

GENTLE SHEPHERD MINISTRIES

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

THE BLESSED HOPE

Part 3

By Rayola Kelley



Last month we considered the Blessed Hope in light of the doctrine of resurrection. Such an emphasis may seem immaterial, but it is important to understand that doctrine involves attitude as much

as conduct and practice. If the attitude is not right about a spiritual matter, the conduct will not be honorable, and the practice will be considered profane or defiled to God (*Titus 3:15-16*).

So much of what Christians claim they believe has no impact on their attitude, conduct or practices. This proves that what they hold to is an intellectual concurrence with a matter, but not a spiritual agreement that establishes them more on the foundation of who Jesus is, lines them up to the cornerstone of Jesus' examples, teachings and ways, and establishes them in the faith that was first delivered to the saints. Don't get me wrong, I have my own opinions about the end days, but they are opinions. I may believe these opinions are right because of how Scripture has been presented to me, but this does not mean that I really know all about a matter.

Knowing about a subject and having an opinion about a subject are poles apart. Knowing is related to truth. Truth can withstand the winds of time because it will never change. However, my opinions may be based on strong feelings, ideas, concepts, or images of the ways things should be, but they do not, nor are they trustworthy, to be considered the absolute truth. If I put my confidence in something based on my concepts, I may believe a matter is right, but that does not mean I can be assured that it is right. I have learned that there is

a clear difference between the strong reasoning of my opinions and the immovable truths of God. This is why *Isaiah 55:8-9* reminds me that my thoughts are not God's thoughts, and *2 Corinthians 10:3-5* warns me that my opinions may be nothing more than vain imaginations that exalt themselves against the real knowledge of God.

The Bible talks about knowing that a matter is true because it has been clearly confirmed by the witnesses of heaven: the Godhead, His Written Word, and His covenant that was established by the shedding of blood (*1 John 5:7-8*). If I am to know a matter, it must be unveiled by God, confirmed by His Word, and be in agreement with His covenant. What God has said about the Blessed Hope is that no one can be sure when Jesus is coming (*Matthew 24:36, 50*). God must first fulfill those aspects of His plan to ensure that His covenant with man is fulfilled. Therefore, mere man will not exactly know the timeframe.

Knowing also points to the fact that since it is truth, we will see a matter completed. There are three very important points brought out in the Old Testament about the hope of resurrection that every saint will experience. One such point is found in *Job 19:25-27*: "*For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.*"

Job is talking about seeing the fullness of God in his new glorified body. It is at the resurrection that the saints will realize the promises of God as they truly behold Jesus from this glorious vantage point. Keep in mind that we get glimpses of God with the eyes of our heart, for the pure in heart shall see God. We also know that if we die in Christ, our spirit will be pre-

sent with Him (*2 Corinthians 2:8*). However, Job's words imply that there is a mystery that is still attached to the glory that we will experience in our glorified bodies. We will not discover the fullness of this mystery until we are brought forth in resurrection power.

In light of this mystery, it is time to come back to what we can know about the Blessed Hope. Clearly, we must consider this event in light of resurrection, which brings us back to the Gospel. The Gospel is about the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul talks about becoming identified with Jesus in His death, so we can be brought forth in new life (*Romans 6:3-4*). Consider what the apostle said in *Romans 6:5*: "*For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.*"

This brings us to the second point that is brought out about resurrection in the Old Testament. King David brings this aspect out in *Psalms 17:15*: "*As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake, with thy likeness.*" David knew that it was only in righteousness that he would see the Lord. "Awake" in this Scripture has to do with the physical death where the physical body, although it is decaying away as it digresses back to dust, ashes or the remains of the earth, represents a form of sleep or rest for the believer whose soul is now present with the Lord (*2 Corinthians 5:8*). This blessed state will last until the spirit and soul are reunited with a new body. When Jesus comes for His Body, the resurrection power within the saints will raise them up in the likeness of Christ in a new body. David declared that he will be satisfied when he awakes with such likeness.

As you consider the Gospel, you will realize that Jesus' life is to be worked out in us through death to our self-life. As we walk through the barren wilderness of the grave of the world, we leave more and more of this present age behind us, as we are being conformed to the image of Christ (*Romans*

8:29). In other words, we are taking on His likeness. This brings us to one of the promises. As the old life is left behind, we press towards the ultimate prize.

The Apostle Paul makes this statement in *Ephesians 1:13-14*: "In whom ye also trusted, after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Who is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." According to the apostle, we have not yet fully realized our redemption. In the Gospel message, we begin with Jesus' redemption of being bought back from the claims of sin upon our lives, but this redemption will be fully realized in our resurrection.

This brings us to what Daniel said about our resurrection: "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever" (*Daniel 12:2-3*). Daniel is giving us a glimpse into the promise that in our new glorified bodies we will shine. No doubt, Jesus' glory will be completely unveiled in our lives. There is some indication that the extent of this glory will be determined by the life we lived in our fleshly bodies. We know that judgment begins in the house of God, and that fires of judgment will try our works (*1 Corinthians 3:12-15*; *2 Corinthians 5:8-10*). Only works that are pure, refined and precious will survive the fires. Such works will shine, but they will reflect the work and beauty of our Lord.

Obviously, we will be brought forth in new glorified bodies to meet our Lord, which points to total identification with Him. Resurrection will mark the completion of the work that was done on the cross on our behalf.

Do we understand the full implications of our resurrection? The answer is no, but we must live in this present age with this reality ever before us. We will meet Jesus in power and glory. We will receive new bodies, so that the promises of God will

be brought to completion.

This is why we receive the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead by faith. We must presently live in light of being raised up in greater measure. In a sense, resurrection can be considered the ultimate deliverance. But unlike the deliverance taking place in this present world, where people are being delivered from its bondage and destruction, in the resurrection, we will be delivered to the fullness of life where we will experience the fullness of the promises of God. This is what it means to walk in expectation of the Blessed Hope.

The great people of God always walked in this expectation. Abraham walked in expectation of seeing the city of God. Consider it for a moment. Abraham's vision was not aimed at this world, but beyond it to something that he had not seen, but knew he would experience. He walked in expectation of seeing the city of God (*Hebrews 11:10*). Every great saint of faith walked in the expectation of experiencing the fullness of something they had not yet seen. Even though many died without receiving the promises in their lifetime, they still knew that in the future, they would experience the completeness of all that God had promised them (*Hebrews 11:13-16*).

As believers, we do not walk in expectation of a great city, but in light of Jesus coming for us. It is something we have not seen, but we believe. As a result, we live and conduct our life according to this great hope. We live in the comfort of it. We maintain the anchor of abiding joy as we keep our focus on the day when all will be fulfilled for the glory of God. Such expectation allows us to better understand *Hebrews 11:1*: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

The next question is, how do we live or conduct our lives in light of this glorious hope? Before we can live out this life, we must first develop a proper attitude. Let us now become mindful of the attitude that will manifest itself in light of the Blessed Hope.

Jesus spoke of the attitude that needed to be in place in light of His coming. We need to be faithful as His servants while we occupy in this present world (*Luke 19:11-13*). To be faithful to our Lord, we must be obedi-

ent servants in regard to His kingdom. In order to be faithful servants to Jesus, we must become strangers and sojourners in this world (*1 Peter 2:11*). This world must not have any real hold on us. However, we must be faithful to what we know is right. Doing what is faithful and right ensures that we will occupy until He comes.

The attitude that must exist can be explained by relating it to selling your house. We have been involved with this process. The best advice we have ever been given is that once you put your house on the market, you must consider it as belonging to someone else from that point on. You are simply keeping it until the rightful owners come to take possession of it. Maintaining the house in an honorable and responsible way would be the same as occupying it.

As Christians, we are simply passing through this present age. We may be entrusted with lands, houses and possessions as we pass through this world, but we must properly serve as keepers of the land, temporary occupants of the houses, and responsible stewards of all possessions. All must be completely consecrated to our Lord for His purpose and glory.

The other aspect of our attitude has to do with the oil. As Christians, we are to possess the oil of the Holy Spirit. We may be chaste in our practices, but we must have the oil of the Holy Spirit to not only guide us through the darkness, but to identify us when the Lord comes. This is clearly brought out in *Matthew 13:1-13*.

It is the Holy Spirit who prepares us for our Master's return. He will warn us of things to come. He will sanctify us as vessels, anoint us as servants, and teach us the things of God, so that we can truly be Jesus' disciples (*John 14:25-26*; *16:13*; *2 Peter 2:19-21*; *1 Peter 1:2*; *1 John 2:20, 27*). The problem today is that many people think that intellectual understanding of doctrine or scriptural savvy prepares them for what is coming, but the Bible is clear that only the Holy Spirit (oil) will ensure that each of us will be prepared for our Lord's surprise coming.

In next month's issue, I will be dealing with the conduct and practices of those who are prepared to meet their Lord. Meanwhile, consider your

THE WINDS ARE BLOWING AND THE PARTY IS OVER

By Jeannette Haley

From time to time, the Lord has given me visions or revelations by the Spirit of terrible judgments to come upon the wicked and disobedient, in fulfillment of His Word. Such glimpses into the wrath of God are always sobering, to say the least. I can assure you, these awesome revelations are not from my own imagination, nor are they pleasant to see or share with others. God is warning His people, and this nation, that time is short. Our life, as we know it, is going to change. Are you prepared?

Jesus said, *"For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be"* Matthew 24:38, 39.

The flood is at our very door. I'm not talking about a flood of water (although that has happened and will happen in different parts of the world), but a sudden flood of destruction upon all who are living carelessly. Note the words, *"And knew not..."* What a fitting description this is of the day and age in which we are living where people are perishing *"for lack of knowledge."* Not worldly knowledge, or technological knowledge, but knowledge of the Holy One, knowledge of God's Word and ways; knowledge of godliness and holy living. Ours is a flippant, silly, foolish nation—a nation that has gone financially, spiritually, morally, and intellectually bankrupt. Who is to blame? The fault can be laid at the door of the Church.

"Oh," but you say, "This is America! We're a Christian nation. We're a land of mega churches, (where, I might add, individuals "fall through the cracks" and are swept away into destruction). We have TBN, and other Christian networks, and radio. We have 95% of the world's Christian literature. We have lots of spiritual books, and other stuff. God bless America." If you (as I once did) truly

believe this, you need to wake up and smell the coffee. Once upon a time, decades ago, America may have been considered a "Christian nation," but no longer. What is being passed off as "Christian" is nothing more than a façade made up of a meaningless hodgepodge of empty "Christianeze" phraseology. And, while there remains a remnant of genuinely godly pastors scattered across the landscape, most have been forced to close their church doors, or shut down their ministries, much like the "Mom and Pop" stores have been driven out of business by Wal-Mart and other "mega" merchandisers.

Like an empty shell tossed to and fro by the relentless tide, the emerging, post-modern, man-centered church has become devoid of substance, and is like a well without water, or an empty vessel unfit for the Master's use. Its power is no longer from heaven, but from a platform of "positive" personalities, false prophets and profit. Its appeal is no longer based upon the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, but upon fun, family and fellowship (and, much to its shame, sports and even sex). Decked out like the harlot that it is, the post-modern church prides itself in its "new outfit." The old is out, the new is in. Mockers of all that is holy, godly and true, the pimps of this "new reformation" or "new wave" as it is sometimes called, unashamedly peddle their ear-tickling, worldly wares, all in the name of "Christ" of course. And, the people love it.

It's no secret that the masses are not the least bit interested in sermons about sin, salvation or sanctification. Instead, they long to hear about a New Age type of spirituality that would make any shaman proud. The bottom line is most can't discern the difference between the world, the flesh, the devil, and modern "churchianity." Ah! But, haven't we been warned, over and over again, in the Scriptures of these times? Truly this is the day foretold in 2 Timothy 4:3: *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."* Fables! That's God estimation of all the unscriptural, heretical rhetoric with its false promises

of a happy, successful, self-centered, self-fulfilling life in this world, without even a twinge of conscience about the judgment which is already beginning to fall, and which is to come.

Can you guess what you'll find in this grotesque, post-modern, emerging church that's spreading itself across this nation, and around the world like a cancerous fungus? Here's what you'll find, if you bother to look: *"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves,"* [self-esteem teaching] *"covetous"* [lusting after what the world has to offer], *"boasters"* [proud of their popularity and wealth], *"proud"* [lacking humility], *"blasphemers"* [denying the Lordship of Christ, that He is God Incarnate], *"disobedient to parents"* [rebellious, disrespectful], *"unthankful"* [like Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Laodicean church], *"unholy"* [no separation from the world], *"Without natural affection"* [lacks true compassion and moral uprightness], *"trucebreakers"* [think nothing of breaking vows and not keeping their word], *"false accusers"* [mocks true believers, gossipers], *"incontinent"* [without self-control, undisciplined], *"fierce"* [threaten those who expose them as wolves], *"despisers of those that are good"* [hate those who are morally upright and obey God rather than men], *"Traitors"* [lead the people astray], *"heady"* [arrogant, "highminded"] [think highly of themselves], *"lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God"* [love the world in the church, but not the church in the world; worldly and unsaved.] Finally, *"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away"* 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

You may ask, "How can such a thing be, especially here in America where Bibles are everywhere?" Do you not know that the Word of God (King James Version) is no longer widely read, or preached, or taught, or held up as the standard of truth? Most professing Christians have never read the entire Bible, or committed to its study. The question is *why not?* If, as Jesus said, *"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,"*

then why do we excuse ourselves from living by "every word" that is contained therein? Are we, who are living in the end days, so smart and so super sophisticated that we can wave off the very Word of God, inspired by God, and written for our instruction? Is the Bible (the *entire* Bible) no longer relevant for our day and age? *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works"* 2 Timothy 3:16, 17. When was the last time you heard sound doctrine preached? When was the last time you heard the Word of God used to reprove? When was the last time you heard the Word used for correction? When did you last hear the Word of God used to instruct in righteousness? Or, was the last sermonette you listened to designed to make you feel good about yourself, so you could settle on your lazy lees, and be happy, happy, happy all the way to hell?

Consider this: *"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God"* Psalm 9:17. *"Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Harken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD. They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you"* Jeremiah 23:16, 17.

America has lost her moorings because the Church has lost hers. Let's consider for a moment what constitutes a Christian, or truly godly nation. Foremost, a godly nation is one that fears God. *"Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else"* Deuteronomy 4:39. A Christian nation honors God, the Creator of Heaven and earth, and no other god. A Christian nation believes the record that God has given of His Son, Jesus Christ. *"And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life"*

1 John 5: 11, 12. There can be no communion or agreement with idols or pagan gods such as Allah (the moon god of Mesopotamia); the Mormon Jesus (who is the brother of Lucifer); the Pope (Vicar of Christ) and the goddess, Mary; the Jesus of the mind-science cults, or the Jesus who is really Michael the archangel. There can be no agreement with Jesus the New Age "way shower"; or the new, modern Jesus who can be spiritualized into being whatever we imagine Him to be (which is usually an effeminate, weak, wispy figure, who gushes love all over us regardless of how self-centered and wicked we are, or whether we're even *saved* or not.)

A Christian nation does not sacrifice the helpless for the convenience of the wealthy, cast out the elderly through hard-heartedness and indifference, or murder the unborn or partially-born innocents. A Christian nation does not tolerate sodomy, fornication, adultery, pornography, or licentious behavior. A Christian nation does not condone witchcraft or Satanism and the occult in any form, and protects the young from exposure to it, whether in the schools, or through the printed page or via different means of entertainment. A Christian nation is not lenient with lawlessness, and a Christian nation does not vote into office men and women who lack godly character and who have their own one-world political agendas.

A Christian nation will do whatever it takes to guard against any type of pornography, lewdness, child abuse and molestation, wife abuse, animal abuse and cruelty, or wickedness in general. A Christian nation will execute swift judgment upon murderers, rapists, thieves, and all who deliberately endanger, use, abuse, or in any way harm others. In other words, there is a distinction between right and wrong, and wrongdoers will pay for their crimes.

A Christian nation will not be partial to any particular group of people because they think they deserve special treatment. God is no respecter of persons. But, a truly Christian nation will always come to the defense of God's chosen people, Israel.

Finally, a Christian nation has solid, uncompromising Christian leaders. So, what happened to America?

The answer to that question could undoubtedly fill volumes, but the bottom line is America has been in a steady spiritual decline for decades because she has forsaken the God of the Bible, and substituted, in His stead, a more convenient "God" who is "universal" to all peoples regardless of what religion they profess. This universal "God" is the "God" of everyone and accepts whatever form of "spirituality" the people choose to reverence. This "God" isn't ashamed of people who are ashamed to confess Jesus as Lord; therefore, this "God" is not the Lord God Almighty of the Bible. Of a truth, God will put into leadership the type of person the nation deserves. Knowing that should cause a shiver of fear to run up your spine.

The general idea in America is that this convenient, modern "God" doesn't hold the present generation responsible for their sins because He is still honoring our forefathers who first established this nation upon the God of the Bible and godly principles. Today's modern "God" winks at the idolatry of gross materialism and immorality. After all, the popular consensus is that "'God' (whoever He may be) loves everybody" and He wants us to be happy, and He loves America more than any other nation, so He blesses us, much as a doting father spoils an undisciplined child. Besides, some believe that God is no longer as He was in the Old Testament, bringing sudden destruction upon whole nations because of their wickedness. This new "God" is a "New Testament God," which means, because of Jesus, we somehow, as if by magic, no longer have to be concerned about obedience to His Word, or living godly, upright lives in all fear and sobriety. He overlooks our "mistakes" and "faults" and emphasis that we love and esteem ourselves very highly. That is pretty easy to do if you're a Mormon, a New Ager, a Manifest Son of God, or belong to a mind-science cult because, after all, you already believe that you *are* a "god."

This new American God doesn't mind "When the Saints Go Marching In" is played in taverns to a bunch of drunken revelers. He winks at the gay parades and decadence of Mardi

attitude about the Blessed Hope. Is it upright before the Lord because you are becoming more and more identified with Him in His death and burial, to ensure that you will be brought forth in His likeness in resurrection?

Wind Blowing, Continued

Gras. In fact, no one needs to be concerned that the abomination of homosexuality is now being taught to young children in the California school system, and elsewhere in this country through different means. Never mind that archaeologists have discovered the gruesome remains of what were once Sodom and Gomorrah, proving for once and for all that such "cities of the plain" did exist and met with a violent end. (See Genesis 19)

Somehow the God of the Bible has mellowed out over the ages, and become more "tolerant" and "politically correct," just like us. However, the Prophet Jeremiah warned: "Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. The anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly" Jeremiah 23:19-20. Are you considering it "perfectly;" that is, with understanding and wisdom? If you have, then you know that the party is over.

AMERICA IN CRISIS

"America is in the crosshairs. Our enemy does not fight in uniform. They have infiltrated our infrastructure. Our leaders have allowed the enemy to come into our highest centers of government. Our President, a professing Christian, claims that we worship the same God as do the Muslims.

Isn't it time that we learn to hate evil, as we are commanded in God's Word? Those who don't hate it will soon embrace it." - Excerpt from -- SW Radio Church, E-Letter, February 11,2008

RAYOLA'S Q & A CORNER

Q: *Can Christians become too obsessed with sports? I am having trouble with my son in this area because sports are far more exciting and important to him than God. Every time I try to talk to him about this he becomes angry.*

A: Yes, Christians can become too obsessed with sports. In fact, it has become a big idol for some individuals. There are a couple of reasons that sports are so popular.

1) They appeal to the fleshly lusts or appetites of the natural man. These fleshly attractions bring a certain sensationalism that is very pagan in nature. The problem with such sensationalism is, is that it can become quite addictive to those who do not keep sports in a proper perspective.

2) Sports allow individuals to escape present reality. People have a hard time facing the drudgery or challenges of their lives. In sports they can get caught up with the excitement and the competition and battle of it, while forgetting about the vanity and problems that seem to plague their life. Sports are also a means that allows all pent up emotions to be spent out as these people live the experience.

The natural or fleshly man cannot respond to the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:13-15). If a Christian becomes caught up with sports in an idolatrous way, sports will become the natural preference when it comes to personal pursuits and desires of life. What we prefer, or desire, will determine what we expose ourselves to. Since sports are of the world, they will bring those who live for them under the influence of the world and expose them to the rebellious spirit of the world (Ephesians 2:2).

Needless to say, such a godless environment of the world will dull the spiritual senses of those Christians who continually expose themselves to it. Once the spiritual senses are dulled down, such Christians will not have any real spiritual inclination towards God. In fact, they will often consider the idea of God outdated and His Word obsolete. Since they prefer the world, they will rebel against separation from it, which is what the Bible instructs. However, such association with the

world will put these individuals at enmity with God. God's Word also reminds us that the world is temporary and already doomed. But, those who do the will of God will live forever (2 Corinthians 6:17-18; James 4:4; 1 John 2:17).

Your son has fallen into a trap. It is void of life and has no real substance to it. But, he prefers it at this time. My advice is that you get on your knees and seek God's intervention and wisdom on his behalf. It is a hard place to be because as Christians, we often fail to recognize how we have lost ground to the world's influences, until we have to face the vanity and destruction of our bondage.

Gathering: But Not For The Better by Chip Brogden

"Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there I am in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

Jesus did not say where the two or three had to be gathered together. He did not specify a church building or a living room meeting. And He did not say how many times a week they had to be gathered, or if the gatherings had to be structured or unstructured, open or closed, inside or outside.

By establishing His Presence in the midst of a group so small as two or three, Jesus repudiates our fascination with large numbers. Anyone can gather a crowd if you tell them what they want to hear. May I say that a large group has no more of the presence of Jesus than a small group. The numbers are irrelevant. Either Jesus is in the midst, or He is not. If Jesus is not in the midst of us then having a large group of people will not compensate for Him not being there.

I would rather sit on the living room floor with three people and have Jesus in the midst than sit in a service with three thousand people where Jesus is nowhere to be found. Of course, Jesus can sometimes be found in large groups of people, but as my wife says, He tends to get lost in the crowd.

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LETTERS & EMAILS

“ . . . precisely what I've been hoping for - a group of believers that aren't about "churchianity" . . . But they're just about gathering together in His Name, ministering to Him and allowing Him to minister to them in Spirit and in Truth; true disciples of the Lord seeking a real relationship with Him.” - WV

(Quoting from Rayola's February article): “This is why, as Christians, we must be motivated by godly love to ensure inward integrity towards our godly responsibilities. This inward integrity will ensure that our conduct towards God and others is honorable or exemplary in every way.”

“How "simple" --- yet PRO-FOUND!!!! This is a truth that we Believers should all be living, but you have stated it so beautifully and astutely!!! I so appreciated the whole Q&A on the Law. You see, being as I'm involved with some Messianics, I get chided continually for not being a seventh day Sabbath keeper!!! (What if MY practicing Sabbath is on Tuesdays!!) I get so weary of those of this ilk trying to beat people up with God's Law(s)! Thanks for your exemplary Q&A Section to see God's people FREE! Whom the Son sets free, is free INDEED! Thanks again for such great MEAT in these articles. - FL

“At first, I thought it was impossible to live an overcoming, victorious life in Christ, now I'm seeing that it is a strait gate for a reason - it is a difficult path the Lord asks us to walk with Him but it is not impossible if we trust Him and Him alone - and someday I will see His work in me finished when the Trump calls.” - WV

“You can see the writings on the wall as it were. I see things accelerating fairly quickly towards the anti Christ kingdom and one world Government. The Elitists or Illuminates plans are taking root into what will be the New World Order. I guess we look upwards and realize that we are ever closer to his coming. Keep up the good works.” - ID

“Was trying to find something worthwhile to watch on TV yesterday morning; came across a "Christian gospel music video" where this man was "singing" on stage, dressed in a suit with tennis shoes on and had

long dreadlocks. To be honest, with the facial expressions he was making and the bodily demonstrations to go with it, he looked demonic. And there was on stage with him a full music section, and women who were dressed worldly, tight jeans and so on, dancing and shaking as if on the dance floor at a night club. If it was not a "Christian" program, I would have thought I was watching "Soul Train"!!! Of course, today's popular "gospel artists" are so worldly, that they are welcomed with open arms onto the world's platform and stage. There have been some "gospel recording stars" who have been on "Soul Train". The modern day "church" has become so worldly that there is hardly any distinguishing it from the world. Holiness appears to be out and worldliness appears to be in. But not with God. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world"-Titus. Maybe that is why Jesus said only a few would find the road that leads to life. Let us then "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling"-Hebrews. - MD

“What wickedness is being perpetrated upon the American people by our so called beloved "leaders"!!! The question is, where are they trying to lead us? Not to God, that's for sure. The system of the Beast seems to be preparing itself for the entry of the Anti-Christ. I also believe that the apostate "church" will play a major role in all of this as well. Yes, our redemption is truly drawing nigh! Even so, come Lord Jesus.” - MD

“Am loving your wonderful book, 'Victorious Journey'. Thank you for sending it! God bless you!” - WA

“WHY does everyone have to seek after FICTION to learn about Almighty God? WHEN did the Bible become 'secondary' to all of this fictional fluff? What a spiritual depression we are living in! I firmly believe that the hand of judgment from God has been released onto the good 'ol US of A!!! And the leaders have asked for it by their implemented laws and actions, with the sheeple noddingly (is that a word? LOL!) shaking their sleepy heads in agreement!! - FL

GOD'S SHEEP, GOD'S CHURCH

“Today many of God's sheep are being scattered because they cannot hear the voice of the Shepherd. They desire to come to the Living Water, but they encounter dry wells and muddied water. There are many invitations, but the tender voice and signature of the Spirit is missing. Therefore, the sheep continue to seek for the Shepherd who will lead them up the paths of righteousness to the still waters that renew, and the green pastures that they are able to feed upon.

“This brings us to what distinguishes the real Church of Jesus from the counterfeits. It is alive. It is not an indifferent building, system, denomination, or doctrine. It is a living organism. It lives because of the Spirit that inspires and leads, and the truth that establishes it upon the immovable Rock. After all, it is the Spirit who leads to all truth about Jesus, who will show the Church the things to come for preparation, and who serves as the true teacher to the Body. Although the flame of life might appear weak in some of the Church, and the resolve to cling to the Rock may be questionable, the Church lives. It has the eternal flame within it, and the eternal Rock of ages to keep it.

“The Church lives, and one day this extraordinary Body will be brought forth in the unhindered glory of the One who purchased her. There will be no doubt of her existence, witness, flame, or foundation. Her existence will be unveiled in His glory, her witness will be confirmed in a future reign with her Lord, her flame will become a consuming fire in light of His judgment, and her foundation will be standing when all others crumble as shifting sand beneath the storms of God's wrath.

“The question is, are you part of this living organism?”

Excerpt from “What Ever Happened To The Church?” by Rayola Kelley, © 2008

“Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.”

~John 20:21~