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THE REALITY OF GOD

Part Six

By Rayola Kelley

Last month I talked about knowing God. There is only one way to know God and that is through Jesus Christ. He is the way into a relationship with God, He is the truth about God, and He is the only way into a life with God (*John 14:6*). Therefore, to know God, we must know Jesus Christ (*John 14:7-11; Colossians 2:9*).

My first genuine introduction to Jesus was that as Savior. We need a Savior and our understanding to this need is not just once in a lifetime acknowledgement. I don't know about you but I need Jesus to save me daily from the enticing ways of the world, the snares of Satan, and the foothold that the flesh has on me. I need His way to lead me away from the ways of the world, I need His truth to help me discern the snares of Satan, and I need His way of life to help me daily overcome the "old man."

I remember when I was first saved—there was a honeymoon of sorts. I was so excited and full of zeal that I did not realize I constantly needed His intervention. As a result, I took various detours along the way until I realized that I needed my precious Savior to save me from the influences of the world, the workings of my flesh, and the activities of Satan. He gave me His Word to recognize and flee the influences of the world; He gave me the example of His life to enable me to overcome the flesh through faith, and He gave me the Spirit to overcome Satan in power and authority. As the Bible tells me, He is able to save each one of us to the uttermost (*Hebrews 7:25*).

The second reality I had to grow in was that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh. To many this is just a concept of theology and doctrine, but it must become a revelation that is constantly being unfolded to us as we grow in

the knowledge of Jesus Christ. We can keep Jesus in a doctrinal box if the eternal aspects of His nature and character are not being unfolded to us by our spiritual teacher, the Holy Ghost (*John 16:13; 1 John 2:27*). The Bible calls this "revelation." (*Ephesians 1:1, 7; refer to Revelation 1:1*).

I have said this before and I will say it again and again. There are no new revelations but that of Jesus being revealed in greater measure to our spirits. The greater revelations of Jesus must line up to what the Bible tells us about Him. If anything takes away from His deity and perfect, sinless nature as man, it is heretical (*Titus 3:10; 2 John 7-11*). If anything perverts His work of redemption, it will prove to be a false gospel (*Galatians 1:6-9*). If any person declares that he or she stands as the final authority to a matter, that person is a predator in sheep's clothing rather than a shepherd who leads by example and guides in humility. And, if any person exalts his or her conclusions or any other book over the Word of God, that person is not standing on the Word of God; rather, he or she is hiding behind a fig-leaf of misguided devotion that will leave him or her standing on shifting sands that will collapse from underneath him or her in due time (*Matthew 7:15 refer to 1 Peter 5:1-4; Matthew 7:21-27*).

It is easy to shift our dependency from God to embrace every whim that leaves us feeling good, accept error that makes sense to our logic, and become deluded by that which is self-serving and self-exalting. It is for this reason that we must always test our attitude towards God and others, the spirit motivating us, the extent of our reliance on His Word, and the fruits that such attitudes produce in us.

Jesus is clear that the fruits will tell on a matter (*Matthew 7:16-20*). If something causes me to become unreasonable, belligerent, unkind, demanding, and judgmental, then I must discern the source (*Galatians 5:22-23*).

For example, perhaps there is a flaw in my character, or I could be coming into agreement with a wrong spirit, or I could be buying a lie (*2 Corinthians 11:3, 4, 13-14; 1 John 4:1-3*). It is up to each of us to be honest about our fruits, and quick to examine our motives, and be humble enough to submit to what the Word says about a matter. Of course, such a response can only happen if the person loves the truth of God's Word more than his or her reality or take on a matter (*2 Thessalonians 2:10-12*). The latter is a product of pride.

It is clear that because of whom Jesus is we have the authority to stand, the power to withstand, and the enduring faith to continue to stand. However, the authority to stand involves having a right attitude or the mind of Christ Jesus, the power to withstand includes right standing with God, and the faith to continue to stand entails a powerful, living testimony that is backed up by right living.

Clearly, if Jesus is God Incarnate, He alone is the final word and authority in a matter. He alone is the one who deserves our complete commitment, obedience, honor, and worship. He alone is the Rock of ages and the ultimate Judge in all matters. He alone is the One we must please and obey.

Obedience leads us to the third relationship: that of Lordship. *First Corinthians 8:6* states, "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." (Emphasis added.)

What does it mean for Jesus to be Lord? The word "lord" is presented in different ways. For example, we read a couple of different presentations of the word "lord" in the Old Testament. When we see it being presented in this way, "LORD" (all caps), it is in reference to Jehovah or Yahweh. This presentation is used in rela-

tionship to our God being a covenant God. When you study the prayers in the Old Testament, you will see this presentation of LORD often being used by the Jewish people to approach and appeal to God. The reason for this is because the Jewish people had one basis in which to confidently approach God and that was according to the covenants He made with their forefathers. This is why the name of "Jehovah" is attached to various promises and works that can be traced back to His covenants. These promises and works include such titles as Jehovah-Jireh (the Lord will see or our Provider, *Genesis 22:8-14*); Jehovah-Nissi (The Lord our banner, *Exodus 17:15*); Jehovah-Ropheka (The Lord our healer, *Exodus 15:26*); Jehovah-Rohi (The Lord my Shepherd, *Psalms 23:1*).

When you see the word "lord" being presented in this manner, "Lord" (lower case), it points to Adonai. Adonai is used in relationship with earth as in God carrying out His purposes of blessings in the earth. It points to Him as being overlord or ruler, owner, and the one who blesses.

Kings have subjects, but lords have servants. Kings oversee kingdoms, but lords oversee personal households and estates. There is a more personal knowledge between a lord and his servants than between a king and his subjects. Just lords always recognize virtuous qualities of their servants and will entrust such faithful servants with greater responsibilities in their households. *Hebrews 3:4-6* tells us, "For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

We know that in the case of Moses the house that was being built was according to the ministration of the Law, while in the case of the house of Christ, it was established

according to the ministration of grace. We are told in the case of Moses, the glory the law emitted from his face had to be covered by a veil, while the glory of the second house, Christ, is to be manifested in the faces of those who are being conformed to His image (*2 Corinthians 3:7-18*).

This brings us back to the concept of Lordship. In the Old Testament "LORD" or Jehovah was used because the people's relationship with God was based on what He declared He was going to do. *Hebrews 6:13* gives us a special insight, "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself." But, when it comes to the New Testament, "Lord" or Adonai is used exclusively in light of what Jesus did on earth in regard to redemption. Redemption is what ushered in the new covenant.

It is always interesting to see how these two presentations of "Lord" were used in the Old Testament. As stated, you can see "LORD" consistently being used in the Old Testament, but "Lord" is used a few times as well. For example, it is used in *Genesis 18* when the Lord came with two angels and spoke with Abraham about destroying Sodom and Gomorrah. It is interesting that in *Genesis 18:1*, that the Scripture's presentation of Lord is that of Jehovah, "And the LORD appeared unto him," but when Abraham bows before Him and actually addresses Him in *Genesis 18:3*, Abraham said, "My Lord."

Another incident where "Lord" is used is in *Isaiah 6*. Consider what *Isaiah 6:1* states, "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." (Emphasis added.) This chapter is where Isaiah volunteered himself to be sent forth to his people after hearing the voice of the Lord asking, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" "Then said I, Here am I; send me" (*Isaiah 6:9*). (Emphasis added.) It is important to note that in this verse, the plurality of the Godhead is clearly being brought out by the word "us." In *Isaiah 6:12*, LORD is then used in relationship to judgment on those who forsake Him.

Here is another interesting question. It is clear that the LORD appeared to Abraham in the form of a man in *Genesis 18*. (There were three men

that came to Abraham, two were angels and he addressed the third one as Lord. See *Genesis 18:2-3*.) Isaiah clearly testified that he saw the Lord sitting on the throne, high and lifted up. The Lord appeared in other places in the Old Testament. For example, Jacob had a dream that he saw the LORD standing above the ladder that reached from heaven to earth in *Genesis 28:12-13*; the elders of Israel saw the God of Israel in *Exodus 24:10*; and Joshua bowed before the captain of the LORD'S host and worshipped Him in *Joshua 5:12-15*. The question is who were they seeing?

John made a statement in his Gospel, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Is there a contradiction between the sightings in the Old Testament and John's words in the new? You first have to ask what it would mean to see God. To see God in his entirety, you would have to see all three persons of the Godhead. We know that Moses could not even look at the full glory of God in *Exodus 33:18-20* without dying.

Jesus gives us this insight in *John 5:37*, "And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath born witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape." In *John 6:46*, He makes this statement, "Not that any hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father."

Jesus made it clear that no man has seen the Father except Himself, but He never made such declarations about the Holy Spirit or Himself. Consider what King Nebuchadnezzar declared about the fourth man that he saw in the fiery oven with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, "He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" (*Daniel 3:26*).

What one person of the Godhead could take on the shape of man and be able to present Himself as Yahweh, the God of Israel, and the captain of the LORD'S host? There is only one answer and that is the Son of God. It was Jesus, the one who formed the material world with His very words, the One who was the

Word or verbal, visible expression of God in the beginning, the One who spoke to Moses in the burning bush, and is known as the Lawgiver of Mount Sinai (*Colossians 1:16-18* refer to *John 1:1*; *Hebrews 11:3*; *Exodus 3:4-14*; *Genesis 49:50* refer to *James 4:12*). Clearly, it was Jesus in His pre-incarnate state that was seen by Abraham, Jacob, the elders of Israel, Joshua, King Nebuchadnezzar, and Isaiah. John the Baptist said of Jesus in *John 1:30* that He was before him (existed), and Jesus said in *John 8:58b*, "Before Abraham was, I am." And, we must not forget what Jesus told Philip in *John 14:9b*, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

This brings us to Jesus as Lord. The Bible declares that if we confess the Lord Jesus, and believe in our hearts that Jesus was raised from the dead, we shall be saved (*Romans 10:9*). *Romans 10:13* states, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." *First Corinthians 12:3* states, "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God called Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

It is easy for people to refer to Jesus as Lord, but to understand "Lord" in relationship to Him in the right way means understanding "Lord" in reference to Him being Adonai, deity. For a person to gain such insight takes the Holy Spirit to reveal that truth to a person's heart. Jesus said as much to Peter, when He asked him who he declared Jesus to be, and Peter acknowledged that He was Christ, the Son of the Living God. Then Jesus went on to say this, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (*Matthew 16:17*).

Next month I will show the necessity for a person to understand and properly translate the word "Lord" in relationship to Jesus. Meanwhile, the question we must honestly ask and answer is what does the word "Lord" in relationship to Jesus mean to each of us personally? Obviously, it is vital that our understanding is right. Remember we must confess and call upon the Lord Jesus to be saved. †

MUNDANE CHRISTIANITY?

"...I began to feel that my spiritual life was somehow becoming mundane. I couldn't understand this spiritual downturn, since everything around me seemed fine. I was spending a month in the jungle and then, during my month at home, I delivered sermons at church, taught Sunday school, listened to the preaching of others, studied my Bible, and worshiped in my home. I was doing everything a born-again person and a Christian worker is supposed to do. But something was missing. Should I back up and take a new approach in order to revive my intensity? Was there a reason for this spiritual stagnation? It was not clear to me where I was at spiritually. I longed to deepen my faith. One day, when I was in the Word meditating on the Lord, something came to me like a drop of cold water on my forehead, alerting me: *You are neglecting evangelism*. Yes, that was the answer! Until then, I had been on the *defensive*. I needed to go on the *offensive*, emphasize and train my skills to take victory over the enemy in this spiritual war, and maintain a vibrant and growing faith." - Sung Joon Kim, *Forty Years in the Amazon Jungle*, pg. 205

"They who think on heavenly things are forced by their psychological structure to use mental raw material borrowed from the earth. And this is certain to show up in their thinking. Even the Bible, to be understood by its readers, must condescend to tell of eternal things in the language of time. It must explain the celestial by means of the mundane. So we find in the Scriptures birds and kings and sheep and soldiers acting as interpreters for Almighty God. Grapes and lilies, gold and stubble, corn and cattle, rain and stars all are used by the Holy Spirit to carry our minds across the vast chasm that separates the spiritual from the material. Doubtless the constant use of figures drawn from our familiar world to express religious ideas leaves a residuum at the bottom of our minds which in some measure gives color, if not form, to our theology. We struggle to understand spiritual things by comparing them to natural ones; then little by little those natural things become identified with the spiritual completely and the spiritual suffers greatly as a consequence." - A.W. Tozer

WORLD IN THE CHURCH?

"Once you have lost the division between the world and the Church--the Church ceases to be truly Christian!" - Martyn Lloyd-Jones

"Pleasure, so called, is the murderer of serious thought. This is the age of excessive amusement. Everybody craves for it, like a babe for its rattle!" - Charles Spurgeon

"The great god 'Entertainment' amuses his devotees mainly by telling them stories. The love of stories, which is characteristic of childhood, has taken fast hold of the minds of the retarded saints of our day, so much so that many manage to make a comfortable living by spinning yarns and serving them up in various disguises to church people. What is natural and beautiful in a child, may be shocking when it persists into adulthood, and more so when it appears in the sanctuary and seeks to pass for true religion!

"So today we have the astonishing spectacle of millions of dollars being poured into the unholy job of providing earthly entertainment for the so-called people of God. Religious entertainment is in many places rapidly crowding out the serious things of God. Many churches these days have become little more than poor theaters, where fifth-rate "producers" peddle their shoddy wares with the approval of evangelical leaders who can even quote a holy text in defense of their delinquency. And hardly a man dares raise his voice against it!" - A.W. Tozer

"I believe that one reason why the church has so little influence over the world--is because the world has so much influence over the church! It is overwhelming to see the growing worldliness of the visible church. Many professed Christians--the Lord alone knows whether they are true believers or not--give us grave cause for apprehension. We see them tolerating practices which would not have been endured by their fathers; my blood chills when I think of how far some fashionable professors go astray! When the Church descends to the world's level, her spiritual power is gone. Jesus said, 'Preach the gospel to every creature!' But men are getting tired of the divine plan; they are

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WHO IS ASHAMED?

Part One

By Jeannette Haley

If you happened to witness a man of God do what the scribe Ezra did in front of the people, you just might shrink back in fear, and conclude that he was a maniac. The question is when was the last time you saw a Christian leader so distressed over sin *in the Church* that he or she tore up his or her clothes, yanked out his or her hair, or ripped out his beard and sat down astonished? Some of us may almost feel a surge of this type of passion at times due to the accelerating wickedness, evil, injustice, and downright idiocy manifesting itself in our nation's godless leaders—not to mention the horrors and atrocities that are taking place all around the world. But, when was the last time (if ever) your spirit was stirred up and aflame with the same passion towards sin in the church? Or are you content to ignore it, passing over it as "normal" and acceptable, content to tolerate it in the name of unity and love?

Listen with your "spiritual ears" to Ezra the scribe because there is a powerful message here for God's people today: *"Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass"* Ezra 9:1-2. No doubt some of you are thinking, *What? Are you daft? Nobody has seen these ancient people with their strange gods in our modern churches. Besides, Ezra lived about 500 years before Christ.* At this point we need to remember what the Bible says about the Bible, and I do mean both the Old and the New Testaments. Today there seems to be an attitude in some professing Christians that we don't need the Old Testament any longer—just the New Testament. I've had silly people

spout off to me, "Well! I don't need the Old Testament! I'm a 'New Testament Christian.'" In my book that's about as idiotic as buying a two-piece pantsuit, and then wearing the jacket without the pants.

A.W. Tozer said, "We should banish from our minds forever the common but erroneous notion that justice and judgment characterize the God of Israel, while mercy and grace belong to the Lord of the Church. Actually there is in principle no difference between the Old Testament and the New. In the New Testament Scriptures there is a fuller development of redemptive truth, but one God speaks in both dispensations, and what He speaks agrees with what He is. Wherever and whenever God appears to men, He acts like Himself. Whether in the Garden of Eden or the Garden of Gethsemane, God is merciful as well as just. He has always dealt in mercy with mankind and will always deal in justice when His mercy is despised. Thus He did in antediluvian times; thus when Christ walked among men; thus He is doing today and will continue always to do for no other reason than that He is God." What we need to remember is that the Old Testament is Christ concealed, and the New Testament is Christ revealed.

The Old Testament gives us types (examples) and shadows of what was to come in the New Testament. For example, speaking of the Levitical priests, the writer of Hebrews stated, *"Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount"* Hebrews 8:5. [Emphasis added.] *"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ"* Colossians 2:16, 17. [Emphasis added.] In 1 Corinthians 10:6 we are told that the events that took place in the Old Testament are for *"our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted."* [Emphasis added.]

The Old Testament is the foundation for the New Testament, and teaches us God's principles and precepts so that we can gain the wisdom we need

to conduct ourselves in a manner that is worthy of our Holy God. God did not throw off His holiness once the work of the cross was finished so that anyone can carelessly barge with pride into His presence wearing his or her old filthy garments of the flesh and find acceptance with Him, even though this attitude is prevalent today. Any such notion is grave error at best and blasphemy at worst. It is only through the blood of Christ which washes away our sin that we are made fit to approach our holy God with confidence. An illustration of this can be found in the parable of the marriage of the king's son where we read, *"And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen"* Matthew 22:11-14. Jesus was undoubtedly referring to the wedding garment which is the robe of righteous that only born again saints wear that we read of in Isaiah 61:10, *"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."* The bride, the Church of Jesus Christ, must be holy *"That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish"* Ephesians 5:27

Interestingly, these pagan nations can serve as types and examples to the modern Church, which will be discussed in Part Two of this article. As Rayola says, "People will never come higher than their idols." John R. W. Stott (1921-2011) said, "The Christian landscape is strewn with the wreckage of derelict, half-built towers – the ruins of those who began to build and were unable to finish. For thousands of people still

ignore Christ's warning and undertake to follow him without first pausing to reflect on the cost of doing so. The result is the great scandal of Christendom today, so-called "nominal Christianity." In countries to which Christian civilization has spread, large numbers of people have covered themselves with a decent, but thin, veneer of Christianity. They have allowed themselves to become somewhat involved; enough to be respectable but not enough to be uncomfortable. Their religion is a great, soft cushion. It protects them from the hard unpleasantness of life, while changing its place and shape to suit their convenience. No wonder the cynics speak of hypocrites in the church and dismiss religion as escapism."

We are given powerful examples in *Ezra 9* of the separation that must take place if a Christian is to truly be converted to the ways of righteousness. Here we read that God's people, "The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations...." And it goes on to list pagan societies. Apologetics press reports, "The biblical record, together with archaeology, reveals in Canaan a degraded society that practiced any number of atrocities in the name of religion. These nations engaged in ritual prostitution, self-mutilation, and human sacrifice. Their societies were filled with incest, idolatry, and violence. As a result of this immorality, God weighed them in the balance and found them wanting." According to *Leviticus 18, 20* the sexual immorality of the Canaanites, and Egyptians was basically what we see every day in our own world, including homosexuality, orgies, bestiality, pornography and every type of perversion imaginable. These pagan nations also practiced sorcery, necromancy (contact with the dead), fortune telling, witchcraft, and infanticide among other shameful abominations. Most of these people were descendants of Ham, while the Moabites and Ammonites descended from Lot. God warned the Israelites "But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides,

and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell. Moreover it shall come to pass, that I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them" *Numbers 33:55, 56*. No wonder then that Ezra reacted so strongly, as it is written, "And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished" *Ezra 9:3*.

The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, [God's people] have not separated themselves..." Ezra 9:1a. God is saying that it is up to His people to "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" *2 Corinthians 6:14-18*. We all get excited about God "receiving" us as his sons or daughters, and Him being our "daddy" who thinks we are oh-so-wonderful, and is "crazy" about us, and dotes on us, and all that unscriptural mush, as we skip right over the condition God lays out for such a relationship; that is, separation. Jesus is returning for a Church that is separate from sinners, separate from the filth of the world, separate from the love of money, separate from the works of the devil, and separate from a counterfeit Christ-less religion. Jesus didn't die for us because there was some "good" in us, or that we are "worthy," but because we are hopelessly lost sinners who need to be reconciled to God. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" *Romans 3:10-12*. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is

eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" *Romans 6:23*.

Now concerning Christians and the organized, institutionalized, traditional, man-centered, liberal, seeker-friendly, Patriarchal (prejudiced against women), respecter-of-persons, Nicolaitan, cold, dead, lukewarm, prideful, self-serving, social gospel "churches," that pander to sin in the camp; that is, pandering to the unrepentant, lovers of the world's systems, the dabblers in the occult, the idolaters, the fornicators, the rebellious, the unclean, and the perverted, including heretical teachings, and unbelievers, let me ask you, where in the Bible does it say that in God's universal Church that make up His Body that there must be a special place for the wolves, the swine and the goats? Is not the true Body of Christ made up of His sheep that are all equally received by Him who believe and who are partakers of His divine nature? Peter wrote, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" *2 Peter 1:2-4*. True believers that make up the Body of Christ must come out and be separate from the world and its ways, or suffer shame. The Laodicean churches of these end days must obey Jesus, be zealous and repent, or suffer shame. *Matthew 25:31-34* is clear that the day is coming when the King shall separate the sheep from the goats.

Listen to the heart of Ezra, "And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God" *Ezra 9:5*. Can you get a picture of the anguish and shame that overwhelmed this man of God? When was the last time you felt this way over the state of the Church in America, or over your own sin and fell on your knees before God in shame? Then he said, "O my

God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens" verse 6. Ezra was ashamed and blushing over the sins of Israel whose moral deviations equaled that of the pagans, and whose trespasses against God's commandments were great.

Shame is a terrible thing that began with our first parents. Adam and Even were ashamed after they sinned and sewed fig leaves together to cover their nakedness. (*Genesis 3:7*). King David wrote many verses about being ashamed, including "*In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness. Let me not be ashamed O LORD; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave*" *Psalms 31:1, 17*. There are many who claim to be Christians, but when it comes to confessing Jesus to the world, they shrink back in shame. Think on His words from *Mark 8:34b-38*, "*Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.*" [Emphasis added.] Have you considered the great shame that Jesus endured for us? "*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God, Hebrews 12:2*."

America is guilty of the same level of wickedness that grieved the heart and soul of Ezra. How can we any longer say, "God bless America" when America has been given over to her greed, lust, lewdness, godlessness, fornication, occultism and idolatry? Why would our holy God choose to bless a nation that has heartlessly

slaughtered over 50 million babies since Roe vs. Wade? On top of this, the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law estimates that there are about 9 million Americans who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. Why should God bless a nation that throws God out of its educational system from pre-school to higher halls of learning while hailing an atheistic, deluded nut like Charles Darwin as some super genius of truth? While it is true that God has a remnant of people in this nation who have not bowed the knee to Satan, nevertheless, we have passed the tipping point, just as Sodom and Gomorrah did. There is a time when the cup of iniquity overflows and judgment is imminent. America is being destroyed from within just like the British Empire. The British boasted that God was on their side, blessing their armies and navies. But in 1659, Puritan watchmen were warning of the self-destruction of the British Empire. They were being raised up by God to warn of the self-destruction coming upon them because of rampant sin and godlessness. The British Empire was crumbling left and right, and what was ruining them was decay from within.

Thomas Hall wrote: "The sins of England I fear more than all the enemies of the world. It is not Spain, or Italy, France or Turkey, that I fear... it is the atheism, blasphemy, apostasy and the profaning of all that is holy, and contempt for the gospel.... If anything destroys us, it is these abominations that reign among us."

When the empire crumbled, another Puritan writer commented: "God humbled us with sickness, plague, poverty and decay of our economy... we threw off the yoke of Christ and now we have on us the yoke of pestilence and disease." The Puritan Watchmen were crying out the same message that Hosea delivered to Ephraim: "Thou hast destroyed thyself!" (*Hosea 13:9*).

Then there is the issue of Israel. Concerning Israel, God says, "*And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed*" *Genesis 12:3*. It is no secret how the United States is turning against Israel (except for a handful of faithful God-fearing believers.) The scales are tipping, and it is not in favor

of Israel. God warns, "*And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem*" *Zechariah 12:9*.

In closing, I tearfully must confess that there was a time when being an American was something I was proud of, because America, as a whole, stood for something. She wasn't ashamed of God, she wasn't ashamed to be identified as a nation populated by churches full of God-fearing Christians. America stood for freedom, for right over wrong, for equal opportunity, for respect, decency and dignity. But over the past few years I have felt more and more ashamed to be associated with an America I can no longer recognize—the Normal Rockwell America—an America that no longer exists.

Are you beginning to get an inkling of the fire that burned in Ezra? Can you understand how grieved, astonished and ashamed he was? *Ezra 9:4*, "*Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel because of the transgression of those that had been carried away; and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice.*" Where are the people of God today that tremble at His Word? Look what is happening to America! Look what is taking place in the world today! Are you trembling yet over the judgment of the Almighty? God is starting to shake this world. He is shaking America. He is going to shake this nation until all that is left are two choices: either put away all your sins and silly foolishness and get real with God and worship Him and Him alone, or sell your soul to the devil by trying to hang on to your temporary life with its temporary pleasures and temporary lusts and end up in an eternal hell. God is going to shake His Church "*For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God*" *1 Peter 4:17*? He is going to purify it through the fires of adversity until she is holy and prepared for His coming. When Jesus comes, when you stand before Him, when his eyes of fire search the very depths of your soul, are you going to be ashamed? †

RAYOLA'S Q & A CORNER

TALKING TO THE DEAD?

Q: (In regard to Jesus talking to Moses and Elijah on Mount Transfiguration in Matthew 17, Mark 9, Luke 9.) "Since it is appointed for man to die once (Hebrews 9:27), how is it that Moses who did die, while Elijah was translated, that the three disciples witnessed Jesus talking to them...so, the Lord WAS speaking with the dead, albeit, the Scripture says they appeared in 'glory' which I'm assuming meant their glorified bodies? So, what is to stop "anyone" else from speaking to the dead, since Jesus did it beforehand?"

A: You asked a very thought-provoking question. When you consider the word "judgment," it is in reference to separation such as in the case of Matthew 25:23-22. My understanding is that since believers (Judgment seat of Christ) and unbelievers (Great White Throne Judgment) will appear before different judgment seats, they will be separated at physical death (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:11-15). Those who are heirs of salvation are separated unto eternal life, while unbelievers are put into the holding place of hell where they will be separated unto eternal damnation. (Note: Old Testament saints were placed in Abraham's bosom before Jesus came, and since His redemption, believers find upon death that they are spiritually present with the Lord. (See Luke 16:22-23 and 2 Corinthians 5:8.)

As far as Moses and Elijah appearing on the mountain, keep in mind that God is the God of the living, not the dead (Matthew 22:31, 32). In other words a person who belongs to God never dies. As far as the glory that surrounded Moses and Elijah on the mount, you need to keep in mind that Jesus' glory, in relationship to His deity, was being unveiled to the disciples. The Apostle John spoke about the glory he witnessed on the mountain in John 1:14, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

As to whether Moses and Elijah were appearing in glorified bodies, I

can only point you to what Jesus said in John 5:24-29 where He talked about resurrection. What happens at resurrection? According to the Apostle Paul that is when saints will inherit their glorified bodies (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; 1 Corinthians 15:50-54). Upon receiving our glorified bodies the fullness of redemption will finally be realized.

This brings us to the fact that Moses and Elijah appeared in human form. The only thing I can tell you for sure is that they did not appear in a physical body, since Moses' body was clearly left in the grave and we know that all physical bodies must be put off or changed in order to enter into glory.

Keep in mind that when something appears in a form, it is for the purpose of identification. For example, saints who die in the Lord are said to be asleep, not dead. They are waiting for that time when they will be raised in a new glorified body. We have a record in Scripture of these saints being raised from the grave in a recognizable form. Consider Matthew 27:52-53, "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."

We know that angels, spiritual beings, can take on human form, and no doubt this was true for Moses and Elijah. The thing that amazes me is how did the disciples recognize these men? There is no record of images of these men being left behind. I can only surmise that the Holy Spirit revealed their identities to the disciples.

This brings me to the reason why these two men appeared with Jesus. Clearly these men were not there so Jesus could speak to the dead. He was not seeking them beyond the grave for information or assurance about the unknown or the future. What was He speaking to them about? Luke 9:31 gives us some insight, "Who appeared in glory and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." He was talking to them about the events of His death, burial, and resurrection, something that all saints of the Old Testament were looking forward to. Let us consider the significance of this.

It is well-known that Moses is highly regarded by the Jews. After all, he gave them the Torah. As for the

great prophet Elijah, they are still waiting for his return. However, Moses prophesied that a great prophet like unto him would come (Deuteronomy 18:17-18). We know that he was talking about Jesus. Jesus is not only the great prophet who was promised, but He is the lawgiver who came out of Judah. He is also the One who fulfilled the law and is found at the end of it to be the essence of righteousness, for the Law was simply a schoolmaster to point people to Jesus (Matthew 5:17; Romans 10:4; Galatians 3:24). Jesus is not only the greatest of prophets, but He is the one that all the prophets prophesied about. He was and is the fulfillment of all the shadows, types, patterns, promises, and prophecies found in the Bible. He is the One who in the end will assure all saints that their faith towards God was not in vain.

Even though Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus, and the disciples showed great excitement over seeing them, when all was said and done on that mountain, the only one who was acknowledged by the Father and left standing was **Jesus**. The truth is Moses (the holy Law) and Elijah (promises) had to give way to that which was and is worthy of all of our devotion—the One who cast the shadows in the Old Testament and came to fulfill the promises of that which would bring the new forth in power and glory.

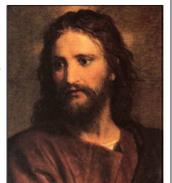
There will always be mysterious aspects about the matters of God's kingdom, and will be explained in the age yet to come. Meanwhile, I hope I have been able to bring some insight to your question. †

OUR FIGHT

"Every Christian must be aware all of the time that in this fight against the evil spirits of this world there are stumbling blocks at every corner against true evangelism, the proclamation of the Gospel. This is particularly true on the mission field." - Missionary Sung Joon Kim

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

- James 4:7



Continued from pg. 3, column 3

going to be saved by the music, or by the theatricals, or by the amusements! Well, they may try these things as long as ever they like; but nothing can ever come of the whole thing, but utter disappointment and confusion: God is dishonored, the gospel is travestied, hypocrites are manufactured by thousands, and the church is dragged down to the level of the world!" - C. H. Spurgeon

"The world has absorbed the Church, and the church was content that it should be so!" - Horatius Bonar

"Conformity to the world, in all ages, has proved the ruin of the church!" - Rowland Hill

"When the church finds its members falling into gross and scandalous sins, then it is time for the church to awake and cry to God for a Revival of Religion. When such things are taking place as give enemies of religion an occasion for reproach, it is time for the church to ask God, "What will become of Thy great name?" When there is a spirit of controversy in the church or in the land, a revival is needful. The spirit of religion is not the spirit of controversy. There can be no prosperity in religion, where the spirit of controversy prevails. When the wicked triumph over the church, and revile them, it is time to seek for a Revival of Religion. When sinners are careless and stupid, and sinking into hell unconcerned, it is time the church should bestir themselves. It is as much the duty of the church to awake, as it is for the firemen to awake when a fire breaks out in the night in a great city." - Charles G. Finney

"The neglected heart will soon be a heart overrun with worldly thoughts; the neglected life will soon become a moral chaos; the church that is not jealously protected by mighty intercession and sacrificial labors will before long become the abode of every evil bird and the hiding place for unsuspected corruption. The creeping wilderness will soon take over that church that trusts in its own strength and forgets to watch and pray." - A. W. Tozer

"The life of faith is not a life of mounting up with wings, but a life of walking and not fainting." - Oswald Chambers

PAGAN HIERARCHY?

By Skip Moen

"For the body is **not one member, but many.**" - 1 Corinthians 12:14

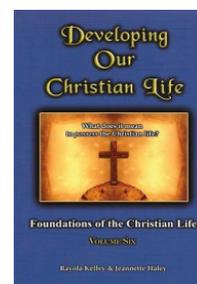
Not one member – Everyone is familiar with Paul's analogy of the body. In his letter to the believers in Corinth, Paul goes to great lengths to impress upon this rowdy bunch that their lives must reflect the compassion, grace and obedience of the Messiah. They need *order*, but Paul quickly adds, *order* in the body does not mean control by a hierarchy of superiority. Order means everyone doing what they were designed and chosen (by God) to do. Anything else in the assembly is a form of spiritual abuse.

According to the text, there is but one, and only one, head of the assembly. That one is the Messiah. *Everyone else* is just a member of the body. Not one of the rest is independently important, spiritually superior or designated as authority over the rest. That means that the Messiah and the Father make arrangements for each member to fulfill tasks required for the edification, instruction and continuation of the assembly. God's spirit at work among the members leads each one to take up the assignment necessary for that particular person. This is the combination of passion, calling and worship rolled into one. Unfortunately, what typically happens to members of the church is assignment *by the church for the needs of the church*. It is rare indeed for a member of the body to be asked, "And how is the spirit of the Lord leading you to participate with us in this assembly?" It is far more common to hear, "Oh, we have a lot of things to be done and you'd be great at this one." This form of abuse was clarified for me by my friend John whose work in the area of passion and purpose is foundational and excellent.

Consider the implications of Paul's analogy. No one is *less* important, *less* necessary, *less* useful than anyone else. The pastor is **not the head** of the assembly. He or she is not above critique, not more "spiritual," not the final word. Of course, in pagan hierarchies, he is, but we are not members of a pagan

hierarchical religion (are we?). You and I are members just like everyone else. If a church "official" says something, does something or displays an attitude that does not match Scripture or that impugns any other member, we are to speak up, to defend what's right, to remind that person that every member is equally important in the *one body* whose head is the Messiah. Far too often we have been taught that if we are not a hand, we have no value. If we are not a foot, we must be left on the sidelines. If we are not persuasive, articulate, intellectual, organizing or contributing, then we have no place except to sit in the pew and agree with everything. Paul would *strongly* object! So should you. When we begin to treat hands and feet as equally and uniquely important to us all, community will flourish.

ouk esti hen says Paul in Greek. *ouk*, the strongest possible negative in Greek. **Not** to be one, but *polla*-many. So what's the problem? Scripture clearly asserts your equal position. The spirit of the Lord has chosen you to perform duties specifically tailored to your passions. You serve Him in this body. Why do you hesitate? Throw off the shackles of pagan hierarchy and do what God designed you to do. And if you discover the reprisal of silent discouragement, then you will know which religion dominates your community. †



DEVELOPING OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE—by Rayola Kelley. The sixth volume explains what it means to possess the Christian life. The problem with much of the presentation of Christianity is that it

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