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The Reality of God

Part 20

By Rayola Kelley

In March, I heard Pastor Shahram Hadian explain the Islamic belief. It was not only enlightening and challenging, but it was encouraging. As I listened to the facts about Islam's god Allah, I thanked the God of the Universe for revealing Himself to me by His Spirit. As I learned about the two houses (presentations) of Islam (house of war and house of Islam) and its two-sided coin (forced peace through complete surrender and tyranny ruling through Sharia Law), I thanked the Lord that He has provided only one way (Jesus Christ) and one message (the Gospel) in which people can approach Him and be accepted in His kingdom.



Unlike the main goal of Islam which is all about conquering all who disagree with it through fear, murder, rape, torture, and death as a means to bring the whole world into a place of subordination to the cruel, oppressive Sharia law, I rejoiced that Jesus was the manifestation of God's commitment to draw the world with cords of love into a place of submission, where those who believe His message can receive His glorious promise of eternal life in their hearts as being true (*John 3:16*). When I heard about the lies that those advocating Islam hide behind in order to set up and eventually overtake communities and then graduate from the house of war to the house of Islam where Sharia Law becomes the law of the commu-

nity, and eventually the land and nation, I rejoiced that I am not serving the god of this age, Satan, who is the god and false light behind Islam. As the father of lies and being a murderer from the very beginning, he is clearly the true inspiration behind it (*John 8:44*; *2 Corinthians 4:3-4*).

As I heard about Islam's main prophet Muhammad, I thanked God for our Prophet, Jesus Christ (*Deuteronomy 18:18-22 refer to John 7:40*). Although Jesus is fully God, He was clothed in humanity to walk among us as Prophet, to serve in the heavenly temple as our Priest, and return as our King. Muhammad is simply a man, a prophet of Islam and will never serve as priest or king of an everlasting kingdom.

When Muhammad is compared to Jesus in the prophetic office, it is clear who the true prophet is, and who the false one is. These two prophets stand at opposite poles from each other. Muhammad started out preaching peace, but changed his message when he acquired an army so that through war and bloodshed he could force people to become followers of Islam. As a result, you hear about Islam being a religion of peace from the propaganda machine, along with the mouthpieces of political correctness, while the actions of the "true" representatives and followers of Muhammad are declaring Jihad against everyone who will not surrender to their god and prophet.

Let's consider the character of Islam's prophet. Muhammad married a six-year-old girl and consummated his perverted, godless union with her when she was only nine. Sadly, Muhammad's followers have been instructed to be imitators of him. Should we be abhorred at the actions of Muslims when they marry off their little daughters to perverts, as well as repulsed by the many reports of Jihadists raping the young, innocent girls of the "infidels," ultimately killing

many of them? Muhammad cut off the heads of those who would not surrender to his cruel, insane belief. Should we be surprised then to see his followers cut off heads? Keep in mind, some of the world is denouncing such actions and calling it extreme or radical Islam, but the truth is such actions are what the Koran demands of its committed followers.

Those who declare that Islam is a religion of peace are only presenting one side of the coin that is incomplete, while the true face of Islam is being best represented by those who are at war with every infidel (you and me) who are not yet surrendered to Allah and Muhammad. Islam requires sacrifices to open the way for people to enter Paradise. Hence enters suicide bombers. These individuals are not only promised Paradise and virgins, but supposedly, they open the way to Paradise for at least 70 of their family members. This is why we see such celebration when a committed follower offers up his life in the name of Allah. Clearly, Islam promotes a culture of death and not life.

As for the Koran, the message of it has changed to present a double-sided coin, but holds to the goal of world-wide dominance whether by seduction or force. The word "Koran" is derived from the Arabic roots "Salema," which means peace (through surrender), purity (forcing people through, unclean wicked acts (lying, murdering, and intimidation to come into subordination), submission to the good will of their god (Allah) and obedience to his law (Sharia). Again, we are reminded that peace comes with Islam when one completely surrenders to the oppressive Sharia Law, which produces oppressive fruits that are unclean and clearly demonic.

According to the January 2016 magazine, *Midnight Call*, there was a recent discovery of fragments of Suras (chapters 18 & 19) that would designate it as the oldest part of the Koran

ever discovered. It was written with ink in an early form of Arabic script known as Hijaz. You may wonder why this bit of information has caused such a stir. It is because these fragments predate Muhammad's writing of the Koran. Such an implication shows that the particular text of the Koran was written to fit the political and theological agenda of the times and that it was not a revelation from heaven.

On the other hand, we know the Word of God was inspired by the Holy Spirit, stands on infallible truths and righteous principles, and is trustworthy (2 *Timothy* 3:16; 2 *Peter* 1:20-21). Unlike the theme of the Koran, which ultimately insists on complete surrender to a cruel, oppressive law, we know that the main theme of the Bible is man's redemption, and can be found from *Genesis* 3:15 through Revelation. In His Word, God's righteous nature is consistently upheld and man's hopeless plight due to sin is revealed and addressed in light of the cross of Jesus.

In light of the previous facts about Islam, let's now consider our Prophet, Jesus. He was the Word from the beginning, but came as a servant to mankind. Jesus never had to preach a fickle message of peace because He is the true Prince of Peace. As the way, He opened up the only true way to Heaven, not to just a few people, but to the whole world. The only sword He carried was the truth that could set men free from all spiritual oppression. He did not come to condemn but to save. He did not kill those who disagreed with Him, cursed those who opposed Him, or take vengeance on the innocent because of their association with "infidels"; rather, He actually asked forgiveness for those who bruised, beat, and crucified Him. He came to reconcile man back to his Creator by becoming the sacrifice, taking the judgment of sin on Himself so those who believed upon Him would not have to taste spiritual death. Jesus calls His disciples to follow (imitate) His godly examples. This means to submit to that which is worthy of all consideration as one walks in the ways of righteousness, always choosing the ways of life and taking the high road of inward humility towards God and moral excellence in conduct towards others (*Isaiah* 9:6;

Luke 9:23-26, 56; 23:34; *John* 1:1; 8:32-36; 14:6, 27).

The reconciliation Jesus brought through His work on the cross opened the way for believers to enter into a relationship as adopted sons and daughters of the Father of heaven (*John* 1:12; *Romans* 8:14-17; *Galatians* 3:26; 4:4-7; *Ephesians* 2:12-17). As Christians it is easy to take our family relationship with God for granted. However, Pastor Shahram Hadian put this relationship in a whole different light for me. It is this personal, family relationship that brought hope and awe to him. The reason why is because Allah has no sons. Allah is nothing more than the moon god, which has been clearly represented on the flags of Islam with the symbol of the crescent moon. He was a lifeless idol worshipped by Muhammad's family. Muhammad simply gave credence to this idol by giving it an identity (Allah), attaching power to it through the physical sword, and exalting it in the minds of the followers in the place of the true God of the Universe.

God's people are commanded not to worship the sun or moon or any part of creation (*Deuteronomy* 17:2-3; *Romans* 1:20-26). Clearly, there is no reasoning with a lifeless idol. When it comes to an idol, there is no room for mercy, no avenue of grace, and no real assurance of salvation. Since idols can only take on the attitudes of the one who exalts them, they prove to be fickle and hypocritical.

The most profound difference between these two prophets, Jesus and Muhammad, confirms which way, which message, and which presentation will ultimately stand in the end. Jesus' tomb is empty and Muhammad's grave still possesses his bones. Our Lord lives and is one day coming back for His people. All false religions will be brought down before His feet in utter destruction. He will set this world right side up with His justice.

The question is are we as Christians ready to stand on the reality of who our God is, withstand with the truth against the spiritual cancers such as Islam that are taking many captive and killing those who dare to defy them? Are we prepared to stand regardless of what it costs us? We

can sit in our chairs of wishful thinking and declare our devotion to God, but lack authority to stand. We can seduce ourselves in a state of fantasy and denial, thinking that such beliefs as Islam will never conquer America, but the truth is such idolatrous beliefs do not have to flex their muscles. The "bleeding heart" liberals and the undermining Communist agendas of the Progressives will let them come in and take over to serve their wicked agenda of bringing this country into a one-world government. But, let me just say, the leaders of Islam will not be heading the one-world government. The truth is that like so many deluded individuals in the world, those who follow Islam in principle are nothing more than pawns that will be sacrificed in the end for a wicked cause. These deluded souls will be used to usher in a new world order that has nothing to do with Islam. And, the Bible is clear that all who oppose Israel (such as the devoted Islamic followers) will be destroyed.

Even though we know that Jesus will put an end to wicked governments and heretical kingdoms, we need to keep in mind that the location of the seven churches mentioned in Revelations chapters two and three is now under Muslim's dominance. Where is the light of the church in that part of the world? For that matter, where is the light of the church in America that could bring a decisive contrast to those seeking God, seeking the true way, and desiring everlasting life? The truth is the church in America used to be a threat to the Muslims, but the devoted followers of Islam are no longer afraid of it because they see how weakened it has become by the corruption of the world.

This brings me to a very important aspect of the God of the Universe that I have already discussed—that He is the only true light. Outside of the God of heaven and earth, man gropes in darkness. It is much like what happened to Lot in the city of Sodom in *Genesis* 19. The wicked men of the city wanted to abuse the angels because they would not be denied their abominable desires. The angels pulled Lot into the house and closed the door, while blinding the men. These men then wearied themselves trying to find the door as they

groped in darkness for the entrance.

How many people who are zealously committed to cults and the occult are groping to find the door into Paradise, a better reincarnation, or afterlife? Clearly, such people represent those who fumble in the darkness trying to find the one door into eternal security, but it will elude them (*Luke 13:24*). However, their light is darkness and as Jesus stated in *Matthew 6:22-23*, great is their darkness. They have been blinded by the lies of the age they live in and the false light of seductive heresy. They are unable to see the light of the true Gospel (Jesus). Their deeds are evil and they can't afford for the light to shine on them (*John 1:3; 3:19-21; Corinthians 4:2-6*).

Then there are the counterfeits of Christianity. There are so-called "Christians" who have become militant in their prayers, bold in their claims against hell, and swing from branches of nonsensical, fleshly hype. They are under such heretical umbrellas of Positive Confession and Kingdom Dominion, but all such false presentations will prove powerless against the real spiritual battle that is taking place between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness.

As believers, we need to know who our God is and stand strong in Him if we are to stand against this grave darkness that is consuming the world (*Daniel 11:32*). We must remember that the real light that empowers believers is not successful methods, man's traditions, religious theology, denominational associations, good works, or charismatic claims. It is the person of Jesus Christ, His life being established in us which is the true light of the world. He is the Victor and He alone will usher in the victory.

Clearly, the great challenge of our times does not come down to the issue of our Lord's ability to fight and win the battle for we know He will, but the real issue for each of us rests with the relationship we have with Him right now. What side will we be standing on when we face the different affronts that take place against this nation and the church? What will the fires of judgment reveal about our commitment towards Him and the quality of our works that we have

done on His behalf? The sad truth is Islam is filling the spiritual vacuum left by the weak preaching of a compromised gospel, a church that seems to lack authority and power, and members who appear to be asleep at the wheel.

This brings me to this question. Where is the fire of the Spirit that would be seen in the darkness? Where is the passion for souls that would stir up the church to carry out its commission, contend for the faith that was first delivered to it, and prepare (disciple) others to carry the torch? Where is the love for truth that would stand against all besetting sin in love, stand against any type of heresy in urgency, and in power call God's people to come out and be separate from this world in their attitudes, ways of thinking, and practices?

As we face the heart-wrenching fruits of our homes, societies, and nation, as the church we must honestly ask ourselves if we have dropped the torch that we have been entrusted with because we have fallen asleep in the pews. Do we lack godly love because we have become half-hearted towards Jesus? Are we in a state of despondency because our walk lacks life and power? Do we fear man and the world more than we fear God because we want to be popular and considered as "loving" in order to fit into the politically correct environment?

If we have answered "yes" to any of these questions, we need to know that most likely the living reality, the presence of God is missing. It is the presence of God that ensures true worship. It is the fire of God that not only lights the way but inspires us. It is the torch of God that reminds us that we are in a life-and-death race.

If the presence of God is missing, why go to church? Why go through the motions if there is no life found in our religious exercise. Why settle for less, become lean in the spirit, and frustrated in our spiritual walk because we walk away hungry after being fed Cool Whip, and thirsty because the cisterns are either dried up or only offer stagnant water? Why spend time getting ready for church when you come back emptier? Would we be surprised to find out how many people on Sunday morning have to push, prod, shame, or give self a pep

talk so they make it to church? According to statistics that number is high and is confirmed by those who no longer attend church. We can blame it on Satan, on bad habits, the attractions of the world, and lack of true devotion, but is the real reason for such a state in our churches because God is missing? And, why is God missing?

There are those who see the problem in the church and are calling for revival. When you listen to their plans to bring about revival, there is one element missing: a call for repentance. God's Spirit will not come down on foul waters (compromise), land on muddy ground (divided hearts), and abide in filth (the profane).

The condition of the church can clearly be traced back to sin. Whether it is people living in sin or omitting righteousness in matters, God is missing from the equation because of sin. Families are falling apart because of the sins of selfishness and pride. Our societies are in chaos because of the sin of lawlessness, and our nation is crumbling because of the sins of immorality and corruption in high places.

Next month I am going to elaborate on the weakness that is paralyzing numerous churches in America and how to remedy it. Meanwhile, in humility ask the Lord to turn the spotlight on your own life to reveal how He views your life *before* Him, your relationship *with* Him, and your life of service *to* Him. After all, the only evaluation that will count about such matters in the end is God's evaluation. †

TRUE WORDS OF WARNING **By Ronald Reagan**

"If we ever forget that we are One Nation Under God, then we will be a nation gone under."

"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free."

THE TIME HAS COME

By Jeannette Haley

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; But after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, Having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”
— 2 Timothy 4:3, 4.

From ancient times people have always had a certain fascination with the supernatural such as predictions of the future, either their own personal future, or the future of the nation in which they live, or the future of the world. Ouija boards, fortunetellers and mediums, astrology, ancient prophecies, visions, dreams and even “modern prophecies” represent only a small part of



the occult “bait” on Satan’s “hook” to lure seekers of hidden knowledge and the supernatural into his trap. What is amazing to me are the large numbers of people professing to know Christ who are also openly involved in some form of the occult. What you usually hear is the broad use of the term “spiritual.” As long as whatever they are involved in is “spiritual” whether it be extra-biblical beliefs and practices, or any of the endless branches of the New Age—just so long as it can be called “spiritual” it’s supposedly okay with God. My question is “which God?” Certainly not the God of the Bible!

Indeed, the time has come when there is so much wrong with the “spiritual” demonic delusion that’s sweeping through both the secular world, and the religious world that one hardly knows where to begin. The word “spiritual” can mean any of the following depending on a person’s point of view: mystical, divine, unworldly, psychic, nonphysical, and transcendent. Thus, if a born-again Christian and a “Christian in name only” engage in a conversation about “being spiritual” each will have his or her personal own definition or understanding of what it

means to be spiritual. In fact, the problem of semantics is one reason uninformed and undisciplined Christians become confused, disarmed, or deceived by the seemingly “spiritual” language of New Agers, Universalists, Manifest Sons of God, and members of cults, etc. When having a conversation centering on spiritual matters, you need to determine (discern) the intent (spirit) and meaning behind the words people are using. Take the word “God” for example. You can hear almost every cult, cowboy, ghost buster, politician, playboy, movie star, athlete, agnostic, chief and chef use the name “God.” False religions, cults, the occult, secret societies and so forth speak of “God” but the question is which god are they talking about? Most Christians are confused in this area, especially when it comes to Islam. The fact is, Allah is NOT God—he is the pagan crescent moon god of Mesopotamia, Baal Hadad. As Christians we cannot afford to become careless and assume that everybody is on the same page when it comes to God. The God of the Bible is the Majesty in the heavens. He is the Supreme Being, the Creator of heaven and earth and all that is both visible and invisible. *“Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein...I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me...For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else”* Isaiah 42:5, 8; 45:5a, 18. The next time you meet someone who appears to be “spiritual,” or who even claims to be a Christian, ask him or her to give you his or her testimony. If no mention is made of the person coming to a point of belief in whom Jesus is, of His death on the cross for sins, His resurrection, and how he or she came to true repentance, followed by receiving Jesus as both Lord and Savior, then

you cannot assume that he or she is truly born again.

The time has come where many people fail to realize that Satan, being an angel, is a powerful spiritual being who can appear as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). I shudder every time I hear a “Christian” being flippant and cocky about Satan, and my spirit has been sorely grieved when I was unfortunate enough to hear people (who were jumping up and down) singing at the top of their lungs, “Well, I went to the enemy’s camp and I took back what he stole from me.” Nowhere in the Bible does it tell us to chase after the devil! The Bible says, *“But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you”* James 4:7, 7. [Emphasis added.] The real Christian stands firmly on biblical truth, and knows that true spirituality according to God is revealed in His Word, and in Jesus Christ who is the Word, and anything that does not line up in spirit and truth to God’s Word is a dangerous lie that we must not toy with. Remember what happened to our first parents in the Garden of Eden. Just because something is compelling, spellbinding, and beguiling through the mystical, psychic, otherworldly, transcendent, nonphysical phenomena, or supernatural doesn’t mean it originates from God. Satan and his demons can be defined as “spiritual” since they are unseen, spiritual entities that operate in the unseen realm as the Bible teaches. Christians who are led by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:14) are “spiritual” because they have *“through the Spirit mortified the deeds of the body (Romans 8:13) “Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” Ephesians 2:2. Note what Paul is saying here—that Satan was working even then, as he is today, “in the children of disobedience.” If there was ever a time when people who claim to be Christians are walking “according to the course of this world,” it is now. And, a big part of that worldly course and disobedience involves the occult and the supernatural.*

The time has come where this fascination with the supernatural outside of biblical boundaries is leading multitudes of people of all ages into an altered state of consciousness that redefines reality according to whatever supernatural or mystical experience they may encounter. In the beginning such an experience may be exhilarating, beautiful, powerful, mesmerizing, and subtly addictive. However, once the door is opened to receive another spirit "so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" the person is in danger of demonic oppression, and in some cases possession. "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him" 2 Corinthians 11:4.

The time has come to expose some of the ways Satan is working today in many Christian churches where sound doctrine is no longer endured: 1) Reincarnation. Simply begin to explore the claims of those who have lived past lives, and open up your mind to the possibility that you have lived before in another life, and Satan will give you an incredible, believable experience of "déjà vu" that "verifies" it. 2) Journaling, or automatic writing. Learn how to sit quietly, open up your mind and "listen" to beings from another plane of existence as they write "spiritual" thoughts through you. This is how mediums "channel" messages from familiar spirits. Automatic writing and channeling is divination (see Deuteronomy 18:10), and the source is not the Holy Spirit who gives His people inspiration when using their gifts and talents which is a different thing altogether. Automatic writing and channeling is demonic, yet there are gullible Christians who think it is the Holy Spirit "talking" to them. This is the source behind such books as *God Calling*, *Jesus Calling*, *A Course in Miracles* (which is the New Age bible), *The Shack* (which is blasphemous), and the dangerous occult book, *Urantia*. 3.) Become involved with Yoga: "Yoga is the very heart of Hinduism. It is sold in the West as science but in fact is religion. It is promoted in the West as beneficial to health, but in the East it

is a technique for dying. The goal is to reach *moksha*, allegedly escaping the world of illusion (*maya*) of time and sense into liberation from the endless cycle of birth and death and rebirth through reincarnation." (Quoted from *The Berean Call*). Open door to demons. 4.) Learn Contemplative Spirituality and Spiritual Formation. Both open the door to wrong spirits, just like TM (transcendental meditation).

Two of the largest movements that are narrowing the gap between the New Age and Christianity are defined by (and I quote Lighthouse Trails) "**Contemplative Spirituality**: A belief system that uses ancient mystical practices to induce altered states of consciousness (the silence) and is rooted in mysticism and the occult but often wrapped in Christian terminology. The premise of contemplative spirituality is pantheistic (God is all) and panentheistic (God is in all). Common terms used for this movement are "spiritual formation," "the silence," "the stillness," "ancient-wisdom," "spiritual disciplines," and many others. **Spiritual Formation**: A movement that has provided a platform and a channel through which contemplative prayer is entering the church. Find spiritual formation being used, and in nearly every case you will find contemplative spirituality. In fact, contemplative spirituality is the heartbeat of the spiritual formation movement." 5.) Ignore personal sin and disobey the Word of God. Consider this, "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" 1 Samuel 15:23a. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil" Ephesians 4:26, 27. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" Revelation 3:15, 16. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" Matthew 6:24.

The time has come to wake up and remember that Satan is the "god of this world" and his purpose for the

swelling river of deception flowing through the churches in these end days is to condition Christians, if possible, to receive the one-world spiritual ruler called the antichrist. (Jesus warned us that he will perform great signs and wonders to deceive.) This is being methodically accomplished through false doctrine taught in many liberal Bible schools, in "emergent post-modern churches," and in much of the hypnotic, contemporary music (remember, music teaches theology as much as preaching does); through watered-down Bible "versions," and "soft preaching" that convicts no one; through the mountains of so-called "Christian" best-selling books, films (including the *Passion of Christ* with its Roman Catholic and occult overtones), and other media, and through the overabundance of end time false prophets "littering the landscape" (to quote Johanna Michaelsen, author of *The Beautiful Side of Evil*.)

The time has come to reflect on how Jesus spent a great deal of His time on earth casting out demons. It is sheer folly to assume that there is no such thing as demons in the world in which we live today. On the contrary, demonic activity is on the rise around the world as the time grows shorter. We are told in 1 Timothy 4:1, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." In 2 Peter 2:1, 2 we read, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. Many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." The time has come. We can see it everywhere if only we would open our eyes and look.

The time has come to admit that one of the greatest tragedies of our day is the lack of solid, sober, sincere, truly saved Christian youth in fundamental churches. The time has come where there is a scarcity of real Bible-believing churches. I say "Bible believing" in the sense that the whole Word of God (not just selected parts) of the Holy Bible (God's Word from

the original texts, not perverted so-called “versions” from the Alexandrian texts) is actively believed, faithfully taught, memorized, lived and walked out in the lives of the people; Churches that have not lost their first love, where everything is Christ (not man) centered, and whose goal is to make disciples of Christ according to the great commission; Churches that fear and love God, and who worship Him in Spirit and in truth, not just on Sunday mornings, but every day of the week; Churches that will not tolerate unbiblical or extra-biblical beliefs and worldly, immoral lifestyles; Churches that are evangelistic, and train the people to go out and be the “salt” and the “light” to lost souls, and Churches that invite the presence of the Holy Spirit to come and minister to the people.

The time has come to ask, what has happened? Isn't the real Jesus enough? Could it be that the popular Jesus that has been mainly presented for the past fifty to 100 years is a different Jesus than the One the Bible portrays? The Jesus most youth want is not God incarnate, who tells them to deny self, pick up their cross, and follow Him, but a culturally relevant version of Jesus—somebody who isn't threatening to their lifestyle, and who endorses their love of the world, immorality, attitudes, pride and rebellion, and their loud pagan “worship” and, yes, I am going to say it, extreme Satanic music and entertainment. Over fifty years ago A. W. Tozer said, “I have in my office a well-used Methodist hymnal that goes back more than a century. In that hymnal, I have found 49 hymns on the attributes of God. I must confess that every day in my office I get on my knees with that hymnal, or one like it, and sing comfortably off-key a great hymn that honors and glorifies God. I think I would have fit in with those old Methodists....In my old Methodist hymnbook, there are 1,100 hymns. As I meditate on them, I am amazed at the depth of theology in those old hymns. When those old Methodists congregated on a Sunday morning, they were singing theology. I would hazard a guess that most of them knew what they were singing, and it was a strong doctrinal medicine for the soul. I wonder if many Christians today on a Sunday morning know the theology of what they are sing-

ing?” (From *My Daily Pursuit*, pg. 93.)

The time has come to “*seek for the Lord while He may be found,*” repent of our dullness of hearing, lack of zeal, absence of vision, slothfulness in prayer: The time has come to seek the face of the Lord for His Spirit, His perspective, His will, and His power to be His witnesses until we leave this life and enter into the presence of the One who died for us and purchased us with His own blood.

The time has come. †

TOUGH TRUTHS FROM TOZER

“And Abram fell on his face;: and God talked with him.” - Genesis 17:3

One marked characteristic of present-day Christians is the low level of their spiritual energy, their all but total lack of moral enthusiasm.

I do not believe that it is necessary to prove this. We carry the proof in our own hearts and observe it in the conduct of our Christian friends. We may safely accept it as a fact and go on from there.

Behind this condition I believe there are four principal causes. They are: 1.) A deadened sense of sin in the Church. The very word *sin* is not in good standing in present-day philosophy and psychology. The intellectuals have put us on the defensive and have made us ashamed to believe in sin as a reality. It is somewhat like believing in nymphs or kelpies, quite all right for a less educated generation but surely not in keeping with our advanced scientific knowledge. The relativity of morals has been taught to our college youth for a long enough period to give the idea time to sift down into the mind of the man on the street and affect the whole popular concept of right and wrong. Hence there is no sharp line drawn between good and evil, even among church people.

2.) The result is that when people ‘accept’ Christ they do so with little or no real conviction for sin and without radical repentance. It is rare now to see a transforming conversion. The average convert becomes one by a series of compromises, whereby he surrenders something to gain something and dickers for his salvation like a huckster. The thought of uncondi-

tional surrender to the Lordship of Jesus never enters his mind. A shoddy mercantile theology has reduced the whole thing to the level of an across-the-counter transaction with no loss of face to the sinner. Of course the resultant conversion is a cold-blooded, emotionless affair.

3.) Next in order and flowing directly out of these is the absence of an experiential encounter with the living God. The personal encounter gave fire and life to the religion of the Bible. “Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him” (Genesis 17:3). Jacob met God on two occasions and those meetings affected him as light affects a sensitized plate. Moses trembled before God in delighted fear. The Bible itself grew out of such experiences. They were not alike except in their spiritual content and their clear and lasting effect upon the individual heart. This content is so weak among Christians today as to be all but unrecognizable. The significant words of prophet and apostle were “I saw...I heard...the heavens were opened...I saw the Lord,” and other like expressions. Today we try to substitute a pale, waxy “faith” for such vivid encounters. No wonder the Church has taken on the general tone of a convalescent hospital instead of the camp of a victorious army.

4.) The fourth cause of our lack of moral enthusiasm, as I see it, is the absence from our experience of an object for the heart's devotion. The great spiritual souls of other days had such an object. In the Old Testament they were frankly and unashamedly in love with the Most High God, and when He became flesh and dwelt among us He came still nearer to the hearts of His people. Paul's heart exploded into a burning volcano of love for the Lord Jesus. It was this and not his theology alone that made him the fiery spirit he was.” - *The Price of Neglect*

*Jesus, hail! Enthroned in glory, there forever to abide,
All the heav'nly hosts adore Thee,
seated at Thy Father's side.
Worship, honor, power and blessing
Thou art worthy to receive; Loudest praises, without ceasing, meet it is for us to give.*

John Bakewell (1721-1819)

RAYOLA'S Q & A CORNER

WHAT IS WORLDINESS?

Q: *Can you please explain how a Christian can determine what is worldly and define "worldliness" from a biblical perspective?*

A: When it comes to this subject there is much confusion for Christians because they are in this world while being told they are not to be part of it. In other words, as believers we are not to belong to the world. But as you pointed out in your question, what actually constitutes or makes up the "world?" The more people are involved with the world, the more they become worldly or manifest "worldliness" in their ways, speech, mannerisms, preferences, and pursuits.

There are many things that make up the world, and those who refuse to belong to it will be hated by it. In other words, there should be a real distinction between a Christian who serves the Lord and those who serve the world. The Bible is clear how we are to respond to the different attractions of the world.

In *1 John 2:15*, we are told that the world is made up of the lust of the flesh, the pride of life, and the lust of the eyes. In other words, the world is designed to attract the flesh (appetites of man) into a state of obsessing for the things of the world as a way for the world to actually possess his soul. It also uses the pride of man to exalt his self-life and self-importance to the status of idolatry and to entice the eyes of man to the point he will pursue and worship the things of the world. Ultimately, whether man recognizes it or not, the price to gain the world is his soul. Whether it is taking his will captive, ensnaring his emotions into a destructive spider web of obsessions, jealousies, addictions, or indoctrinating his intellect with lies, the world is bent on owning man's soul. It is for this reason Jesus warns, "*For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matthew 16:26).*"

As Christians the solution to the world captivating our very soul is

found in reckoning that we are dead to the world's different attractions and influences upon our lives. In *Romans 6*, it tells us we have been positionally baptized into Jesus' death; therefore, we should not yield the members of our body to serve sin, but to serve God in righteousness. The Apostle Paul declared that he was crucified to the influence of the world in *Galatians 6:14* and the Apostle John stated in *1 John 5:4*, "*For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*" When a person is born again of the Spirit of God he or she will not find any real agreement with the world.

There is also the concept of the world, which points to a particular age. Hence, enters the word "world" being interchanged with the word "age." We see this interchange in *2 Corinthians 4:2-4*. "Age" points to a particular time. This time is distinguished by various factors such as cultural influence, belief systems, and acceptable practices. When you put these factors together, you have a type of philosophy that is influencing people's attitudes towards the issues concerning God, life, and morality. A good example of philosophy is that of "Political Correctness" which is being promoted today.

It is important to point out the different philosophies of the world are not new ideas but repackaged lies of Satan. If you study the history of the Communist takeover of a society, one of the philosophies it promotes is "Political Correctness." It is a way to take away any clarity (true light) when it comes to God, morality, right/wrong, and eternity.

Philosophies influence attitudes that people adopt in a society. These concepts may seem logical to worldly ways, acceptable to religious practices, and reasonable to the masses, but they dull down morality, subtly change God's glory into an acceptable worldly presentation, and exalt man's understanding to an idolatrous insane reality. It is for this reason that the Apostle Paul gives this warning in *Colossians 2:8*, "*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments (foundation) of the world, and not after Christ.*" (Parenthesis added for clarification.) Jesus best

described the end of these foundations in *Matthew 7:27*. They will all crumble because they are not built on the immovable Rock of truth, Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul was the one who instructed believers to not be conformed to this world (in attitude) but to be transformed by the renewing of the mind (*Romans 12:2*). He tells us in *Philippians 2:5* to have the mind of Christ and reproved the Christians in Corinth for being carnal (in their ways) because of their attitude towards spiritual matters. The Corinthians considered issues such as baptism according to the world's attitude and not according to the teachings and examples they had been given. For this reason Paul made this statement, "*I have fed you with milk (doctrine) and not with meat (proving what is the will of God): for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*" (*1 Corinthians 3:2-3*). (Parentheses added for clarification. See *John 4:34* and *1 Peter 2:1-2*.)

There is also a spirit of the world (*1 Corinthians 2:12*). Spirit is what motivates a person. The spirit of the world has one goal and that is to seduce, instigate, and move man away from God, His ways and truth. This spirit wants to influence man in his thinking, attitude, and ways. This wrong spirit wants man to become stuck in the quagmire of oppression, eat of the world's poisonous fruits and drink of its arsenic-laced waters. It wants man to roll in its profane pigpens, become blind to truth, dependent on the world's wicked systems, seek it for happiness and purpose, and to ultimately bow before the real god of the world, Satan (*2 Corinthians 4:3-4*).

It is clear as we consider the different aspects of the world, why those who belong to it will prove to be enemies of God (*James 4:4*). Jesus calls His disciples to follow Him by first denying the self-life (the flesh and pride) of any right to call the shots, picking up a personal cross (becoming crucified to the influence of the world) and follow Him away from it (*Matthew 16:24-25*). As Christians we

no longer walk in the course of the world, but have been called to come out and be separate from any agreement with the wrong spirit, depart from all iniquity, flee youthful lusts, and follow righteousness, faith, charity, and peace (2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Ephesians 2:2; 2 Timothy 2:19-22). If a person loves or prefers the things of the world more than God, the love of the Father is not in him or her (1 John 2:17).

The Bible is clear that we can know people by their fruits (Matthew 7:16, 20). There are many people who call themselves Christians, but their fruits tell on them as to what is influencing their attitudes, who/what they are serving, and what they value. Can there be a worldly Christian, full of the world when both words together are really a contradiction. One clearly possesses the very spirit, nature, and rebellious ways of hell, while the other one has the living Spirit of God in them. Will Jesus even claim that such an individual belongs to Him (Matthew 7:21-23)? The Bible only speaks of a carnal Christian who has maintained a worldly attitude due to spiritual immaturity, and who needs to be transformed in his or her thinking in order to mature in his or her walk. Such Christians are not in danger of losing their souls, but the works they do will be consumed in the fire (1 Corinthians 3:10-15).

Many Christians have a problem with the world because they refuse to do what the Bible instructs them to do in regards to the different aspects of the world. They think of Christianity as a lifestyle to be imparted to them, rather than the life of Christ that needs to be worked into their inner man. Their heart is divided between the world, and their flesh fights against the Spirit's impressions and leading away from its temptations and snares. They avoid making the right decision to deny self of rights to partake of the poisonous fruits of the world and choose to pick up their cross and follow Christ in faith and obedience in the ways of true righteousness. They want God to simply make them what they should be instead of making the right decision to reject the attractions of the world, set their affections above, have faith towards God as to what is Scripturally true, and obey

what is right in order to establish the life and mind of Christ in them.

Scripture is clear that the world with its ruler (Satan), philosophies (attitudes), spirit (counterfeit), and ways (deceptive and wicked) is a great affront to God. There is no such thing as a worldly Christian, but sadly there can be much worldliness present that a Christian must be purged from in their thinking and ways. However, if there is any carnality (flesh) present, as believers we must give the Lord permission to purge us of it in brokenness and repentance as we turn in true conversion to righteousness. †

QUOTABLES

"Our only rule of faith and practice is the Word of God. We have...no creed to defend, no denomination to maintain, and no confession to bind our minds. "What do the Scriptures teach?" That is and must be our only concern. If the plain teachings of Holy Scripture appear to destroy or contradict our understanding of any doctrine--then let us relinquish the doctrine, or acknowledge the fact that our minds are both depraved and minuscule--and bow to the revelation of God. "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17"
- Don Fortner

"Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. To know is not to be wise. Many men know a great deal, and are all the greater fools for it. There is no fool so great a fool as a knowing fool. But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom." - C.H. Spurgeon

"What God wants is not to fill up empty pews. He is not concerned about filling empty churches, He is concerned about filling empty hearts. And empty lives, and empty eyes that have no vision; Empty hearts that have no passion, and empty wills that have no purpose." - L. Ravenhill

"What is the only foundation for a sound character? Reverence for God; and when that is gone, the foundation of character is gone." - R. A. Torrey

STRAIGHT TALK

"Today, 'love' is the universal theme. Again, those ignorant of biblical truth are sucked in to the 'can't we all just get along?' dream. The biblical command to love one another is only half the coin. If we don't love God first, we have nothing left but mushy affection for others. And biblical love for God involves obedience. Jesus said, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.' Only when we understand the unconditional nature of biblical love, can we effectively get beyond mushy affection. And obeying Jesus' commandments does not include praying five times a day to Allah or honoring Buddha.

"The Bible is clear that chaos and confusion will increase in these last days. People will keep looking for answers in all the wrong places. At some point, a charming leader will appear seeming to have all the answers proposing a one-world government and one-world religion. By then the Bible will be so watered down that it will support any desired doctrine.

"As soul winners, we are commissioned to make disciples for Jesus, freeing them from idolatry and false religions, not joining them." - *Battle Cry*

"I believe one of the greatest things we can do is challenge the young people around us not to be pressured in figuring out their life based on what society thinks is important: their own likes and dislikes. Rather, encourage them to take time to fast, pray and cry out to God, asking Him, 'Lord, what do You want me to be when I grow up?' And we should fast, pray and cry out to God right alongside them.

"Unless we help our young people take God seriously and be willing to trust Him with their most precious gift—their future—how can we encourage them to follow the Lord wholeheartedly in any other area of life?"

- Daniel Punnose, *Gospel for Asia*

"When people put worldly love on the face of God's love they diminish the authority of the fear of the Lord in people's lives. What people fail to understand is that God's holiness will judge them, not God's love. The fear of the Lord is what establishes God's authority in a person's life."

- Rayola Kelley, *Gentle Shepherd Min.*