

GENTLE SHEPHERD MINISTRIES

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

PO Box 571 - Priest River, ID 83856 * www.gentleshepherd.com * February 2012

SPIRITUAL SURVIVAL

Part 7

THE NO SPIN ZONE

By Rayola Kelley

Recently Jeannette was discussing some Scriptural matters with a friend and she asked the friend if she watched Bill 'O Reilly's show on Fox News. The friend made an indication that she indeed did watch the show. Jeannette then pointed to the Bible and stated, "This is the no spin zone for believers."



It is easy to put our spin on anything that serves our purpose, including the Bible. Instead of preaching the Gospel, there are those who preach causes. Instead of teaching the Bible, there are those who teach men's ideas or concepts of the Bible. Instead of approaching it to believe it, people adjust it to make it believable to their personal take on matters.

The truth is there is nothing sacred when it comes to the spin that people are putting on everything. Truth is becoming nearly extinct in the midst of the ongoing spin of deception that is being promoted by most of the world. Whether the spin is propaganda, indoctrination, or blatant deception, it is engulfing the world. This spin simply becomes a web of darkness that entangles people into a false reality.

As Christians, we must avoid being entrapped by the foreboding web of seduction and delusion that is wrapping this world up with the lies of Satan. We must guard our hearts and minds against the barrage of deception that is being constantly spun by the liars of the world. In fact, it appears as if people would rather spin a lie than speak the truth. Even when the truth is spoken and its wisdom obvious to any sane person, it is apparent that these deluded individu-

als prefer the foolishness of the deceptive reality they proclaim.

This should not surprise us since the father of lies, Satan, is their father (*John 8:44*). These people are simply doing their father's bidding. They are letting the lust for power and money drive them as they murder the reputation and innovation of anything that is marked by truth, righteousness, and purity. They live a lie and can only speak lies. Their final end is clear according to *Revelation 21:8*, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." (Emphasis added.)

I have wondered how individuals can insist on being far removed from the truth without any conviction as to how preposterous they are when it comes to their insipid take on reality. The answer is simple. They have deceived themselves. They prefer the lies; therefore, that is what they have exposed themselves to. In their delusion, they believe they are right and that the end, regardless of the wicked means they may have to use to arrive at their desired goal, will ultimately be justified.

The question is how can a person be content in flinging him or herself in the various deceptive currents of wickedness and expect to survive the ultimate judgment and wrath of the God of righteousness? Perhaps the answer lies in the environment in which these individuals are conditioned. Sadly, people are conditioned according to the age they live in, and this is true for the age in which we now live.

We must consider the age we find ourselves in if we are going to understand the battle before us. Keep in mind, we are not fighting against flesh and blood. The people who are doing Satan's bidding have his back-

Jesus described the type of environment that would be present before His coming. He made this statement in *Matthew 24:37-38*, "But as the days of No'e were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that No'e entered into the ark." Jesus described the environment that now clearly resonates not only in America, but throughout the rest of the civilized world.

It is vital to understand that this environment is the product of wickedness reigning. It is from this premise that we must seriously consider what Jesus was saying. First, we must note the term, "before the flood." The flood pointed to the reality that the environment during Noah's day required judgment. The contrast of Noah's righteous ways was what ushered in the judgment that came upon the whole world (*2 Peter 2:5*). Those who perished in the flood could not bring any real accusation against God because He provided a stark contrast between the faith of Noah and the wickedness of the world. It was clear that men during those days had the opportunity of being saved by entering the ark or perishing in the flood waters, but since their works were evil, they preferred the darkness of sin, condemning their souls to the inevitable.

Does our present environment require God to judge us? Consider the legalized murder of countless precious souls of the unborn. Consider the exaltation of abominable lifestyles from sodomy and witchcraft, to every kind of perverted practice known to man. Trust me. As a Christian counselor, I have heard it all from incest to bestiality. You may shake your head at this, but I believe I need to inform you that these practices are taking place in the lives of those who call themselves Christians.

It is for this reason that I want to set the record straight. Fornication is all illicit sex outside of marriage. The moral Law of God is clear about how we are to conduct ourselves in regard to sex and

marriage. Fornication is an abomination to God. It is committing offense against God's moral instruction regarding all sexual conduct, as well as the attitude we must possess towards it.

Sex was a gift given to marriage to not only create a special type of intimacy between one man and one woman, but to ensure the future of generations yet to come. "Fornication" means something has come into agreement with the profane, which always results in death. Such agreement is not only physical and emotional, but it is also spiritual. For this reason fornication is also known as spiritual harlotry. In *1 Corinthians 6:17-20*, we are told that fornication is a sin committed against the body. It is coming into agreement with a wrong, perverted, foul spirit. Since our body is to be the temple of the Holy Spirit and we are to glorify God with it, we must conduct ourselves according to the ways of godliness and not according to the crude, base ways of the spirit of the world. We are also told that whosoever destroys the temple of God (their body), God will also destroy (*1 Corinthians 3:17*).

Because of the practices of fornication, not only do we have an epidemic of sexually transmitted disease such as AIDS, which is set to wipe out whole nations, but there is no future for generations to come when homosexuality becomes the normal practice in a society. God put Adam and Eve together and sanctified their union as constituting ordained marriage. *Romans 1:26* talks about God giving people over to their vile affections to pursue that which was unnatural. *Romans 1:27* explained how this pursuit for the unnatural would manifest itself: women lusting after women and men after men, working that which is unseemly or indecent and contrary to nature.

Civilizations and societies such as the Spartans have ceased to be because of the abominable practice of homosexuality, and even though the present day advocates of this abominable lifestyle are trying to find ways around the deadly fruits of it through other means such as adoption and artificial insemination, such civilizations will not only cave in on

themselves, but eventually the land will spew the people out in utter contempt (*Leviticus 18:27-30*).

In Moses' day people were marrying and giving in marriage. Some Bible scholars believe that the part of marrying has to do with the perverted union of homosexuals in a legal sense. It does not matter how people want to justify or legalize abominable practices, they will remain such before our holy God. According to the Law of God, these practices will result in judgment, death, and damnation.

Fornication is a blatant affront against not only the moral Law of God, but against the sanctity of marriage. Pre-marital sex is fornication. Sadly, it seems that even people in the Church have no qualms about committing fornication outside of marriage. Even though these unions may end in marriage, most of them have a rocky existence or end in divorce.

Due to the moral climate, marriage not only is often given a bad rap, but most people do not properly regard it to ensure its Scriptural integrity. Recently, I witnessed the flippant attitude people have towards marriage. We have some friends who rent their park-like grounds to wedding parties. Through the past summer I helped them with some of the weddings. Jesus said in Noah's day people were being given in marriage. I watched parents give their daughters away, but the truth of the matter is marriage has been made a common practice. In other words, it has lost its distinction, meaning, and purpose. Instead of the ceremony marking two people coming together in holy matrimony, it became about partying. No doubt there were some couples who were taking their marriage vows seriously, but for others it seemed like an excuse to party away. Jesus made reference about people partying in Noah's day. In such an atmosphere there is no real sobriety or awareness of reality. In a sense, giving in marriage is doing business as usual with no awareness of the storms gathering on the horizon.

The greatest type of fornication being committed within marriage is pornography. In spite of people's twist on pornography, that it is simply a bad habit or a natural desire of man, most people do not realize that pornography is an illicit and unnatural practice that

defiles what was intended to be honorable. It trespasses into arenas that are forbidden by Scripture to even speak of let alone expose ourselves to. It is driven by lust that is base, indifference that is angry and hateful, and crude selfishness that has no regard for anything that does not serve its perverted preferences and practices. In essence, it has no regard for that which is pure and right. Pornography strips away all decency, robs innocence, kills hopes, and destroys lives.

Pornography perverts a person's attitude towards godliness. A married person in pornography commits adultery with his or her eyes and will defile the sanctity of the marriage bed, causing him or her to become perverted in perception towards sex and dishonorable in attitudes and conduct towards his or her spouse (*Matthew 5:27; Hebrews 13:4*). It is important to point out that whoremonger in *Hebrews 13:4* also means fornicator. It is clear that continual exposure to the profane can result in a reprobate mind where there is no sanity, clarity, or distinction. *Titus 1:15* best describes how we are affected by what we are exposed to, "to the pure all things are pure, but to the defiled all things are defiled."

The greatest victims of pornography are children. Children are becoming victims to predators and depraved despots in every arena of society. The idea that there is a bill to legalize pedophilia floating around, which would allow these depraved animals to have legal grounds to prey on our children, shows the wickedness that resides in high places in our despotic government. But, why should this surprise us? Since unborn babies are dispensable, why not cheapen the purity and innocence of our young children? Where will it stop? Sadly, it will probably stop with the wrath of God and be completely silenced by the grave.

How is the Church faring in regard to the darkness of fornication engulfing the world? Is it bringing distinction like Noah did in his day or is it succumbing to the darkness? The latest figure is that at least 50% of pastors are into pornography. In other words, many pastors are offering strange fire through unclean lips that will be unacceptable to God, leaving a wasteland of mediocrity, heretical teachings, and

Continued Pg. 5, Column 1

O TASTE AND SEE!

By Jeannette Haley

Perhaps you can recall back to when you were a kid, and your mother, or some other adult, came at you with a spoonful of something you couldn't quite identify, all the while saying "Here, taste this. You'll like it". I don't know about you, but I thank God that my mother loved to cook, and she was good at it. However, one incident stands out in my mind to this day. Mom called me to her and offered me a spoonful of plain, white sugar. I was amazed! What kid could resist such a sweet, guilt-free offering? As out-of-the-norm as this was, without hesitation I opened my mouth and took it all in. Then, something began to do a tango on my tongue that certainly wasn't sugar. My clever mother, knowing that I had a fever, and that swallowing anything remotely resembling a pill resulted in something akin to a rodeo, had crushed up an aspirin and concealed it in sugar. It's a taste combination I can still recall.

As I am sure the whole world knows, I love chocolate. Especially deep, dark chocolate. It puts me into a wonderful place where life is good. (As a side note, Valentine's day reminds me of chocolate, but chocolate doesn't remind me of Valentine's day!) When I was in grade school, we lived in a friendly Seattle neighborhood. Mom had a couple of special friends there, and they took turns baking and sharing over a cup of coffee. As I bounced into the house one day after school, the aroma of freshly baked brownies greeted me. Ahhhh! Surely there would be a mountain of delicious chocolate brownies just waiting for me to delve into. But no! Imagine my utter disappointment and disgust when I discovered that most of the brownies had gone to the neighbors! I was aghast and utterly shocked at such a display of total disregard by my very own mother to my immeasurable selfishness. Her display of kindness and generosity to others made about as much of a dent in my conscience as drifting lint does when it hits the floor.

Oh the sins of youth! My heart often echoes the words of King David recorded in *Psalm 25:7*, "Remember

not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O LORD." Seeds of Adamic pride within every newborn babe soon sprout into roots that grow branches of self-will, self-love, self-centeredness, self-serving, and selfishness. As these roots gain ground in a person's heart, they produce the fruits of rebellion, disobedience, indifference (hatred), anger, perversion, moral deviation, unbelief, and all the rest of the poison that afflicts mankind, sealing his fate forever—unless! Unless he lets go of the forbidden fruit of sin and dares to taste the sweetness of the Lord Jesus Christ. "O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him" *Psalm 34:8*.

To taste something is to experience it, and receive certain information about it. For example, the physical sense of taste has four categories—sweet, salty, savory, and bitter. Every time we taste food, we make a decision as to whether we like it, love it, or don't like it. As we eat one bite at a time of a delicious, gourmet meal, we grow in our appreciation for the complexity of texture, seasonings, and layers of flavor. The same is true when people "taste" the Lord.

What does it mean to taste the Lord? Jesus told the people "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever" *John 6:53-58*. Of course, we know that Jesus wasn't speaking of literally "eating" him, but of partaking of his life through His Word and by His Spirit. He told them, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

If we are to "taste the Lord," we must begin with His Word. The Apostle Peter, writing to new Christians ad-

monished, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious" *2 Peter 2:2, 3*. Jesus told Peter to feed His lambs, which means the milk of the Word, and then to feed His sheep, which alludes to the meat of the Word until they are mature enough to be able to handle "strong" meat. *Hebrews 6:1, 2* tells us what the milk of the Word involves. It says, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection: not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."

All of these basic principles are the "milk" of our Christian foundation that every believer should be taught, study, understand, and believe. But, we must not stop there, as so many do who think that is all they need to know, and thus resign themselves to decorate some dead church like mummies in an Egyptian museum. The question is, how many Christian leaders in our day and age are truly feeding the sheep milk *and meat*?

The writer of *Hebrews* warned believers, "...ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" *Hebrews 5:11b-14*.

There is no doubt that we are living in the end times. It is vital that Christians be able to discern both good and evil, and know how to test the spirits (1 John 4:1). Biblical prophecy is being fulfilled by the day, especially the fact that innumerable false prophets, hireling shepherds, and ravening wolves are "feeding" God's sheep another Jesus, another Gospel, another Spirit, doctrine of devils, and heresies that damn the soul. These "ear-tickling" thieves and liars are making merchandise of men's souls

as they pervert the gospel of Christ. Such was the plight of the church in Galatia, to whom Paul wrote, *“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” Galatians 1:6-9.*

Now is not the time to fall asleep as did the ten virgins who grew weary while waiting for the Bridegroom. Now is the time to declare, as did Job, with all of our heart, *“Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips: I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food” Job 23:12.* How many of us esteem (value, cherish, desire, and respect) God’s Word over our “necessary” (life sustaining) food? To Job, the “words” of God’s mouth were of utmost importance—more important to him than even the food his body needed. I fear that not many of us could honestly declare such. You see, Job had “tasted” of the Lord, and what he experienced was more fulfilling, satisfying, life-giving, exciting, wonderful, and enjoyable than physical food could ever be. Job had discovered the Bread of Life, and the Living Water. And, he didn’t even own a Bible! Remember, Job is the oldest book in the Bible. But, he knew God, he had tasted Him, and he had developed a taste for God that went deep, far outweighing all that befell him.

In God’s dealings with the Children of Israel in the wilderness, we read in *Deuteronomy 8:3*, *“And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know: that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.”* Of course we know that Jesus quoted this Scripture to Satan when He was being tempted in the wilderness, which reiterates the seriousness and indispensability of

God’s Word for our lives, both in this world and the one to come.

Tasting the Lord in salvation is sweet, and is cause for rejoicing and praise. Feeding on the milk is nourishing, and should cause a person to become grounded in truth as he or she follows the Lord into the still waters of baptism, and the green pastures of communion and prayer. However, all too often, like the Children of Israel, people easily forget to feed on His Word as the cares of this world “choke out the Word.” Doubt and unbelief creep in as they fail to praise Him, forget His works, and fail to wait for His counsel. Lust leads to tempting God. *Psalm 106:15* tells us the devastating result, *“And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.”*

It is hard for us human beings to shift our focus from temporary pleasures for that which is eternal. We do get caught up with food and drink, and other necessities. However, in regard to such Jesus said, *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you” Matthew 6:33.* It is our responsibility to seek first His kingdom, to feed ourselves from His Word, to study it so that we will know how to rightly divide it, to learn the principles of God, and to obey them. The problem is, most people have little, if any, lasting hunger and thirst for God’s Word. In addition, Satan does everything in his power to hinder a person from getting into the Bible. Therefore, the key is to learn how to develop an appetite, or taste, for God’s Word. After all, God’s Word is written for us. It is from heaven, as was the manna. As a person begins to feed his or her spirit from the banquet of God’s Word, he or she will begin to acquire a taste for it. In time, genuine hunger for the Word develops.

If you watch the Food Network channel (which is one of our favorites) you might well imagine what the competing chefs on Chopped would come up with if they opened their mystery baskets to discover the same manna that God fed the Israelites. It was a totally balanced, nutritious food for the human body, but can you imagine eating manna for breakfast, lunch, and dinner? What about snacks and

dessert? What do you “add” to manna? Perhaps salsa and sour cream, or maybe ice cream and chocolate sauce? No doubt the chefs would somehow come up with a creative dish to present to the panel of judges. While this may be amusing to consider, let us remember that when it comes to God’s Word, anyone who adds or subtracts from it faces eternal damnation. (See *Deuteronomy 4:2*; *Revelation 22:19*.) Therefore, self-appointed teachers, preachers, and prophets who take it upon themselves to speak the oracles of God without fear, sobriety, and righteousness—not being Spirit-led, nor walking wisely before the Lord will be judged. *“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” Hebrews 10:31.*

As any foodie will tell you, people eat first with their eyes. (Just ask Eve about that!) Even if the ingredients in a dish are unknown and new to a diner, if it is presented in such a way that stirs up the appetite, it will cause a person to want to taste it. What people need to do is develop a taste for the Word of God, and that can only come as they begin to taste it for themselves, then feed on it, followed by acting on it, and finally sharing what they have learned and experienced with others. When a person partakes of the Word, they begin to partake of Jesus who is “the way, the truth, and the life.” (*John 14:6*) Do you want more of Jesus? Then consider this powerful verse in *John 1:14*, *“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.”* Surely as your soul feeds on the pure milk and meat of God’s Word, you will discover and declare with the prophet Jeremiah, *“Thy words were found, and I did eat them: and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts.”*

Bon appétit!



destruction behind. It is clear that an epidemic of grave proportions is present. This epidemic is decimating families, destroying innocence and purity, along with decency. It is causing those who give way to this grave darkness to risk everything including their souls, families, and credibility.

This brings us to the final aspect of the environment of fornication that was prevalent in Noah's time. The main culprit behind fornication can be found in *Genesis 6:5*, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

The environment of fornication is fueled by vain imaginations that have no boundaries as to how perverted and foul they become. We can see this same scenario in America. Today many people have the time and means to expose themselves to a continual stream of profane images and practices. They are into lustful sensationalism that stirs up appetites and affections to a fevered pitch. As it stirs up the possibilities of how some practice of iniquity will satisfy the flesh, their affections become obsessed with experiencing it. Then, once it hits its height, it will seek a means to fulfill it. Hence enters every kind of perverted practice. There is no limit to how foul it can become or how destructive it can prove to be to others.

It is clear that when man is committing idolatry, he is committing spiritual fornication. When a person is toying with the profane with the intent to come into agreement with it, he or she is actually committing spiritual whoredom or prostituting his or her soul. When a person is emotionally coming into agreement with the unholy, he or she has become a defiled clay vessel that must be broken in true repentance in order to be cleansed (*2 Corinthians 4:7*; *2 Timothy 2:19-21* refer to *Leviticus 11:32-33*; *Psalms 34:18*; *51:17*). When a person bodily gives of self to another outside of that which has been established as ordained marriage by God, it is fornication.

As you can see, the only way for these people way to avoid the

judgment of God is to repent of the attitudes and practices of fornication. However, to repent, they first must agree with God's evaluation about it. When the prophet Isaiah encountered the holiness of God in *chapter 6*, he could only declare that he was a man of unclean lips. It is as only a person gains God's perspective of such matters will he or she realize the seriousness of his or her actions. Clearly, the sin of fornication shows complete contempt towards God Word. Wisdom is lacking because there is no fear of the wrath that awaits those who practice it. If there is any fear, it is wrapped up in anger towards God because He will not allow them to live in it without fear of consequences. There is no concern about the brokenness of relationship between God, or the wounding and bruising of others because of the affects of sin upon their souls.

The darkness and judgment of fornication is great upon this nation and world. To survive such darkness, one must be living above it. He or she must be walking in excellence towards the matters of God. To live in excellence, one must enter the ark provided by God. The ark is not a physical structure; rather, it is the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. His work of redemption is what truly made the ark a living reality. Like the days of Noah, people have a window of opportunity to enter into the ark to avoid the wrath of God, but if they fail to, they will perish in their sins. As the Bible declares, those whose lives are not hidden in the ark of Christ will experience the wrath of God (*Matthew 25:13:10-13*; *Colossians 3:1-3*; *1 Thessalonians 5:9*)

The questions are: Am I hidden in the ark of Christ, and do I stand above and distinct from the darkness of this world? If you cannot honestly answer these questions, ask the Lord to turn on His searchlight and reveal the answers. †

*Jesus, I will trust Thee,
Trust Thee with my soul;
Guilty, lost, and helpless,
Thou hast made me whole:
There is none in heaven
Or on earth like Thee;
Thou hast died for sinners,
Therefore, Lord, for me!*

Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879)

QUOTING CHARLES FINNEY

Be filled with the Spirit.—Eph. 5:18

"What are the consequences of having the Spirit of God working in power in your life? You will be called eccentric, and probably you will deserve it. I never knew a person who was filled with the Spirit who was not called eccentric. And the reason is that they are unlike other people. They act under different influences, take different views, are moved by different motives, are led by a different spirit. There is such a thing as being so deeply imbued with the Spirit of God that you must and will act so as to appear strange and eccentric to those who do not understand your conduct. The apostle Paul was accused of being insane by those who did not understand why he acted as he did (*Acts 26:24*). But the truth was that Paul only saw the subject so clearly that he threw his whole soul into it. To walk with God and live above the standards of the world will put you at odds with it.

If you have the Spirit of God, you must expect to feel great distress in view of the church and the world. Some believers ask for the Spirit because they think it will make them so perfectly happy. There never was a greater mistake. Read your bible and note how the prophets and apostles were always groaning and distressed in view of the state of the church and the world. The apostle Paul said he was always bearing about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus (*2 Cor. 4:10-12*). The more you have of His Spirit, the more clearly you will see the state of sinners and believers, and the more deeply you will be distressed about them. Many times your distress will be unutterable (*Rom. 9:1-3*).

And you will be often grieved with the state of the ministry. Spiritual believers often weep and groan in secret when they see the darkness on the minds of their ministers in regard to the Spirit, their worldliness, and fear of man. The spirituality of the ministry, though real, is often so superficial that the pastor cannot and does not sympathize with those who are spiritual. The preaching does not meet their needs, does not feed them, does not meet their experience. Though he may preach sound doctrine, he remains in spiritual babyhood and needs to be fed rather than undertake the feeding of the church.

RAYOLA'S Q & A CORNER

CAN A CHRISTIAN CAST OUT DEMONS?

Q: "I have problems with the following comments in Apologist John Beardsley's, *Spiritual Warfare: Can a Believer Be Demon Possessed?*: 'The only legitimate casting out of demons happened in the time of Christ and the apostles. This demonstrated that Jesus truly was the Messiah the Old Testament predicted would come. The Jews at that time would recognize that casting out of demons meant that the Messiah was present and offering the kingdom to the nation Israel. The apostles were given this authority to cast out demons as representatives of Christ. This authority cannot be transferred to anyone else.' My problem is that I have, on occasion, personally witnessed demonic manifestations in Christian circles for a number of years, and I have also witnessed genuine deliverances when demons were cast out. I believe that the Bible is clear that believers have also been given authority and the responsibility to carry out Christ's commission by the power of the Holy Spirit. Can you please bring clarity to this conflict? Thank you."

A: In our ministry, we have encountered much demonic activity in the Church. It is important to point out that not everyone who calls themselves a Christian is a Christian. In other words, these individuals are not born of the Spirit and water as John 3:3 and 5 clearly states.

If a person is truly born again of the Spirit of God, he or she cannot be possessed by the kingdom of darkness. Possession entails the demons controlling a person's spirit and owning his or her soul. Ultimately, a possessed person has no control over any area of his or her life.

However, Christians can be oppressed in the soul area by demonic influence. This oppression can manifest itself in various ways from depression to spiritual hindrances in growth and prayer. When the light of God exposes demonic activity, whether it is possession or oppres-

sion, there can be some bodily manifestation of it.

Another important aspect of this subject is to realize Christians may possess the authority to cast out demons, but only Christ can deliver people from their rights or hold on them. Deliverance comes when Jesus takes His position as Lord in a person's life. Lordship points to ownership. As already stated, in possession, Satan owns the soul and in oppression, he is hindering some aspect of the soul, whether it is the will, emotions, or intellect. It is for this reason that people who are possessed cannot declare Jesus to be Lord, and those oppressed have a hard time believing that He is Lord of their lives.

The demonic realm must be properly discerned. The Bible tells us that we must not be ignorant of the devices of Satan. We must recognize his avenues, doors, and attachments that he operates through, if we are going to resist his advancements and take authority over him.

I hope this helps to answer your question. ✚

COMMENTS & EMAILS

"I know you've heard of this book, [*The Harbinger* by Jonathan Cahn] as it's been promoted heavily at WND lately, and I'd encourage you to go to:

<http://www.charismanews.com/opinion/32598-2012-americas-final-warning> and read the COMMENTS left there. Quite enlightening, and some of them are truly spot on [such as this one]:

'God and Israel are in Covenant; God and America are not. Period. God does not deal with America the way He deals with Israel. Period. America is just like any individual--it can pledge allegiance to God, or go its own way, under the law of sowing and reaping. Your Rabbi makes a big mistake assuming God established America like He did Israel. It just isn't so... God cut Covenant with Abraham, and the Covenant passed to Isaac and Jacob who became Israel. God has never cut Covenant with America. He cut Covenant with Israel because it was God's plan to use Israel to birth the Messiah; and for Israel to be His own special people among all the na-

tions on the earth, to be a witness to His reality and His goodness. America has never had such a place with God. As things are going right now, America may be so messed up it is not even around when the False Prophet and the Antichrist show up; but Israel will be. Israel is alive and kicking and in God's plan even in the book of Revelation, which shows future things to come. Israel is mentioned all through the Bible; America is not mentioned even once. Israel has such a special place with God that His son Jesus will rule the world from Jerusalem; then from the New Jerusalem that God brings down from Heaven after the Millennium. America has no such place with God. It is foolish to even think it... But as far as warning signs about our condition before God...God's law of sowing and reaping is bowling us over even now. A great awakening to Jesus will come, or we are done.'" - FL

"I was so blessed to see you write about our Blessed Hope! [January NL] If there's one thing that is useful for the Lambs of God, it's HOPE! And YES . . . it IS the ANCHOR OF THE SOUL!! It's what keeps our mind sane in an erratic, and profoundly evil, world! In my humble opinion, that is the one golden strand that keeps drawing up Upward, while we still are living down here! BEAUTIFUL article." - FL

[Quoting from Rayola's writing] "We must take note of Cain's plight. Pride set him up for a fall, jealousy took him captive, strife became his preference, and murder his action. Instead of repenting, he tried to hide the darkness of his own heart. Instead of seeking mercy, he held his wicked position as mercy fled his grasp and darkness claimed his soul and death his destiny.' WOW! The downhill process here is amazing, and SO TRUE: Pride > Jealousy> Strife > Murder!!! What a progression of degeneration!!!!!" - FL

"In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge. The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death. Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people."

— Proverbs 14:26, 27, 34 —