



## Chapter 38: 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.”

### **38-1: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 every one 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 premimenece, 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 eschatalogy 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 churchmembers 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 churchmembers 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 churchmembers “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 churchmembers of the perilous times. Churchmembers 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. Churchmembers that do not turn away from the truth. Churchmembers, like many we know, who do not turn into fables. The problems are the perilous times among churchmembers 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.

### **38-2: 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 in 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 has 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 walk 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 dwell 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.

### **38-3: 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 medi-

ating 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 lead 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 crated 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)**

#### **38-4: 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 4:17-32. 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, 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 noone. 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. Uncleanliness.
  - 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, a 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 any one 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 angle 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 inexpli-

cable 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.

### **38-6: 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 trumpeted and the great, booming voice of God; and how the people of the Assembly begged that the words would not 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 bear 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.

### **38-7: 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 believe; 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 churchmembers 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 atyp-

ical: 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.

### **38-8: 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, bye and bye. 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 no 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 12:13-29)