you have eternal life. {Have you changed internally from the influence of the Spirit to the influence of other spirits?}

V. I John 3:11, This is the Message that you heard “from the beginning”, that we should love one another. {The original message of love one another.} **{\*\*NOTE: This being the last of the “from the beginning” statements, as we continue along in this book developing a thorough outline and exegesis of I John, we will have to find another theme besides “The Traditions of Jesus” with which to continue the outline, perhaps the theme of eternal life continues the outline.\*\*}**

#### 1-6: Startling Statements from I John.

In this day and time when we know we have far surpassed that time frame that Paul spoke of in II Timothy 4:3,4, the time that would come when there would be a turning away of Christians from truth and Christians leaders with subtle new messages, it is easy to be shocked by some of the statements from I John if you looked at them taken out temporarily from their context. Take for example, the statement of John about the “last times”. That alone is a shock to most contemporary Christians because it is not being heard from their pulpits, because in spite of the clear teachings of the Bible we continue to look for “last times” out in the future, and because of this misconception- conception not only do we miss much truth about eschatology (last things) but just plain much about the Bible.

1. The “last times” are right now near the end of the First Century.

**“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.” (I John 2:18 KJV)**

2. We lie if we say that we have fellowship with God and yet there are dark spots in our lives.

**“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth...” (I John 1:6 KJV)**

3. If we say that we have absolutely no sin in our lives, we are not only practicing self-deception, but the absolute truth is not in us.

**“if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (I John 1:8 KJV)**

4. We make God out to be a liar when we say that we have not sinned, and this indicates that the word of God is not in us.

**“If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” (I John 1:10 KJV)**

5. The Apostle John is writing these things to you to get you to sin not as a goal, but knowing full well that you will sin; and that therefore you need to be more aware of your Advocate for sin than of the sin.

**“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous...” (I John 2:1 KJV)**

6. Keep humble lest you too become practitioners of contentious faith by claiming to be the only focus of God’s love by recalling that Jesus died not only for your sins but for the sins of the whole world!

**“...Jesus Christ the righteous; And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours’ only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” (I John 2:1b,2 KJV).**

7. The person who claims to know Jesus without keeping the commandments of Jesus is not only a liar but also the absolute truth is not in him.

**“He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” (I John 2:4 KJV) {\*\*NOTE: You see the Apostle James hardly stands alone in faith without words is dead; and while the Apostle James may be the first faith contender, he has good company with Paul, Jude, Peter, and John. They all are fearful that the blood of others might be on their hands, carefully declaring the whole counsel of God with the balance between security of believers and faith contending against contentious faith that is without security, without truth.\*\*}**

8. The love of God is perfected inside the Christian who keeps the Bible.

**“But whoso keepeth his word, verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know that we are in him.” (I John 2:5 KJV) {\*\*NOTE: Although the second half of I John, after the first half faith contends with the traditions of Jesus, then presents the security of the believer; and the book of I John being 5 chapters we are not quite half way, there is a gradual overlap between the two balanced themes of I John. We are not with the beginning of I John 2:5 in that overlap region of I John. Rather than having two major divisions, in order to be precise, the epistle of I John should have three divisions with the middle division being one of overlap of the first and last theme.**

**I. Faith Contending with the Traditions of Jesus II. Faith Contending and Security of the Believer. III. Security of the Believer.\*\*}**

9. If you say you abide in Jesus, you should walk or live like Jesus walked and lived.

**“He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.” (I John 2:6 KJV)**

And see how we have a mixture of security with faith contending: the security is in the assurance of being a Christian is that the love of God is being perfected in us, and the faith contending is that

there are some not living like Jesus, yet claiming to be Christians. **{\*\*NOTE: I John unlike the epistles of Paul is not as much a logical treatment and logical flow of truth. It is more like the last teachings of Jesus to the disciples in the Garden before the Crucifixion. Indeed I believe that is the purpose of John in writing on the Traditions of Jesus, to elaborate on what Jesus taught in those last words, and in so doing to use the method of Jesus Himself in those teachings. (In the next chapter will be a brief summary of the traditional teachings of Jesus in John 14-17.)\*\*}**

10. This truth of I John is nothing new because it is the Word you heard from Jesus from the beginning – alias, the beginning traditions of Jesus -but it is new in that a new day has dawned where darkness has been replaced with light.

**“Brethren, I write no new commandments unto you, but an old commandment which ye had rom the beginning. The old commandments is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you; because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.” (I John 2:7,8 KJV)**

We have already noted how I John is unique in that the salutation is in the body of the epistle rather than at the beginning, and right here with the word “Brethren” is the real beginning of that salutation which divides later in I John 2:12-14 into fathers, youth, and little children. This makes us curious about the words in between I John 2:8 and I John 2:12; however since with the introduction in 2:8 shown above, you know it is going to be on the new thing of Christianity, the passing of darkness into light which by the way was also the way John introduced the little epistles in I John 1:5, “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.” **{\*\*NOTE: You cannot mix God and darkness, Christ and sinful habits, Christianity and worldly philosophy, and the Christian Conscience with the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.\*\*}**

## An Outline of the salutation of I John, I John 2:7-14.

(1). Brethren, I bring out of the treasures of the traditions of Christianity something both old and new.

a. The Old is the Original and traditional teachings of Jesus.

b. The New is that a New Day has dawned on humanity and on the people of God whereby darkness has been replaced with light.

(2). Let me talk about this light and darkness.

a. While a man may say he is in the light, he is really in the darkness if he hates his brother. **{\*\*NOTE: As to the question of whether brother means brother by birth or Christian brother, I think we can easily answer in terms of Christian brother since the very introduction to this salutation was "brethren".\*\*}**

b. The Christian that loves his Christian brother walks in the light, and he doesn't stumble in his Christian life because he is walking in the light of the love of God.

c. The darkness of the man who does not love his Christian brother (lack of love of Christians is defined as hate):

[1]. He lives in darkness.

[2]. He walks and stumbles in darkness.

[3]. He doesn't know where he is going or what he is doing.

[4]. He is blind, blinded by the sin of lack of love for Christians.

(3). Fathers, youth, and little children.

a. Little children.

[1]. Your sins are forgiven in the name of Jesus. [2]. You have known the Father.

b. Fathers.

[1]. You have known Jesus from at the first.

[2]. You have known Jesus from at the beginning.

c. Youth.

[1]. You have overcome Satan.

[2]. You are strong.

[3]. The Word of God abides in you.

**{\*\*NOTE: Of the ones to whom this is written they have the security of a believer as: (1) Their sins are forgiven; (2) They know God the Father; (3) They know Jesus; (4) They have overcome Satan; (5) They are strong in the Lord Jesus Christ; and (6) The Word of God abides inside of them. Surely this last is the equivalent of Paul's and Colossians,**

**"Christ in you, the hope of glory..."\*\*}**

11. You can not mix inside yourself love for the Father and love for the world.

**"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (I John 2:15 KJV)**

Is the equivalent of saying a man cannot be a Christian, alias a secure believer, and have love of the world inside of himself? I think so! Even as God and darkness do not mix, even so love of God and love of the world do not mix.

12. The physical world came from God without the thorns, but the world of lusts and pride came from Satan and sin.

**"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (I John 2:16 KJV) {\*\*NOTE: Even as all of the Gospel of John, and even the previous book of Revelation, is background**

**for the little epistles, even so the treatment of first the physical world in John 1, the world which was made through Christ the Word, and then the world which could not comprehend Christ, the darkness of the world which could not comprehend Christ. You see what John has done quickly is to identify darkness in practical terms, in world terms, in terms of the world as: (1) lust of the flesh, (2) lust of the eyes, and (3) pride of life.\*\*}**

This pride of life is not to be confused with the love of life as the Apostle Peter develops it in I Peter 3:10 –

**“For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.” (I Peter 3:10 12 KJV)** Indeed John and Peter are talking about the same thing, one calling it darkness while the other calls it evil, the first calling it light while the second calls in righteousness and doing good.

13. All those things of the world of lust and pride will disappear, and what will remain on the new earth will be those who do the will of God.

**“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” (I John 2:17 KJV)**

Certainly abiding forever is security as a believer, and the way to do that is conditional – do the will of God; and again you see how in this passage after the salutation of 2:7-14, John in going back to the them of light identifies the darkness as lusts and pride, while combining faith contending again with the security of the believer. WE ARE STILL IN THE OVERLAP CENTER REGION OF I JOHN WHERE THE FAITH CONTENDING IS MIXED WITH SECURITY!

14. It is the last time already, now at the end of the First Century; and although many of you making looking for the famous

antichrist, the reality is that many Antichrists are already in the world. IT IS THE LAST TIME!

**“Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.” (I John 2:18 KJV)**

John doesn't have time now in the writing of this little epistle to discuss how the antichrist that Paul wrote of was the Roman Emperor, and many Roman Emperors who persecuted Christians and demanded to be worshiped in the place of Christ, the same beast and beast of Revelation about which John has previously written. Right now the burden of proof under the leadership of the Holy Spirit is upon John to faith contend about the traditions of Jesus and to balance it with the security of the believer.

Obviously his favorite term for the secure believers is “little children”, and we see “little children” in the salutation to be more a general term for the saved of the fathers and the young than to be little children of lesser age than the fathers and the young!

15. These Antichrists were in our assembly but they went away from us because they did not belong to us in the first place: alias, all in Christian assemblies are not Christians. {\*\*“TOO MANY CHRISTIANS!, at least in name. It is sort of like Baptists: as a teacher of Baptist history said, “If Baptists keep growing in the future as they have in the past, one of these days there will be more Baptists than people. Could we already be there?”\*\*}

**“They went out form us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” (I John 2:19 KJV)**

16. Now the security of the believer gets serious, after two groups of Christians in assembly have been identified as first the insecure and then the secures: those are secure who have an

internal “unction”, the presence of the Holy One, and that unction gives an understanding of real things.

**“But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.” (I John 2:20 KJV)**

Once again we see these traditions of Jesus based largely on the teachings of Jesus as given in John 14-17 here the re-iteration in more practical terms of the giving of the Holy Spirit to Christians whereby they come to understand the real things of the world, the spiritual truths and realities. **{\*\*NOTE: Now, it has become apparent as to the three divisions of I John in terms of chapters and verses as we have found the beginning of the Security of the Believer third section, thus also the end of the overlap of faith contending and the security of the believer –**

- I. I John 1:1-2:2 Faith Contending with the Traditions of Jesus.**
- II. I John 2:3-19 Faith Contending and Security.**
- III. I John 3:20-5:21 The Security of the Believer.**

**Warning: the faith contending tapers in the third division, not disappear with the big difference between I and III being the larger emphasis of either faith contending or security.\*\*}**

## **Chapter 2: Complete Outline of I John.**

2-1: [EVEN IN SECURITY A MIX OF FAITH CONTENDING.](#)

### **Division Three Faith Contending Versus Security Verses**

1. Faith Contending in I John 2:20-5:21.

(1). I John 2:21b.

**“...and that no life is of the truth.” (I John 2:21b KJV)**

(2). I John 2:22,23a

**“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father...” (I John 2:22 , 23a KJV)**

NOTE: You realize that where there are “a” or “b” parts the other half of the verse will deal with security, thus verses where security and faith contending are mixed.

(3). I John 2:14.

**“These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.” (I John 2:14 KJV)**

Brother, that is faith contending! After two and one half verses on the security of the believer, and after previously in the epistle having introduced the Antichrists as those who went out from them and denied Jesus, now he calls those same ones as seducers: (1) They were trying to keep Christians away from Christian assemblies and away from the Apostles, also seducing them away from Christ, which the literal meaning of anti- or away from Christ; and (2) They had been successful in seducing some or they would not have been seducers.

(4). I John 3:1b.

**“...therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.” (I John 3:1b KJV)**

(5). I John 3:6b.

**“...whosoever sinneth hat not seen him, neither known him.” (I John 3:6b KJV)** Here it is not who sins as in I John 1:8 or even has sinned in the past as in I John 1:10; but rather sinneth, continuing in the habit of sin.

(6). I John 3:8.

**“He that committeth (notice the continuous nature) sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose**

**the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” (I John 3:8 KJV)**

NOTE: It is obvious that we missed one of the “from the beginning’s at the beginning; and also that from the beginning has to take on more meaning than just the traditions that began with the life of Christ as Satan was there at the beginning of Creation in the Garden tempting man and woman to sin. Of course, again the epistles of John are based on the Gospel of John where the beginning of the traditions of Christ were before the beginning of the world -

**“In the beginning was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” (John 1:1-5 KJV)**

Not only do we see the traditions of Jesus going all the way back to Creation and before, but also we see Jesus as the light and what came against Him in the world as the darkness. When you combine this with what Paul says of the Christ in Colossians, that is that “through Him all things consists” or have their being, and that in John 1 Christ is the medium of Creation, we suspect that there may be a much closer relationship between the means of physical light and the Christ than can be imagined, much less the spiritual light!

(7). I John 3:10b.

**“...and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.” (I John 3:10b KJV)**

(8). I John 3:12.

**“Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil,**

**and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brothers, if the world hate you." (I John 3:12,13 KJV)**

Note that we definitely cannot eliminate blood brother from the discussions even those the emphasis has to be on Christian brothers, and double in trouble is the Christian in assembly who does not love his Christian brother who is also his blood brother. (NOTE: Hate has progressed here from a person hating his one brother, to the brother and brothers that are hated, those that are still the Christians in assembly!)

(9). I John 3:14b,15.

**"He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." (I John 3:14b,15**

**KJV)**

Perhaps you forgot that we were originally looking at startling statement in I John that, though your assemblies are called Christian assemblies, you are not likely to hear; and here is another: The person, calling himself Christian or otherwise who does not love his brother is a murderer. He is guilty of MURDER. YOU SEE THAT IS THE POSITION THAT MANY FUNDAMENTALISTS LEADERS OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION ARE IN NOW AS THEY HAVE PRACTICED THE LACK OF LOVE FOR OTHER CHRISTIAN BROTHERS IN THE CONVENTION, ELIMINATING THEIR CAREERS AND JOBS AND REPUTATIONS AND ASSISTING EVEN IN THEIR REMOVAL FROM SERVICE IN THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION. THIS LACK OF LOVE IS NOT FOLLOWING A FUNDAMENTAL OF LOVE OF THE BIBLE, NOT PRACTICING THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE APOSTLES, AND YOU KNOW THE REST OF THE REASON AS GIVEN IN I JOHN AND IN THE OTHER SCRIPTURES

ABOUT FAITH CONTENDING! (NOTE: With this verse we have looked at a total of 8 out of the 24 verses between where security begins in 2:20 to the point above in 3:15, so that while it may seem like a lot of verses on faith contending in a division of I John on security, we do see that three times as many verses are on security as are on faith contending; and if we check the tapering or increasing rate, we notice that only 5 out of 15 of the verses of the third chapter of I John are faith contending, which means so far not change in rate at all, it stay constant up to this point at 3-1 for security over faith contending.)

(10). I John 4:1.

**“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” (I John 4:1 KJV)**

Veritably here a very key to faith contending is to “TRY THE SPIRIT”? Why not try believers or Christians? Well, for one reason if they are truly believers and truly Christians, then there is no test for them; another it is the attitude that is being tested even more than the behavior; and thirdly there is the very practical matter of we have to go beyond appearances where both sheep and wolves in sheep’s clothing look alike!

(11). I John 4::2,3.

Even though in the method of John, borrowed from Jesus in John 14-17, there is a positive and then a negative opposite treatment following, we need both to treat the full context here of faith contending. The more positive part is really in the category of Security.

**“Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard**

**that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.” (I John 4:2,3 KJV)**

Having already received and written the revelations of Revelation where the man of sin, the son of perdition, is the Roman Emperor and many Roman Emperors, and having read and no doubt preaching on Paul’s man of sin and perdition of II Thessalonians 2:3 – considered then and still today as the ultimate antichrist – John now makes it clear that what we are really up against is the spirit of antichrist that can have many manifestations in many persons.

(12). I John 4:5,6.

Likewise it takes both of these verses together to see the faith contending, and although some of the best security of the believer is here with one of the greatest assurance of a continuous faith in terms of who we are listening to –

**“They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.” (I John 4:5,6 KJV)**

WHO IS THE WORLD LISTENING TO? TAKE NOTE ANYONE THAT THE WORLD IS LISTENING TO: IN OTHER WORDS, WHO IS POPULAR WITH THE WORLD, BEWARE, THOSE SPEAKERS AND PREACHERS ARE ALSO “OF THE WORLD”!

(13). I John 4:20,21.

After thirteen verses of pure security, we come to two on faith contending, although the 21st verse is really more security –

**“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he loved God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.” (I John 4:20,21 KJV)**

(14). I John 5:12b.

After twelve and one-half magnificent verses on the Security of the Believer, then comes the opposite of another positive statement of security –

“...and he that hath not the Son of God hath no life.” (I John 5:12b KJV)

The last nine verses are on Security, and we will start with that last nine, it being the most secure points in the security of the believer.

2. The Security of the Believer in I John 2:20 5:21,

(1). I John 5:11,12a.

The Apostle John, well aware that he is writing Scriptures shortly to become respected among all Christians as Word of God, provides an objective criterion to the previous more subjective and internal assurance of the Security of the Believer, and that objective criterion is the Word of God –

**“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hat life...” (I John 5:11,12a KJV)**

(2). I John 5:13.

Even as the Apostle John was clear in the identification of his purpose for writing John in John 20:30,31, even so now in I John 5:13 he makes clear the purpose of the writing of this little epistle as for security of the believer, and you might note the similarities and differences in the purpose of the two books.

The Purpose of the Gospel of John –

**“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (John 20:30,31 KJV)**

The Purpose of I John –

**“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” (I John 5:13 KJV)**

While both books stress the believe in Jesus for eternal life, the book of John is in order to have that life and the book of I John is in order to know that you have that life.

(3). I John 5:14,15.

This is the external confidence of receiving answers to asked prayers!

**“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.” (I John 5:14,15)**

(4). I John 5:16,17.

Although this verse is on faith contending in that it tells the secures how to deal with the kind of people of contentious faith, it is written to the secures.

**“If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.” (I John 5:16,17 KJV)**

The sin unto death, of course, the same as the unpardonable sin, is to reject the wooing of the Spirit of Jesus to the point of no return; and here is the one place that John admits that some who are called and thought to be Christian brothers may not be at all! In faith contending and in the security of the believer when faced with known sin in the lives of others we deal with two kinds of people and in two ways: (1) Brothers who are really brothers who have

not sinned unto death; and (2) And brothers who are not really brothers that have crossed over the line committing the unpardonable sin.

(5). I John 5:18.

**“We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.” (I John 5:18 KJV)**

Once again as in I John 3:6 this is the continuous habit of living in sin; and while before it was that such a person is of the devil, here it is on the more positive and secure side of being born of God so that there is not the habit of sin, and that on the positive side also Satan can not get to such a secure person.

(6). I John 5:19.

**“And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.” (I John 5:19 KJV)**

The positive and definite statement of contrast must be made that there is God and then that there is the world of wickedness and surrounded by a wicked world and wicked people, there is God and the people of God. You must feel the minority feeling here, yet secure in the supremacy of the power of God!

(7). I John 5:20,21.

**“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.” (I John 5:20,21 KJV)**

That is about as much Security of the Believer as you can have: to know the true God and eternal life. It is also faith contending in that it seeks to eliminate untrue gods, or idols as in the next verse, from the true God and true and secure everlasting life. The key again to security is the matter of “understanding”. The spirit of

truth has the understanding, and the spirit of error does not have the understanding. The true Christ must be known in order to know the true God!

2-2: The next long section on pure security that we noted was in I John 5:1-12a.

(1). Having used the word believe in the Gospel of John more times than any other single book of the New Testament, and having set forth in John 3 the teachings of Jesus on the necessity of the New Birth; now John ties believe and the new birth unmistakable together with the straightforward statement that the person who believes that Jesus is the Christ is also the person who is born of God, adding the connection of faith and the new birth to love – if you love the God who begat you also love the Begotten (I John 5:1).

(2). If we love God and keep His commandments, then we also know that we love the children of God (I John 5:2).

(3). An identification of the love of God: the love of God is to keep the commandments of God. These are not grievous commandments (I John 5:3).

(4). Those born of God overcome the world, faith providing the victory to overcome the world (I John 5:4).

(5). Overcomers are the believers that Jesus is the Son of God (I John 5:5).

**NOTE: Again you see the background of the book of Revelation for the writing of I John. Revelation where the overcomers are introduced. Indeed, a proper Biblical terms for those who have Security would be overcomers.**

(6). What we have in I John 5:6-8 is a test of spiritual understanding. John has already mentioned, and will mention again, the understanding that has been given; and now it is time to provide an objective test as to how other spirits in the church can be tested in terms of spiritual understanding –

**"...the Son of God. This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy (Spirit); and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these agree in one." (I John 5:6-8 KJV)**

(7). Even as Greater in He that is in us than he that is in the world and even as God is greater than our conscience and knows all things, even so greater is the witness of God to His own Son than the witness of men to the Sonship of Jesus (I John 5:9).

(8). This great witness of God, an internal witness, is the same as the greater in us, Christ and the Spirit of Christ which are One (I John 5:10).

(9). To match the internal witness is an objective record of that witness, the written Word of God, and with this combined internal and external witness comes the Security of the Believer, alias the Overcoming and Overcomers – **"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (I John 5:11,12 KJV)**

Then we have – still going backwards – those thirteen verses of pure security between the test of error versus truth and the test of love, the thirteen verses of I John 4:7-19.

(10). Since pure love comes from God, as we love also we indicate that we have indeed been born of God. To be born of God is the same as knowing God. The reciprocal is true: the one who does not love also does not know the God who is love. How do we see and know the love of God: well, it was shown by God the Father sending His only Son to die on the cross for our sins. We live through this act of Christ and sacrifice of the Father. You want to know what real love is then do not think or say that we love God,

but think of that much greater love whereby God gave His Son to be the “propitiation” for the sins of the world.

Christian brothers should love one another even as God loved those children in order to make them brothers. Since no man has ever seen God (this is a repeat of John 1:18), the way the world sees the love of God is by God dwelling in brothers where the love of God is manifested, and where this love of God is constantly being perfected!

The way that we know God dwells in us is because of the Holy Spirit inside that He has given us. Also we know that God dwells in us because we have seen and do testify that God sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. Persons who confess this fact, God or the Spirit of God comes to dwell inside them. To dwell in God is to dwell in love since God is love. This is the way love is made perfect. Dwelling in God promotes loves and loving promotes dwelling in God, and it is a circle that eliminates all dread of the Day of Judgment. (You see here is the Security of the Believer and the feeling of the Security of the Believer. That is, a Believer feels secure when all dread of the inevitable Judgment of God is eliminated, and that can be done only through love). Since love and fear can not exist together- that is perfect love and perfect fear – then perfected love eliminates fear and well-developed fear eliminates love. But go back to the Source of Love: **“We love him, because he first loved us” (I John 4:19 KJV)**

(11). I John 4:4.

**“Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” (I John 4:4 KJV)**

- a. How would you like to be told by an Apostle that was taught by Jesus, “Ye are of God”. That would surely be the ultimate in security; that is, the ultimate except for having Jesus, or the Spirit of Jesus inside you tell you that you are of God. Paul

had written the equivalent in Galatians 4:6 when he wrote: **“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” (Galatians 4:6 KJV)**

b. You see in I John like in Revelation, the Secures are really the Overcomers!

c. Greater is the Spirit of Christ in you than the spirit of Satan that is in the world!

(12). I John 3:16-24.

The love of God has to be detectable from God and from us: from God it is detected as we comprehend that Christ gave His life for us, and from us it is perceivable as we love Christian brothers. There is no love of God perceivable when you see a brothers in need, have goods to meet those needs, and there is no compassion of response to those needs. Like the Apostle James has also written, there is love in words and tongue, and then there is love in deed and truth, the love that performs deeds. By the performance of these deeds of love for Christian brothers, our hearts are assured that:

- \* we are of the truth; and
- \* our hearts are assured before Him.

Sometimes, even often, our heart or Conscience condemns us; but we should know that God is greater than our Conscience or our Concepts of God. Now, if our Conscience does not condemn us at all, then the confidence should be in the presence of God not before men. Either way, God knows all these things!

Again like in James, the way to receive answers to prayer is by keeping the commandments of Jesus. That is, in James we do not receive the answers to prayers for two reasons: (a) We do not ask; and (b) We ask amiss in order to consume it on our own lusts. If we are keeping the commandments of Jesus, this will overcome the tendency of the human spirit within us to lust or to lust to envy. Or

as Paul would say, “Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.” However, the prime thrust is to do “those things that are pleasing in his sight” (I John 3:22 KJV) PLEASE GOD AND YOU CAN HAVE THE ANSWERS TO YOUR PRAYERS, RECALLING ALSO THAT WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD! This matter of faith and the commandments of Jesus is made clear in the next verse – **“And this is his commandments, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.” (I John 3:23 KJV)** Even as Jesus summarized all the commandments of God into two – love God and love your neighbor as yourself – even so John now summarizes all the commandments of God into two – believe on the name of the Son of God and love one another, so that we quickly see that love of God is the same as believing on the name of Jesus. That is, if we really love God, we must listen to God when He commands that we believe on the name of His Son.

What happens when we keep these two commands of God to believe on Jesus and to love brothers –

- \* we dwell in God
- \* God dwells in us
- \* God gives us the Spirit in our human spirits

(13). I John 3:14a.

**“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” (I**

**John 3:14a KJV)**

2-3: These are the Overcomers or Secures—

(a). Have already in this life on earth passed from eternal death to eternal life; and (b). They love Christian brothers.

(14). I John 3:11.

And as well as being the very foundation of security in love, we have here another of the major divisions of I John in the words, “from the beginning”.

(15). I John 3:7.

This is the encouragement from John not to be deceived with the tacit assumption or reality that even here in the First Century many were trying to “deceive” Christians even as later in I John we see that they were also trying to “seduce” Christians. The basis of being secure against deception is to face up to the undeniable fact that: The righteous do righteously.

(16). I John 3:2-6a.

Now, we are the sons of God; and while it is not apparent at this time what we shall eventually be like since none have ever seen the fully glorified body, it shall be apparent when Christ comes again what we shall be like. We will then be like Christ! With this hope, the hope of Christ in you, then we purify ourselves as steps toward that total and final purification in Christ. We seek to be blameless and without fault in this wicked and perverse generation. When we sin we transgress the laws of God become disobedient and having a measure of impurity. We know that Jesus was made clear to the world in order to take away the sins and transgressions of the world, and that in Jesus then and now is no sin at all. The secure or overcomers that abide in Jesus can not live in the habit of Sin!

(17). “from the beginning” we must decide if it was from the beginning and the ministry of the teachings of Jesus, or “from the beginning” as Jesus, the Word, was “from the beginning” as Co Creator of the universe in the beginning.

**“For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.” (I John 3:11 KJV)**

You heard it from two beginnings: (a) From the beginning of the giving of the laws of God when the laws were summarized as love for God and love for neighbor; and (b) From the second beginning when Jesus quoted from that summary of the laws.

(15). I John 3:9,10a.

How can you tell the children of God from the children of the world, alias the children of Satan? Well, this is the way they are manifested or made clear to the visible eye: those that do not live in the continuous habit of sin are the children of God because they have been born of God, and that seed of God makes it impossible for them to continue in a habit of sin.

(16). I John 3:1a.

**“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God...” (I John 3:1a KJV)**

Once you have been called a son of God, you don't really need either the term of overcomers or secure.

**“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:12,13 KJV)**

(17). I John 2:27-29.

THE ANOINTING, THAT IS THE BLESSING FROM GOD, THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT OR THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN YOU! This Anointing from God abides inside you, and because of this Anointing who is also the Comforter and the Teacher, you do not need a human teacher. This Anointed Teacher and Comforter as Jesus taught in John 14-17 has the capability and the desire to teach you all things. He is truth without any error or lie! As Jesus taught you when you were with Him, you like the branches to the vine are to abide in Him.

So little children, just abide in Him! That way when He appears, when we see Him again, we can have great confidence, not be ashamed at all! You see since we know that Jesus is righteous and will appear righteously at the Second Coming, then we also know that those who live righteously are born of Jesus.

(18). I John 2:23b-13.

**“...[but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this it the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.” (I John 2:23b-13 KJV)**

If we understood just this, we would hardly need anymore on the Security of the Believer. With a repeat of “from the beginning” twice, and obviously here it is to little children who in person heard Jesus from at the beginning of His ministry: there is the matter of a beginning with Jesus, and then there is the matter of that continuing which was at the beginning. All of this is based on having the Father, which is to have the Son, and having the Son which is to have the Father. “remain in you” are definitely the key words. It is not enough to begin in you; that is, to know only initial salvation. It is necessary to know continuing salvation!

(19). I John 2:20,21a.

**“But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it...” (I John 2:20,21a KJV)**

Who is John writing to? The little children that: (a) Already know the truth but need some affirmation or confidence since there are those who would deceive them and seduce them; (b) Those who have the Unction, the Anointing, from the Holy One, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so we complete the third and last division of I John, the one on the Security of the Believer, but even so with a mix; and while at the beginning of this chapter we were inclined to think that so much was on faith contending, we see after this thorough look at I John 2:20-5 that while there were (19) points on Security, and many of those very long, there were only (7) in that third division on faith contending. (See page 119).

#### 2-4: A COMPLETE OUTLINE OF I JOHN.

We are now ready to put together the third major divisions and the first sub-divisions of I John which John himself has highlighted by the usage of the words "from the beginning". Of course the major divisions of: (1) Faith Contending; (2) Security of the Believer; and (3) A Mix of Security and Faith Contending we found by a careful reading of the whole text. As a matter of fact, we also found the "from the beginnings by a reading of the text!

You will recall the major divisions as developed in a previous chapter. I. I John 1:1-2:2 Faith Contending with the Traditions of Jesus.

II. I John 2:3-19 Faith Contending and Security.

III. I John 3:20-5:21 The Security of the Believer.

And to these we will add the major sub-divisions of the "from the beginnings.

I. Faith Contending with the Traditions of Jesus. (I John 1:1-2:2)

1. The beginning of the Traditional Jesus on Earth. (I John 1:1-2:6)

**"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, and our hands have handled of the Word of; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us..." (I John 1:1,2)**

There is almost a double from the beginning here: (1) The “from the beginning” when the Apostles heard, saw, and felt Jesus of Nazareth thus establishing Christian traditions of personal experience with Jesus; and (2) Above all the “from the beginning” as Jesus, the Word of Life, was with God the Father. The progression of John’s writings start with the revelation to himself of Jesus as the Word in the book of Revelation, the same all encompassing Word with which he begins the Gospel of John later; and then after writing all of the words of life from the Word in the Gospel of John, now in I John it begins with “life” added to the Word to make it the “Word of life”.

**“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called The Word of God.” (Revelation 19:11-13 KJV)**

**“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.” (John 1:1-4 KJV)**

**“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6 KJV)**

**“...of the Word of life...” (I John 1:1)**

2. The Traditional commandments You Heard from Jesus. (I John 2:7-11)

**“Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.” (I John 2:7 KJV)**

Again double meaning is implied if not stated in the first and second usage of the “from the beginning”: the first going back to the giving of the Ten Commandments on love; and the second the traditional teachings of Jesus which these Fathers had heard for themselves.

### 3. The Salutation to Children, Fathers, and Youth.

(I John 2:12-23)

**“I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name’s sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.” (I John 2:12-14 KJV)**

- (1). Reasons John is presently writing I John.
- (2). Reasons John had already written John to the Fathers.
- (3). Reasons John had already written II and III John to the youth.
  - a. You are strong.
  - b. The Word of God abides in you.
  - c. You are Overcomers (you are secure).

NOTE: Later we will look for these reasons for the previous writing of II and III John. What we will find is that the problems introduced in II John – of those who deny Jesus as the Christ – and of III John – those who separate themselves from other brothers and have a greed in Christian leadership that desires preeminence in all things – are those problems with which I John is dealing. Yes, it is true: II and III John were shorter epistles written before I John;

and the reason the King James Translators of 1611 chose the present sequence of I, II, and III for titles is because of the size.

### **“Little Children”**

“Little children” is the favorite term of the elderly Apostle John for both the Fathers and the youth. With the start of this usage of address in I John 2:12, we have an outline within an outline. It is almost as if John has started I John by addressing all the church members, saved or otherwise, little children or not; and then after a separation based on the doctrines or faith contending of I John 1:1-2:11, he is ready to primarily address the “little children” who will admit that whether fathers or youth they are little children. Usages of “little children” in I John –

1. I John 2:12.

**“I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name’s sake.” (I John 2:12 KJV)**

2. I John 2:18.

**“Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.” (I John 2:18 KJV)**

3. I John 2:28.

**“And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.” (I John 2:28 KJV)**

4. I John 3:7.

**“Little children< let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.” (I John 3:7 KJV)**

5. I John 3:18.

**“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth.” (I John 3:18 KJV)**

NOTE: After this usage of “little children”, John develops the habit of addressing these little children as “beloved”: (1) I John 3:21; (2) I John 4:1; (3) I John 4:7; (4) I John 4:11. We will utilize in terms of exegesis from I John, or the reading out of the original meaning and outline, both the “little children” and the “beloved’s” as parts of the outline of I John.

6. I John 4:4.

**“Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” (I John 4:4 KJV)**

7. I John 5:21.

**“Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.” (I John 5:21 KJV)**

### **Some Matters of Outline Exegesis**

As we get closer to the heart and mind of the Apostle John in I John, or more importantly closer to the mind and heart of God, the Word of God as recorded in I John, we develop and change the outline according to what we dig out of the Word of God in I John. You will note that as we have gone along we have changed the chapter and verse content of the first major division, “Faith Contending with the Traditions of Jesus” to go all the way from I John 1:1 to 2:23 as summarized below –

I. Faith Contending with the Traditions of Jesus, I John 1:1-2:23.

1. The Word of Life from the Beginning, 1:1-2:6.
2. Traditional Commandments of Jesus, 2:7-11.
3. The Salutation, 2:12-23.

(1). Reasons for the present writing of I John.

(2). Reasons for writing John to the Fathers.

(3). Reasons for writing II and III John to the youth.

### **Outline of I John Continued**

We continue now with the second major division of I John, The Security of the Believer, much of the work of the outlining having been previously done in the gathering of the "from the beginning's", the "little children", and the "beloved". One additional note, the "beloved's" are both deductive and inductive in that they introduce and close a section of thought.

#### II. The Security of the Believer.

(I John 2:24-3:18)

1. Let the first words and Word Abide in You, 2:24-

3:10. (1). Blessing, little children abide in Him, 2:24-28.

(2). Beloved, you are sons of God, 2:29-3:10.

2. The Tradition of Jesus is to Love One Another, 3:11-

19.

(1). Love and Hate, 3:11-17.

(2). Little children, love in truth, 3:18-19.

#### III. Faith Contending and Security, I John 3:18-5:21.

1. Little children, truly love, 3:18-4:3.

(1). Beloved confidence before God, 3:18-21.

(2). Beloved, test the spirits, 3:22-4:3.

2. Little children, You are of God, 4:4-5:21.

(1). Beloved, love one another, 4:4-10.

(2). Beloved, Love one another, 4:11-21.

(3). Believers, 5:1-21.

NOTE: The endearing term of “beloved” becomes the more endearing term of “believers”!

So we made it we have a complete outline of the epistle of I John. Let us briefly consolidate it before we move on by looking at it together –

I. Faith Contending with the Traditions of Jesus, I John 1:1 2:23.

1. The Word of Life from the Beginning, 1:1-2:6.
2. Traditional Commandments of Jesus, 2:7-11.
3. The Salutation, 2:12-23.

(1). Reasons for the present writing of I John.

(2). Reasons for writing John to the Fathers.

(3). Reasons for writing II and III John to the youth. II. The Security of the Believer, I John 2:24-3:18.

1. Let the first words and Word Abide in You, 2:24-3:10.

(1). Blessing, little children abide in Him, 2:24-28.

### **Chapter 3: Faith and Faith Contending in the Bible.**

#### 3-1: THE BIBLE’S OWN DEFINITION OF FAITH.

**“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1 KJV)**

Even in the Bible, few things are as clearly defined as is “faith”!

“...faith is...”, we read in the Word of God as recorded in Hebrews 11:1. **FAITH IS:** (1). The Substance of Things Hoped For; and (2). The Evidence of Things Not Seen. **Substance**

Our Christian faith needs substance. Faith like so many other things in life even as love is intangible in that you can not see it, feel

it, taste it, or hear it directly. You can see and hear the results of faith and love, but you can not see or hear these intangibles within themselves. As Christians what do we hope for? Well, we hope: (1) To see God face to face and eternally; (2) To be inhabitants of the new heavens and new earth; (3) To be accepted here on earth as a child of God; and so on. Well all these hopes deal with things that can not presently be seen – God Himself, heaven, salvation, and the new heavens and new earth; but the encouraging word of the Bible is that our Christian faith gives “substance” to these things that are hoped for!. Actually “hoped for” being words of the King James English of 1611 does not adequately express the full meaning in today’s English of what was original written by the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul in the First Century. Today’s equivalent of this portion of Hebrews 11:1 would be more that what we hope for is “more what we reasonably expect is going to happen.”

### **Evidence**

Christian faith besides giving substance to our legitimate hopes also is within itself an “evidence”. The Apostle Paul who wrote the book of Hebrews was first a lawyer before he became an Apostle, and naturally to lawyers there is little as important as evidence. Of course before we take the present attitude toward Paul that most people have toward lawyers, since all the law of the Hebrew nation was religious law except what they had to heed as being under the Roman government, then Paul’s job as a lawyer before his conversion was to interpret and uphold the religious laws of the Old Testament as the Pharisees had come to interpret them in the First Century.

When a young man and when Christian Evidences and Christian Apologetics were so important to me in order to provide an intellectual foundation and arguments to justify Christian faith, there were two books very important to me that provided evidence of Christian faith. One was a book by a lawyer who had practiced law before the Supreme Court of the United States entitled A

LAWYER EXAMINES THE BIBLE. Irwin Linton, the author, maintained in the book that sufficient evidence existed in the Bible to support a prima facie case sufficient for any modern court of law whereby Jesus Christ's claims to be the Son of God would be supported in those courts of law. Further Linton stated that he had never met a lawyer who when he said that he did not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, who could also say that he had read through the four gospels for himself to determine the validity of the claim. Linton also tells of Simon Greenleaf, the former Dean of the Harvard Law School, who in writing the book THE TESTIMONY OF THE EVANGELISTS, and who being at that time an authority on the subject of "evidence", stated that the testimony of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John would be sufficient in any court of law to substantiate the claim that Jesus was and is the Son of God!

Another book that was good in the defense of the Christian faith was that of Mosma's THE EVIDENCE OF GOD IN AN EXPANDING UNIVERSE. This book is a compilation of articles written by over 40 scientists in government, education, and industry with evidence from their particular scientific fields as to why they believe in God. The biologists found in the details of the design of man and animals, evidence of God; the physicists found in the atomic and astronomical design of the small and large of the earth and universe the evidence of God; and mathematicians found in the logic of man and the universe evidence of God.

### 3-2: The Word "Faith" in the Bible.

When you deal with the word "faith" in the Bible, you are dealing with the Bible itself. Faith is indeed the primary subject of the Bible apart from the two major subjects of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; and much of the Bible on those two very fundamental subjects of God and Jesus are there to engender "faith" on the part of the reader or listener. If momentarily we stick with the King James Version of the Bible – primarily because concordances such as YOUNG'S ANALYTICAL are more readily available for the

King James—we will find that the word “faith” is: (1) Found in the Bible with five distinct Hebrew and Greek words; (2) Two of those five are Hebrew words of the Old Testament and naturally the other three of those words are Greek words of the New Testament; and (3) Faith is primarily a New Testament word with only two usages in the Old Testament as compared to approximately 239 times in the New Testament; and (4) The word “faith” is found in 24 out of 27 New Testament books, faith itself is found in 27 out of 27 New Testament books as we will find it is also possible to talk about faith without the usage of the word itself.

However since the purpose of this first chapter is a definition of “faith” from the Bible, we will briefly look at all 241 usages of this word “faith” in the Bible; for it is in the usages of the word faith in the context of the verses, chapters, and books of the Bible that more define the concept of faith than even the precise definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1. In fact, as we look at the other 240 out of 241 usages of “faith”, you will come to appreciate even more the definition of Hebrews 11:1, especially when you consider the in-context weight of the fact that in Hebrews chapter 11 alone there are 23 other usages of the word “faith”; and that is a good place to start our study of the definition of faith as we find that Paul is summarizing faith in the Old Testament where the word faith itself has not previously been used. For example, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses are mentioned in Hebrews 11 as practitioners of faith, and yet the word “faith” is not mentioned except twice in the Old Testament. Just before we look at the usages of faith in Hebrews 11, we will look at the two usages in the Old Testament.

### **The Word “Faith” in the Old Testament**

#### 1. Faith in Deuteronomy 32:20.

The Hebrew word translated “faith” here in the King James Version is more literally in modern English translated as “faithfulness” or “steadiness”.

**“And he said (God said), I will hide my face from them (from the children of Israel), I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very forward generation, children in whom is no faith.”**  
(Deuteronomy 32:20 KJV)

2. Faith in Habakkuk 2:4.

Here the Hebrew word is more literally “faithfulness” or “stability”; but it gets redefined as do so many other Bible words when it is quoted in the New Testament, and naturally we would have to think that in the mind and heart of God that original meaning was in the Old Testament all the time, beyond the common usage of the Hebrew, or Greek, language in the ordinary usages of the conversations or other documents of the times.

a. Habakkuk 2:4 in the Old Testament.

**“Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.”** (Habakkuk 2:4 KJV)

b. Habakkuk 2:4 in the New Testament.

**“For I am not ashamed of the gospel ; for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘But the righteous man shall live by faith’.”** (Romans 1:16,17 NASV)

By the way, here in Romans 1:16,17 and in Habakkuk 2:4 as quoted in Romans 1:17, we see examples of both substance and evidence in faith. Here we see: (1) Gospel; (2) God’s power; (3) Salvation; (4) Believes; (5) Righteousness; and (6) God. God we have never seen!

**“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”** (John 1:18 KJV) The righteousness of God we have never seen.

Fortunately the righteousness of God was given some substance in the Old Testament by the laws of God, particularly the Ten

Commandments, and in the New Testament by the record of the life and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ –

**“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17 KJV)**

### **“Faith” in Hebrews 11**

1. Hebrews 11:1.

**“And what is faith? Faith gives substance to our hopes, and makes us certain of realities we do not see.” (Hebrews 11:1 NEV)**

2. Hebrews 11:2.

**“It is for their faith that the men of old stand on record.” (Hebrews 11:2 NEV)**

The New English Version adds “faith” to 11:2 whereas the implication of the King James Version is the same with “it” for faith, referring to the “faith” of Hebrews 11:1 as the “it” already on record. **“For by it the elders obtained a good report.” (Hebrews 11:2 KJV)**

This also serves to remind us that we are about to look closely at the “elders” or forefathers of the Old Testament and their good records or reports of faith, although the word “faith” is not mentioned in the original record.

3. Hebrews 11:3.

**“By faith we perceive that the universe was fashioned by the word of God, so that the visible came forth from the invisible.” (Hebrews 11:3 NEV)**

True, we can see the universe; and therefore we do not need the substance or evidence that faith gives -ah, but while we see the results, we do not see that God brought it into being instead of some great explosion or some other means that the majority of the world believes!

4. Hebrews 11:4, "by faith" Able left a memorial to faith and to righteousness by faith in that he sacrificed according to obedience, according to faith in the words which God spoke to him. Cain tried another way, and it did not work in the sight of God!

5. Hebrews 11:5 – Enoch pleased God, his faith in God pleased God; and that same faith was so great that God took him straight to heaven without passing through the portal of death.

6. Hebrews 11:6, Faith is the only way to please God!

"But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11:6 KJV)

NOTE: Here is something that is apparent but still needs to be noted. "Believe" is the verb form of the noun word "faith", so that while the book of John does not use the word "faith" as with some other books of the New Testament, indeed of the whole Bible, the word "believe" is found in those books.

What must men believe in order to please God?

(1). That God exists. That God is!

(2). That God rewards those who diligently seek Him. Those that sought God sincerely in the Old Testament through the Law, and those who seek God sincerely through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ after His Advent.

7. Hebrews 11:7: Noah could not see the rain yet nor the Flood of the whole earth that would come, yet he believed the word of God when God said that it was going to rain for 40 days and nights enough to Flood the whole earth and destroy everything living; and by this believing or faith, Noah "became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Heb 11:7 KJV).

Right here we could discuss extensively if desired as to whether this “righteousness” of Noah, a righteousness by faith, was seen or not seen. In other words as to whether it needed substance or evidence like faith, or as to whether the righteousness already had substance? To sufficient answer that question as with all questions in the Bible related to man’s righteousness – even as with Habakkuk 2:4 and Romans 1:16,17 quoted earlier, we must distinguish between legal righteousness and actual righteousness.

(1). Legal righteousness is that in the sight of God which therefore can not be seen by us even as God Himself can not be seen by us. Legal righteousness is sometimes called “justification” or the “atonement”. It is the legal act on the part of God whereby when God sees our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, He declares our righteousness to be the same as that of Jesus.

(2). Actual righteousness is the continuation of salvation after the initial regeneration or germ of salvation. At the new birth, or regeneration, the spirit of Christ is planted as a germ in our human spirits whereby we can grow in actual righteousness or Christlikeness. Sanctification is that process by which the power of the Holy Spirit continues to make us more actually righteous based on our increased faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### 8. Hebrews 11:8-19, the Faith of Abraham.

Read it for yourself in conjunction with the fact that God Himself preached the Gospel to Abraham as recorded in Galatians 3:8 and Genesis 12:1-3 –

“And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.” (Galatians 3:8 KJV) Even as you don’t see the word “faith” when you read Genesis 12:1-3, nor do you see God justifying (justification or atonement) neither Abraham nor the Gentiles to come, you also do not see the word “Gospel” in Genesis 12:1-3. However, although you do not see the

word Gospel or faith there, you know it is there in concept apart from the actual words because the New Testament says it is!

**“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” (Genesis 12:1-3 KJV)**

9. “By faith” Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, Hebrews 11:20-22.
10. “By faith” and Moses, Hebrews 11:23-29.
11. “By faith” and Joshua and the children of Israel marching around the walls of Jericho, Hebrews 11:30,31.
12. “By faith” a whole host of men and women of the Old Testament, Hebrews 11:32-40.

### **3-3: IMPACT OF THE HOPE!**

In order to get the full impact of Christian faith, we must first get the full impact of Christian hope – “now, faith is the substance of things HOPED FOR...” Three things are most important in the Christian life – faith, hope, and love; and although the greatest of these is love, in order to appreciate the full impact of the love of God in providing Christian faith as a way of life, we must see also all that God has provided both in this life and the life to come. All of this is summarized in HOPE!

**“Behold, I make all things new...” (Rev 21:5)**

One word, the word new, as found in Revelation 21:5 above can make obvious the full impact of hope upon Christian faith ! While they may seem a tremendous burden to place on one word, even the word new, it helps when we realize that this word and with the

words above in Revelation 21:5 comes from God Himself, from “he that sat upon the throne” (Rev 21:5). Quickly in the book of Revelation the Almighty God the Father becomes “HE THAT SAT (AND SITS) ON THE THRONE”. In other words, God the Father reigns supreme over all the universe; and although the Father has placed all things under the feet of Jesus, and by Jesus all things consists and have their being, above the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the Almighty God the Father who is sitting supreme on the great white throne. Just above the clouds, and with His feet in the clouds, sits God the Father in another dimension that we can not see. He sits on the “circle of the earth” so that He can see every sparrow that falls to the ground or each lily of the field that neither toils nor spins, yet your heavenly Father cares for them.

This God, the God of love and power, the God of the great white throne on the circle of the earth, and the God of the Lord Jesus Christ and full salvation, is the God who speaks, saying, “Behold, I make all things new...” You can count on it that all things in the heavens and on earth will be new. Counting on it, counting on these words from the Great Almighty God sitting on the great white throne of the universe is what faith is all about. Without faith, it is impossible to please God. Faith believes that God is, that God is sitting up there on the great white throne caring and watching; and that this God rewards those who diligently seek Him!

God is making “all things” new:

1. God is making a new earth.
2. God is making new heavens.
3. God is making a new people to inhabit the new earth and under the new heavens.

All presently in this universe is very fragile. As physicists have told us for generations and as stated in the second law of thermodynamics – the order of the universe is decreasing. It is

called the “law of entropy”. Entropy is increasing, and entropy is essentially disorder. So that the law of entropy tells us that order is decreasing in the universe and disorder is increasing. Sometimes we might tend to think that this physical law also has a social implication as a few weeks ago we witnessed in the news the anarchy, riots, and destruction in the city of Los Angeles. As we realize that our American society has within it the potential for self-destruction. Even as we realized also with the Judge Thomas affair that if America is destroyed, it must be destroyed from within as no foes are powerful enough to destroy it from the outside; and that this way of destruction is to destroy each other democratically in the public forum as we kill reputations, careers, and respect for others. With the boomers it has become very popular to tear down without grace and without compassion. No doubt these social as well as physical potentials for destruction are what the Apostle Paul had in mind as he wrote: **“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.” (Romans 8:22 KJV)**

The earth itself groans with earthquakes; the heavens of the universe groans with falling stars and entropy; and society and the individuals that make up society groan in self destruction for something better, and to be better! Even as the Creation of the world of the Genesis account includes the stars, the moon, the sun, man, and all the animals, fish, and birds, even so must the “whole creation (which) groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” include man, earth, and the heavens. The obvious analogy here is of a woman in travail and groaning to give birth; and even as that pain of birth is endured in order for the hope of bringing forth a new child, even so the groaning of this old earth, heavens, and man is in the hope of the new earth, new heavens, and the new man.

### **The Context of Romans 8:22**

In order to build faith in hope, and hope in faith, we will base our faith and hope on the content of the Word of God as given in these verses that surround in context of Romans 8:22. In other words, we will develop more understanding of Romans 8:22 by developing more understanding of the words that surround Romans 8:22.

Romans 8:18-13 –

**“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope; for what man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” (Romans 8:18-13 KJV)**

The contrast is obvious between the present life and the life to come – “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us”. This is the contrast between “the present life” and the future life; and while some criticisms of non-Christians or of social Christianity have been valid in that Christians have and do sometimes ignore the applications of Christian faith to this present life while concentrating solely on the future life, it is still true that **THERE IS**

**NO COMPARISON BETWEEN THIS PRESENT LIFE AND THE FUTURE LIFE.**

And that while we must heed the faith contending of the Apostle James – to be discussed in the second half of this book – that faith is

dead faith in this life without words in this life, it remains a fact of the Bible, the Word of God, that the priority is for the future life where all things, people and universe, will be made new!

1. Romans 8:18. We must distinguish between the three aspects of salvation: (1) Salvation in the past which is called “regeneration” or the new birth which happens or happened the first time that a Christian expressed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; (2) Salvation in the present which is a matter of Christian growth or growth in Christlikeness which is generally called “sanctification”; and (3) Salvation in the future of which Paul is writing in Romans 8:18, “the glory which shall be revealed in us”. This last aspect of future salvation is much greater than the past and present aspects of salvation: this last aspect of salvation in the future is the very reason that Paul at the close of this passage in Romans 8:24 writes of “we are saved by hope”; for this is a salvation still to come. One which requires hope and requires faith!

2. Romans 8:19. Here is another way to say hope and faith: “earnest expectation”. It is more than legitimate expectation: It is earnest expectation! What do we wait to happen in the future as we continue in earnest expectation? The answer is here in this verse—“for the manifestation of the sons of God” These are the new creatures of the new heavens and new earth, the new sons of God. Even as Jesus Christ was and is the “firstborn of God”, so also is every Christian the secondborns as sons of God. As the Bible tells us in John 1:12.

**“But as many as received him (Christ the Word made flesh), to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:12,13 KJV)**

The Apostle John is so fearful that we are going to miss the prime purpose of the book of John which is to “believe” in order to have

“life”, abundant life at the present time and eternal life in the future, that here at the beginning and in the first chapter he lays out the whole plan of salvation around the Lord Jesus Christ as the “Word made flesh”.

3. Romans 8:20. This matter of every person on the face of the earth “being subjected to vanity” speaks also of this tendency of individuals and societies to self destruct. The Apostle James, quoting from the Old Testament in Proverbs, says it this way of even the Christian spirit:

**“Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?” (James 4:5 KJV)**

No, the Bible says nothing to vain for those who have ears to hear and eyes to see; and the Bible, Old and New Testaments, tells us that even after the initial faith and new birth that the old spirit stays inside us, that spirit even of a Christian which continues to envy, to vanity, and to self destruct.

4. Romans 8:21.

**“Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” (Romans 8:21 KJV)**

(1). FROM: the bondage of corruption, from vanity, and from the spirit within us which lusteth to envy.

(2). TO: glorious liberty from corruption, from vanity, and from the spirit within that lusteth to envy; and to being a complete and completed child of God, a completely new creation in Christ!

5. Romans 8:22: “FOR WE KNOW THAT THE WHOLE CREATION GROANETH AND

TRAVAILETH IN PAIN TOGETHER UNTIL NOW”. (ROMANS 8:22 KJV)

(1). Romans 8:22 in the New English Version.

**“Up to this present, we know, the whole created universe groans in all its parts as if in the pang of childbirth.” (Romans 8:22 NEV)**

- a. “We know” – this is a matter of faith, hope, and understanding, that we have

the confidence to know.

- b. “The whole created universe groans” – this gives us obvious understanding

that it is the whole universe of earth, heavens, and created beings.

- c. “In the pangs of childbirth” – this gives us obvious understanding that the

groaning and travailing of the King James Version is that of childbirth. The earth is in the pain of childbirth to bring forth the new earth; the heavens are in the pains of childbirth, or entropy, to bring forth the new heavens; and men and women are in the pains of childbirth to bring forth new men and new women.

(2). Romans 8:22 in the New American Standard Version.

**“For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.” (Romans 8:22 NASV)**

6. Romans 8:23.

**“And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” (Romans 8:23 KJV)**

- (1). We wait in hope and faith as Christians for the complete body.
- (2). We wait in hope and faith for the completed work of the Holy Spirit inside and outside our bodies, sanctification and glorification.
- (3). We wait in hope and faith for the completed adoption as children of God.

(4). We wait in hope and faith for completed redemption; that is, for the complete salvation of our bodies as well as our souls and spirits.

7. Romans 8:24.

How are we saved? “For we are saved by hope...” Is it hope if we can see our salvation already? No, “but hope that is seen is not hope...” You are out of luck if you can see your salvation as completed already, because this is not hope! If you see your salvation then you have nothing to hope for: “For what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?”

8. Romans 8:13.

**“But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” (Romans 8:13 KJV)**

### 3-3: FIRST CENTURY HISTORY OF FAITH CONTENDING.

Okay, we have the faith as set out in the first six chapters of this commentary. Now, what are we going to do with it? The Bible teachings that we are to do three things with our Christian faith: (1) Grow in it; (2) Evangelize with it; and (3) Contend for it. While growing in the Christian faith is important for both ourselves and others with whom we evangelize and contend, the second two are strictly for other people – to contend with the Christian faith for the benefit of others and we evangelize for the benefit of others, the two for others aspects of Christian faith have approximately equal priority in our Christian efforts. This is indicated by the temporal priority the Apostle Jude gave to faith contending as he stopped writing a book on the salvation of evangelism in order to write a book on faith contending –

**“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” (Jude 3 KJV)**

You see how “faith” here in Jude 3 covers the two distinct usage of faith in the rest of the New Testament – as a summary and as an individual exercise – which were discussed in the first six chapters. And the way Jude writes of “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” leads us to believe that all the Apostles except Jude have already done their job of delivering in written and verbal form the summary of faith in their books of the New Testament – first Matthew, then Paul, then James and Peter, and lastly John before the Apostle Jude comes to write about the necessity of “Faith Contending”!

THE REASON THAT FAITH CONTENDING IS NECESSARY IS BECAUSE THE FAITH BECOMES DISTORTED BY THOSE WHO PRACTICE CONTENTIOUS FAITH!

### **What Happened in First Century Christianity?**

You miss the whole point of Jude, of faith contending, and of the primary reason for faith contending if you do not realize that the problem then and now is with certain leaders that are inside the Christian faith! “For there are certain men crept in unawares...” (Jude 4 KJV): these men, leaders in certain churches were inside the Christian movement; and that is the kind of men that the book of Jude is dealing with, the kind of problem with which faith contending then and today must deal. FAITH CONTENDING DEALS WITH CONTENTIOUS FAITH ON THE PART OF CONTENTIOUS LEADERS IN SOME CHURCHES! Let me briefly summarize what happened related to Christian faith in the First Century churches, and which simultaneously created needs for increased faith and faith contending: (1) The Apostle Paul near the end of his missionary journeys called the elders of the church at Ephesus together to warn them as to how quickly men immediately after his departure would come into their churches from outside and some men homegrown that would divert from the faith; (2) About the same time Paul was working with the Gentile churches, the Apostle James found it necessary to explain to Jewish Christians

the difference between dead faith and living faith, between faith with works and faith without works; (3) Likewise about the same time the Apostle Peter had to also write the Christian Jews to warn of dogs that were returning to their vomit; (4) Later the Apostle John wrote first Revelation and then the Gospel of John to give men the proper basis for belief, believing in the Lord Jesus Christ; (5) then in 1 John while setting forth that certain men can not be prayed for who have committed the unpardonable sin, the Apostle John urged in the spirit of faith contending to “test the spirits” because many false spirits and Antichrists were already in the world; (6) II John had to deal with those false spirits and Antichrists in terms of an exclusion from the company of Christians; (7) Since those of contentious faith quickly assimilate all characteristics of the real faith by the time of III John the practitioners of contentious faith had begin to reject a real messenger from a real Apostle from their company; and (8) The Apostle Jude reiterates about the warnings of the Apostles Paul, James, Peter, and John concerning men that would crept into the First Century Christian movement unawares, leading other Christians astray.

Above is a brief of what we will look at in more detail in this chapter. These conclusions and perspectives will be supported with quotations and references from the Scriptures. You will find that what we are talking about is a FIRST CENTURY HISTORY OF FAITH CONTENDING.

### **The Miletus Pastor’s Conference**

Paul at the end of his missionary journeys and before he went to Jerusalem where he had been warned that imprisonment awaited him, called the Ephesian elders together at Miletus for a Pastor’s Conference. He warned them what would happen immediately after his departure, how that “grievous wolves” would come into the churches of Asia from two sources: (1) Some would come from outside the churches on promise of letter; and (2) Others would-be home-grown Christians and Christian leaders –

**“Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has given you charge, as shepherds of the church of the Lord, which he won for himself by his own blood. I know that when I am gone, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from you own body there will be men coming forward who will distort the truth to induce the disciples to break away and follow them. So be on the alert; remember how for three years, night and day, I never ceased to consul each of you, and how I wept over you.” (Acts 20:28 31 NEV)**

How quickly the “savage wolves” can come in behind evangelistic and Christian growth work! Paul worked at Ephesus for three years, giving them the best efforts of a loving and knowledgeable Apostle. The Bible tells us that during this period of time that the efforts were so extensive that all Asia heard the Gospel with Ephesus as an evangelistic and teaching base. It is here that we see, no doubt, the foundation for all the seven churches of Asia Minor that are mentioned in the first chapters of the book of Revelation, which by the way is also an exercise in faith contending and part of the First Century History of Faith Contending. Now, one point that I will consistently make here is that if the savage wolves came immediately behind the Apostle Paul himself and in the First Century, what do you expect to happen in this Century? Ah yes, they are here; and they are in the Christian movement; and they are as hard, if not harder, to recognize as they were in the First Century.

Paul calls them “savage wolves” or “grievous wolves” – Acts 20:29.

The Apostle James calls them “enemies of God” since they are a friend of the world – James 4:4.

The Apostle Peter calls these “false teachers” “natural brute beasts”, comparing them to the Proverbs about dogs and vomit and pigs and mud – II Peter 2.

The Apostle John calls them false spirits and Antichrists, warning not to pray for them when they have crossed the boundary of the unpardonable sin – I John.

The Apostle Jude calls them “spots in your feasts”, clouds without water, raging waves of the sea, and wandering stars – Jude 12,13.

“Wow, these are horrible men,” you might say. “We don’t know any of them since such would be immediately apparent if they came into our fellowship.”

NOT SO; AND THAT IS PART OF THE PROBLEM – ALSO THE REASON THAT PAUL USES THE WORD “WOLVES” AS IN “WOLVES IN SHEEP’S CLOTHING. YOU CAN NOT RECOGNIZE THEM. IF YOU COULD RECOGNIZE THEM THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM!

### **Dead Faith versus Living Faith**

The whole book of James by the Apostle James is truly an effort to “contend for the faith” by pointing out to first century Christians and therefore also to us what is the difference between real Christian faith and simulated Christian faith. The problem then as today was that many claimed to be Christians and Christian leaders who were not Christian at all!

**“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?” (James 2:19,20 KJV)**

And James is much deeper than faith versus works. It is faith with a certain kind of works versus faith without a certain kind of works. All Christians and all humans have some kind of works, some sort of things which they do good or bad and in between; and the things which we do are called our works. We definitely have some kinds of works; but the Apostle James is going much deeper than faith versus works in defining the kind of works that are accepted as living proofs of living faith.

1. Living faith brings tribulations which give birth to Christian patience, James 1:3,4. By the faith tribulation is faith contending itself because it tests your own faith—

“Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.”  
(James 1:3 KJV)

2. Living faith receives wisdom from God, James 1:5.

## **Chapter 4: The Sound of a Sound Faith.**

Christ wants to do you good. He desires the best for your life as does God the Father, the great God of this universe. God sent His Son, Christ, to earth to prove to individuals that he desires good for their life. In fact, it is recorded about Christ while He was here on this earth that “He went about doing good.” Isn’t that amazing? “How many people do you know that aggressively go about seeking to do you good.” Many people want to manage, control, and advise you; but few, or none, want to aggressively do good for you. Christ does! While the way of the world is to manage, control, and advise—all ego builders and self-serving for the people of the world: the way of Christ on the other hand is to serve, minister, and do good. In this chapter and the last, we will illustrate from John and Ephesians how God and Christ do the individual good.

You recall how Jesus answered the question of Judas in John 14, of how the Father and the Son will dwell in the heart of anyone who loves Jesus and keeps the teachings of Jesus. Well, the words teachings, doctrine, and faith are almost synonymous, and that is the subject of this chapter. When we come to the Sound of a Sound Faith, we will discuss the fine points of distinction between doctrine, faith, and teachings. Let it just be said now, before we come to the last chapter on “What Do You Do?”, a closer look at the Christ to Individuals messages of Revelation 2-3, that you will find

how concerned Christ was with unsound doctrine in the seven churches of Asia Minor. One doctrine in particular, Christ says “I hate it.”

#### 4-1: THE BIBLE (I Timothy 2-4).

Even as Christ is for Individuals, so also is the Bible for Individuals. One of the greatest hoaxes every perpetuated on the public is that the Bible is a book for scholars instead of individuals. True, the Apostle Paul who wrote 14 of the 27 New Testament books was a scholar, but he was also a tentmaker; and those 14 New Testament books were first letters written to individuals at different churches. In some cases, they were not even written to churches, simply to individuals, like the books of Philemon, Titus, and I and II Timothy. When Paul wrote, “brethren, you see your calling how not many wise and noble are called...”; it implied that since the Bible is written for those of the Christ-Calling, that is, it is written to be understood by those that are not wise and noble. And that is true!

### **I. The foundation and seal of approval of God Himself is Christ for the Individual.**

When it comes to matters of faith and practice, you can not build on any firmer foundation than the foundation of the Creator and Sustainer of this earth, God Himself. If you want approval or a seal of approval to supply to yourself security in these “perilous times” when so many in churches and out of churches are falling away from the faith, there is no better, I’m sure you would agree, seal of approval than of God Himself. According to the Word of God as found in II Timothy 2:19 “Nevertheless, the foundation of God stands certain, having this seal: (1) The

Lord knows those individuals who are His own; and (2) Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

1. The LORD God and the Lord Jesus Christ know those individuals who belong to them.

2. Whatever name you use to identify yourself with Christ, Christian, Christ-controlled, or whatever, let those that identify with the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

3. How does the Bible define “iniquity”? It is another word for sin which in turn is another words of lawlessness. **{\*\*You see the Bible as Word of God assumes that the laws of God have preeminence, as they do; and that all sin is against God and a violation of the laws of God, and so it is.\*\*}**

## II. Sound Doctrines or Teachings of the Bible include the eschatology of “perilous times” and “the {falling way} time”.

The “time” would be that of the days just before that Great and Notable Day of the LORD when God wraps up all in the universe and provides ultimate justice. The “perilous times” of II Timothy are those times when the behavior of church members is out of Christ control. It doesn’t speak about the conditions of the churches: it speaks about the condition of members in the churches. I don’t think it has anything to do with which denomination: it is a matter of individual character, personality, and behavior. Just as there are the times of revival when spirituality is on a mountain top, so also there are times down in the valleys, or more appropriately down in the swamps when the opposite of revival is true. Like the Bible in II Timothy, you can call it the “perilous times”. Don’t confuse that with the end time which we will discuss later. Both the perilous times and the end time are discussed in the same chapter of II Timothy 3.

1. “Perilous times” are those periods of history, like now, when church members are more wrapped up in their self-esteem and personal conscience than that are in the sound doctrine of the Bible, of Christ-control, and of a life led by the Spirit of God.

2. “the time” in “the time will come” of II Timothy 4:3 is near the end of the last days just before the Great and

Notable Day of the LORD that wraps up time on this planet as we have come to know it. It is obviously the Falling Away Time since according to the passage church members “will no longer endure sound doctrine”.

III. The challenge for Individuals during these hard times, perilous times or end times, or both, to borrow words from the Bible, is to be useful to the Master.

1. The challenge is for complete, Christ-controlled Individuals.

The doctrine, correction, reproof of the Bible, and the instruction in righteousness is to make complete persons. All Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, is given by inspiration of God; and the end goal of this Word of God for Individuals is to make complete persons in Christ.

Persons, if you would, who will not be the church members of the perilous times. Church members that will not have a low tolerance level for sound doctrine; that do not go about seeking teachers that will tickle their ears with something new. Church members that do not turn away from the truth. Church members, like many we know, who do not turn into fables. The problems are the perilous times among church members and the falling away from the faith near the end time; and the cure is sound doctrine from the Bible, for Christ-control, and from the Spirit led life.

2. The challenge to the Complete Person is to be for the Master’s Use. The complete person is the person that is a dedicated vessel that honors God and Christ, one that the Master can use.

4-2: Christ (Ephesians 1, 2).

**“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins...” (Ephesians 2:1) INTRODUCTION.**

1. Apologetics of Christ-Faith is a circular logic rather than inductive or deductive or any other form of 1,2,3... logic.

2. Each phrase, verse, or sentence of Ephesians is packed as the book of Ephesians is with meaning as a summary of the first 10 letters written by the Apostle Paul.

**I. The Apologetics of the Bible goes in circles from God to Christ to the Bible to God, etc. The God Who made you alive although you were dead in trespasses and sins.** 1. The Christ of The God of our Lord Jesus Christ A. (Ephesians 1:17,20-22).

(1). The Christ that was raised from the dead.

(2). The Christ ascended and seated at the right hand of God.

(3). Above all: principality, power, might, dominion, and every name

(4) All things under His feet.

(5). Made Him the Head over all things to the church. B. (Ephesians 2:14-18).

(1). Christ is Himself our Peace.

(2). Christ abolished in His flesh the enmity.

(3). Christ reconciled both to God.

(4). Christ came and preached peace.

(5). Through Christ we have access to the Father.

2. The Father of Glory. (Eph. 1:17)

3. The Father that Paul prays may give you: hope of His calling, riches of His inheritance, and the greatness of His power available to us.

4. The Father who showed His power when He raised Christ from the dead and placed Him at His right hand.

## **II. Man rebels against every law that God has every laid down. (Ephesians 2:1-3)**

1. Satan started the trend when he told the first woman that she would not indeed die if she ate of the fruit of the tree of good and evil.
2. Satan is still active; but we can not blame it all on him. Men and women are all too quick to rebel against the will or law of God.
3. Words and phrases used in Ephesians 2:1-3 to describe this rebellion against God and God's laws.
  - (1). Dead in trespasses and sins.
  - (2). Walked according to the course of this world.
  - (3). Walked according to the prince of the power of the air.
  - (4). Walked according to the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.
  - (5). Conducted selves in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.
  - (6). By nature children of wrath like the rest of the world.

## **III. By the mercy of God, you individually are now alive and fellowcitizens with the saints.**

1. YOU ARE ALIVE! (Ephesians 2:4-10)
2. YOU ARE FELLOWCITIZENS WITH THE SAINTS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD (Ephesians 2:19-22).

{\*\*This is an expansion of comments on the Ephesians 1 and 2 outline above. After all, Christ must be the prime subject of any Bible commentary even as Christ is the prime subject of the Bible.\*\*}  
Even as the real church or assembly is the church of the Firstborn written and registered, and even protected in heaven, so also are the major spiritual blessings IN CHRIST. Ephesians 1:3 words it this way: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. As we look at the teachings of the Bible on Christ for the individual, it would be good to focus on SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN CHRIST. Although it has a lot to do with the individual, the focus is still on Christ and on what God did through Christ for the individual.

## **I. Spiritual Blessings IN CHRIST.**

You will find in the book of Ephesians a far better description of the proper relationship between Christ, God, and the believing individual, better than Christian, better than believer, better than born again, and on the same level as “God knows his own”; and that is IN CHRIST. 1. God individual chose believers IN CHRIST from before the foundation of the earth. The same God who has the individual hairs on the head numbered; the same God who knows when the sparrow falls to the ground and assures that the birds have something to eat; and the same God who along with so many provisions on this earth provided the lilies of the field with beauty, also provides the individual with clothing. The God saw you before you were born, and chose you IN CHRIST to be a believer.

2. God individually determined that those IN CHRIST would be adopted as His sons, only through Christ. It is even as the Apostle John writes in John 1:8: “But as many as received Christ to that individual God gave the right to become sons of God.

3. IN CHRIST the individual believer also has redemption through the blood of Christ that was shed on Calvary’s cross almost two thousand years ago. Redemption is another word for salvation. It is the buying back from the slavery and servitude of sin on the part of God the Father through Christ. Along with the salvation of this redemption comes for the individual forgiveness of sins.

4. As you believed in Christ you were individually sealed with the promise of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is our promise or down payment on completed salvation in the heavenly places.

## **II. Some Things About Christ from Ephesians 1.**

We could get carried away with our own personal blessings and forget the prime subject of Christ. Ephesians 1, especially 1:20-23, tells us things about the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

1. The mighty power of God was at work when He raised Jesus from the dead on the third day. This is the ultimate in power on earth: the power to overcome death. Once again this is the reason the only important church or assembly is the church of the First born. Christ was the first to be born again from the dead, ever on earth. And as the song goes, "because he lives, we also can live." We are the second borns.

2. Christ ascended back to heaven as the first eleven disciples were watching, and the Bible tells us that Christ was seated on the right hand of God the Father, another blessing in heavenly places. Later in the Bible, especially in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as given in John 14,15, we will learn that when Christ was seated at the right hand of God, a place of honor, of course, He sent the Holy Spirit on the first day of Pentecost after His ascension. There at the right hand of God Jesus is ever living to make intercession for individual sins and preparing to come again to complete the salvation that He started in us.

3. Paul wants us to know what a position of honor and power it is for Christ to be seated at the right hand on God.

(1). It is far above all governments of the earth;

(2). It is far above on power and might on earth, above all weapons and armies and military and political might (sometimes they don't

know it and think they are running lose in the world at their own control);

(3). It is far above all state dominions and kingdom dominions and national dominions and United Nations dominions;

(4). It is far above every name that can be named in government, literature, science, religion, and you name it; names now and names in the ages to come.

(5). When God seated Christ at His right hand, He put all things in heaven and earth under the feet of Christ. Other Scriptures put this same teaching of the Bible in different words.

**“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**

**(Philippians 2:9-11)**

And one of the best descriptions of this power relationship between God, Christ, and individual man is given in II Corinthians 15:20-27:

**“But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one inn his own order: Christ the first fruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He as put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. For ‘He has put all things under His feet’. But when He says, ‘all things are put under Him,’ it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”**

**III. Man rebels and has always rebelled against every law that God has laid down.** I like to use BIC for Before IN CHRIST to describe the condition of the person before salvation; and AIC for After IN CHRIST to describe the condition after initial salvation. Paul uses several colorful phrases to describe the BIC condition in the first few verses of Ephesians 2.

1. BIC all individuals are dead in trespasses and sins. There is a fine point of distinction between sins and between lawlessness or trespasses. But either way individuals apart from God in Christ are dead, dead to God, dead to Christ, and dead to the new life, and dead to eternal life.

2. BIC individuals walks according to “the course of this world”. This is colorful language. Perhaps you have never thought of this world with its long history of many nations and persons of having a single course; however, it does according to the Bible, and that course is contrary to the life in Christ. This course of the world is further described in Ephesians 2:2 as being according to the prince of this world which is Satan.

3. BIC individuals are also described as sons of disobedience, and I think we should momentarily dwells on this rebellious aspect of BIC. Those natural born individuals without the second birth have a spirit at work in them that is the inward work of Satan, according to the Bible. And like Satan himself who is the Father of the lie according to Jesus, the spirit in the natural person promotes lying and rebellion. We can think of several examples of this from the Bible.

(1). When God put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, there was no sin. God gave man and woman a choice. He said of all the fruit of the tree you may eat except this one, and if you eat of the fruit of this tree you shall surely die. Along comes Satan to say that is a lie.

(2). When God created man to be both male and female and ordained that they would live together for life, saying what God has joined together let no man put asunder, man came along with rebellion and still does, saying we have a better plan for marriage such as: several wives or husbands in one lifetime, or same sex marriage instead of a male and female.

(3). After the Flood that destroyed all humanity on the earth except for seven souls, God and Noah instructed the three sons of Noah to carry out the original commission to replenish the whole earth and have dominion over it. Instead man migrated by to the Mesopotamia valley and created the city of Babel to make a reputation for himself, and to build a tower of Babel that would reach all the way to heaven and be higher than a flood.

(4). It is still true today as man rebels against all God has said. God says salvation is by grace, man says no he will do it by works; God says marriage is for life, the courts of man say no we can make other provisions; God says Christ is head of the church, man says no we can do a better job of church government; and on and on.

IV. You Believe in God, Jesus says, Believe also in Him (John 14:1-6)

Those that come to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him is what the famous faith chapter of Hebrews 11 tells us. They that come to God and to the Word of God in the Bible must also believe that God has given testimony to Jesus as His Son. Part of that diligent seeking after God who is really one with Jesus is the believing in Jesus.

1. Jesus and the Bible says that God and Jesus are One.
2. If you see Jesus from the Bible and from the preaching of Jesus you have seen God according to Jesus.

3. Jesus said that if you don't believe his words that they are one to believe Him because of the miracle works that the Father gave Him to do.
4. Jesus told His disciples that He went to prepare a place in heaven and that He would come a Second time to gather all believers to Himself.
5. Jesus said that we know the way to where He is going back to the Father, and that He is that way, that truth, and that life.

4-3: [God the Father \(Matthew 4,5\)](#).

### **I. "God Is Good"**

I was asked the other day why Sunday is my day of rest. This quizzer said, "I suppose it is a religious thing." Well yes. Do you remember the Ten Commandments and the one in particular which states, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Like God Himself, it is still valid and up to date. The world comes along and tries to use that day of rest for its own benefit. Well, Christ enters the human scene and clarifies the matter by saying, "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath." In other words, the Sabbath like so much established by God and Christ was meant to do men good. The Sabbath is made for man in order that he might have a day of rest.

The initial Creation of the universe by God illustrates His goodness. All the fruits and flowers and birds and beasts and fish were made by God for the good of man. He provides not only food but also the aesthetic values of beauty. Even the oxygen we breath on this earth as compared to the lack of it on other planets, is a provision from the goodness of God. The very air we breathe is provided out of the goodness of God. The beautiful sunrises and sunsets; the beauty of the mountains and the lush valleys all come from the goodness of God.

And this is a good time to bring out as does John in his Gospel of John how Christ was there active during the Creation of the world.

**“In the beginning was the Word (the favorite introductory word in the Gospel of John for Christ is the ‘Word’); and the Word was with God and the Word was God. All things were made through Him and without Him was not anything made which was made.”**

Notice that “through Him”, that is, through Christ all things of this universe, stars, sky, heavens and earth, were made. Nothing came into existence without the mediating cause of Christ. This is the reason one scholar as called Christ as the “mediating cause”. *“God the Father is the originating cause; God the Son is the Mediating Cause; and God the Spirit is the effecting cause.”* Automatically we have a natural outline to illustrate how God is Good. It naturally flows as: (1). God the Father is good as the originating cause; (2) God the Son is good as the mediating cause; and (3) God the Spirit is good as the effecting cause.

(1). God the Father is good as the originating cause.

We can safely say that nothing existed before God. The Bible in Genesis tells us that the earth was “without form and void” before God said, “let there be land, and sea, and light and dark” and so on right up to the Creation of man. The Creation is only one illustration of the goodness of God as the originating cause.

Another is the goodness of God as the originator of the Bible. Over two Thousand years in preparation as this book of 66 books that we call the Bible, and over 40 authors all moved by the Spirit of God; but in that extensive preparation and writing God revealed to man for once and for all what He desires and demands for the human race. God did not make us and leave us. He provided through this book a way that man might know what is really going on in the universe; what He expects of us; and what is the ultimate destination of man for good. God establishes contact with man through the Bible; and in the Bible, he tells man exactly how to maintain contact with Him, contact now and contact eternally.

(2). God the Son is good as the mediating cause.

Not only did God's Son, the Word, does us good as the mediating cause in Creation; but approximately 2000 years ago Christ came to earth to show man exactly what God is like and in so showing how God is good. Christ healed the sick, He caused the lame to walk and the blind to see; He feed the multitudes when they were hungry; He walked on water to still the waves for the Apostles; and primarily the preached the Gospel of life and died on the cross for the sins of the world.

(3). God the Holy Spirit is good as the effecting cause.

Many people still wonder how Christ can be every where on this earth doing good for every individual that will allow Him. Well, the answer is that the Holy Spirit of God effecting the work and way of God with His goodness on the earth is the Spirit of Christ. The Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Christ are one and the same.

## II. "God is Love."

The goodness of God goes far beyond doing good to the extent of love. The Bible says simply that "God is Love". And to prove the goodness of God and the love of God, God sent His own Son to this earth to minister, and then to give His life on the cross for the sins of the world In the Sermon on the Mount preached by Jesus Himself and recorded in Matthew 5,6, Jesus tried to make clear to the world the things that only He knew about God the Father.

After all, Jesus came from being with God the Father in heaven when He was born on earth, and He went back to be with God the Father after His resurrection and ascension. Jesus expressed it this way to Philip when Philip said, "**Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.**" (John 14:8)

That is a far cry for what the Church (\*\*it is the word "ecclesia", but at Mount Sinai most often translated "assembly"\*\*) at Mount Sinai said. When they heard the voice of God Himself, saw the fire and smoke and darkness, and felt the tempest, they cried for Moses to talk to them instead of God. Philip said to Jesus, just show us the

Father and we will be happy. Jesus made the difference in turning the fear of God into a love of God. The difference in love and fear is also the difference in a little personal knowledge. Like the Apostle John would write later after the life of Jesus on earth, and in the little epistle of I John, "perfect love cast out fear". The Apostle John as one of the original disciples of Jesus was known as the Apostle of love, and he knew that the more personal experience and real love for God and Christ, the more the fear would disappear. God is still a consuming fire and we must know that when the Day of the LORD finally comes that all efforts of the love of God through Christ to win and woo are over, it is a time for the righteousness judgment of God. When we come to the church of the Firstborn, the Assembly that is written and registered in heaven, unlike the fear of the Assembly at Mount Sinai, we come to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant and also to God the Father the judge of all.

Back to the answer of Jesus to the request from Philip to show us the Father. Jesus said: **"Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father, so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority, but the Father who dwells in Me does the works." (John 14:8-10)**

#### 1. How to Get to Heaven where the Father is?

Some of those best-known words and works that God gave to Jesus are recorded by Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount. In that Sermon, Jesus wants to impart to the listeners that will believe something of His concept of the Father. Of course, everyone knows that heaven is where God the Father dwells, so Jesus starts off with telling them what kind of people will be with God in heaven. Notice how different this is from the concepts of the world. It is the poor in spirit; it is those who mourn; it is the meek; it is those who hunger and thirst after righteousness; the merciful; the pure in

heart that will see God in heaven; and the peacemakers that will sit there in heaven with God and Jesus and be called the sons of God.

## 2. Jesus taught us to pray to Our Father in heaven.

Because God is the Father of Jesus is the reason through Christ that God has also become our Father. Jesus was the First born in the Assembly, and because He was first born we are able to follow. So Jesus taught the correct method to pray, not like the religious leaders of His day, the Pharisees and Sadducees, who thought they would be heard for their much speaking in prayer, for their vain repetitions, and their standing on the street corner while they prayed to be seen of men. Jesus stressed that God the Father lives in a secret place and therefore He sees in a secret place, so that when you go in a closet to pray privately you are coming much closer to God than to be seen of other men. Pray "Our Father which art in heaven", and show respect for the name and presence of God, "hallowed be thy name." (Parenthetically, may I say I don't see how anyone can possibly say and mean, "God, hallowed by thy name" when they have the same week taken God's name in vain, and sometimes very often. In the definition of faith of Hebrews 11, it is told that he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him. Showing respect for the hallowed name of God is the right way to come to God: taking the name of God in vain is the wrong and opposite way to come to God. There is submission to a recognition of God as the Father. We will want His kingdom to come – we already heard from Jesus the ones that will be in the kingdom of God and of heaven, peacemakers, merciful, pure in heart, etc.; and we will want to do the will of God, "thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

We know that right there at the site of heaven of the Assembly of the Firstborn with that innumerable band of angel enforcers all

around, that the will of God is being fully done in heaven: we need to want it here on earth.

Unlike the prayers of the Pharisees and Sadducees, our prayers are to be simple: pray to God the Father for no more than daily bread, for forgiveness of sins, and to be led away from temptation and from Satan. And finally some awe of God as that all kingdoms belong to Him, all power, and all glory, amen, amen, and amen, forever and ever.

3. God the Father knows all your needs and will provide.

Finally in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus shows the most tender care of the Heavenly Father as He makes clear that God knows all our needs and provides for them. If you will seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all things like food and clothing will be provided. Jesus gives the birds of the air as an example of God's knowledge of individuals and of the lilies of the field. You don't see the birds lacking for food and you don't see the lilies of the field lack for clothing. The God who knows when a sparrow falls to the ground knows about all these things.

### **III. God demands that His creatures also do good.**

Long ago in the Old Testament God demanded that his creatures, especially those that call themselves the people of God, in turn do good even as He does people good. Much of this has been rationalized away by the philosophy and ways of the world, but like God Himself who changes not with the centuries this requirement on the human race has not changed.

The title of the three volumes is THE LEARN CHRIST FROM THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, and in this next to the last chapter of volume 2, you will hear about how to learn Christ according to the Bible. For those who claim to be Christians, it is an opportunity and obligation to learn Christ and to be like Christ. It is unfortunate that the Apostle Paul had to write a early church, the

church at Ephesus, to tell them that “this was not the way they learned Christ”.

**“But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness.”**  
(Ephesians 4:20-24 NJKV)

In this day when Christian and church have lost so much meaning, it is even more mandatory that we get back to the way to Learn Christ according to the pages of the Bible. The lack from Christians of doing others good in just one indication of Christ not having been learned. He did others good, and that is the opportunity and obligation of those who call themselves by His name.

Unfortunately, the ways of the world have been adopted by churches and Christians so that many efforts are made to manage, control, and use individuals rather than to serve, minister, and do good.

#### **IV. Christ sets the example for goodness.**

CHRIST FOR INDIVIDUALS has accepted the challenge to illustrate to others from the Bible, in particular the books of John and Ephesians, how Christ sets the example for good deeds and for goodness of character and personality. It took the Apostle Peter a couple of years to really learn Christ. After he did, after he learned what Christ meant to do good by feeding the sheep of Christ, then Peter wrote: **“He who would love life and see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile; let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil.”** (I Peter 3:10-12 NJKV and Psalm 34:12-16). Notice Peter quoted this from the Old Testament. It originated

from the mind and heart of God the Father; it was written in the Old Testament book of Psalms through the effecting cause of God the Holy Spirit and then later in the New Testament by the same effecting cause of the Holy Spirit; and then it was mediated to the human race or illustrate as Christ lived and did good on this earth, and in turn the Apostle Peter learned it from Christ that he might also show and teach it.

(1). "He who would love life and see good days..."

Here God early in the history of the human race set up the challenge of "goodness" You want to see good days; you want to love life; then do good!

(2). "**Let him refrain his tongue from evil...**" This is just one way to do

good. Prevent the tongue from evil. I think the history of American Thought will characterize this present generation of Americans as a generation of "wind bags". Talks is so popular; to know everything on every subject and to speak with authority is so popular. It is seen by the proliferation of talk shows. It is seen by the abundance of advice for all know-it-alls with no experience and little training. With that abundant talk comes much evil: the opposite of doing good with the tongue.

(3). "**And his lips that they speak no guile**". Honesty and truthfulness is in many circles of the world a rarity.

(4). "**Let him turn away from evil and do good.**" Well there it is the challenge and obligation of doing good. What will contribute to that doing good is a simultaneous turning from evil.

(5). "**Let him seek peace and pursue it.**" This running after peace is the ultimate in the doing of good.

(6). And then we have a summary of the goodness of God. It is not a goody-goody approach as God does not throw away His total value system in the doing and demanding of good.

**“For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil.” (I Peter 3:12 NJ)**

4-4: SALVATION (Ephesians 4).

We are operating now on the second plane of ESSENTIALS FROM EPHESIANS. The first plane is the faith in the essentials themselves of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, and salvation; and the second plane is what might be called the applications of those five essentials in the Christian life. In other words how does God, Christ, the Spirit, the Bible, and Salvation change the way we live, trying hard at each step of the way not to equate that way of living with churchmanship since the gap now between Christ and churchmanship has become large and non-exemplary.

Paul deals with that very issue in what we consider today as a text from Ephesians 4:17-22. For example in part of that textual section, Ephesians 4:20-21, the Word of God says to us: ***“But you have not so learned Christ....*** (this was church members to whom Paul is talking in a church that he established and where he had the longest ministry of his missionary journeys, and he is telling them that this is not the way he taught them Christ, or more importantly that is not the way that they learned Christ from Christ, and then continues) ***...if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus...***

Recall that Paul wrote Ephesians behind 10 other books of the New Testament and as a summary of those first ten books. Paul wanted Ephesus to have the best of the inspiration that he received from being with Christ in Arabia, the best from his re-study of the Old Testament during the so called seven silent years at Tarsus, and the best of his writings under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. He therefore in this manner “if indeed you are a Christian even though I know you to be a church member, in order to remind them of what he had written about the children of Israel in the book of Hebrews.

**“Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest... (that rest is heaven and the completion of salvation) ..., let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. ” (Hebrews 4:1,2 NKJV)**

## **I. Applications of the (1) Doctrine of Salvation.**

It is another paradox of the Christ Way of Life that salvation is both something entirely by the grace of God and something what we must work out. Yes, both are true; and figure them out in a practical way and you will have the blessings of both that will lead you into the eternal rest that Paul wrote about as recorded in Hebrews 4:1,2. Here in the paradox from the Word of God that we must practice even if we do not fully come to under it –

1. We are saved by the grace of God, past, present, and future.

That is recorded right here in Ephesians, Ephesians 2:8,9: **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast...” (NJKV)**

That’s part of the Word of God and as such it is completely true! Also true is the following statement –

2. You must work with or work out you salvation right up until the time that you enter, if indeed you do enter paraphrasing some of the words from The Apostle Paul. It would not surprise you to learn that this statement of doctrine comes from the last four epistles that Paul wrote, Ephesians being one of them: from the book of Philippians, Philippians 2:12: **“...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling...”** And the clue to how this seeming paradox can be true, sort of like the paradox given by Jesus that you must die in order to live. The paradox of the words is made consistent when you consider the real meaning of the words. It was a

gimmick used by Jesus to get the attention of the hearers. It is a playing with words, or giving words a double meaning as Jesus often did. Paul also learned that from Jesus in the doctrinal statements that salvation, past, present, and future is by the grace of God; then later writing for Christians, even church members, to work out their salvations in fear and trembling. But much of the real meaning of the words grace and work is made clear in the very context of Ephesians 2:8,9 and Philippians 2:12. In fact, the next verse in both cases explains the meaning behind grace and work.

(1) First, the next verse after the famous grace statement from Ephesians 2:8,9, is from Ephesians 2:10.

**“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”**

You might want to put it another way: Since the purpose of the grace of God in the individual life is there “for good works”, if the good works are not there then the grace of God is not there. **“IF INDEED YOU ARE IN CHRIST”** Paul effectively writes to church members!

(2). Second, the next verse after the infamous statement from Philippians 2:12, Philippians 2:13 is: **“...for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”** This also in the manner of grace could be put in another way. Let us call it the way of Learning Christ in order to decrease the gap between Christ and churchmanship: if God is indeed working inside you as a single person (or a married person) then those works will be evident with the corresponding evidence of the grace of God.

You know what I think is the most telling evidence of a real Christian, if you are being a fruit inspector and if in the words of the Apostle John you are “testing the spirits”, it is the matter of grace and graciousness. The Apostle John was the second most

active practitioner of grace and graciousness, and Jesus Himself as our Prime Example was the first most active practitioner and advocate of grace and graciousness. Brother, if a church member is mean and formal and obnoxious, then they do not show the grace and graciousness of Christ.

Now, since I have only a few minutes to look at the Applications of Doctrine textually as covered in Ephesians 4:17-32, I must skim it quickly in outline form. However, we will look again at these same four main points from the passage that I like to call "HOW TO LEARN CHRIST". In other words after this simple and doctrinal look at what the Bible has to say, we will then make two other approaches. First, we will look at the opposite of a "DOCTRINAL" approach, which taking the cue from Jesus we will call the opposite to be "THE TEACHINGS OF MEN". Then we will look at the same subject in terms of the opposite of salvation which I like to call the computer. Don't get me wrong, I like computers. I had better since I spend about 9 hours a day at Raytheon on around four different computers; and then my three at home, many hours. But to me computers sort of represent, like "The Virgin and the Machine", the supreme efforts of man through knowledge, science, and technology and education to save himself apart from the salvation of God. (I will say more about that when we come to that section).

Okay, that leaves me one page to quickly outline Ephesians 4:17-32. (which is good since the implications of how we should be living in Christ is so intense and different from the way we are actually living in Christ). Remember, forget church membership, that will save no one. There are approximately 2 billion people that call themselves Christians; there are approximately 1.2 billion that call on a God named "Allah" and the Prophet Mohammed; and there are approximately 15 million Jews. Now, be realistic for a moment how many of those do you really think are among the "remnant" of God; how many do you really think are going to enter into the eternal rest of God. Right, a very small minority!

## **Ephesians 4:17-32.**

1. Don't walk or live like the other Gentiles live if you have learned Christ (Ephesians 4:17a)
2. How do the non-Christian Gentiles walk or live? (Ephesians 4:17b-19)
  - (1). In the futility of the mind.
  - (2). With darkened understandings.
  - (3). Alienation from the Life of God.
  - (4). Emotions dominated by licentiousness.
    - a. Uncleaness.
    - b. Greediness.
3. Living like the American Gentiles around you is not healthy and is not the way you learned Christ; if indeed you "heard Him" and "were taught by Him". (Ephesians 4:20,21)
4. What you must put off and what you must put on. (Ephesians 4:22-24)
  - (1) Put off your pre-Christ conduct, what you notice I like to call in the words of Ephesians, BIC or Before In Christ. You will notice that old men, no matter what their age, will grow more corrupt each day and year apart from Christ. That is in the context of Ephesians 4:22.
  - (2). Look what is right in between the detail on the putting off and the detail of the putting on: it is the work of the Spirit of God in salvation.
  - (3). Put on the new man, characteristics and conduct of the New Creation in Christ. That is what God really created if indeed God did a work of creation in you. This is true righteousness more than

churchmanship, and this is true holiness more than churchmanship. This is Christ and Learning Christ.

5. Therefore, you know when Paul gets to a “therefore” that it is the implications and applications. If you know a church member that has actually Learned Christ then they will seriously heed these seven admonitions of what it is practically to Learn Christ. Now, I have time to only list them; but we will come back in another presentation to re-visit them.

(1). Put away “lying” at the same time that you put off the old man and put on the new man. You don’t mean to tell me that there was lying among the church members at Ephesus, the very church where Paul paltered and preached. I guess our church is better than that, because we don’t know any church members that lie.

(2). Anger is okay if you don’t let the sun go down on it. In other words if you do not let the anger fester days, weeks, and months into wrath. Remember, wrath belongs only to God. There is no room in churchmanship for the well-known California saying, “I don’t get mad, I get even”. That is an example of anger turning into wrath.

(3). Work in such a manner to earn your income, the opposite is to steal, and the purpose of earning money is in order to have something to give to the needy.

(4). Okay, the words of your mouth. Now, hear I really think our churches are guilty. Do any “corrupt words” come out of the mouth of your fellow church members? Out of your mouth. The flip or positive side of this is to say, especially in the church building, only words that will build up or edify other members and that will communicate the grace and graciousness that comes from the grace of God.

(5). Oh, here is the key from our Comforter, and fellow worker, the “paraclete” that goes along beside us: the Holy Spirit of God. You church members can fool fellow church members and many in the

community, but you can not fool the Spirit of God. Say nothing or do nothing to grieve the Spirit of God. Do you think unkind words grieve Him? How about the taking of the name of God in vain? Oh, how much that must grieve the Spirit of God.

(6). Number six in the specifics of the way to Learn Christ is the opposite of number seven. Number seven is love, forgiveness, and tender-heartedness; while number six is wrath, anger, clamor, malice, and evil speaking.

6. Be kind to one another like God in Christ. You come back again to the proof of what a real Christian is, that of manifesting the grace and graciousness of God. I don't know how we every came to make meanness of spirit synonymous with doctrinal stability.

**II. Next, we will consider the opposite of the Doctrine of Salvation from the Bible, which for convenience I call the "computer". By that I mean all the best efforts of man including science and technology and culture to save himself.**

We saw the ultimate in the efforts of men in a nation to save and promote their own welfare in the Nazi Germany of World War II days. Germany lead the world in science, technology, education, psychology, and you name it; yet all that know-off led them down a corrupt path ultimately instead of down the path of righteousness. The Jewish nation in spite of their monotheism and religious knowledge, except for a remnant like the early Christians and Jesus and Paul and the other Apostles, have not benefitted salvation wise from that religious knowledge. We think of such Biblical statements as:

(1). **"Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth".** and

(2). Paul speaking of the Jewish nation during his lifetime summarized this matter of religion being an alternative to salvation by writing in Romans 10:1-3.

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.”

Since this gives us a clue about the opposite of salvation from God, and I hope you agreed with me that Ephesians is a summary of the first ten letters from Paul which includes Hebrews and Romans, where in Ephesians can be find the equivalent of this zeal of God that does not save and this knowledge that is not the righteousness of God?

1. First of all how about the parallels between the first two chapters of the book of Romans and what we saw in Ephesians 4:17-19 about how Gentiles were living in contrast to the way of Learning Christ. PARENTHETICALLY KEEP IN MIND BEFORE WE LOOK AT THE GENTILES SUBSTITUTE FOR THE SALVATION OF GOD IN ROMANS 1 AND THE JEWISH SUBSTITUTE FOR THE SALVATION OF GOD IN ROMANS 2, THAT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IS ALSO ONE OF THE MOST COMMON SUBSTITUTES FOR THE SALVATION OF GOD.

At the top level of the 2 billion world citizens that call themselves Christians because they are church members, how many do you think are among the remnant that did not bow the knee to Baal? The only seven thousand of the 15 million Jews? And the Mormons are included in the Christians in this country, how many of them do you think can really be Christian and know and espouse such hideous doctrines. You know you can hardly top the Mormons for churchmanship. They are far beyond you in evangelism, in radio and television evangelism, in door to door and community to community work, and in church attendance, and the necessity of good works; but I hope you realize that according to one of the four Bibles which they call Word of God, that THE DOCTRINE AND THE COVENANTS, and contemporaries in their commentaries

verify it, will unashamed talk of a reformed gospel that puts works back in as part of salvation.

Never forget that Paul told us in what we know to be the Word of God that, "If anyone come preaching another Gospel or with another spirit, let them be accursed." I am being doctrinal about this, and the doctrine says that they are accursed. They are an outstanding example of attempts at salvation apart from the grace of God. They like to call themselves the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints" when instead they should be called the Assembly of the Anti-Christ of Latter Day Jews". They are doing all they can do to re-establish what Christ attempted to do away with during his life. The temple, the law, the works and burdens of the law: all this they have re-established. In years of talking with them at Ogden Utah, I developed a theory of who is on the Temple in Temple Square, and who is the source of those four Bibles which they have: it is an angel alright, but it is an angel from the other side, and I would not at all be surprised if it was the chief of the fallen angels.

Well, back to Romans 1 on the Gentiles and Romans 2 on the Jews. Rather than reading Romans 1:21-32, I know of no quicker way to look at it than paraphrasing it. (The problem is that it is a little vulgar, and it is hard not to get indignant when paraphrasing it.) Paraphrase of Romans 1:21-32.

**'All Gentiles in the world have known something about God in several ways (we discuss those ways under 1-1a), became futile in their mind in that they refused to give God the glory and to be thankful to God as the Creator and Giver of life. After the futility of the mind came the darkening of the hearts. While they were in the very act of claiming to be wise, in the sight of God they were becoming fools. 38-5: The Holy Spirit (John 14-16).**

It is rather difficult to understand how such teachings of Jesus as about the Holy Spirit are so distorted and mis-applied except to consider that even with lip service to the Bible as the Word of God,

church members either do not believe it or do not personally practice it. Like the religious leaders of the time of Christ, we are teachings for doctrines the commandments of men. We simply pay more attention to either our own opinions or the opinions of men with itching ears.

**I. Today it could be considered that the end time when men would not longer endure sound doctrine got its start when the clear teachings of the Bible on the Holy Spirit were replaced with the Pentecostal movement.**

It was grown out of the desire of many church attendees for a temporal emotional experience that would pass away quickly the rest of the week. Actually if we are beyond the simple perilous times of II Timothy 2 where in the churches and denominations there is a form of godliness that denies the power of God and into the end times, then we would have to say the transition from perilous times to end times were made on the back of several doctrines of itching ears: first and foremost would have to be the distortion of sound teachings on marriage and divorce, second would have to be the itching ears tendencies toward church government and deacons, and the third would have to be the misunderstandings of the Bible teachings on the Holy Spirit.

Let there be no misunderstand on what the Bible teaches about marriage and divorce. The Bible teaches one man and one woman with children for life. The options for divorced people are simple. All they have to do is to ask God's forgiveness and receive that forgiveness for the committing of adultery because of the marriage to a divorced person. Where the problem becomes so serious is when church members fight the sound doctrine of the Bible on marriage and divorce. They have never admitted to God that they were wrong. Instead, like on so many other sins and lawlessness, they attempt to justify themselves in the eyes of men and God; they rebel and find for themselves—yea more than find, they heap up for

themselves teachers and preachers that will tell them what they want to hear.

But back to the Holy Spirit as the third most distorted teaching of Christ. Let me state it very simply: when you read Acts chapter 2 about the historical event of the Coming of the Holy Spirit recall that it was a one-time historical event in the same category as the birth of Jesus on earth and that when the 11 apostles spoke it was in real languages.

**“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit (the eleven apostles) and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:4)**

Now, get what follows. Since it was the Day of Pentecost there were Jews gathered in Jerusalem from EVERY NATION UNDER HEAVEN. Now, since all these Jews came to Jerusalem with different languages, when they heard the Gospel preached by Peter and the other eleven apostles, they heard them speak in their own languages. And lest you misunderstand those nations and their languages are mentioned:

**“Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia. Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Creans and Arabs.”**

And if that were not enough, twice the Scripture of Acts 2 repeats that each heard the 11 apostles speaking in their own tongue or language.

(1). Acts 2:7,8.

**“Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, ‘Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?’”**

(2). Acts 2:11.

**“...we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.”**

Instead we have a lot of Janneses and Jambres who like the originals try to duplicate the works that God gave Moses and the 11 apostles. The trouble is that they come short just like Jannes and Jambres in trying to duplicate the works of God. They simulate the tongues with gibberish, but the sound of the rushing wind and the cloven tongues are not there. And even as Paul writes of the such men in the church with a form of godliness are impostors, these modern-day church members impostors can not duplicate the Historical Coming of the Holy Spirit.

## **II. The clear teachings of Jesus on the Holy Spirit as recorded in John 14-16.**

1. Jesus stated in John 16:7 that it is to the advantage of all believers after this

particular Day of Pentecost that they have the Helper instead of Jesus.

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.” (John 16:7)

You see the sequence: Jesus departs at His ascension, then the Helper of Comforter or Holy Spirit comes to take His place; and believers become better off than even those who had the personal presence of Jesus.

2. The words of “when He has come” of John 16:8 remind us of all the predictions about the coming of Jesus.

**“And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” (John 16:8).**

3. While some church members might think that the reason for the Coming of the Holy Spirit is in order that they might have a temporal emotion experience on Sunday that attempts to simulate

the Coming of the Holy Spirit, the reasons are quite different. This first group of reasons is to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Jesus in John 14-16 has already mentioned some of the work the other Comforter would do with believers, and now He comes to the work with the world. In a moment we will again look at the work with believers.

(1). **“...of sin, because they do not believe in Me.”** The real crime against God

and Jesus is not to believe in Jesus. Because of this work of the Holy Spirit it takes real effort on the part of the individual to not believe in Jesus. It is far from being a simple matter of not believing, it is a matter of positive, inward resistance to the wooing of the Holy Spirit.

(2). **“...of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and you see Me no**

**more.” (John 16:10)** Jesus is the standard of all goodness and righteousness. When you look at Jesus and His teachings you see God and His character; and seeing His goodness and character you know something of the righteous requirements of God for the individual life. It was in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount of Matthew 5,6 that Jesus taught that because God by His very nature is good that He also demands goodness from the Human Creatures that He has made. **“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, 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.”** (Matthew 5:44,45) And recall as previously discussed, Jesus by His life showed by God is like. **“He,”** Jesus said, **“that has seen Him has seen the Father.”**

(3). The third work of the Holy Spirit with the world is to convict the world of Judgment. **“...of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”** The head of this world is the fallen angel, Satan;

and if this prince of the power of the air is judged—this royal king of all the world—then all in the world are also judged. (I might add that if we do not preach and teach to judgement of God on the Great Day of the LORD, we only preach two-thirds of the work of the Holy Spirit. So we are certainly not His helper even though Jesus sent Him to be the Helper of all real Christians.

4. Also in John 14-16 we come to the work of the Holy Spirit as a Helper to believers. John 14:14:

**“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”**

Before we discuss this contemporary teaching function of the Holy Spirit and the memory trigger function, let us note two facts about the historical coming of the Spirit: (1) God the Father sent the Holy Spirit; and (2) The Holy Spirit was sent in the name of Jesus. The Apostle Peter says about the same thing in Acts 2:32,33:

**“This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.”**

Get that: you devout Jews from every nation on the earth that are assembly on the Day of Pentecost after the Ascension of Jesus what you hear in the rushing wind and see in the clover tongues and hear in your own language is the one time promised coming of the Holy Spirit predicted by Joel and David in the Psalms.

**III. When Paul speaks in II Thessalonians 2 of the Day of the LORD and Lord of how the Holy Spirit is withdrawn, it is withdrawn from the world; because Jesus tells in John 14:16 that the Holy Spirit will be with believers ‘ETERNALLY’.**

**“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.”**

We must separate the work of the Spirit with the world and the work of the Spirit with believers. Near the end times according to II Thessalonians 2, at the same time the man of sin, the son of perdition that works all the works of Satan is revealed, and at the same time of the general falling away of church members from the faith, and at the same time as the general increase of lawlessness against God in the world, then the Holy Spirit is taken away. The same God and Jesus that sent the Holy Spirit in power on the first day of Pentecost after the Ascension will also remove the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not retreat because sin and lawlessness abounds and the love of many wax cold. While it is true, as the Bible tells us, that the Holy Spirit is grieved by sin, especially in the life of believers; there is a certain plan or Day of the LORD planned by God the Father when all life on earth will be wrapped up and a new order restored. Here it is in the words of the Bible, II Thessalonians 2:3-7.

**“Let no one deceive you by any means for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who 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. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And now you know what is restraining that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.”**

“Taken out of the way” sounds like an historical event as momentous as the Coming of the Holy Spirit. And this is the last work of the Holy Spirit that we did not mention previously. It is the RESTRAINING work of the Holy Spirit. What does He restrain against? Against the mystery of lawlessness, in other words against the increase in lawlessness which often seems inexplicable in wars, murders, hate, and unbelief; and against the appearing of the Son of Perdition; and against the work of Satan with all lying

wonders and signs; and against the delusion and great lie that denies the truth of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. You see, you must understand the Coming of Jesus and His other Helper as the chaining of Satan for a thousand years, and when that thousand years is up, then Satan is released as the Holy Spirit is withdrawn.

#### 4-5: THE DAY OF THE LORD.

The last section we heard from Hebrews 12 about the Assembly at Mount Sinai: how the mountain could not be touched, how it burned with fire, how it was covered with blackness and darkness, and how the tempest of a raging wind surrounded it. About the sound of the trumpets and the great, booming voice of God; and how the people of the Assembly begged that the words would no longer be spoken to them. Perhaps they were indignant about the previously spoken words from God through Moses of how if anything, animal or person, touched the mountain they would die. The sights and sounds of all this before the Assembly even made Moses tremble. Today, by way of introduction, to the Day of the LORD, we look at this same historical event as recorded in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. Actually Deuteronomy 5 is a rehash by Moses of what originally happened in the Assembly at Mount Sinai.

**“And Moses called all Israel, and said to them: ‘Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them. The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who are here today, all of us who are alive. The LORD talked with you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire.’”**

Recall how the program ended last time with Our God is a Consuming Fire!

**“I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up the mountain.”**

Then Moses as recorded in Deuteronomy 5:6-21 reminded them of all that God in the Ten Commandments had spoken in His own voice. And Moses concludes as recorded in Deuteronomy 5:22: "These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly (remember the literal translation of the Greek word "ecclesia" for church is assembly)...These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly, in the mountain from the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice (notice the voice was loud like the blast of the trumpet); and He added no more. And He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me."

### **I. Look at the major ten laws of God and then decide if lawlessness is increasing.**

Last program we heard about lawlessness as crimes against God, taking God's name being only one of those crimes; and how there is an increase in lawlessness that heralds the final Day of the LORD and the Second Coming of Christ. Today, hear all of those words of the Ten Commandments as spoken originally in the voice of God Himself, from Exodus 20, This is the heart of the laws of God. This is the law that Jesus referred to when He said that he had not come to destroy the law and the prophets but to fulfill them. You listen to them; and you see if you think the violations of these laws are increasing with what you hear in the news and with what you see about you.

**"And God spoke all these words, saying: 'I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.'"**

God did not bring American believers out of the bondage of Egypt like Israel, but He did through Christ rescue us from the bondage of sin and lawlessness.

**"You shall have no other gods before Me."**

Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount that you cannot serve God and mammon.

Either you will serve the one and despise the other.

The next words are warnings from God about icons.

**“You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.”**

Really is it any better to create a god in our own mind, a very permissive and non-consuming fire God, that will allow us to do all that we desire.

**“For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”**

The God of the Bible, our God is a consuming fire also in that He is not tolerant of either taking His name in vain or of allowing worship of other so-called gods. You remember a few years ago when the Presbyterians were voting on whether to stop preaching that Christ is the only way of salvation, since it seems intolerant. Well, that is like a wife saying that she will commit adultery because it is intolerant of her husband to be the only one in her life. You see that God is a jealous God, and He is intolerant of other gods which He knows not to be gods anyway. As stated time and time, we mix up what is to be Christian with what it is to be an American citizen. There are two great differences. Citizenship in this country demands that the majority is right and tolerance. In matters of faith and practice, based on the Bible, the majority is wrong and there can be no tolerance as related to Christ and God.

Back to the Ten Commandments.

**“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”**

You see any increase in this lawlessness. Has anybody in your church committed lately this crime against God.

**“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” The Sabbath is now after Christ Sunday, the Lord’s day; but that does not change the six and one rule. “Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”**

**“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.”**

In II Timothy we have read of how during the perilous times, church members along with being lovers of self, lovers of money, and having a form of godliness without the inward power, also are disobedient to parents; which since they are adults that misled the churches must mean that they are disobedient to the heritage of their parents, the teachings of the Bible that have been given to them. You see the days of their churches as the days of the land of their nation can not be long when these things happen, so that slowly the ways in the church of the perilous times become those of the end times where sound doctrine is no longer endured. Preachers and teachers are made to surround these church members in protect them from sound doctrine, and to tell the people comforting words that they wish out of itching ears to hear.

On with the Ten Commandments.

**“You shall not murder.”**

Have you seen any increase in the world and in this nation with murder. Many thought after the collapse of Russia that was over. Since then we have heard of murders and war in South Africa,

Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and on and on. And those who thought we had socially evolved in the world to the extent that there was no discrimination are learning otherwise.

**“You shall not commit adultery.”** Remember Jesus’ explanation of that law.

**“You shall not steal”**

Look at the increased news about large corporations where the retirement money of large numbers of people, including seniors, has been confiscated. It seems that as management moves up the ladder that become more crooked and indifferent to the needs of other people. This is increase lawlessness, that sometimes is a crime against the State and always a crime against God and the laws of God.

**“You shall not ear false witness against your neighbor.”**

Honesty, the opposite, of this is almost at a premium. It is difficult to depend anymore

on any person or business. Intellectual honesty as set forth by Elton Trueblood is at a premium.

**“You shall not covet..”**

Do you think, bottom line, these business leaders did not covet to have for themselves the retirement money in 401k’s that belonged to seniors?

## **II. Acts 2 on the Day of the LORD as the end of the last days.**

Acts 2 can straighten us out on much of our eschatology, or last days thinking. When the Holy Spirit came on the first day of Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, it was an historical event just like the first coming of Jesus Christ as He was born in a manger. The only difference is that the Holy Spirit came historically full grown while Christ came as a babe.

**“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven (what does that sound from heaven remind you of?)...there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:1-4)**

1. Peter quotes from Joel 2:28-32 to explain that this is the beginning of the last days. You should nail down an immutable in your eschatology that the beginning of the last days is during this historical event of the Coming of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Peter says that the events of that day were what was spoken of by Joel, and the Prophet Joel says that in the last days these things will come to pass. You know, it takes real perversion of the truth not to see that; and perhaps on eschatology is where the drift toward unsound doctrine started as church members chose to believe about last things what they wanted to believe; and as they were able to find teachers that would bolster their itching ears and false beliefs.

2. The end of this period of last days is the Day of the Lord. In this quote from Joel as quoted in Acts 2:20 it is the coming of the Day of the Lord. Joel writes about the shaking of the heavens and earth, of the blood and fire, and the darkness of the sun and moon; but these events as part of the Day of the LORD are a common thread throughout the Old Testament.

3. Several things happen in between this beginning of the last days as the Holy Spirit comes and the Day of the LORD: (1) the Holy Spirit is democratically outpoured on young and old, status and non-status; (2) Salvation is widespread as whosoever calls on the name of the Lord is saved; and (3) Acts 2:47, the Lord Himself adds to the Church such as are saved.

### **III. Events of the Last Days Ending in the Day of the Lord as given in Acts 2.**

1. The Historical Coming of the Holy Spirit to take the place of Jesus.
2. The Coming of the Spirit to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of

judgment. By the way, many versions translate this sin as lawlessness.

3. Salvation becomes widespread as the gospel is preached to every nation.
4. God Himself adds to the Assembly of the Firstborn all those that are saved.

### **IV. Some Events of the Day of the LORD that are not given in Acts 2.**

1. It is Paul in II Thessalonians that must add that the Holy Spirit not only comes

during the last days but also is withdrawn.

2. Paul adds that the Spirit restrains the lawless One, the son of perdition, and

lawlessness and unsound doctrine itself until He is taken away.

#### **4-6: THE SOUND OF A SOUND FAITH.**

This is the title, "Sound of a Sound Faith" of volume 1 of LEARN CHRIST FROM THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS. It is based on the teachings of the Bible in Romans 10:17,18 and Psalm 19:14, from the Apostle Paul in Romans 10:17,18 and from the Prophet David in Psalm 19:1-4. While the setting forth of the doctrine of faith in the Bible was the primary goal in volume 1, here at the beginning of volume 2 it is to show more how that teaching or doctrine of the

Bible relates to the individual. Likewise it sets the primary theme of volume 2 as “Christ for Individuals”.

### **I. What is the Sound of Sound Faith for Individuals.**

We often think of doctrine as what stirs the pot by emphasizing the differences between religions and denominations. While that could be true for those who attempt to promote themselves, and grow their own denomination, by stressing a uniqueness; it is not true in Bible preaching. The main purpose of sound doctrine is for the individual: to assure them that what they believe in is the Bible beliefs that will provide for themselves the hearing of Christ and the teaching of Christ. In other words, since during perilous times and as those perilous times become the end times, many will fall away from sound faith and many will be impostors. Now, while it is not the job of preachers of the Word to come into the churches and try to separate the sheep from the goats, it is the job of preachers of the Word to tell people about the differences and how to assure themselves that they have indeed heard Christ and Learned Christ instead of some anti-Christ.

1. The Sound of Faith has gone out to all the earth in order that the sound may

fall on all individual ears. A church may have a sound system, but it does not have ears with the capability of hearing.

**“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed; Their sound has gone out of all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.” (Romans 10:17,18)**

Faith comes by individual hearing, and the individual hearing of the word of God. The sound of faith is here spoken of by the Apostle Paul and quoting from the Prophet David in Psalm 19:4 in order that individuals might individually LEARN CHRIST FROM THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS.

## 2. There are countermeasures to Sound Faith, the perilous times of II Timothy 3

and 4 when there is in the churches a form of godliness that denies the power of God and the end times when church members will not longer endure sound doctrine. And you must see for II Timothy 4 that church members turn away from the truth and turn in fables not out of ignorance and indifference, but because they want to. What comes first is “they will not endure sound doctrine”. These are people who have known sound doctrine, and then turn away from sound doctrine. These are people who put a lot of effort in finding other church leaders like themselves with itching ears, heaping them up as fortifications against sound doctrine. Leaders that will tickle their ears, comfort them, pat them on the back, and say peace, peace, when there is no peace for such church members.

Now here is the real problem for church members who have indeed heard Christ and been taught of Him when the perilous times turn into the end times of no endurance for sound doctrine. Where are they going to go to church? After a listing in II Timothy 3 of the characteristics of church members with a form and not reality of Christ, then the advice of the Bible is to turn away from such people in the church. Well, when the perilous times become end times where most have fallen away from the faith, where does the real church of the Firstborn go? We will try to answer that in the conclusion. Right now, there should be reminder of the seal and foundation of God that comes in II Timothy 2 as the preliminary problem of the falling away from sound faith is considered: “Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: **‘The Lord know those who are His,’ and, ‘Let every one who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.’** (II Timothy 2:19)

**II. Sound Faith for the Individual must be considered in the context of the famous “Faith” chapter of Hebrews 11.**

1. First of all, there is the definition of sound faith as recorded in Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Faith provides substance to all the things of salvation that are hoped for, eternity with God and Christ in heaven, about God and Christ Himself who can not be seen or felt with the physical senses. But there is an evidence to faith. The Word of God provides evidence of those things which we see; and if you desire to go beyond that to the field of Christian Evidences and Apologetics, there is enough evidence that would stand up before the bar of reason to support both the Bible as the Word of God and Jesus as the Son of God.

2. Then there are the examples of the elders of faith that we can emulate. That

is the nice thing about the Bible in that it provides for us many examples of faith. The faith of Jesus, of Moses, of Paul, or James, and of Job just to name a few.

3. A specific example of faith and a good place to start with a sound faith is by

faith that God created the world and all that we see in heaven and on earth.

**"By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible." (Hebrews 11:3)**

We could talk for a long time about the evidences in creation which support the Bible story that God did in the beginning make heaven and earth. The design of a flower, of the oxygen in the atmosphere, of the seasons; and on and on, all the characteristics of earth as compared to other planets that God established to make earth a good home for man.

4. It should be added what preachers are do when church members will not

endure sound doctrine, often becoming the victim of the mass rebellion against sound doctrine. Paul mentions that before he tells in II Timothy 4 of the unsound doctrine. The admonition is to continue to "Preach the word! Be reading in season and out of season. Convince (you see in that there is some hope that some individuals in the churches will listen), rebuke (the implication is that some individuals will accept rebuke and change their attitudes and behavior from the love of self and the love of money, from pride and haughtiness, etc.), exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." Pour the doctrine on, and continue to suffer abuse from the members with itching ears.

**II. The rest of Hebrews 11 is full of examples form the Bible of a sound faith to challenge us to a similar faith.**

1. The examples.

2. The challenge of the great cloud of witnesses that have provided a heritage of

sound faith.

3. Always looking to Jesus as the Author, Mediator, and Finisher of the Sound Faith, finding in the Bible of the Apostles and Prophets the proper way to LEARN CHRIST.

**III. The amazing facts that come together in Hebrews 12 is that the striving against sin and sinners is also the means which God uses to strengthen His own and helps to identify those who are His own.**

**IV. What to do when the church members of the perilous times who only have a form of godliness, and are the type believers are told to stay away from turns into the end times of most church members have come to the point of not enduring sound doctrine.**

The general answer is to follow the examples of the great cloud of witnesses that have gone before you listed in Hebrews 11. The whole underlying point of Hebrews 11 is that it has never been easy for God's real people as distinguished from a nation that claimed to be God's people. In Hebrews 11 it is true and it always will be true that the number of goats is greater than the number of sheep. What happened in Elijah's day is more typical than atypical: God had to tell Elijah that somewhere in the mess of false worship and church attendance were seven thousand people in the whole nation of Israel that had not bowed down to Baal. So it is the same in this so-called Christian nation of the United States today, somewhere there are approximately seven thousand real believers who do not bow down to serve mammon in some form or the other; and the probability of your being able to assemble on a regular basis with them, or even find them, is very small indeed. Your only common assembly is the spiritual blessings in heavenly places where Jesus is as the Mediator of the New Covenant with the registration of the Church of the Firstborn.

But it is possible based on Hebrews 11 to get more specific.

1. First, like the cloud of witnesses of Hebrews 11, you must confess that you are a stranger and pilgrim here on this earth. If you are too at home in a certain community with a worldly group and with certain things that provide you comfort, then the probability that you consider yourself a stranger and pilgrim on this earth is almost nil. If you are well established in a city and a home and a church, you are much like the rich man in the story of Lazarus who didn't need heaven because he had his reward already. Of the cloud of witnesses that provide the real heritage for real believers, it is said in Hebrews 11:13:

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

2. If you have already received all the promises from God of salvation in your past experiences then you are probably not among the strangers and pilgrims on this earth. Salvation is a process of past, present, and future; and if yours is complete, or you treat it as complete, then you have missed getting on the boat of the faith of Hebrews 11.

3. You are among the strangers and pilgrims of Hebrews 11 if you have embraced the same promises to come of the witnesses of Hebrews 11. You, like the believers of Hebrews 11, must declare plainly that you seek a better home country than the United States. That is, that you seek a heavenly country. That is the way that God will not be ashamed of you, and that is the way God will include you in the assembly for which He has prepared a heavenly city.

[4-7: The Church or Assembly of the Firstborn.](#)

### **I. Increased Lawlessness as Crimes Against God.**

Many of the laws of God that are daily broken are not crimes against the State but crimes against God. Take for example the crime against God of taking God's name in vain. Daily at work from the most unexpected sources we hear God's name and the name of Jesus taken in vain. These jarring sounds of blasphemy come from the most unexpected sources, but previously we have heard words of faith spoken from the same voice. Besides at work, we hear this lawlessness spoken constantly on television and read it in the popular books. What has really changed in the last few years is the lack of apology. No excuse for such lawlessness is acceptable to God, but at least years ago we did hear some excuses for such blasphemy.

This increase in lawlessness leads us to believe that the Day of the LORD of the Bible is rapidly approaching. It was Jesus who taught us that the general falling away from the faith shortly before the Day of the Lord would be characterized by an increase in lawlessness and a decrease in love for God and Christ. Here are the words of Jesus Himself as recorded in Matthew 24:12: "And

because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold." Many like to call this the "great apostasy"; but like so many other words of religion that are misused and abused, this seems like pie in the sky, by and by. There is a very good chance that we are in it right now if you consider this widespread lack of respect for God that shows itself in the taking of His name in vain. Well, we can still make excuses for it; and still do make excuses for it. However, no matter what excuse you would make for blasphemy, you should hear behind it the words of the Bible, "...for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.." Yes, that is found in Exodus 20:7, right in the middle of the Ten Commandments; and right in the same verse which was spoken to all the people by God Himself, **"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain..."**

"Oh," one might say, "it just slipped out, and I didn't mean it."

"...for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain."

"Oh, you know how it is...you hear it so often in your daily environment that it just slips out."

"...for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain." "Oh, everybody does it in order to place emphasis on certain words."

"...for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain."

## **II. The Day of the LORD of the Old Testament becomes the Day of the Second Coming of Christ in the New Testament, a prerequisite for both being the increase in lawlessness.**

The Day of the LORD, often spoken of in the Old Testament, becomes the Day of the LORD, spelled with all capital letters, and of the Lord, spelled with a capital letter and then little letters in the New Testament; and what we learn more clearly in the New

Testament that the Day of the LORD is also the time of the Second Coming of Christ. In the Old Testament it is primarily a “great and awesome” Day when the sun is darkened and the moon stops shining, while in the New Testament it is all that but also a time of rejoicing as Christ Himself descends from heaven with a shout, a voice of an archangel and the trump of God as all believers, dead and alive, are caught up in the air to meet Christ in the air. Two thousand years ago some of the first Christians did not understand that you could not possibly miss this Day of the LORD. They thought they had missed the Second Coming of Christ! Paul in II Thessalonians chapter 2 assured this discouraged believers that the Second Coming could not happen until several prerequisites happened. In the order that Paul mentions them in II Thessalonians, they are: First, the falling away from what has been believed must come; then the man of sin, the son of perdition, must be revealed; and then, read it carefully, the Holy Spirit is mentioned as the one is restraining the son of perdition from appearing; and two thousand years ago it was said that the Son of Perdition would be revealed in His own time. (May I briefly submit to you that Osama bin Laden or someone just like him is this man of sin, and that he has already been revealed. Don’t judge too quickly until you read again Daniel 11, and look at the current events that have happened centered around this one individual.) But back to II Thessalonians and what Paul says must happen before the Second Coming and the fulfillment of the Day of the LORD and Lord. Paul says two thousand years ago that “the mystery of lawlessness is already at work” – oh my, if it was at work two thousand years ago, but must the mystery of lawlessness be doing now when every day we hear of the lawlessness of the taking of God’s name in vain. Then Paul gives us in verse 2:7 more insight as he states that the Holy Spirit is restraining both the son of perdition and the mystery of lawlessness until the Holy Spirit is taken away.

What are the events we have so far just before the Second Coming and the Day of the LORD: One, the falling away from faith on the part of church members; two, the revelation of the man of sin; three, the taking out of the way of the Holy Spirit; and the increase in lawlessness inspired by Satan and the lawless one.

This “falling away” is not the falling away of people from the churches and denominations. That is wishful thinking. According to the Bible, believers have never been in a majority: it is the difference between the many that go the broad way that leads to destruction and the few that go the narrow way. No, the falling away is not from churches and denominations. It is a falling away of church members from sound faith. They stay right there in their local church or denomination being part of the perilous times of II Timothy 3:1-9 and part of the end time failure to endure sound doctrine of II Timothy 4:1-4.

### **III. As this lawlessness, Day of the LORD, and Second Coming of Christ has come closer, where has your religious Assembly come.**

In other words: where do you stand on the issues of the Day? We read in Hebrews 12 of two assemblies and where they stood. One Assembly as the Church in the wilderness, standing before Mount Sinai as God spoke the Ten Commandments; and the other is the church of the firstborn, Jesus Christ, which is recorded in heaven and registered in heaven.

#### **1. The Church in the Wilderness.**

First the description of the Church in the Wilderness at the Sinai giving of the Ten Commandments from Hebrews 12:18-21.

**“For you have not come (by the way this tells us where your assembly has not come, hopefully)...For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the**

**word should not be spoken to them anymore. (For they could not endure what was commanded: 'And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow.' And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, 'I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.'"**

Notice how this assembly, and by the way the Greek word for "church" is literally translated "assembly" ...notice how this assembly was so personally involved in every sense of the word. Their touch was involved: God told Moses that any animal or person who touched the mountain would die. Their heat sensors and eyes were involved: the mountain burned with fire. It was much like being close to a volcano or to Mount Lemon burning. There was blackness and darkness and the tempest of wind. Their hearing was affected: there was the sound of the trumpet, and if you read the original in Exodus and Deuteronomy, it was the blast of a trumpet more than simply a sound. It actually hurt the ears. And then there was the voice of God Himself. Yes, read Exodus closely and you will see that God Himself was speaking in the audience of the whole Assembly.

## 2. The Assembly that is Registered in Heaven.

Next, have you come to the Assembly of Church spoken of in Hebrews 12:22-24, the Church of the Firstborn, written in heaven, and the only Assembly that you must be registered in for salvation.

**"But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel."**

(1). To Mount Zion instead of Mount Sinai, to grace rather than law.

(2). To the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. This is the kind of Assembly that you want to be in: an Assembly where the Living God is. Because He lives, we can live; but it must be in this Assembly.

(3). To an innumerable company of angels. Jesus said that He could call a legion

of angels to His rescue rather than die on the cross. Well, at the same place where the Assembly and Church of the Firstborn is located is where an innumerable company of angels are located. Just think of what they are capable of doing, and will do on that Great and Final Day of the LORD and Lord.

(4). To the general assembly and church of the Firstborn, who are registered in

heaven. Your church membership here on earth is not worth the piece of paper it is written on compared with eternity. You must be registered in heaven; and even though you pastor or priest may tell you that your church membership here on earth is the same as being registered in heaven; surely you must see the difference, and realize that this is only wishful thinking on his part. The Firstborn is Christ. Christ was the Firstborn from the dead that started a long line of succession of other believers who were born from the dead. Those only are the ones registered in heaven.

(5). To God the Judge of All. Here is where we come to all the Old Testament teachings of lawlessness and the Day of the LORD when all the temporary tolerated unrighteousness and falsehood comes under the righting judgment of God.

(6). To the spirits of just men made perfect. There is Abraham, and Moses, and Elijah, and Noah, and Paul, and Peter. Men who were justified by faith; men who were perfected by the inward working of the Holy Spirit.

(7). To Jesus...listen, we have a lot of loose talk about Jesus both attempts to blaspheme and to identify with Him. But the only place you can come to in order to see Jesus is with the Assembly or Church of the Firstborn, registered in heaven. Which Jesus is it? The Jesus that is the Mediator of the New Covenant. By the way of the blood of Jesus and His atonement on the cross for the sins of the world.

#### **IV. These Seven Characteristics of the True Church are given to keep you from being suckered into the wrong Assembly.**

You see how the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 12 wishes that no one that can read or listen will miss the message of the real Church of Hebrews 12. He through the Holy Spirit identifies seven characteristics of the Assembly that will help you to distinguish it from all other assemblies that offer you the way of salvation through church membership. Don't forget the several things that will happen near the end time that will all attempt to lead you away from the Church of the Firstborn and toward fake assemblies.

1. Jesus mentioned in Matthew 24 that before the increase in lawlessness with the falling away of the faith of many, there would first be many false leaders.

I know it is very personal to you, and everyone likes to believe that they have the right leader; however, listen...

**"Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold."** (Matthew 24:11,12)

2. The people around you in your own church will get where they can not longer stand sound doctrine. It will be done so smoothly and over such a period of time they will not even notice the difference. However...

**"...the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will**

**turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned to fables.” (II Timothy 4:3,4)**

2. Don't forget also the perilous times even before the end times when men in the churches and denominations shall “have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof.” Yes, right there in your local church **“men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers (taking God's name in vain), disobedient to parents (these are adult men and women that deny the heritage of all they have been taught on sound faith), unthankful (unthankful for their heritage), unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal (just plain mean, do you know anybody in your church or denomination that is just plain mean?), despisers of good (yes, they will really laugh at and ridicule the good), traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power.” (II Timothy 3:2-5)** And what you are supposed to do is to stay away from such church members, leaders of just fellow church members. The Word says, “And from such people turn away!” (II Timothy 3:5b)

3. Don't ever forget that the God of Love of thousand of years is also a God of the Consuming Fire at the Day of the Lord.

Paul discussion on the two assemblies ends with a admonition to Listen and heed the God who speaks to you personally.

**“See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth, but now He has promised, saying, ‘Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.’ Now this, ‘Yet once more,’ indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us**

**have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.”**

**(Hebrews 1:13-29)**

## **Chapter 5: What Do You Do?**

This question, “WHAT DO YOU DO?” is short for “WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN MOST OF YOUR CHURCH OR DENOMINATION IS INTOLERANT OF SOUND DOCTRINE?” Christ has already answered that in the messages to the angels of the seven churches, and by the way of those pastors and the book of John, in Revelation 2,3, to all church members. We previously discussed how there is a “Christ for Individuals APPENDIX” at the end of each of the 7 messages. Well, that APPENDIX as for as being for individuals in the churches is an answer you what you can do when all about you, like all but one of the original seven churches in Asia Minor, is intolerant of sound doctrine. At one time I wondered why there seemed to be sort of an Appendix to the message that Christ delivered to each church; and then recently I realized that it was a separate message to the individuals in the church.

[5-1: What Do You Do If You Are in A Church Like Ephesus \(Rev 2:1-7\).](#)

Well, here is the message of Christ to you as an individual church member.

**“...To him (the individual church member) who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” (Revelation 2:7)**

This message from Christ says, “Okay, your church is in trouble: it has left the love of Christ as it’s first love; but there is still eternal

salvation for you!" What does this remind you of? I hope of II Timothy 2:19.

**"Nevertheless (okay, so your church is in trouble) the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His, 'and, 'Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.'"**

The security of salvation, alias the overcoming, as has been a consistent theme in this volume 3, is an individual matter. It does not depend on your church, your social context, or your political and economic context. This message from the Ascended Christ to you is that you could go to paradise if no one else in your church or denomination went, although hopefully it will not come down to this. Of course you will have to remain counter cultural to your church if it is like Ephesus. You like your church can not leave Christ as your first love. If your church or your denomination was and is your first love then you are in trouble. Recall the answer of the three questions from Thomas, Philip, and Judas that we studied in the chapter on "Signs for Believing". **THE ANSWER OF JESUS TO THE THIRD QUESTION FROM JUDAS. {\*\*This is also the way to Learn Christ by hearing Him and being taught by Him.\*\*}**

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

(1). You must keep in the process of loving Jesus. "If anyone loves Me..." (2). The person that loves Jesus must also keep the teachings of Jesus, and will indeed keep the teachings of Jesus as proof of that love. **{\*\*Also I might say, as proof that he or she has indeed Learned Christ, or has been "born again" as some so glibly say with their little automatic formula's for salvation.\*\*}**

(3). God the Father will love the person who loves Jesus and keeps the words of Jesus. **{\*\*You see here is part of the reason that our little formula's and automatic plans of salvation do not work. We do not control God the Father. His love comes to us as He**

**ordains, and He will love us when we love Jesus and the teachings of Jesus. That is, if He so desires and so ordains.\*\*}**

(4). Now here is the miracle of this love of God through love of Jesus Christ: God the Father and God the Son will invisibly **{\*\*This is actually the work of the Spirit of God and of Christ, the Holy Spirit. I wish I had space to discuss it here, but read about the Holy Spirit in the chapter on "Some Sounds of a Sound Faith", and even here in John 14 where Jesus taught about the work of the Holy Spirit.\*\*}** come and dwell in the heart of the LOVER and Practiced. This is sometimes called the new birth, but I think this is simpler and more powerful. **{\*\*The new birth, of course, was taught by Jesus and recorded by John in John 3; but the disciples had been taught that, and still they needed to hear this teaching of Jesus. Much like we also need to hear LEARN CHRIST today.\*\*}** **"...and We will come to him and make Our home with him." (John 14:23b)**

As how to be an overcomer (among the Seven Christian thousands during the Falling Away, that has been a major part of our previous complete study of the book of Revelation

**{\*\*The "overcomers" are identified as: (1) The righteous and this is consistent with the final admonition of Revelation 22:11 where the righteous and holy are to keep on being righteous and holy; (2) Those who win souls by the testimony of Jesus and by the Word of God, a consistent and repeating theme in the book of Revelation; and (3) As the opposite of the wicked sinner where also in Revelation 22:11 it is admonished to let the filthy and liar keep on being filthy and a liar.\*\*}**

...and also: **{\*\*The Overcomers: (1) Inherit all these things of the new earth; (2) God Himself will be the God of the overcomers; (3) And overcomers become sons to God. The Non-overcomers (21:8), or succumbers, are identified as the: (1) Cowardly; (2) Unbelieving; (3) Abominable; (4) Murderers; (5) Immoral persons; (6) Sorcerers; (7) Idolaters; and (8) Liars.\*\*}**

5-2: What Do You Do If You Are in A Church Like Smyrna (Rev 2:8-11).

Actually the transition in this Christ message to the church and to individuals is better seen in listing the verses where the words “church”, “churches” are located, “He” and “you” are found in Revelation 2:8-11 as the message of Christ for the Individual and for the total church and all the churches are intermixed: (1) In 8:1 it is the whole church at Smyrna that is being address through the pastor. **{\*\*I’m sure the pastor also has a guardian angel, and he needs one in this day and time of the Falling Away.\*\*}**; (2) In the words from Christ that follow in Revelation 8:9 and 10a, the “your” is obviously addressed to the whole church; (3) An individualistic theme is picked back up when Christ tells them that the “devil is about to throw some of you into prison” (8:10b). You see the devil discriminates individually, and God allows it individually for three reasons: (a) for a witness to the world; and (b) according to Hebrews it is a compliment from God because He allows only His own Sons, not the illegitimate, to be persecuted; and (c) It makes a better Christ follower. **{\*\*Of course we in America are not in physical tribulation right now as the church at Smyrna was for “ten days”, and therefore will not receive the same reward which they receive. This no physical tribulation, I am told from the modern update of FOXE’S BOOK OF MARTYRS, is not true for the rest of the world. Foxe’s states that the physical persecution of Christians is worse now than at any time since Christ. Likewise, we know that there is a “final tribulation” to come on the whole world just before the Day of the LORD and the Second Coming.\*\*}**

5-3: What Do You Do If You Are in A Church Like Pergamos. (Rev 2:12-17).

The church at Pergamos is known as the compromising church. How easy it is to compromise with sound doctrine and Satan in the name of unity among members, especially when those members are active, have a history of giving, and have some position of

respect and service in the church. This is especially true when a new generation of believers, having little experience with the richness of the inheritance in the saints and of church government, find themselves in new leadership positions, or when they consider “the desires of their own heart” instead of sound doctrine.

Remember Balaam, he advised the king that the way to beat the children of God was to make them compromise in the worship of foreign gods. The message to the total church, from Christ, was to “repent”. How long has it been since your have heard a pastor or evangelist to tell the whole church to “repent”? **{\*\*Does this mean that modern American churches don't need it since they are so much better than the church at Pergamos? I think not. It is just to call for repentance in the church is an unpopular move, distracts from the itching ears comforting, and might get them run off. As far back as 30 years ago after a pastor preached at one church in Portales, New Mexico on exactly what the Bible teaches on marriage and divorce, the next Sunday hardly any church member came to church. Perhaps he included repentance.\*\*}** How often do you think it has been needed? A lot more often than it is heard! It is so easy for a new generation to consider that church government and even the doctrine of God and Christ are evolving, instead of considering the warning of the Apostle Jude about “the faith **once for all delivered** to the saints”.

Well, if you are in a church of denomination like that, what is the individual message of Christ to you?

**“To him (the individual church member) who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I (Christ) will give him (the individual church member) a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.” (Revelation 2:17) **{\*\*This is a good place to briefly insert a reminder about the differences between “church”, “churches”, and the church of the Firstborn, written in heaven, which is the body of Christ. It is doctrinally unsound to use the word “the church” to refer to any less than the full body of Christ****

which is written in heaven. It is far more Scripturally sound to talk about churches, and the differences in churches; and the number of members in those churches (or denominations) that actually belong to the Body, the church of the Firstborn, written in heaven can be any where from zero to some large number. It is again not our job to separate them or to number the people of God. And unless somebody on this earth has already died, gone to heaven and read the church roll up there, they can not tell exactly which church members are on that only determinative church roll. Of the approximately 128 times the word “ecclesia” for church in the total Bible, a couple of times it is translated “assembly” (as in the assembly of the Firstborn), approximately 20 times it is church in the sense of the whole body of Christ, but most times it is a specific local church, like at Pergamos or Philippi, etc.\*\*} You see how individualistic Revelation 2:17 is above. This is from Christ: you, the overcome in that church or denomination in spite of the path your church or denomination pursues in the Falling Away will receive: (1) a white stone; and (2) a new name on that white stone that no one knows except the individual recipient. In those days a “name” expresses the character of the person so named, so that Christ is saying that this person who overcomes in his own church and the world will have a character, personality, and status before Christ that is known only to the person and Christ.

I know there will be complaints about the theme of this commentary being “rugged individualism” like in Frontier America; however I think it has and is being made clear that individuality is a part of the plan of Christ for the believing person. I know “Christ for Individuals” is counter to political correctness, group behavior, democracy, rule of the majority or any other name it can be called where the welfare of the group takes priority over the individual, but you see individually is the way God works, especially when conformity to the group is not possible. Don’t forget that the Bible tells us during the ups and downs of the “perilous time” of II Timothy 3:1-9 “not to keep company with

such” church members; and when later in II Timothy 4:1-4 when the ups and downs of the perilous times turn into the steady Falling Away (**\*\*the time comes when they will no longer endure sound doctrine\*\***), then it is even more important, if you can, to get away from such church members. There is the danger of being dragged down with them.

Don’t ever think that even if you have practiced love, that there is not also the need for sound doctrine; and don’t ever think, as you see by Christ’s message to the church at Pergamos, that Christ does not care about sound doctrine. There were a lot of good things Christ said about Pergamos (works, hold fast to the name of Christ, and did not deny Christ’s Faith); but Christ has several complaints about their doctrines:

1. some members hold the doctrine of Balaam **{\*\*Christ holds the pastors and other church members for allowing unsound doctrine to exist in their church.\*\*}**.
2. some members are practicing the ways of Balaam who advised Balak the way to damage the relationship with God was through idol worship and sexual immorality. Now, why would any fellow church member want to damage the relationship of another person with God and Christ? Most generally for profit, also for control and influence, and then if they were among the men of the “perilous” times who are lovers of self and money, it is just part of their character. (II Timothy 3:1-9)
3. some members hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, a doctrine that “Christ hates.” **{\*\*not my words, the words of Christ and the words of the Bible; yes, Christ hates some unsound doctrines.\*\*}** The Nicolaitans with their doctrine essentially said, “As long as you are a Christian, it does not matter what you do.” Christ hates that: it does matter what you do, it matters to Christ and it matters to your real salvation. Recall how Jesus answered Judas and the other disciples in John 14, that they loved Him only if they keep His teachings. That is also the point of LEARN CHRIST

in Ephesians and this commentary: those bad doctrines with their bad works will not be there “if indeed you learned Christ and were taught by Him.” **{\*\*You know the full meaning of that now, and if not re-read THE REACTION conclusion of a chapter to follow.\*\*}**

5-4: [What Do You Do If You Are in A Church Like Thyatira \(Rev 2:18-29\)](#).

You are in trouble if you are in a church or denomination that is corrupt like Thyatira! Can a whole church be wrong? Can all their democratic votes be in the wrong direction? Well, how do you read this. Surely in this day and time of the “perilous times” of II Timothy when church members have a form of godliness and deny the power thereof, and of “the time will come” when church members become intolerant of sound doctrine and ultimately turn into fables, you must see that this amounts to democratic votes toward anarchy, anarchy that rebels against Christ, against God, and against the overseer of the local church.

But what is the individual message of Christ to you? This is a long individual message from Christ, but the individuals in this church need it!

**“Now to you (individual members), and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. But hold fast what you have till I come (hold on to the sound doctrine you have until the Second Coming of Christ). And he who (the individual church member) overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations-- ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’--as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star.” (Revelation 2:24-28)**

Good ‘ole B.H. Carroll, founder of Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, in his AN INTERPRETATION OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE, as

always has a comment to make. **{\*\*Summers and Mounce would not comment on the Nicolaitans, but Carroll did.\*\*}** What I call the Appendix to the message to the seven churches, or really the Individual messages from Christ, B.H. calls "the promises to the faithful in the churches". Also Carroll in his commentary on Revelation explains "overcometh": *"It commences with justification and ends. with sanctification. 'He that endureth unto the end shall be saved'--'Be thou faithful unto death, and thou shalt receive a crown of life.' John elsewhere supplies the object of the verb. Twice he says: 'Ye have overcome the wicked one' (I John 2:13-14). Three times he declares the world as the object to be overcome (I John 5:4-5). Only those 'born of God overcome the world.'*

*"The means of overcoming is 'the blood of the Lamb'; the instrumentality is faith--and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith' (I John 5:4). Satan, his emissaries and the world that lieth in him, must be overcome. By faith the child of God goes on from victory to victory--from grace to grace--from strength to strength--from glory to glory."*

5-5: What Do You Do If You Are in A Church Like Sardis (Rev 3:1-6).

Sardis is known as the dead church. They had a good name and a good reputation and a good history in the community, the state, and in their own eyes; but in the sight of Christ they were dead. Now, if you are in a dead church or denomination and you want to do better, what is the message of Christ for you?

**"You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."**  
**(Revelation 3:4-6)**

You see here is your problem: you can not readily admit to yourself that a whole church, except for a few, could be wrong.

Why? Because the American Democratic Faith of the rightness of the majority is so engrained in your thinking. However, I doubt until you admit it, you can find a personal solution. What is the solution of Christ for the Individual:

**BE AN OVERCOMER!**

5-6: What Do You Do If You Are in A Church Like Philadelphia (Rev 3:7-25).

In a way it is unfortunate that there is one of the seven churches like Philadelphia that is considered the faithful church. Not unfortunate then but now since with all these problems with six out of seven churches, and almost two thousand years ago, and considered the characteristics of individual church members of the "perilous times" and the falling away from the faith of the "time will come", how hard will it be for a church to really in these modern times be like Philly. However, there is still a message from Christ to individual church members in Revelation 3:12.

**"He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. 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."**

Always the same message to the individual from Christ in Revelation: **BE AN OVERCOMER!** What is somewhat different in Revelation is the nature of the reward to the Overcomer from Christ. And once again we will try to paraphrase Carroll on the subject: (1) the promise of overcomers to the access to the tree of life in the paradise of God is "incorruption, glory, power, and a spiritual body in the image of Christ; (2) the promise to overcomers not to be hurt of the second death is not to be case into the lake of fire and brimstone after the Judgement of God at the Second Coming; (3) the promise to overcomers of hidden manna is to appropriate the body and blood of Christ **{\*\*spiritually the same as baptism in Romans\*\*}** for nourishment into eternal life; (4) the

promise to overcomers to receive a white stone with a new name is the assurance of divine acceptance, the personal experience of the Spirit of God bearing witness with our own human spirit that we are a child of God **{\*\*our heart naturally cries out “Abba” for Father\*\*}**; (5) the promise of overcomers to rule over nations comes from the identification on the side of Christ, who is head of the church and kingdom, king of kings, and Lord of Lord; (6) the promise to overcomers to receive the morning star is a premonition of the victory in the Second Coming; and (7) the promise of the overcomer to be arrayed in white garments is an internal cleansing, a perfecting toward personal holiness, the good old doctrine of sanctification. **{\*\*that third aspect of salvation of salvation after faith and regeneration, the process of become more Christlike until Glorification takes place at the Second Coming, where “we shall become like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.\*\*}**

5-7: [What Do You Do If You Are in A Church Like Laodicea \(Rev 3:14-22\)](#).

This is your last chance to have your church covered in the book of Revelation, and to receive your message from Christ as an individual church member. If the shoe fits, wear it! This church is known as the “lukewarm church”. You have to admit that with the emphasis on toleration and moderation, getting along with everybody and in the name of unity, contemporary churches by and large would be satisfied with the “lukewarm” connotation.

Well, if this is your church; and you need an individual message to separate yourself from the majority in your church or denomination, what is it?

**“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.” (Revelation 3:19-21)**

## 5-8: THE FUTURE.

The future of Southern Baptists looks bad since the takeover by the fundamentalists approximately 20 years ago. When I was growing up in Southern Baptist work in Texas, we called the fundamentalists “feudamentalists” because you knew what they were against more than what they were for. When the fundamentalists broke off from the Southern Baptist Convention in approximately 1920, they started a lot of churches which by and large were called Bible Baptist Churches. All of us enjoyed their more famous preachers like Lester Roloff, John R. Rice, Lee Robertson, and Jerry Falwell.

The basic difference between the major body of the SBC and the fundamentalist was more a spirit than doctrine; although the fundamentalists tried to make themselves know as 1611 King James Bible supporters, pre-millennium Scofield mites, and verbal inspirational mites falsely so called, mainly by themselves as if patting themselves on the back. That spirit can only be called a fighting spirit. W. A. Criswell expressed it when he told Bill Moyer on TV that “we (the fundamentalists) were going to get fighting until one side or the other one”. The other side in the SBC was called “moderates”. How then did the fundamentalists come back into the SBC and then take control. No doubt, they looked around to see the prosperity of large SBC churches and the retirement program, and slowly they began to be called to large SBC churches like Criswell to First Baptist Church, Dallas, Adrian Rogers to Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, and Charles Stanley to FBC in Atlanta. The person of intellectual honesty must admit that the people themselves had a lot to do with the attitude that permitted the calling of fundamentalists without adequate SBC background or spirit into the SBC churches.

There were many reasons for the change in church member attitudes that permitted such a takeover: as the average reading level of Americans fell from sixth grade to third grade level, those third graders looked around for preaching at their level and there

were the fundamentalists; the neglect of the Bible in America and in the churches lead to a vacuum where church members from experience knew no Baptists doctrine or Bible doctrine; the organizations took the place of Bible and organizers with outgoing personalities were sought.

However, the primary reason that it was so easy for a takeover by the fighting spirit of the fundamentalists is that SBC churches like all churches and denominations were victims of the FALLING AWAY. Yet we must recall and act accordingly that a Fighting Spirit is not consistent with the Christ of peace on earth. A fighting "spirit" is a bad spirit; and besides the admonition of the Apostle John in I John to "test every spirit", you know what else the Bible says about bad spirits. The very smart thing that the fundamentalists leaders like Jerry Falwell, Adrian Rogers, Charles Stanley, and George Bush have been able to do is to subtly and falsely identify "evangelical" and "born again believers" with fundamentalism and the American Democratic faith. What always comes through this veil of deception is the spirit: it is a spirit minus love, grace, graciousness. It is a spirit that is counter to the Gospel of the poor. It is a spirit of the popular majority, the majority according to the Bible have always gone the wrong way on the major decision of faith: the way that leads to destruction although it is broad enough to allow the majority to travel. These leaders move so quickly back and forth between the American Democratic Faith and the Faith of Christ and the Bible when they speak that it is difficult to tell where one leaves off and the other starts. Indeed the two do overlap on many issues, but these leaders want you to think they are synonymous; or at least they want them to be. Jerry Falwell, for example, reveals what he is really like when he publicly supports the killing of Iraqis, because it is our response to their killing Americans on September 11. You see that fighting spirit of fundamentalism always comes out: love for our own kind, fundamentalists, and death to all others. What it really sounds like is the Muslim conquest of the world approximately 1200 when the

choice of the conquered was “believe like us or die”. You see that this support for murder puts being an American seeking revenge or even justice before the love of Christ. These same people are those that are willing to support the death penalty in this country in spite of the obvious inequity toward the poor. Rich people just do not go to death row. Likewise they can support the moral rightness of our military killing and imprisoning Muslims all over the world in the name of our American rights: this is the American Democratic faith, in no way can it be considered consistent with Christ and the Bible.

At this point Bush has probably killed more (Americans and Iraqis and innocent bystanders and other nationals) than Saddam did. And if he has not already killed more, he will get there. It is a strange kind of morality among the fundamentalists that claims to be a moral majority that can kill, lie, and deceive; always considering the end which is American democracy can justify the means which are immoral. Listen to them carefully, you will hear the DOCTRINES OF THE AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC FAITH (like listed in Gabriel’s’ book and others by American Studies scholars) more than you hear the faith of Christ and the Bible: like the mission of America to force other countries to Democracy by killing and destroying; like the gospel of wealth which protects and promotes the wealthy while suppressing the poor and even middle class; and the corollary of success to the gospel of wealth which justifies the trampling of the people in the land in order for them to rule. The Old Testament Prophets constantly reminded the nation of Israel not to take advantage of the people in the land, foreigners and citizens: they did not heed and God withdrew His support from the nation. Do you think it would be a strange thing if the Word of God and the prophecies repeated themselves in a young country like the United States?

Did you know, and I learned this from Henry Steele Commager who I believe since he really had no axe to grind as an American Studies scholar **{in THE AMERICAN MIND and in more**

**contemporary lectures and writings}** when he stated the origin of the fundamentalists movement. How it was started in California by a group of millionaires. Listen to those millionaires and the supporters of the millionaires with the American democratic faith: what they are saying is “help me hold on to my millions” since me and my kind are protectors of the American way of life, and we will take care of you! Do you think it is strange that along with the lack of jobs created and the unemployment, and almost every state in American suffering financial, Americans losing their 401K value, and corruption in big business...do you think that along with all this it should be thought strange that the percent of Americans of middle class income and the poor has increased while the percent of the rich has gone up.

“Faith without works” is dead like Jesse Jackson told Jerry Falwell on national television. Falwell, the new “god” of the moral majority and fundamentalism simply because he pastors a 24,000 member church, started the immoral majority, and a school to kick out more fundamentalists like themselves, immoral in that they always think they are right and hence confuse themselves with the Maker, he (Falwell) always think he is right. He is moral and he is right, and anyone that disagrees with him like Jesse Jackson must be wrong. (There is more of that rotten spirit of fundamentalism.) The truth is that Jerry Falwell pastors in the state of Virginia which went traditional, dogmatic, and custom and tradition oriented long before other states. Their custom and tradition, just like what happened to the religious leaders of Jesus’ day, has replaced the doctrine of God with their own beliefs, primarily the beliefs of the American Democratic Faith.

Ah well, the important thing is to know Jesus; and perhaps Falwell and the other fundamentals know Jesus and will preach Him if they have not become so enamored with the American Democratic faith and the popularity that it brings to them while they effectively substitute the American Democratic Faith for Faith in Jesus Christ.



## Chapter 6: A Virtual Baptism for James Thomas McMichael.

Some may not realize that the first name of “James” comes from his grandfather on the Steelman side, James Riley Steelman; and the middle name of “Thomas” from his grandfather on the McMichael side, Thomas Madison McMichael. Like James and all of us they had their human weaknesses. But rather than those, we at this point must dwell on the future of great hope, and how James, always kind to others, began to create a hope in all of us during the last months with a request to be baptized in the Weatherford Lake behind his house. Sadly, we were too late for that as after his request I asked, “Good, if you are ready”, to which he replied yes; and then to the question “When do you want to do it”, James said “when I get my strength”. We all know that did not happen, except with the no pain, much strength and joy and happiness Jim has now in heaven with Jesus, Mom, and Mr. Steelman. So as a memorial to Jim, we now have a virtual baptism for him at the Lake.



What better way for a virtual baptism than with those at the Memorial service for his Mom, and the Lake behind his house in the background. Thanks all for your participation. Strange you see, well not as we have virtual for everything else in

life, why not for what is described about baptism below in Scripture. (From the Berean Study Bible)

### [Dead to Sin, Alive to God](#)

**...3Or aren't you aware that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4We therefore were buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may**

**walk in newness of life. 5For if we have been united with Him like this in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection.... (Romans 6:3-5)**

Even water baptism is not only following the example of Jesus Himself, and is like He said, "IN obedience to his command" that fulfills the righteousness of obedient works, but it is also a virtual reality of what has already happened in the believer like Jim before they ask to be baptized.

We think of Philip the evangelist and the Ethiopian, after Philip had explained to him the passage about Christ he was reading from Isaiah, when the Ethiopian naturally ask, like Jim, and always a good sign of faith, "Here is water (at Lake Weatherford behind Jim's house), what does hinder me from me baptized. Many of us know the historical reply of Philip the evangelist:

## Christ Is Preached to an Ethiopian

"Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert. <sup>27</sup>So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, <sup>28</sup>was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. <sup>29</sup>Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."

<sup>30</sup>So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

<sup>31</sup>And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. <sup>32</sup>The place in the Scripture which he read was this:

“He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;  
And as a lamb before its shearer *is* silent,  
So He opened not His mouth.

<sup>33</sup>In His humiliation His justice was taken away,  
And who will declare His generation?  
For His life is taken from the earth.”

<sup>34</sup>So the eunuch answered Philip and said, “I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?” <sup>35</sup>Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. <sup>36</sup>Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, *here is* water. What hinders me from being baptized?”

<sup>37</sup>Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.”

And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

<sup>38</sup>So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. <sup>39</sup>Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. <sup>40</sup>But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.”

It is impossible to explain why there was so much passage in time from the first profession of faith by Jim at Oakridge Baptist Church where I was preaching a revival meeting, and when Jim requested to be baptized within a couple of

months of his passing to be heaven with Mom June 19, 2020; and I am not sure it is important at this point. (All of us agree, Jim could in no way be fit into any kind of standard mold. We was a little bit of his Mom, a little bit of his grandfathers Steelman and McMichael, a little bit of me no doubt; but mainly a special personality and character called Jimmy McMichael.) Even as we can not explain many things, sins, and wrong doings, or procrastinations in our lives—and let him without sin cast the first stone. We are just grateful that he did, and almost too many times to number during his last few months, Jim gave testimony to his faith in Christ.

We could see evidence of the spirit working in his life when he told us how Ephesians 5:16 had stuck in his mind while in the garage, and he could not explain that, further asking of the meaning of it.

### [Children of Light](#)

*...<sup>15</sup>Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, <sup>16</sup>redeeming the time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup>Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is...*

[Berean Study Bible](#)

We can easily think he was given warning by the spirit of Christ in his heart that both he had a short time, and in keeping with the passage from Scripture we all have a short time to buy back or redeem our time before the Second Coming.