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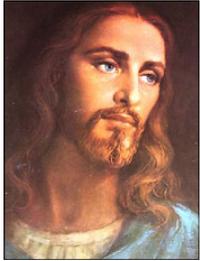
CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH ~ MAKING DISCIPLES ~ EQUIPPING THE SAINTS FOR MINISTRY

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The Reality of God

Part 12

By Rayola Kelley



One of those “wow” moments for me was when I realized that God could be seen in the face of Jesus Christ. I could know God in a personal way, and He not only put a face to deity, but He revealed God’s heart of love, His desire to save mankind, and His unchanging characteristics that clearly identify God.

Jesus said to Thomas in *John 14:9*, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?” Jesus was intimately involved with His disciples for three years and they still missed it. For over two thousand years Jesus has been presented to the world through the Gospel, and yet how many still miss or refuse to receive the gift of eternal life?

There are various reasons people miss the Gospel. The first reason is some have never heard it (*Romans 10:14-15*). Praise God for missionaries who have the vision and passion to adhere to the commission to preach that Gospel to every creature. These stout-hearted souls must count the cost before they tread into an unknown harvest field to offer themselves as a living sacrifice to be spent out for the glory of God.

Another reason people do not hear the Gospel is because they see no need for it. Many people see themselves sufficient enough and they do not need some “crutch” like religion to get them through life. After all, religion is for the weak and when they hear the Gospel, they have a tendency to shrug it off as if obsolete and insignificant.

There are also those who in their mind have enough religion to keep God off their back and somewhat happy with them. However, any religion that lacks the reality of the true Gospel of Jesus dying for our sin, being laid in an empty tomb for three days and nights, then being resurrected, will prove to be a dismal failure on judgment day. The truth is there will be no reason for people who have been exposed to Jesus Christ and Him crucified for rejecting it other than choosing not to believe it. (*1 Corinthians 2:2; 15:1-4; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6*).

The next reason people see no need to believe the Gospel is because they do not see any power in the Gospel to change their present plight. Sadly, many churches speak of the benefits of the Gospel in light of the future, but fail to show that the Gospel has the power to change and transform lives for today. The Gospel is about the eternal life of Jesus being imparted in a person. As the Holy Spirit works the life of Christ into a person through the active obedience of faith, the person becomes more like Christ.

The living Church of Jesus is meant to be a living witness that attests to the reality of Christ living and working within His Body, the Church, through the indwelling presence and power of the Spirit. The Church has been unified by the Spirit, along with its commission to preach the Gospel and disciple, and its commandment and responsibility to love one another as Christ loved His Body. This unity will verify that the Son was sent by the Father to bring forth eternal life in those who believe, who have received His life, and are identified by the seal of the Holy Spirit upon their lives that they are heirs of an eternal inheritance (*Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; John 13:34-35; 17; Ephesians 1:11-14; 4:4*).

The beauty about Christ is that He is the same today as He was yesterday and will be tomorrow which brings me to two very important aspects about

His work (*Hebrews 13:8*). First, His immutable ways make Him an incredible Rock. He mentioned that He was the Rock in *Matthew 16:18*, upon which the Church would be built, and in *Matthew 7:24-27* Jesus tells us if we build it on the right foundation it will prove to be shifting sand and it will collapse in the storms of life. The Apostle Paul confirmed Jesus was the only sure foundation when he stated there is no other foundation upon which to build our spiritual lives (*1 Corinthians 3:11*).

Today there are many people building on shifting sand. Sadly, some are building on things that look spiritual, sound religious, and in some cases are backed by Scripture. They may be relying on sound doctrine, good deeds, spiritual insights, and etc. to save them, but the only Rock (or foundation) that is going to withstand the shaking of the day we are living in is the actual foundation that is founded squarely on the person and work of Jesus Christ. I say this because the idea of foundation has to do with what one is actually relying on.

People unknowingly are putting their reliance on matters associated to Christ, but not Christ Himself. The Bible does not say if you are standing on doctrine, works, or some other religious element, while leaning on your association or idea of Christ that you will be able to stand. Usually, whenever I lean items against the house, all it takes is a gust of wind to knock them down. A person must be standing on Christ, lining up to Him as the Cornerstone of truth, and growing up into Him as the Head of the Church to be a balanced Christian in his or her stand, walk, and understanding.

There are other aspects of Jesus being the Rock. In Moses’ last song in *Deuteronomy 32* before he ascended to Mount Nebo where he would die and King David’s prayer recorded in *2 Samuel 22*, they mentioned the Rock. I have to admit I love these two chap-

ters and want to encourage the readers who are not acquainted with them to read them. David acknowledged that the Lord is His Rock, in Him will he trust, for He is the horn of His salvation. He made this statement in *2 Samuel 22:32*, "For who is God, save the LORD? and who is a rock, save our God?" We also know that throughout Psalms, David makes reference to the LORD being the Rock in terms of his salvation and refuge (*Psalms 18:2, 31, 46; 62:2, 6*).

The Apostle Paul makes mention of Jesus as our Rock in relationship to the children of Israel in the wilderness in *1 Corinthians 10:4*, "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ."

Consider the warning in Moses' song found in *Deuteronomy 32:15c* about the Rock of salvation, "then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation."

In *Daniel 2* there is a prophecy about a stone that will be cut out of the mountain that will destroy the image that represented Gentile governments through the years, and then set up an everlasting kingdom. There is only one Rock of judgment that is capable of toppling idolatrous, wicked governments. His name is Jesus.

In *Matthew 21:43-44*, Jesus talked about the stone that the builders rejected. This had to do with the legend of the building of Solomon's temple. All the stones were designed off site for the temple and had to be hauled in. However, there was one stone that looked unusual to the builders and they thought it to be a mistake. They actually rolled the stone into the Kidron Valley, which was a dumping place. There the stone was affronted with the weather and the trash of the rest of the area. When the builders had almost completed the project, they were minus one stone, the cornerstone, and when they examined the vacant spot, they realized that the stone they had rejected, was the actual cornerstone that every other stone was made to line up to. They had to go down into the dump to retrieve it to complete the temple.

What a glorious picture this legend presents to the Jewish nation.

The Jewish people did not recognize Jesus as their real cornerstone to their commandments, precepts, ordinances, testimonies, and etc., and as a result rejected Him, which was clearly displayed by the cross. He then was discarded, laid in a tomb, only to be resurrected three days later to be established in His rightful place as King of kings and Lord of lords. However in *Matthew 21:43-44*, Jesus made this statement about the stone that was rejected, "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof, And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whosoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

We can see that Jesus in His deity is the Rock of our salvation, but in His humanity He was that cornerstone of the Spiritual building, a cornerstone that was rejected. In the future He is coming back as Judge and King. As Judge He will set things right and as King He will establish His eternal kingdom.

The amazing aspect about Jesus is that He covers all bases for us. As Man He came as a Prophet, but now serves as a High Priest, and will come in the future as reigning King. The Bible actually prophesies about all three positions being fulfilled by one man, the Promised One, the Messiah. For example, Moses prophesied about Him being the ultimate Prophet in *Deuteronomy 18:18-19*, David the High Priest from the order of Melchizedek in *Psalms 110:4*, and many prophets such as Isaiah and Jeremiah talk about Jesus coming as King.

This brings me to the second aspect of Jesus: that of Mediator. The Apostle Paul made this statement in *1 Timothy 2:5*, "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

It is clear that there is only one mediator between God and man. How important is a mediator? When you consider the scene at Mount Sinai, you get a real picture of the importance of a mediator. The people of Israel came face to face with the dreadful reality of the holiness of God. What they witnessed brought fear to their hearts. They had a sense that they could not stand before this holy God. It was for this reason they asked Moses to be

their mediator. Consider what the people of Israel said in *Exodus 20:19*, "And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die."

Because of sin, man in his fallen state could not stand before a holy God without experiencing judgment. It is clear that man needs a mediator, one who can stand in the gap to bring some type of agreement between the parties involved because there is no common ground in which the parties can meet and work out the differences.

It is clear from the situation at Mount Sinai that man had no real common ground in which to meet God unless there was a mediator. What was mediated on Mount Sinai to serve as a common ground was the Law. The Law showed God to be holy and man a transgressor. Although the Law could not justify man, it was a schoolmaster that revealed the way in which man could stand before God without being judged.

However for believers, Jesus became that mediator. He not only stood in the gap for each one of us, but He also brought reconciliation. His blood took away the offense that brought the separation, and His redemption provided a means by which man could enter into a relationship with the Holy God.

The first mediation was a type of *arbitration* where a point of agreement could be established. However, the second mediation entails *litigation*. In *1 John 2:1*, it speaks of Jesus being our advocate. Most people think the word advocate has to do with Jesus being our defense attorney in the court of Law. However, that is not a correct understanding of this term. According to the 19 century revivalist and lawyer, Charles Finney, an advocate is one who took a person's place in order to pay the debt required by the court of Law. In other words, an advocate would pay the fines or serve the time in place of the guilty person to satisfy the Law.

The Bible is clear, the wages of sin is death; therefore, Jesus as our advocate paid that wage on the cross to satisfy the holy Law of God on our behalf. The Apostle John confirms this in *1 John 2:2*, "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only,

but also for the sins of the whole world.” “Propitiation” points to substitution. This is why the cross of Christ is referred to as the place where the great exchange takes place, as believers give up the old man in order to receive the new man.

The third mediation has to do with *intercession*. Jesus became our High Priest in order to represent God’s interest to us and represent our needs to Him. Jesus serves as a High Priest from the order of Melchisedec. The Melchisedec Priesthood was before the Levitical Priesthood; therefore, it is considered the original priesthood. There are many differences between these two Priesthoods (*Hebrews 7:1*). The Melchisedec High Priest served as both King and Priest and was the Priest of the Most High, while the Levitical Priests could never be kings for they came from a distinct lineage that can be traced back through the descendants of Levi, through the family line of Aaron. The Melchisedec Priesthood served the Most High God and was over all, while the Levites were associated to Jehovah God, the covenant God. The Levitical priesthood was established through the Law of Moses and they served as priests to the Jewish people. The Levites had a *standing* ministry, ever offering sacrifices while Jesus has a *sitting* ministry because redemption was paid in full. However, He continues to make intercession for us because of sin and our enemy, who is forever accusing us (*Revelation 12:10-11*). Consider what *Hebrews 7:25* states, “*Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*”

Is Jesus your Rock, the foundation on which you have built the whole of your spiritual life? Is He the Cornerstone that you are lining up to in your spiritual life? Is He your Mediator? Have you accepted His terms set forth by arbitration to believe unto the saving of your soul? Have you embraced Him as your ultimate Mediator, the One who is able to serve as your place of arbitration (reconciliation), litigation (advocate), and intercession (High Priest)? †

Pathway to Apostasy

Commentary by Roger Oakland
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Recently, I was contacted by a friend and colleague who also has a discernment ministry. He was surveying other discernment ministries in order to come up with a list of the top ten subtle ways the body of Christ is presently being led astray. As I was busy speaking at a conference at the time I received his e-mail, I wrote him back and told him I would get back to him in a few days.

While flying back to my home after the conference, I took out my computer and responded to my friend’s request. The topics I had presented at the conference were still fresh in my mind. Following are the first ten trends I have personally encountered. While I am certain there are many more, the following ten trends provide a good overview of what is taking place in the church today:

- * Ecumenical unity at any cost yet completely void of any connection to the message that Jesus died on the Cross.
- * The church-growth movement, which is focused on a market-driven seeker-friendly Christianity emphasizing a megachurch mentality.
- * A Christianity focused on following men, their methods, and their movements.
- * A Jesuit agenda promoted by publishers and pastors proclaiming the teachings and ideas of Roman Catholic church fathers and Roman Catholic mystics.
- * The rejection of biblical creation and the acceptance of theistic evolution and progressive creation.
- * The acceptance of New Age ancient Babylonian practices such as yoga and contemplative prayer as a means of “getting closer to Jesus.”
- * A false Christianity that substitutes the gospel according to the Scriptures with a social gospel.
- * The “Purpose-driven P.E.A.C.E. Plan” that prepares the church for a global one-world religion.
- * An experience-based “Christianity” that seeks after signs and wonders and rejects the biblical warnings of a

Last Days spiritual deception found in the Bible.

* The compromising of the church in order to become “postmodern” and “progressive” in an attempt to reach the postmodern generation.

It was not my objective to place these various trends in their order of importance. The fact is, each one is occurring, and the vast majority of professing Christians are not even aware these trends are happening or even that there is a problem. Perhaps in the future, these ten points would make good chapter headings for a small book that would deal with each topic in more detail.

For now, let me say I believe biblical Christianity is under attack like it has never been before. We are not only on a “slippery slope”—Christianity is ready to fall off the cliff. As Jesus asked in Luke 18:18: When the son of man cometh, will he find faith?

Current events indicate the pathway to apostasy is leading exactly in the direction foretold by the Scriptures. †

DID YOU KNOW?

COVER-UP: TOP ISRAELI RABBI 'FOUND MESSIAH' (EXCERPT)

He was, without doubt, the most venerated rabbi in Israel at the age of 108. Some 250,000 marched in his funeral procession after his death in 2007. But when Yitzhak Kaduri’s much-anticipated letter announcing the name of the Messiah he claimed to have encountered was unsealed a year after his death, the Israeli press and world media that found him so quotable in life ignored it. And what was the name of the Messiah whom Kaduri met after years of praying and fasting? It was Yehoshua – the formal name for Yeshua, or Jesus in the Greek.

<http://www.wnd.com/2013/10/cover-up-top-israeli-rabbi-found-messiah/>



DARE TO DISCERN

Part Two

By Jeannette Haley

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” – 1 John 4:1

Even though some in the Body of Christ possess and know how to operate in the “gift of discernment,” we are all, as God’s children, commanded to be “harmless as doves, and wise as serpents.” This wisdom requires discernment and, as mentioned in Part One discernment requires “wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.” (Proverbs 23:23.) As believers we need to remember that in order to discern the spirit in operation behind anything the foremost basic foundational test is to discern if it lines up to the Word of God, beginning with the issue of sin. Regardless of how uncomfortable the issue of sin makes us feel, or how difficult it is to broach the subject of sin with people, especially if they are in rebellion against truth, the issue of sin lies at the root of every problem we encounter in this fallen world. The Apostle John wrote, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us....If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us” 1 John 1:8, 10.

You will know that a person is walking in the wrong spirit if he or she willfully sins, or is consistently living contrary to the Word of God, even if he or she claims to be “saved.” Such a person may cause confusion in others, (because he or she claims to be a believer) but the truth is no one can serve two masters. If he or she is living in sin, and continues in sinful practices, the spirit in operation is one of rebellion and unbelief. Usually such is accompanied by pride, anger, self-pity, and fear, among other things. There can be no fellowship with Christ or agreement with such a professing believer while he or she insists on living in a sinful lifestyle. Such a person needs to humble him or herself, come into submission to God, and seek His help and forgiveness.

In 1 Corinthians 10 Paul reminds the new believers in the church at Corinth of those that displeased God be-

cause of their lust, and that “they were overthrown in the wilderness” verse 5. He went on to say that the judgments of God upon Israel were for our example, “to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play” verses 6, 7. He then said, “Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer” verses 7-10. God and His Word do not change, regardless of how far and wide Satan’s deception has spread and taken root in these end times. Sin is still sin. The wages of sin is still death. The soul that sins shall still face an eternity without Christ. Those who believe, embrace, follow and support the perverted “gospels” of “New Thought,” “Positive Confession-Word of Faith,” “Contemplative Spirituality,” the “Social Gospel,” “Replacement Theology,” “Kingdom Now” and the sinless, bloodless “Emergent Church” propaganda, and so forth offered today through popular false prophets need to wake up, and flee from these soul-damning, apostate movements and return to solid biblical Christianity before it is too late. Those who scoff at the warning of being “too late” need to remember what happened to the five foolish virgins. (See Matthew 25:1-13.)

Paul wrote, “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” 1 Corinthians 10:12. The most dangerous position a believer can take is the one where he or she allows pride to blind him or her to the fact that any Christian can fall into sin. When we receive Christ as Lord and Savior, He does not automatically make us into little robots that He controls, as if to guarantee us that our free will is no longer under our control. Paul goes on to say, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that he may be able to bear it. Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry” verses 13,

14. Thus, the two things we need to flee from are youthful lusts, and idolatry. Oswald Chambers give us this insight, “Idolatry is not only the adoration of images ... but also trust in one’s own righteousness, works and merits, and putting confidence in riches and power.” He also said, “Idolatry is the outcome not of ignorance, but of perversity.” A. W. Tozer summed idolatry up thusly: “Whenever we take what God has done and put it in the place of himself, we become idolaters.” All inward and outward manifestations of sin rest upon the twin pillars of unbelief and idolatry.

Unfortunately, the truth is that many well-meaning Christians have opened the door to a wrong spirit through religious zeal, pride, immaturity, ignorance, and/or impulsiveness. An example of this can be found in Luke 9:51-55, when the Samaritans would not receive Jesus because He was set on going to Jerusalem which greatly angered James and John who wanted to command fire to fall from heaven, and consume them. Jesus “turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.” On another occasion Jesus said to Peter, “Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men” Matthew 16:23. Jesus was not calling the man Peter “Satan,” but He was exposing the spirit behind Peter; that is, Satan and the spirit of the world (which is of Satan). This spirit is, of course, contrary to the Spirit of God. Peter was impulsively rebuking Jesus for telling the disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer many things, be killed, and rise the third day. Jesus knew that Satan was using Peter’s human weakness and fear to rebuke Him. After all, Jesus had just told Peter that he was blessed, and that upon the “rock” of his confession of who Jesus is, He would build His church. The future that one minute looked so dazzling bright to Peter was suddenly overshadowed with loss and despair. This passage of Scripture illustrates the collision that occurs between the carnal mind of man, or spirit of the world, and that which is of the Spirit of Christ. One is of this

present world, earthy, and the other is of the Holy Spirit, heavenly (divine Spirit).

Because Satan is adept at deluding, seducing, and blinding people as to the spirit that is behind most of what modern man is attracted to, what he admires, and what he desires to embrace into his lifestyle, the sharp contrast between the holy and the profane, good and evil becomes less distinct. This is especially true as everything we incorporate into our lives becomes part of our "culture."

Once culture has been well established, it becomes entrenched into our way of thinking, and lifestyle habits, so much so that it takes a real love for God, love for the truth, and an honest desire for God's perspective to begin to discern the evils embedded into it. Most of what we buy into is the result of propaganda. Keep in mind that propaganda is a powerful tool to condition people. Satan, being the father of lies, slithers into nearly every arena of our lives through the constant bombardment of hoopla. Thanks to modern technology, everyone except a handful of primitive people living on this planet are subjected to the deception that lies behind the incessant bombardment of propaganda with its spirit of lust, greed, and lies. In order for God's people to be able to wade through the deceptions, allurements, falsehoods, and vanity of this world, they must pray for the mind of Christ, for God's perspective on all things, and ask for wisdom to discern the spirit behind it, and the ability to see through this insidious conditioning for what it really is.

Then there is also the more subtle trap of "comfortable church culture," which should be wisely discerned. We Christians have our own language, our own set of habits and traditions, our own type of predictable, programmed church activities, and all too frequently our own type of religious attitudes. But, is this the Church that Jesus is building? It all comes down to who is being exalted—man and his ideas, plans, and programs, or Jesus. Here is a timely quote from Archibald G. Brown's sermon, "What Our Churches Need!" May 19, 1872: "Alas, what an amount of *powerless machinery* we have in the so-called religious world! Powerless, because it

has no unction of the Spirit. Powerless, because it is the work of *man*—not the working of God through the man. Powerless, because it is dry and artificial. Powerless, because it is done by men who have never tarried until they were endued with *power* from on high.' *Instrumentality* is almost worshiped—while the Holy Spirit is well-near ignored! O, I wish that it were more realized by us all that apart from the blessed Spirit, our acquirements and preparations are nothing, and can do nothing! *God's church is hindered, not helped, by any instrumentality that lacks the Holy Spirit.*"

These are some of the things that we need to carefully discern if we are to be as the five wise virgins who were prepared when the Bridegroom suddenly came for them. Keep in mind that the true Church is the body of Christ, He is the Head, and as such His Church should bear no resemblance to a well-established community social club. Ken Butcher wrote in his excellent book, *The Church – What on Earth Is It?* "There are increasing numbers who are no longer satisfied with a deformed expression of 'the body of Christ' defined by its structural limitations and denial of freedom for the Head to operate through the various members by the Holy Spirit. They are beginning to question this false identity and look for a better alternative although they may be quite vague about what alternative options there are, and may be searching but not quite sure what they are searching for or how to find it. As more come to understand that the church is really 'the body of Christ' as the Scriptures say it is and recognize the profound implications this has for the practical function of the church, they will not be happy to continue in the failed traditions."

Revivalist Dr. Vance Havner, had this to say in one of his many books concerning "our marching orders, from *Matthew 28:16-20*, "The great commission is our Lord's marching orders to believers. It was a mountaintop experience, which is always a good thing if we carry the vision into the valley. . . . Christian testimony and service are based on the worship of Christ as Lord, not upon admiration of Him as a teacher. . . . Jesus said . . . 'All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.' He shows us first His resources, the power

that is back of His orders. In Matthew 11:27-28, He says in effect, 'All things are Mine, come.' In *John 17:2-3*, He says, '*All power is Mine, believe.*' *Here it is, 'All power is Mine, go.'* We often flinch before our task, but we need to remember who is back of us. He is with us, as He also says here, but first He is back of us.

"Go ye therefore.' We build churches today and wait for the people to come. Here we are bidden to go after them in the highways and hedges. Too many churches are glorified clubs that have forgotten about the shepherd seeking the sheep.

"Disciple all nations.' Soul-fishing is the Christian's business. We are not to uplift, reform, cultivate them, but to bring them to know the Lord. We have forgotten our commission and are out proselyting, calling the righteous to repentance, instead of bringing men to Christ." To which I say a hearty "Amen!"

Now we come to the second foundational test which involves the identity of Jesus Christ, *1 John 4:2*, "*Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.*" A believer must believe the Jesus of the Bible and that He is the only Christ, the Messiah, and the Anointed One. The next test in regard to Christ's identity is *1 John 4:2*, "*Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.*" This is where true Christianity and the majority of cults differ. A good question to ask people is the question Jesus asked His disciples, "*Who do you say that I am?*" *Matthew 16:15? If they do not believe that Jesus is God Incarnate, God in the flesh, you know that they have an antichrist spirit* regardless of how charming, loving, giving, sweet, and outwardly "religious" they are. Oswald Chambers said, "The Incarnation was not for the Self-realization of God, but for the purpose of removing sin and reinstating humanity into communion with God."

What is an antichrist spirit? Here is a short explanation from Let Us Reason Ministries: "*1 John 2:22-23* '*Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son*

does not have the Father; the one who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.' This is someone who denies Christ as the only anointed one and refuses the interrelationship of the persons who are deity.

"1 John 4:2-3 'By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.' Several times this term is used in the plural, and can be applied to almost anyone who is opposed to Christ. Those who deny that Jesus came in the flesh are anti-Christ or of the spirit of antichrist. This is one of the ways to discern a false teacher from a true one.

"John is writing after the resurrection and is using *perfect tense* in Greek which denotes a past action with continuing results into the present, and continuing on into the future. He came in the flesh, rose in the flesh, and is still in the flesh. The same body that He was born and died with, He rose with. If one claims that Christ rose as a spirit creature, and not physically, they are of the anti-Christ spirit and are denying the third point of the Gospel. It was the Gnostics that John is specifically addressing in his epistles.

"The word Anti can be understood to mean either against Christ or it can also mean in place of, a substitute is the fuller meaning. He will be a substitute for the real one. In this way he opposes him. The common use of this title applies to the great world dictator, the last Caesar in the end times. He is Satan's chosen vehicle the beast receiving from the dragon dominion and power (Rev.13:2)."

Regarding Christ's identity, 1 John 4:14 says, "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." Jesus is the only Savior of the world. He is not a "Way Shower," a "Master among Masters," an "Avatar," "Ascended Master," "Universal Educator," "Cosmic Christ," "Universal Spirit," or "First Principle," and He is not a "co-redeemer" with Mary! To be saved, the Jesus of the Bible must be our personal LORD and Savior. †

POPE FRANCIS: AN APOCALYPTIC FIGURE

By Jan Markell
Olive Tree Ministries

I am cautious about "pinning the tail" on the Antichrist and the False Prophet. We cannot know ahead of time who these personalities are; however, Pope Francis comes close to "filling the bill" on the False Prophet. Or he may be but a "type" of that man just like there are many "types" of the Antichrist throughout history. I think the devil has always had a candidate for the Antichrist waiting in the wings as he doesn't know when the final generation is.

The False Prophet is described in Revelation 13:11-15. He is also referred to as the "second beast" (Revelation 16:13, 19:20, 20:10). Together with the Antichrist and Satan, who empowers both of them, *the False Prophet is the third party in the unholy trinity.*

Pope Francis is revealing himself to be a blatant Marxist. He has also pulled back from issues Catholics have considered sacred. He apparently has replaced abortion with social justice and environmentalism. Most troubling, however, is **his call for a "new world order"** and that there be a global constitution, a global court and a **one-world government**. Scripture is clear that the Antichrist will be the head of a one-world government (Revelation 13).

Even conservative Catholics are sounding a warning that Pope Francis—the first Jesuit Pope—may be the most troubling Pope ever. He is raising apocalyptic concerns and some in the eschatological community feel that he, indeed, has gotten the nod to be the False Prophet.

Roger Oakland, a former Catholic, writes, "According to Bible prophecy, a one-world religion that will offer the promise of peace throughout the world is going to commence prior to Christ's return. To most, this global body will seem like a wonderful thing and very possibly will be a pseudo-Christianity (coming in the Name of Christ); however, contrary to how the masses will view it, it will actually help establish and set up the Antichrist and his one-world government."

He continues, "In order for this to happen, all religions must come to-

gether in an ecumenical plan. Today, as part of this Satanic scheme, the evangelical/Protestant church is being drawn seductively into the Roman Catholic Church, largely through what we call 'the Jesuit agenda.' Incredibly, while the evidence is obvious to some, the majority of proclaiming Christians are not at all aware it is happening."

Oakland concludes, "So what should we expect if we are in the time when such a system unfolds? First, many who once were Protestant and Evangelical will become ecumenical. Second, all religions will unite in solidarity of purpose. *Understanding the Jesuit agenda is essential if we are to understand how this worldwide deception will come about.*"

Jan Markell is the founder and director of Olive Tree Ministries. Her radio program airs on 700 radio stations across America. She is the co-author of *Trapped in Hitler's Hell*. †

COMMENTS FROM READERS

"Ladies, how beautifully these two articles meshed together! God delivered me from the Word of Faith CULT, and the laundry list Rayola provided is spot on! They want to own your mind! Then, if you DARE to discern the devilish DOGMA they are teaching well, you get the left foot of fellowship. Thankfully, God delivered me long before "they" could dispose of me. But, not before challenging them on their teachings, for which I was seen as the rebellious one. They were correct in one aspect; I absolutely REBELLED against their dogma and false teachings! I thank God daily for delivering me! Jeannette, thank you for such an astute definition of dogma; I've never heard it explained so succinctly. And, I thank Him for you, my fellow soldiers, in this trek we're on to deliver the Truth from the One True God; the Ancient of Days. May He continue to strengthen you and make you wise beyond measure. Thank you for your labors of love on behalf of the rest of the troops." - FL

"Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Ps 119:104-5

RAYOLA'S Q & A CORNER

GOD'S LINE

Q: *I know God is loving and long-suffering, but does He have a line in which He will say enough is enough and will respond in judgment?*

A: According to Scriptural examples God does have a line, but people will have no idea where that line is located and when they have actually stepped across it. The Apostle Peter in *2 Peter 3:9* tells us God is longsuffering so people will come to repentance and Jesus summarized the whole matter by declaring, "Repent or perish" (*Luke 13:3, 5*).

The first indication that there is a line involves the matter of true repentance. Let's consider Cain (*Genesis 4*). He refused to heed God's warning about his anger and still killed his brother Abel. When confronted, he refused to take accountability for his actions and when he would not humble himself, he went into a mode of self-pity, fearing that he would have the same action befall him. It is clear that Cain stepped over some line of no return as he left the presence of the Lord, and became a vagabond who did his own thing.

However, there are those who give an impression of repentance, but miss a valuable opportunity to get it right in the first place. For example, Esau was quick to sell his birthright for food, and the Bible tells us that even though he cried bitter tears over losing the blessing to Jacob that he found no place of repentance (*Hebrews 12:16-17*). Did Esau step over the line? The birthright was associated to the Messiah, with blessings to a worldly inheritance. I believe Esau stepped over the line because he did not value the things of God. God said that He hated Esau but loved Jacob (*Malachi 1:2-3*). Malachi's reference to these two men included their descendants. This brings us to a very important point, God deals with people differently; therefore, the "rope" of long-suffering He allots them, along with His line may vary. For example Jacob had his problems that are often pointed out in sermons and Bible Studies, while Esau's action does not always receive much attention or consideration. Yet the Lord's attitudes to-

ward them were poles apart.

Another example of a person who stepped over the line was Judas Iscariot. Jesus said of him even though he would be fulfilling Scriptural prophecy, woe to the man who would end up betraying Him (*Luke 22:22*). We are told that Judas repented in *Matthew 27:3* to the priests about betraying an innocent man, but they were not the ones offended by his betrayal. Judas' offense was against the Son of God, against the God of heaven; therefore, his misdirected repentance did not change the final results. We are told that after he encountered the indifference of the priests, Judas went out and hung himself.

Then there were the sons of Aaron who offered strange fire and died for it (*Leviticus 10:1*). We also have Ananias and Sapphira in *Acts 5* who lied about their giving and also died for it. To me these individuals stepped over some line. Clearly the sons of Aaron did not think it such an offense to offer God the wrong type of fire nor did the couple in Acts think that the difference between what they promised to the Lord and what they ended up giving to Him would be noticeable. It is clear that they had a casual attitude towards God.

Another man who stepped over the line was King Manasseh (*2 Kings 21; 2 Chronicles 33*). He reigned 55 years, but it was said of him that he did evil in the sight of the Lord which included idolatry, witchcraft, and sacrificing his children, causing the people of Judah to gravely err. For the sake of His covenant to David, God humbled this king, but not before this wicked king brought an irreversible judgment down on the people of Judah (*2 Kings 21:12-16*). Even though the punishment was put off because of the 23-year reign of righteous King Josiah, it did come on the kingdom of Judah in the form of Babylonian oppression and destruction. The very nation that humbled King Manasseh by putting him in prison in the first place, until he humbled himself and was delivered by God, was the very nation who would humble and take into captivity the people of Judah, as well as destroy the temple and Jerusalem.

What can we learn from these people's example? It is clear people need to truly repent but it takes a per-

son to humble him or herself before the Lord. The only thing that keeps people from truly repenting is a prideful, hard heart. That is why we have this exhortation in *Hebrews 3:8*, "*Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness.*"

The second thing we must avoid is missed opportunities to do what is necessary and right when it comes to our spiritual lives. However, we must put value on the things of God for us to consider the matters of God in the right way. It is for this reason that this warning is given in *2 Corinthians 6:2*, "*(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)*"

As we consider these examples, we can see true repentance is a matter of a heart attitude, valuing the things of God, and having a fear of the Lord. However there is a much-needed fourth part to ensure genuine repentance and that is the Holy Spirit. In *Genesis 6:3*, the Lord warned that the Spirit of God would not always strive with people. *John 16:7-13* tells us that the Holy Spirit reproves people of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

If a person is not open to be convicted of sin, ready to humble oneself before God seeking forgiveness, and restoration, the Holy Spirit will not be able to reprove him or her. There is a saying that it is easy to get a lost person saved, but it is not easy to get an "okay", "decent" person lost. Until people see their true spiritual plight so they can recognize that the wrath of God is presently upon on all unbelief and disobedience, they will see no need to repent and flee His wrath to come.

God will never step over our will to save us, but we can step over the line where the Spirit of God will no longer strive with us. It is a fearful thing to put God to a foolish test to see how far His longsuffering will be extended before He lets a person be taken by the currents of His judgment to taste His wrath. As the Bible tells us, "*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*" (*Hebrews 10:31*). †

CHARLES SPURGEON

(19 June 1834 – 31 January 1892)

"Strangers are come into the sanctuaries of the Lord's house." Jeremiah 51:51

In this account the faces of the Lord's people were covered with shame, for it was a terrible thing that men should intrude into the Holy Place reserved for the priests alone. Everywhere about us we see like cause for sorrow. How many ungodly men are now educating with the view of entering into the ministry! What a crying sin is that solemn lie by which our whole population is nominally comprehended in a National Church! How fearful it is that ordinances should be pressed upon the unconverted, and that among the more enlightened churches of our land there should be such laxity of discipline. If the thousands who will read this portion shall all take this matter before the Lord Jesus this day, he will interfere and avert the evil which else will come upon his Church. To adulterate the Church is to pollute a well, to pour water upon fire, to sow a fertile field with stones. May we all have grace to maintain in our own proper way the purity of the Church, as being an assembly of believers, and not a nation, an unsaved community of unconverted men.

Our zeal must, however, begin at home. Let us examine ourselves as to our right to eat at the Lord's table. Let us see to it that we have on our wedding garment, lest we ourselves be intruders in the Lord's sanctuaries. Many are called, but few are chosen; the way is narrow, and the gate is strait. O for grace to come to Jesus aright, with the faith of God's elect. He who smote Uzzah for touching the ark is very jealous of his two ordinances; as a true believer I may approach them freely, as an alien I must not touch them lest I die. Heart searching is the duty of all who are baptized or come to the Lord's table. "Search me, O God, and know my way, try me and know my heart." ✠



SPICY QUOTES

"There are certain marks of revival. If we were having it, there would be a return to the authority of the Bible as the inerrant inspiration and the Word of God. Some of the brethren battling for orthodoxy today ought to wager on calling the church to repentance, because when the church repents and forsakes its doubt, liberalism doesn't have a leg to stand on...."

"If we were having revival today, there would be a profound conviction of sin (which I don't see much of), confession of sin, and forsaking sin. We've given the sin issue new names today. We call it 'immaturity, arrested development, biological growing pains, and error of mortal mind.' God has become 'the big buddy upstairs.' Parents no longer use the word *lost*. I don't know when I last heard a father or mother say, 'My boy or girl is lost.' I used to hear parents cry out for their children. Now they say, 'Well, my Johnny is a good boy.' The rich young ruler was a *good boy*, but he wasn't *God's boy*. Depravity today is largely a matter of complexes and inhibitions. We leave it for the psychiatrists and not the preacher. Old-fashioned sinners are harder to find today than whooping cranes. I don't hear many prodigals saying, 'I have sinned.' We call fornication 'premarital sex,' and adultery is just 'an affair'...."

"We cannot expect God to take away our sins by forgiving them if we're not willing to put them away by forsaking them." - From Vance Havner, *When God Breaks Through, Sermons on Revival* edited and compiled by Dennis J. Hester.

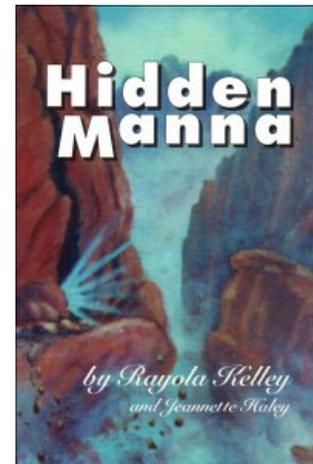
"People without truth have to push their agendas on others through coercion, deception, and devilish wiles, whereas those who love, embrace and stand on truth possess strength, power, and character through the Holy Spirit." - GSM

"God doesn't need anything nevertheless He wants worshipers." "In an effort to get the work of the Lord done we often lose contact with the Lord of work." "It takes simplicity and humility to worship God acceptably." - A.W. Tozer

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