

# GENTLE SHEPHERD MINISTRIES

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH ~ MAKING DISCIPLES ~ EQUIPPING THE SAINTS FOR MINISTRY

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## The Odyssey Part 7 THE CURRENT By Rayola Kelley

The inclination of fallen humanity is to believe we are in control of our destiny. We are, in fact, able to do so but only in the sense that we ultimately choose where we will spend eternity: Heaven or Hell. However, how we reach the end of our destination is a different story. The truth is different currents run through each age. The current we find ourselves in will depend on the type of shoreline we have sought out to obtain our life.

There is the shoreline of wishful thinking. It is made up of the unsteady sands of worldly possibilities. When the tides of the world come in, it quickly picks a person up and ushers him or her into the fast moving currents of illusive hope. As the different ideals of success, happiness, and satisfaction are pulled out of a person's hands by the fast current, the person begins to lose all hope. Eventually, these individuals slam into the rocks of vanity, leaving them in a state of utter despair. These poor souls know that they have missed obtaining a purposeful life.

On the shoreline of lustful pursuits, the current of the riptides of undisciplined flesh can roll in, pulling the person out into the unpredictable ocean waves of life. These waves lead these individuals right into the paths of destructive storms. As the different storms ebb away any semblance of personal strength, life, as these individuals perceive it, begins to leak out through the cracked vintage of what once was, and of what could be if they had chosen a different path. As they become more and more consumed by the consequential storms of life, there is a weak consensus in their innermost being that if anything reaches the shore, it

will be bits and pieces of a miserable existence that will reminisce of a life that will never be due to the utter foolishness of such meaningless pursuits.

When it comes to the shoreline of prideful expectation, people wait for the waves of self-sufficiency to come along so that they can ride high on their surfboards of arrogance. In their mind, there is no way they can fail to conquer the challenges of the currents of life as they ride above that which would drive them out to the ocean of uncertainty. From the height of prideful expectation comes the sense of infallibility as such individuals come closer to the shoreline. In their conceit, they fail to see the hidden rocks of judgment that will greet them as the wave they are riding on thrusts them towards their ultimate collision with the inflated vanity of their ego, the reality of their ineptness, and the demise of any personal character.

The final shoreline has to do with personal piousness. It is highlighted by the towering rocks of personal righteousness. People who stand on such rocks can see the storms coming; however, they perceive that the waves created by the storms will break against their rock and simply be nullified from having any real impact on them. Even though their rock seems high enough, they have failed to calculate the verbosity of the winds that different storms can bring. They do not realize that they are not really grounded in the Rock, they are simply standing on the height of personal arrogance. As a result, the winds will not only topple them, but it will cause them to fall into the angry waves of judgment and failure.

If you are like me, you have visited each of these shorelines at one time or the other in search of life. However, the current, waves, storms,

or winds have revealed the vanity of each pursuit. The currents have ripped out all fantasy from your grasp, the waves have either taken you out to expose you to the storms of life or they have hurled you headlong against the rocks or left you grounded on the sand. And, what about those winds? They have shaken every faulty foundation you have been standing on to expose how unsteady you are in your life.

When I became a Christian, I had to learn that God has provided a current for His people that will enable them to find and experience the life that He has ordained for them. However, it is not always simple to come to terms with this current. After all, the world's current looks more appealing, because it is faster and more exciting, but it is like the Jordan River.

The word "Jordan" means "descended." The Jordan River's course is a little more than 200 miles. It varies in width from 45 feet to 180 feet. It starts from the foothills of Mount Hermon and runs through the Sea of Galilee. This brings us to the reason for its name and its final destination. The Jordan River descends from 1200 feet above sea level down to 1286 feet below sea level. You talk about the rush you could experience on such a descent. It descends at a rate of 25 feet per mile. There are 27 rapids between the Sea of Galilee and its final destination. And, what is Jordan's final destination? It is the Dead Sea.

The currents of the world may be fast, but they are quickly leading people down to the depths of death. These currents may start from what looks like a productive source of water and even grants a temporary experience of the benefits of a place like the Sea of Galilee, but eventually it can only lead to the vanity of that which will come to rest in a place that has no life. People may float in the Dead Sea, but they cannot remain there for they will die as well. When they get out of the lifeless waters, they must wash themselves because they have the stench of death upon



them. Surely, this represents the essence of the current of the world, but how many people insist that it will lead them to a life of happiness?

When it comes to the currents of the flesh, such currents operate much like a tsunami. They will come upon you when least expected. They have a subtle nature to them. For example, the more one gives in to flesh, the greater the momentum the lusts of the flesh gains in one's life. As the lusts demand more of its captives' affections and loyalty, the more the water of life seems to recede, but in reality the water is gaining the addictive heights that will consume all that is in its path, leaving no real semblance of life behind. This is why it is important for Christians to discern where their affections and attractions are being directed towards.

When it comes to the waves that entangle those on the prideful shores of expectation, I was reminded of the gigantic waves on the North Shores of Hawaii on the Island of Oahu. Those who know anything about surfing know this location is where champion surfers are made or potential ones are stripped of all honors or hope of victories.

When the waves of the North Shores are at their peak, there is nothing more fascinating or beautiful to behold. At their height, they look as if they are touching the sky, but there is also a fierceness to them that not only brings awe, but dread. There is a defiance to them, and as they roar into shore, there is almost a taunting echo. It is as if the waves are daring those surfers to come out and give it the best shot they have, and just maybe they will find the right wave, catch it at the right time, and experience an honor few have, and gain a title that few possess.

Is this not what pride is all about? It wants to conquer the impossible to lay claim to bragging rights. However, it is all a temptation because there will always be better waves that must be conquered and other champions to be victorious over. Such exaltation represents one moment of great ecstasy as one may even touch the heights of success and satisfaction, only to be brought down to the reality that each success is temporary, and that one must al-

ways strive for or remain on top of the wave of arrogance to experience such ecstasy.

We Christians must avoid getting caught up with the various temptations and games of pride. We must neglect our need to come out on top, our desire to claim supremacy in a matter, and our so-called "right" to be important and indispensable to others. We must learn how to come to a state of humility, bow before that which is worthy, and give way to that which is honorable.

When it comes to personal piety it reminds me of the association two great rivers in the Middle East have with each other: The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Amazingly, these two rivers have been known to run parallel and have even joined together at different places; however, they do part and go their separate ways. The amazing fact about the Euphrates River is that it was and is to serve as one of the borders to the Promised Land.

Man's religious best can often run parallel and even join with the matters of God, but eventually it will go its own way. The ways of God may appear harsh at times, but they will always bring us to the place of possessing His promises. We must flee any notions that will cause us to run alongside of the ways of God instead of becoming lost in His current. There is only one course, one current, and one river that will bring us into the full promises of God.

The river and current of God are described in *Ezekiel 47:1-8*. The waters of God are living and powerful. Jesus in *John 7:37-39* tells us that rivers of Living Water can flow from us, but they must be uncapped in our soul. This only happens when a person is "born again" from above. At this point the individual can become a channel in which the Living Waters can freely flow forth with the life of Christ.

However, to ensure the flow of the Living Waters, we must be brought to the shorelines of this river. At first we cannot gauge how wide the river is, for we must first get into it before we can experience its current and power. The Bible actually describes four depths that can be experienced by believers. Each depth simply shows the level of maturity a Christian is operating in.

At first, believers are brought into ankle deep water. In other words, they are more of an observer of the Christian life than a participant. Due to their immaturity they are happy to wade in the water, but avoid going any further because they have not really learned to walk in the deep truths of God. These people can remain on the outside fringes of that which would bring maturity to them until they become more founded on the Rock of Christ.

The second reading was taken at knee level. Here the believer has been brought into deeper water. Such individuals have received some revelation about the Christian life, but remain closed to the shoreline. They do not yet want to be swept off their feet by that which they cannot understand or control. Such individuals must give up their need to understand and learn what it means to walk in faith towards the immovable Rock of Christ.

The third group stands in water up to their loins. These individuals have had experiences with God, but they are not comfortable in completely consecrating their lives to experience the depths of Christianity in order to ascend to the heights of greater revelation. They are quick to settle for giving the impression they have experienced the depths of the Spirit, but as long as they are being seen of men, it remains obvious that it is simply a show. It is vital that as believers we avoid being content to run parallel with the things of God—we must get in the current if we are going to grow and reach our high calling in Christ.

The final group represents the swimmer. The deeper we get into the river of the Spirit, the more we will become aware of how impassable it is. Since the current is in the deep part of the river, the final group must swim in faith and obedience to the place of the current before the river can take them to the places of maturity and promises.

This river will take us through the dry desert of testing, but in the end it will bring us to the sea, ensuring that our lives will be made whole as all that is eternal will eventually be restored to us. It is said that on the banks of this free-flowing river there are many trees. Trees are associated to life and shade. In the current there is not only healing, but wholeness is there to be obtained

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## HEAVEN

By Jeannette Haley

*"We are confident...and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."  
– 2 Corinthians 5:8*

Most people, whether they are born again Christians or not, have their own idea of what heaven is like, or what it will be like for them personally. Muslims, who do not believe in original sin, believe heaven has seven different levels. As one advances upwards through each level, the closer you become to Allah. Keep in mind that Allah is the ancient moon god of Mesopotamia, not Jehovah God of the Christians and Jews. An excellent Web Site to check out is [www.biblebelievers.org](http://www.biblebelievers.org) which is a great resource for study on the pagan ancient moon god worship, and is a wealth of other historical facts that most Christians are unaware of as well.

Mormons have their own convoluted beliefs about life after death that involve an elaborate, unscriptural explanation of what a person must do to work his or her way to the "third" or "Celestial" heaven. Roman Catholicism's teachings, beliefs and practices come from Mithraism—a form of paganism that existed in Babylonian times. They also require extensive works as a requirement for salvation. In response to the question, "Do people go to heaven after purgatory," [Wiki.answers.com](http://Wiki.answers.com) says, "Yes, when a soul enters purgatory it begins the cleansing process, (removal of sins) so the soul can be purely good and so worthy to be entirely in God's presence (heaven). In other words a soul in heaven is guaranteed a place in heaven. Some churches believe that Purgatory is a temporary state before you can go to heaven. While some other churches believe that it is a place for those not good enough for heaven, but too good for hell; and once in Purgatory you remain there indefinitely. Other churches do not believe there is a Purgatory at all; they believe that after death people go directly to heaven or hell depending on how God judges them." The Roman Catholic Church teaches that there are four different types of Purgatory within "Limbo", one of which is

the Limbo that infants who die before baptism go to for eternity.

Even though God strictly forbids praying to the dead, or trying to communicate with them (necromancy) it is no secret that Mary is considered to be a "co-savior" along with Jesus, and is prayed to daily by millions, making her an omnipresent, omnipotent goddess.

The fact is, every false religion, cult and New Age belief, and practice, on the planet originates from prehistoric paganism (both pre-Flood and post Flood) that culminated in ancient Babylon. Therefore, any belief, teaching, philosophy, or *experience* that people maintain is "the true way" apart from God's Word is a lie from the father of lies. The Holy Bible alone stands, and always will, as the only standard of truth for lost mankind to cling to, depend upon, and believe. Nevertheless, there is an astonishing flood of apostasy gaining momentum within Christendom, especially throughout Western civilization which has historically championed the Gospel, and spread the light of Christ to the entire world. This evil tide of heretical poison is lapping at the doors of unbelieving and hardened hearts in these last days. Such are turning from God's Word to cunningly crafted fables, witchcraft, vain philosophies of man, doctrines of demons and paganism, false science (evolution) and an endless presentation of heresies, such as Universalism which teaches that every soul, saved or not, will end up in heaven, completely doing away with what the Bible teaches concerning hell. We are warned, "*Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them*" *Ephesians 5:6, 7*. "*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ*" *Colossians 2:8*.

Concerning heaven, God created three separate and distinct "heavens." (*For all the gods of the people are idols: but the LORD made the heavens*" *1 Chronicles 26:16*.) These "heavens" are the atmosphere, or sky that surrounds the earth; the second heaven is the Universe or what we call Space, and the third is where God's throne is located. In *Deuteronomy*

*26:15* we read, "*Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey.*" This is one of many references that establishes that God is "above" the Universe, above the air around the earth, and above all the earth and all that lives upon the earth. God is "higher" in every way to His creation. *1 Kings 8:30* records Solomon's powerful prayer at the dedication of the temple. Referring to God hearing from heaven, he prayed "*And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive.*" In *2 Chronicles 30:27* we read, "*Then the priests the Levites arose and blessed the people: and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling place, even unto heaven.*" In this verse we see that God dwells in His holy place, in heaven.

In *Job 22:12* it says, "*Is not God in the height of heaven? And behold the height of the stars, how high they are!*" Consider that the Book of Job is the oldest book in the Bible, and these ancient people understood that God Almighty, the Creator of all there is dwells on high, even above the height of the stars. Asaph declared in *Psalms 73:25*, "*Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.*" I think in modern terms, this wise man would probably ask, "Why should I settle for less when I can have the Most High God?" In *Psalms 148:13*, we read "*Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent: his glory is above the earth and heaven.*" The prophet Isaiah wrote, "*Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory...*" *Isaiah 63:15a*. From *Genesis 1:1* through the last chapter of the Book of Revelation we can find hundreds of references to heaven, and God's dwelling place above.

Heaven is a fact. It is also a fact that Jesus declared that He came down from heaven. For example, in *John 3:13* He said, "*And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the*

*Son of man which is in heaven.*" In John 6:32, 33 Jesus declared, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." In John 7:51 He declared, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat [believe and receive] of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, [on the cross] which I will give for the life of the world." [Addition mine.] The Apostle Peter wrote, concerning the resurrected Christ, "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" 1 Peter 3:22.

One thing that you will never find in the "real Bible," (as opposed to many of the perverted ultra modern, so-called "translations") is flippancy. Flippancy, however, abounds in the world around us, and makes no exception for such serious realities as sin and Satan, right or wrong, life or death, heaven or hell. Satan will use whatever means he can to undermine the truth and validity of the Word of God. It is obvious that one of his greatest weapons is the use of frivolity. We can see this portrayed in such things as ridiculous, and downright immoral, television series, Hollywood productions, as well as by the media, comedians, radio talk shows, video games, books, music and the arts, and advertisements, to name a few. Tragically, such levity and disrespect can be seen in certain religious leaders, seeker-friendly churches, and popular movements within Christendom that are "Christian" in name only. Such wolves in sheep's clothing, with their cavalier attitudes, set up a blasphemous atmosphere for undiscerning souls—an environment that encourages demonic deception with devastating results. In *Deuteronomy 32:15* God had this to say about this subject to Israel, "But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness: then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation." [Emphasis added.]

God never changes, so how can we expect Him to "understand" and overlook the lack of brevity and sobri-

ety displayed by both the world and much of the Church when it comes to His Word, His greatness, His holiness, His judgment on sin, His great salvation, His ways, and His commandments (moral law)? How can He forgive the lack of faith, and the unbelief that is expressed through flippancy concerning such truths as heaven and hell? God declared through the Prophet Jeremiah, "Is not my word like as a fire? Saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour. Behold I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD." *Jeremiah 23:29-32*. [Emphasis added.]

This brings me to the title of this article, "Heaven." Heaven, where God dwells with all the heavenly host, and departed saints is a fact that needs to be expressed within the context of God's Word in order to insure its truth and sanctity. What is troubling is the increasing flippancy about heaven, especially from both those who should know better (those with a Christian background) as well as those who think they are "Christians," but aren't. It is disturbing to hear people say such things about the dead as "My dad is watching me from heaven. I know he'd be proud of my success." Or, "I know that my mom is always with me, wherever I go," or "I know that so-and-so is protecting me...I talk to him/her all the time." As innocent as this may be to many people, it dangerously borders on the evil practice of necromancy, or communication with the dead, and it is strictly forbidden by God. "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch. Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an

*abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God" Deuteronomy 18:10-13.*

Another flippancy about heaven is when people talk about the unsaved being "up there, watching what is unfolding here below." We heard one such comment lately when watching a television documentary on the strange life (and unsolved disappearance) of a notorious wealthy fornicator. His life was one of flagrant corruption, yet the unsaved around him merely assume he is "up there," watching them try to solve the riddle of his disappearance while searching for his illegitimate offspring in Asia.

Then there are those who believe that certain celebrities, who had no profession whatsoever of Christ when they were living, either in word or deed, are now carrying on with their "singing" or "acting" or "playing sports," or whatever, up in "heaven." Some Christians believe it is going to be one big "party." Nothing could be farther from the truth! Yet, people flippantly continue on, trying to bring heaven (and God) down to the level of this fallen world, inserting their own take on how it could be based only on subjective feelings and imaginations garnered from this temporal world, in order to feel comfortable about heaven. In all probability, many people don't honestly want to go to heaven if it doesn't offer them what they imagine it should be, with such things as marriage (Jesus said there is no marriage in heaven, see *Matthew 22:30*), or a continuation of either the life they enjoyed on this earth, or a fulfillment of the life they wish they had enjoyed on this earth.

Finally, even Christians sometimes have a tendency to believe that those whom they have admired for their good deeds, clean, honest living and generosity to others must surely be in heaven. In their mind, because God is loving and kind, His grace must somehow overlook the fact that these people never came to Christ to receive His forgiveness for their sins, and to make Him Lord of their life. Even the most well-meaning and sincere Christian is still *human*, and it is

*Continued Pg. 5, Column 2*

**IS JESUS SPEAKING TO US TODAY?**

**Q:** "What does it mean that 'my sheep hear my voice' in *John 10*?"

**A:** There are two problems in regard to people properly understanding or receiving the fact that our Shepherd is speaking to us today as a truth. The first has to do with the fact that many do not believe Jesus is speaking today, and if He is, how is He speaking? However, the Bible is clear that God has always spoken to His people. *Hebrews 1:1, 2* tells us He first spoke through the prophets, but in these last days He is speaking through His Son.

The second problem has to do with properly discerning the Lord's voice. However, the key to hearing His voice implies one knows the Shepherd well enough that he or she is able to recognize His voice among the barrage of voices that are clamoring for our attention.

This brings us to the relationship aspect of the Christian life. Jesus tells us that His sheep will hear His voice. The relationship between the shepherd and sheep has to do with ownership and dependency. A good shepherd is devoted to the welfare of his sheep. He is acquainted with every sheep and makes the necessary investment to encourage a healthy dependency on him. It is such a personal investment between the shepherd and sheep that it develops within the sheep the ability to hear and recognize the shepherd's voice when He calls out to them.

We know that Jesus made such an investment in each of us on the cross. He is well acquainted with us, but to clearly hear His voice we must know Him. It is for this reason we are told to deny ourselves, pick up our cross, and follow Him into the life He is calling us to.

This brings us to what serves as His voice today. There are two sources that serve as our Lord's mouthpiece: His Word and the Holy Spirit. In order for us to hear the active voice of our Shepherd in His Word, we must have the Holy Spirit. In order to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying according to His Word, we

and promises to be discovered. Granted, the terrain will change, but in the end the river will forge a path through the landscape, leaving the deep impression of the Spirit of God upon the soul of the believer.

There is much to be discovered in this impassable river of the Spirit, but rest assured, the life of Christ is our lifejacket. If we sink into the depths of the ocean of life, He will provide the stamina to endure the rigors of those depths until we once again reach the current of the river. If we find ourselves being drawn by the riptides of the flesh, the current of the Spirit will pull us back into the place of safety. If stormy waves threaten to capture us, the Holy Spirit will lift us above them, and if a tsunami tries to overtake us, He will take us to greater heights.

The question is, what current or wave are you presently riding? Are you dancing around the shorelines of wishful thinking, lustful pursuits, prideful expectations, and personal piousness, or are you in the current of the Spirit? Are you simply an observer of the greater Christian life, the one who is content with mediocrity, or the one who gives the best religious appearance? Or, are you the swimmer, willing to risk it all in faith to possess all that God has for you? †

a very human thing to want heaven to include those people, places and things that we love and enjoy in this present world. However, God's Word is clear that this verse (*1 John 5:12*) "*He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life*" still applies regardless of how much we may love certain "good" individuals, or how wonderful we think they are. Knowing these things should fan the flame that burns in our hearts with God's love to pray for, and reach out to those who are lost by any means available. God has provided the way to eternal life, and heaven, through His Son Jesus Christ. He calls us to be co-laborers with Him in the great harvest field of the world, winning souls to Christ, teaching them to obey His commandments through discipling, and also teaching them to follow Him all the days of their life.

When it comes to heaven and hell, people need to be aware of the slippery slope of the aforementioned belief of Universalism, which the fathers of the faith have fought against for centuries. According to Wikipedia, "Christian Universalism is a school of Christian Theology which includes the belief in the doctrine of universal reconciliation, the view that all human beings and all fallen creatures will ultimately be restored to right relationship with God in Heaven." Students of the Bible will readily discern the grave error in this vain, and fast growing, philosophy.

Those of us who "know that we know" that our names are written in the Book of Life rejoice with great joy, and comfort believing Jesus' promise, *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also*" *John 14:1-3*.

Are you ready? †

*"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."* - *Revelation 22:17*

**QUOTABLE**

"Religion today is not transforming people; rather it is being transformed by the people. It is not raising the moral level of society; it is descending to society's own level, and congratulating itself that it has scored a victory because society is smilingly accepting its surrender." --A. W. Tozer (1897-1963)

"His love in times past forbids me to think, He will leave me at last in trouble to sink." - Unknown

"All heresy is either the Bible plus, or the Bible minus." --Lewis S. Chafer (1871-1952, first president of Dallas Theological Seminary)

"It is scarcely possible in most places to get anyone to attend a meeting where the only attraction is God."

"Christians don't tell lies they just go to church and sing them." - A. W. Tozer

must be born again and our new hearts must be open by faith to what the Spirit is saying. It is the Spirit that quickens the Word of God. In other words, He makes it living, personal, and applicable for today. Without the spiritual element of the Spirit, the Word remains dead-letter and ineffective.

The final aspect we must always remember is that the Lord speaks truth. Truth is unchangeable and immovable. Therefore, everything that is being said in relationship to God and His truth must be in line with the complete counsel of God (His Word) and properly discerned as to the spirit and intent behind it. In other words, by knowing the character, ministry, and ways of the Holy Spirit, a person will be able to properly test and discern the spirit behind what is being said. It is for this reason that Jesus admonished those who have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying.

I do hope this answers your question. †

### **GETTING HIGH ON WORSHIP MUSIC** **Part Three**

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### **GETTING HIGH ON PRAISE MUSIC**

The point is that worshippers who use rock music as their vehicle of praise, who think they are high on God, are more likely to be high on music.

The City Harvest magazine for July-December 2002 contained a question/answer section. One question by a new member to City Harvest was instructive: "I just started attending church a few months back and really felt drawn to the presence of God, ESPECIALLY THROUGH THE TIMES OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP. Yet, each time when I try to meet God in the same way during my personal quiet time AND 'FEEL' THE TANGIBLE PRESENCE that I always sense during church services, I always fail. Is this because there's something that I'm not doing right? Am I not worshipping in the correct way?"

The answer to the person's question is that he or she is looking for the wrong thing and is confused about the nature of true worship of God. Worship has nothing to do with my feelings or with a "tangible presence." Those things are easily counterfeited by the flesh and the devil. True worship is to give thanks to God and to serve Him obediently BY FAITH NO MATTER HOW I FEEL AND NO MATTER WHAT THE CIRCUMSTANCE.

Abraham doubtless did not feel very good and had no tangible presence when he trudged toward the mountain with his most beloved son in tow with the purpose of sacrificing him in obedience to God's command, but he was performing a most supreme act of worship.

Job did not feel tingly, wonderful emotions or any sort of "tangible presence of God" when he was sitting in the ash heap scraping his boils with pieces of clay pots and contemplating the loss of his children and wealth and rebutting his wife's complaints. But he was worshipping God acceptably and fruitfully when he endured that terrible condition and did not curse God, but trusted Him in spite of how miserable he felt. In that horrible condition, Job said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him." That is true worship.

It has nothing to do with being under the sway of powerful music or stirring up high emotions and pursuing a perception of God's tangible presence. Hebrews 13:15-16 describes true worship: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Note the attributes of true worship from this passage:

- giving thanksgiving to God in all circumstances
- doing good works or obedience to God's commands
- communicating to those who have needs

One does not need rock music to accomplish any of these things, and, in fact, rock music provides no benefit whatsoever in any of these endeavors.

Rock music is rock music, and the praise of God is the praise of God; and they have nothing to do with one another.

I challenge those committed to the contemporary philosophy to give up rock music for one month and serve the Lord without it. If you need rock music in order to enjoy and serve the Lord, you have a serious problem.

If rock music is necessary or even important for the service and worship of Christ, what did God's people do in A.D. 65 or 1240 or 1530 or 1850 or 1945?

"Oh, Lord God, I beseech you by the blood of Jesus Christ and for His glory, deliver many of your saints and assemblies from this powerful contemporary drug and give victory over the wiles of the enemy even in the very midst of end times apostasy." †

### **COMMENTS FROM READERS**

"My friend, Willie, who has now gone Home to be with our Lord, used to say: 'Is the Word of God less effective because it comes out of a female's mouth?' He had no qualms about sticking up for us women and defending our COMMAND to preach the Word! - FL

"I think Satan's hatred for Britain and USA is so deep and great, he wants to destroy us. England has sent out evangelists and missionaries all over the world, and when America became populated they did the same thing. We are now being inundated with all the rubbish of the world, being robbed, murdered, abused etc, even our own rulers are robbing us, we have tyrannical leaders who do nothing about the immigrants, few of whom are decent people. These leaders have had a carrot dangled in front of them and will pursue their master's orders come what may. I think the end aim is the destruction of our two nations and all the people in them while the 'rulers' have departed to collect their prizes. Whether the Lord will allow this we can only wait and see, but we must remember Abraham's prayer on behalf of Lot, He will not abandon, nor forsake us." - UK

"Wow, read through most of your NL. Incredibly good...I think you gals get better and better in your writing. A lot to digest and think about, but it was excellent." - ID