

GENTLE SHEPHERD MINISTRIES

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

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Discernment 9

BEING READY

By Rayola Kelley

Last month I talked about whether believers are ready or not for Jesus' coming. The Jewish people were looking for Jesus' first coming, but many of the religious leaders failed to acknowledge or recognize Him. He was ultimately rejected by His own people and crucified by the Romans. All of this was done in accordance to God's plan to bring forth redemption. As a result of this event, Jesus and the cross became a crossroad, a pivotal point in history where man must personally consider what he is going to do with Jesus and the salvation He provides.



Today the Jewish people are still looking for His first coming, while believers are looking for His second coming. The question is will those who claim they belong to members of the Body, the church of today, truly recognize Him, and when He comes will He recognize them? Jesus said many would call Him Lord, but He would not recognize them as His servants (*Matthew 7:21-23*).

Here is the question for today: is our challenge the same as the Jews? It is true we must recognize the real Jesus among the counterfeits, love His truth, walk by faith in light of who He is, obey His Word, and seek out the life He has for us. However, when He comes the second time we are

told in *Revelation 1:7*, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."

When Jesus comes the second time, there will be no doubt as to who He is. People will recognize Him, but how many of the last generation will fail to know Him for themselves because of unbelief and rebellion; therefore, will be void of the oil of the Spirit and the light of His life that will prepare them to enter through the door of saving grace (*Matthew 25:1-13*)? Many people speak the name of Christ, some call Him Lord and others appear to be in love with their idea or concept of Him. Since there is nothing relative, true or binding according to this world, these individuals often believe as long as they do what is right in their own eyes, use His name, are associated or affiliated with religion or some church in some way, and talk about Him in religious groups that He will recognize them when He comes. The question for these individuals to answer is have they been truly "born again" of the Spirit of God (*John 3:3, 5*)? The Apostle Paul talked about those who love His appearing (*2 Timothy 4:8*). As we will see, when it comes to the end days, it is also about godly conduct that is inspired by true faith, a love for God, and a desire to please Him. The Apostle John made this statement about conduct in *1 John 3:8-9*, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doeth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

But, we must also come back to the question for today, what is the real challenge the church must address in these days? Each generation must be aware of the age they live in. Although

the lies are the same old lies that have plagued each generation, they have been repackaged according to the mood and terminology of that particular age as a means to seduce, indoctrinate, and delude many away from the truth into another reality. For instance, many of the religious matters that have rolled through Christendom found their heights in fads and not according to a real move of God. Since I have been a Christian, I've watched many fads roll through Christendom. Countless numbers of them received worldly promotion and took off like a rocket in popularity, but within a few years it seemed like the Christians who chased after them lost their zeal towards their waning popularity as they switched their attention to, and excitedly chased after, the latest popular fad. Truth is not a fad that changes with the latest worldly method or revelation of religious gurus; and, regardless of the compromising world and watered-down Christianity shunning, mocking, and trying to redefine it, truth remains steady and sure. The Bible is clear we should sell all and buy truth for we can do nothing against the truth only for it (*Proverbs 23:23; 2 Corinthians 13:8; Ephesians 4:14*) warns against such foolishness of fickleness, "*That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to be deceived.*" Clearly, this shows that involvement with such fads has to do with sensationalism and popularity and not the truth. In such arenas human fickleness dictates rather than the Spirit and truths of God.

Sadly, many ignore Jesus in their worldliness, reject Him in their atheism, tolerate Him in their amoral thinking, adjust Him to New Age concepts, and settle for religious garb to cover up their lean spirits and thirsty souls. As believers we must come back to what the Bible tells us about the last of the end days. It is clear that the target

of God's enemies is always leveled at two aspects of Christianity: **truth** and **faith**.

Jesus warned of great deception in the end days (*Matthew 24:4-5, 23-24*). The Apostle Paul in reference to the one who is coming with power from Satan, deceiving with signs and lying wonders made this statement in *2 Thessalonians 2:10-12*, “*And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*” People assumed their particular take on God and life is truth, but the Bible warns that in the end days there will be a falling away from the truth (*2 Thessalonians 2:3*). The compromising environment of the world coming into the church has been conditioning people to develop itching ears that prefer fables over truth causing them to only accept what is tolerable to their thinking, non-abrasive to their feelings, compliant to their liberal philosophy, and acceptable to the seductive spirit of the world (*1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 4:3-4*).

As mentioned the second Christian virtue that will be greatly missing in the end days is genuine faith. Jesus put it this way in *Luke 18:8*, “*I tell you that he will avenge them speedily, Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?*” *Jude 3* talks about contending for the faith that was first delivered to the saints and *2 Corinthians 13:5* states, “*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*”

We must be aware of teachings on faith that are erroneous. Faith is not about setting up the right environment to get God to do it our way; rather, faith is trusting God to bring about a matter according to His will, way and plan. Faith trusts God to do all things well and perfect. It rests on His character, trusts His intention to work all matters out for our spiritual benefit and His glory, and comes to rest in His faithfulness to keep His

Word. Genuine faith does not put conditions or boundaries on God to bring forth a matter a certain way; rather, faith allows God to bring a matter about according to His righteous ways. It is God who must work out the details of something to ensure the integrity of it.

Clearly, some of the teachings rolling through Christendom on faith present methods of how to control God in order to avoid walking by faith in Who He is. God will not be controlled by man's pathetic methods, boxed in by doctrine, and forced to lower Himself to prove that He is God. God is God and He does not have to prove Himself as so, explain Himself to gain a person's confidence, deny His holiness to prove His love, and adjust to the world to gain support and loyalty. God truths are unchanging, His ways perfect, His plan righteous, His intentions pure, and His call to us is to choose the excellent way of living and not the base ways of the flesh, the world, and the devil.

The next ingredient that must be present in these days is that a believer must be **ready** for Jesus' coming. People are constantly arguing about the events around His coming, but how many are preparing the church for His coming? The main issue is He is literally coming back just as the Bible says. The Bible is full of Scriptures that clearly talk about Him coming back. But, how many are like the Jews of Jesus' day? Prophecy after prophecy was carefully laid out in Scripture so that when the Messiah came, the Jewish people would recognize Him and gladly receive Him.

Today skepticism is growing in the midst of the various debates about what we will see, what we won't see and what to name our particular take on the matter. No doubt people are weary with the arguments, the false starts, the incorrect interpretation on prophecies, the presentations that prove to be hollow, and putting their money in the coffers of the world to read the latest presentations that may touch man's logic but is found wanting in the end.

Clearly, the Jewish people were looking for their Messiah the first time around, but they were not **ready** to receive Him. The reason for such a state was because they were looking

for a conquering Messiah and not a Lamb sent by God to take away their sins. They were looking for a political, military leader and not for a Redeemer. They were looking to be conquerors over the Roman Empire not conquered by sacrificial love and saved by grace. They were ready to be aggressive, not humbled and brought to a place of submission to God's plan and surrender to His will for them to be saved from the spiritual death sentence brought on by the disease of sin.

As we approach these final days, the skepticism as to whether the Lord will ever really come back is growing. Some of the skepticism is because much of the debate about the end days is based on pride, the concept of one being right over the other person, and everyone else must agree with them or be considered wrong, foolish, and dumb. Knowledge based on pride only sets up pinnacles for people to fall off of when proven wrong. As Christians we must avoid the pinnacles and keep the real issue centered, and that is **Jesus is coming back!**

To add to skepticism, indifference has captured some Christians. There are those who believe He probably will come back, but there is no need to get excited because the saints have been crying “wolf” for over 2,000 years. However, Jesus' coming back is not a false cry, but the basic fundamental belief of the Christian faith that needed to be taught to each generation as a means to prepare believers to meet the Lord, whether it is in the air as described in *1 Thessalonians 4:13-18* or whether by way of the door of death as described by *2 Corinthians 5:8*, “*We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*”

Let me pose this challenge. How many of us believe that since we have not died today that we will not die, and that all declarations of our future demise is like crying “wolf?” We all know that unless Jesus comes the end of our physical life is death. We are not crying “wolf” when we talk about the reality of our physical demise and likewise we are not crying “wolf” when we declare the Lord is coming back. Just like the fact that many of us do not know the day or time we are going to

die, we do not know the exact day and time when Jesus is coming back. But, like physical death it is inevitable that it is going to happen and we must be ready to meet Him, as well as be prepared to embrace the dawning of a new dispensation.

This brings us to what it means to be ready. The Jews' rejection of Jesus the first time teaches us it is not enough to be looking for Jesus; we must be ready to recognize Him when He comes for us. Jesus' discourse on the end days have some very clear exhortations about being ready for His intrusion into our world, whether in our personal life or at the end of the present age. The instructions that are clearly presented are practical whether considering our physical demise or His literal coming.

The first warning that came from Jesus was to take heed that no man deceived us, *"for many shall come in His name, saying, I am Christ and shall deceive many"* (Matthew 24:4-5). He went on to warn, *"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not, For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect"* (Matthew 24:23-24). Some of you might be saying, I already know this, but how many believe it and tremble before God's Word and shudder for others because deception will be prevalent in the last days? I know I can be deceived and only by the grace of God will He keep me in the narrow truth as I cry out to Him to have mercy on me.

However, I must consider what I believe about Jesus. What are we, as believers, looking for when Jesus comes the second time? Are we looking for a humble Savior who is all love or are we looking for a Judge who will judge all iniquity with the sharp sword of His Word? Are we looking for someone who will accept our various compromises and profane agreements in the name of tolerance, or are we looking for a conquering King who will rule with a rod over the whole earth to ensure justice, righteousness, and peace in His kingdom? I could go on but the point I am making is that due to the watered-down, syrupy, and often vague unscriptural Christianity

that is being presented today, it seems like many in the Christian realm are looking for Jesus to come back as a meek man who is going to bring love and peace to the world. It appears to me that while the Jews were looking for the Christ of the second coming, many in the visible church appear to be looking for the Christ of the first coming. Jesus came the first time to save the world, but He is coming the second time to judge it and set it right. The description that reveals how He will come the second time is found in *Revelation 1:10-18*. Keep in mind that upon receiving this revelation about Jesus, the Apostle John fell at His feet as dead out of fear.

It is vital to remember that as believers, in death we will meet Him in His glory; but in His second coming, those left behind will meet Him in His righteousness. We must be prepared to walk into glory and ready to always meet our Lord as Judge and Victor.

Another matter that must be scripturally considered is how will Jesus come back? Our attitude towards Jesus is determined by what we believe or perceive about Him, but our conduct is often determined by how we regard what He says about a matter. Do we believe it because we believe Jesus is the essence and end of all truth or do we ignore, adjust it, mock it, or discard it because we do not want to believe it? After all, it might not fit into our narrative or fragile reality.

Jesus stated in Matthew 24:25-26, *"Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth; behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not."* Jesus left by way of the sky in Acts 1:9-11 and He is coming back by way of the eastern sky according to His own words in Matthew 24:27.

Today unbelief is running rampant towards the blessed event, not only about whether Jesus is coming back but how is He coming back. Some believe He is going to come back in the form of a "Christ-consciousness," even though the Bible is clear that His return will be seen by the naked eye. Some believe He will not come back until man first sets

up His kingdom for Him, but it is clear there will be few left and that if He did not come, there would be no flesh saved alive (*Matthew 24:22*). It is clear man cannot save mankind or himself.

The religious people of Jesus' day should have recognized their Messiah, but refused to because it did not promote their religious kingdom. There was no excuse for their unbelief and likewise there will be no excuse for the unbelief that plagues the present age.

This article only allowed me space to address our belief and attitude towards Jesus, but next month I will delve into the subject of being ready in relationship to our conduct. Meanwhile what do you know about Jesus, what do you believe to be true in His Word, and what is your understanding as to His second coming? Whether we see Jesus coming in our lifetime is not the real issue. The real crux of the matter is whether we are ready to meet Him when the flesh goes to the wayside and the door of eternity stands open before us to receive our redeemed souls. †

COMMENTS

"We so appreciate all of you. You are such a blessing to so many. I continue to pray for all of you for health, strength, wisdom and endurance. I anticipate this year to be extra productive for your ministry. Thanks so much for Carrie's CD, she is truly a gift of God in her music.— GC (OR)

"We have been praying for years that the Lord would make Jerusalem a praise in the earth!! Most people don't seem to realise it has happened!!! We are praising the Lord for the US moving their office, people who are not believers, as well as haters are all talking or ranting and raving about Jerusalem. And we are all praising!!! HalleluYAH"— FT (UK)

"I'm amazed that they [evolutionists] can so BLINDLY, and randomly, accept their own faulty facts....YET they cannot/will not accept The Faith without seeing! They are all 'stuck on stupid!!!!!!'"— AS (FL)

"My Friday mornings are absolutely my favorite days! I love being taught by Rayola! She is an amazing teacher and I learn so much from her studies." — PW (ID)

"SILVERWARE" CHRISTIANS

By Jeannette Haley

"But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour."

— 2 Timothy 2:20

As the subject of this article was beginning to form in my mind, the pastor of the church we attend made a comment that confirmed the direction I was leaning towards when he said that a lot of people "take a stab at Christianity" but that's all they do, and when it doesn't turn out the way they think it should, they go back to their old way of living. This reminds me of how hard it is to try and chase peas around on your plate with a fork. You can make a game out of it and see how many peas you can actually stab, but in the end you'll probably either switch to a spoon or figure it's a waste of time and give up.

To approach the Christian life with a "pea stabbing" mentality will never work, yet how many people use the "stab approach?" We have met more of them than we care to count; people who are disappointed, disgusted, defeated and depressed because they "tried Christianity" to see if it would do anything for them depending on where they were and what they wanted at the time. The Bible records how multitudes of people followed Jesus for a while because of what He could do for them physically such as provide food and healing for their bodies. They also followed Him to see the miracles which He did, and to listen to His teachings because *"Never man spake like this man," John 7:46.*

It was a mixed crowd then, just as it is today—a mixture of entertainment seekers, signs and "spiritual" experiences seekers, personal benefits seekers, and those whose hearts truly hunger and thirst for the One True God as did the Greeks who said to Philip, "Sir, we would see Jesus" John 12:21b. Oh that people would desire to see Jesus today in His Church instead of seeking for entertainment, ear-tickling psychobabble or motivational sermons, social activities, wild and woolly "worship," unbiblical "signs and wonders," "spiritual encounters from the fourth dimension," or classes on contempla-

tive meditation techniques so you can end up with your very own demon.

Years ago Rayola and I confronted a pastor's wife of a certain church in a small community because she was advertising classes on *A Course in Miracles* for Christians. For those of you who aren't aware of this book, it was dictated by a demon through a woman named Helen Schucman, and it denies sin, elevates self, and promotes many ways to God. When we asked her if she had ever truly received Jesus as her Savior she angrily retorted, "Yes, but He's not enough!" Obviously this "fork" woman had merely "taken a stab" at Christianity and when God didn't step outside of Who He is and what His eternal Word declares in order to do her bidding, tickle her ears, and entertain her with signs and wonders, she flung herself into Satan's realm of the occult.

The question is, if Jesus isn't "enough" then who is? The answer is nobody! *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"* Acts 4:12. A. W. Tozer said, "One thing the young Christian should be taught as quickly as possible after his conversion is that Jesus Christ is all he needs. When he believes effectively on Christ as his Lord and Savior he can humbly declare his independence of everyone and everything outside of Christ. This the New Testament teaches with great emphasis and clarity and with fullness of detail. We need not quote any proof text in support of this statement, but suggest simply that the inquirer read the Scriptures to see for himself, especially John, Ephesians, Colossians and Hebrews. One marked characteristic of modern evangelicism is its lack of assurance, resulting in a pathetic search for external evidence to corroborate its faith. It sets out bravely to declare its trust in Christ, but is shortly overawed by the counter declarations of science and philosophy and before long it is looking hesitantly about for some collateral evidence to restore its confidence."

"Fork" people, who take a stab at following Christ, end up betraying the Lord because of unbelief. For example, we read in John 6:64-69, "But

there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." We may not always "have a good time" or have it easy on our journey on the straight and narrow, but it is the only road to eternal life!

Woe to the pastors who fail to confront those in their flock who are playing religious games and merely taking a "stab" at Christianity while walking in unbelief! The sin of unbelief from pulpit to pew has flung the door wide open to every unclean and profane thing of the world, the flesh and the devil. Unbelief has paved the way to idolatry, and subtlety exalted every insidious affront imaginable against the Lord God Almighty. Every unholy thing that has come into the professing, institutional church has come in because of unbelief, and is working to undermine, belittle, and destroy the purity and power of the true Word of God, the innocence of the children, the Person and work of the Holy Spirit, and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Until the "fork Christians" who maintain that "Jesus just isn't enough" are dealt with, until there is separation between the holy and the profane, there can be no revival.

Then there are the "spoon Christians." These are the people who are content to be spoon-fed the milk of the Word (doctrine) all their lives. They choose churches that spoon out baby food week after week to dulled-down adults who have never developed a desire to sink their "teeth" into the solid meat of God's Word. Spoon-fed Christians have weak testimonies and are of little consequence in either the world, or the Kingdom of God, because they are content to stay in their non-threatening, know-nothing, do-nothing, accountable-for-nothing

comfort zones. "Spoon Christians" pose little threat to Satan since they are spiritually anemic and content with the status quo.

"Spoon" Christians are "*Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*" 2 Timothy 3:7 because "*these...resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith*" 2 Timothy 3:9b. Dullness of this sort is dangerous! God says in Revelation 3:15, 16, "*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.*" So, if God spits you out, where are you going to end up? Here is another warning for the dull of hearing: "*But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor*" Micah 4:12. Jesus said, "*Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not neither do they understand*" Matthew 13:13.

A. W. Tozer summed it up well back in 1948 when he said, "There is today no lack of Bible teachers to set forth correctly the principles of the doctrines of Christ, but too many of these seem satisfied to teach the fundamentals of the faith year after year, strangely unaware that there is in their ministry no manifest Presence, nor anything unusual in their personal lives. They minister constantly to believers who feel within their breasts a longing which their teaching simply does not satisfy. I trust I speak in charity, but the lack in our pulpits is real. Milton's terrible sentence applies to our day as accurately as it did to his: 'The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed.' It is a solemn thing, and no small scandal in the kingdom, to see God's children starving while actually seated at the Father's table. The truth of Wesley's words is established before our eyes: 'Orthodoxy, or right opinion, is, at best, a very slender part of religion. Though right tempers cannot subsist without right opinions, yet right opinions may subsist without right tempers. There may be a right opinion of God without either love or one right temper toward Him. Satan is a proof of this."

While the "fork Christians" con-

clude that Jesus "just isn't enough," the "spoon Christians" believe that beyond their basic doctrines there is "nothing more." At least nothing more than they need to concern themselves with. Yet, Hebrews 5:12-6:2 clearly states, "*For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.*" [Underlining added.]

Therefore, shame on the pastors who fail to feed themselves the meat of the Word as the Holy Spirit teaches them, revealing the deep things of God, so they in turn can cease from spoon-feeding milk, or at best a spoonful of watery soup, to the sheep! Weak pastors, preaching from weak Bible translations to weak sheep, end up with a weak church that offers a weak witness to the world! Where is the power in the "Laodicean" churches of today?

Jesus said, "*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me...*" Acts 1:8a. The Holy Spirit enables men and women to speak with authority: "*And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all*" Acts 4:33. Smith Wigglesworth said: "God wants to purify our minds until we can bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, and endure all things. God dwells in you, but you cannot have this divine power until you live and walk in the Holy Ghost, until the power of the new life is greater than the old life." And, "Wherever the Holy Ghost has right of way, the gifts of the Spirit will be in manifestation; and where these gifts are never in manifestation, I

question whether He is present."

Finally we come to the "knife Christians." This type of "silverware Christian" is adept at slicing and dicing. They profess to love Jesus, but the question is, do they love the Jesus of the Bible who is revealed from Genesis to Revelation, or is it a Jesus of their own making? This type of Christian either slices whole sections out of the Word that he or she doesn't agree with and conveniently disposes of them, or chooses instead to dice them up into convenient, out-of-context "bite-size" pieces that take on a whole new flavor (meaning, intent or spirit) from the original. Thus God's Word loses its original intent and power as it is conveniently carved up to fit the personal taste of whatever ungodly, but socially acceptable and popular philosophy, belief, or agenda is on one's daily "spiritual" menu.

The Bible strongly warns against "adding to" or "cutting out" any of God's Word. In Deuteronomy 4:2 we read, "*Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.*" Jesus said, "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*" Matthew 4:4. The written Word is the revelation of the Living Word. "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*" John 1:1. Therefore, if someone comes along with their handy dandy little knife and begins to "carve out" certain Scriptures, or whole sections of the Bible, and tells you that they are not applicable to us, or are not relevant for today, or that obedience is optional, or that the truth of the Word which God's people have maintained for the past 2,000 years is wrong, then remember Titus 3:10, 11 which says, "*A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth being condemned of himself.*"

If "knife people" could literally cut out of the Bible any reference or allusion to sin, its far-reaching effects, and the judgment on sin, hell, death, tribulation, suffering, self-denial, cross bearing, overcoming, crucifying the flesh and its lusts, loving God above

all else, and obedience to Jesus' commandments, then how many pages would be left? Maybe a few pages of genealogies? Nope. Think again. Even the genealogies tell us of these things when you look up the meanings of names.

"Knife Christians" fall into different categories depending on their personal agendas or conclusions to a matter, but the one, in our experience, that seems to surface the most concerns the subject of fornication. Old Testament examples, such as Jacob or King David are "cut out" and held up as "proof" that it's okay for a man to have more than one wife, or at least it's okay to have a mistress, or two, or three. After all, argue the "knife Christians", David was a "man after God's own heart". Then to further prop up their argument with the strength of a wet noodle, they tell you that the nowhere in the Bible does it say that a man and his female lover "have to get married." Now, consider this, in the King James Version the word "fornication" appears 44 times (<http://www.brandplucked.webs.com/fornicationimmoral.htm>), so the "knifers" have had to "cut out" (blatantly ignore) the word "fornication," pretending it doesn't exist, or call God a liar to their own destruction.

Every cult, false religion, aberrant belief, and doctrine of demons has, to a greater or lesser degree, cut out whole portions of the Holy Bible and twisted, redefined, or adulterated it to fit their false narrative, or rebellious lifestyle. Satanists, Freemasons, New Agers, and mystery religions do it, and you see Hollywood doing it all the time. Sadly, even some whole Christian denominations do it by simply ignoring (mentally cutting out) whole portions of Scripture. For example, many notable yet powerless, dead denominations and churches of today avoid "like the plague" any true Bible study, teaching, preaching, or acknowledgment of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit, along with the gifts of the Spirit.

Therefore, when you consider why Jesus sent the Holy Spirit after His ascension, you quickly come to the conclusion that without the Spirit the body is dead. Charles Spurgeon said, "A church in the land without the

Spirit is rather a curse than a blessing. If you have not the Spirit of God, Christian worker, remember that you stand in somebody else's way; you are a fruitless tree standing where a fruitful tree might grow." A. W. Tozer said, "The Spirit-filled life is not a special, deluxe edition of Christianity. It is part and parcel of the total plan of God for His people."

The words of Jude are as timely today as they were in AD 66: *"But, beloved, remember, ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life,"* Jude 17-21.

Therefore, may we, as we examine the "table setting" of our own lives discern if we are an instrument of silverware, or "a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" 2 Timothy 2:21. †

RAYOLA'S Q & A CORNER

Q: *"The other day I heard some men talking about David and his wives and concubines along with Solomon and his many wives and concubines. The general consensus coming from them is that since David and Solomon had many wives, and that David was a man after God's own heart, they likewise could have many women on the side as well. This is not the first time I have heard such nonsense. The problem is these men call themselves Christians and seem to justify their dishonorable attitudes towards women and sex according to the practices of the Old Testament. As a woman I am disgusted at such attitudes and question if these men are even saved. I was wondering if you could put this in perspective."*

A: Sadly, there are very few spiritual matters that are held sacred today and probably the most exploited subject is sex. The Bible is clear that

that which is done in secret, whether it should be considered sacred as in a relationship between a husband and wife or done in wickedness as in the case of fornication, should not be a matter of casual or flippant conversation. There should not be jesting or coarse talk about such personal matters as if it they are common, for what is made common is often considered profane by God (*Ephesians 5:3-12*). If such matters come to the light it is for the purpose of reproving them as being dishonorable in order to bring repentance and godly instruction.

This brings us to the crux of the subject. When men who have a religious affiliation want to justify heaping their lusts upon themselves because of immoral thoughts and practices of fornication towards women, they often use David and Solomon to do so. However, when a person uses the Bible to justify immorality they do so to their own damnation. The Apostle Paul put such profanity in this light, *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness"* (*Romans 1:18*).

The Bible is clear as to what we are to think upon in *Philippians 4:8*, and whatever we think in our heart, is what we become (*Proverbs 23:7-8*). Like the days of Noah, man's imagination today appears to be continually evil while skirting around the standard of righteousness that has been lifted up in his midst (*Genesis 6:4-5*). Jesus put it this way in *Matthew 24:37-38*, *"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark."* Remember, in Noah's day the sons of God lusted after the daughters of men and took them as wives according to their choosing. Who the sons of God and the daughters of men are, is a whole different discussion that becomes a moot point because people will believe their own take on it. However, the point is that wicked imaginations are often associated with sexual abominations.

In the generation of Noah, there was a clear standard of righteousness erected and there is also a moral

standard of righteousness erected in our midst. For example, during Noah's day he served as the people's standard of righteousness as he built an ark against the great day of wrath that was coming, while our standard of righteousness is Jesus who is our ark when it comes to the wrath that is abiding on all disobedience (*Romans 2:8-11; 2 Peter 2:5; Ephesians 2:1-3; Colossians 3:2-3; 1 Corinthians 1:30* refer to *John 16:7-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 2:16*).

Man is forever adjusting morality to fit his narrative, justifying all immorality to justify his transgressions and iniquity, while trying to clothe his wickedness with religious garb to cover up the stench of it. However, Jesus took away the cloak to reveal sin and when man stands before the holy God who will be His judge on that day he will find that he will ultimately be judged by the very Word he selfishly used to justify himself. Once the judgement is passed, he will not stand justified as he is stripped by the truth, condemned by a holy Law, and deemed worthy of eternal death without any recourse or means to seek mercy and forgiveness (*John 15:22; Romans 3:19-20; Galatians 5:16-25; 6:7-8; Hebrews 9:27*).

When we consider the days of Abraham, Jacob, David, and Solomon, we must remember that cultural practices of that time permitted a man to have more than one wife. That practice is still very much alive in many of the Muslim nations and among some religious sects. Even though the Lord permitted it, He declared this in His law in *Deuteronomy 17:17* about kings, "*Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.*"

This brings us to how God views a matter. Man may justify sin, but God is the ultimate judge of all matters. If man's conclusion does not line up to God's assessment of a matter, man's argument or justification will not stand in the end.

God's plan for mankind was made clear at the very beginning. Male and female were created as one. God took **one** woman out of the side of man and instituted the union of marriage, "*Therefore shall a man leave*

his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (*Genesis 2:24*). Jesus confirmed this in *Matthew 19:4-6*, "*Have ye not read that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are not more twain but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*"

Some people argue that the word "marriage" is not used in these Scripture references but if you put it in context, Jesus was being asked about divorce and He was clear that man was not to put his wife away unless there was adultery. For there to be a divorce there had to be some legal, binding agreement that we would know as marriage. Even though the word "marriage" may not be mentioned in some Scriptures, *Hebrews 13:4* states, "*Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers (fornicators) and adulterers God will judge.*"

Mankind may be loose with sex, but it is clear that sex is a gift that was to be confined within the binding union of marriage set forth by God. In fact, fornication includes all illicit sex outside of marriage which is very much described and condemned in *Exodus 22:16-19; Leviticus 18; and Deuteronomy 22:22-30*. These sexual sins include lying with a maid that a man is not betrothed to, and if he does he must endow her to be his wife, along with adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, rape (molestation), and incest. God stated that these abominable sins is what will cause the land to spew people out, and in most cases those who practiced such immorality were put to death for committing such sins as a way to keep the land from being polluted.

In the New Testament the Apostle Paul clearly stipulated that fornication is the one sin committed against the body because it brings one into agreement with the unholy, rendering such an act as a type of prostitution (*1 Corinthians 6:17-20*). We are the temple of the Holy Spirit and those who defile the temple will be destroyed (*1 Corinthians 3:15-17*). We know that we cannot fellowship with fornicators and that

they will not make it into the kingdom of God (*1 Corinthians 5:6-511; Galatians 5:19-21*). The Apostle Paul instructed believers to sanctify their bodies in relationship to sexual conduct and to avoid defrauding a person by giving him or her false impressions about intentions (*1 Thessalonians 4:3-6*).

This brings us to the purpose of marriage: it was to serve as a shadow of the marriage of Christ and the church (*Ephesians 5:22-32*). The vow made in marriage is that of faithfulness (until death do us part) and the covenant part of it has to do with godly conduct of the husband and wife towards each other to leave a testimony for the generations to follow as to the sacredness, purpose, and working of marriage.

This brings us to a very important reality that Jesus is coming back for a chaste bride. This attitude that marriage does not have to be practiced and regarded as sacred and ordained by God is behind the great breakdown of the family. Godly marriage is the backbone of a healthy family and a healthy family is the backbone of a healthy nation. However, the dishonorable attitude and practices that find their basis in fornication is defiling the inner sanctuaries of marriages (the bed), rendering sex a common activity as people change partners like they do their clothes, while casting their souls to the winds of judgment to gain temporary pleasure that leaves them often feeling empty and hollow in the end.

It is clear our nation is sick, groaning under terrible sin, reeling from a world that seems to be going mad because moral boundaries are being cast aside and selfishness erected while innocence, purity, and righteousness are being sacrificed in the name of happiness and the right to live life any old way. However, there is a day of reckoning coming, a day of judgment and I love what John the Baptist declared to the religious people, "flee the wrath to come by bringing forth fruits meet for repentance" (*Matthew 3:7-8*). †

"The vague and flimsy hope that God is too kind to punish the ungodly, has become a deadly opiate for the consciences of millions." - A.W. Tozer

Donald Trump's connection to the Hebrides Revival (Hebrides Islands are by Scotland)

In the late 1940s a small cottage in Scotland on the Island of Lewis by in the village of Barvas lived two elderly women, Peggy and Christine Smith. They were eighty-four and eighty-two years old. Peggy was blind and her sister almost bent double with arthritis. Unable to attend public worship, their humble cottage became a sanctuary where they met with God. To them came the promise: I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground, they pleaded this day and night in prayer. One night Peggy had a revelation, revival was coming and the church of her fathers would be crowded again with young people!

She sent for the minister, the Rev. James Murray MacKay, and told him what God had shown her, asking him to call his elders and deacons together for special times of waiting upon God. In the same district a group of men praying in a barn experienced a foretaste of coming blessing. One night as they waited upon God a young deacon rose and read part of the twenty-fourth Psalm: Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord. Turning to the others he said: Brethren, it seems to me just so much humbug to be waiting and praying as we are, if we ourselves are not rightly related to God. Then lifting his hands toward heaven he cried: Oh God, are my hands clean? Is my heart pure? He got no further, but fell prostrate to the floor. An awareness of God filled the barn and a stream of supernatural power was let loose in their lives. They had moved into a new sphere of God realization, believing implicitly in the promise of revival.

Among those converted the following night was a fifteen-year-old boy who became an outstanding helper in the revival. This lad became a frontline prayer-warrior. The preacher, Duncan Campbell, called at his home one day and found him on his knees in the barn with the Bible open before him.

When interrupted he quietly said: Excuse me a little, Mr. Campbell, I am having an audience with the King. Some of the most vivid outpourings of the Spirit during the revival came when he was asked to pray. In the police station in Barvas he stood up one night, simply clasped his hands together, and uttered one word – Father. Everyone was melted to tears as the Presence of God invaded the house.

In Callenish, he prayed until the power of God laid hold on those who were dead in sins transforming them into living stones in the Church of Jesus Christ. But the most outstanding example of God's anointing upon him was in Bernera, a small island off the coast of the Isle of Lewis. Duncan was assisting at a Communion service; the atmosphere was heavy and preaching difficult, so he sent to Barvas for some of the men to come and assist in prayer. They prayed, but the spiritual bondage persisted, so much so that half way through his address Duncan stopped preaching. Just then he noticed this boy, visibly moved, under deep burden for souls. He thought: that boy is in touch with God and living nearer to the Savior than I am. So leaning over the pulpit he said: Donald, will you lead us in prayer? The lad rose to his feet and in his prayer made reference to the fourth chapter of Revelation, which he had been reading that morning: Oh God, I seem to be gazing through the open door. I see the Lamb in the midst of the Throne, with the keys of death and of hell at His girdle. He began to sob; then lifting his eyes toward heaven, cried: O God, there is power there, let it loose!

With the force of a hurricane the Spirit of God swept into the building and the floodgates of heaven opened. The church resembled a battlefield. On one side many were prostrated over the seats weeping and sighing; on the other side some were affected by throwing their arms in the air in a rigid posture. God had come!

Between 1949 and 1952 a widespread revival swept through these islands in answer to the prayers of God's people. This revival became known as the Hebrides Revival.

Mary Anne Smith MacLeod, niece of the two intercessors of the Hebrides Revival, cousin of Donald Smith the 15

-year-old converted at the revival emigrated from the Hebridean Island of Lewis, off the west coast of Scotland, from where she emigrated to America and met a gentleman named Frederick Trump

Mary Anne Smith MacLeod is reported to have met Frederick Trump at a dance where they fell in love. They married in January 1936, the wedding reception for the 25 guests being held at the Carlyle Hotel in Manhattan. On April 5, 1937, she gave birth to their first child Mary Anne Trump Barry, a United States Federal Judge, followed by Fredrick Jr. (1938–1981), Elizabeth (1942), Donald Trump 45th President of the United States (1946), and Robert (1948).

Coincidence or Holy Ghost? God used two elderly sisters who desperately wanted to see God move in their church in a small fishing village on Lewis Island. Not only did the revival reach their Island in Scotland but the Hebrides Revival became known around the world. Little did they know that their nephew would one day become the President of the United States of America and bring change and a move of God to the Nations. It is time to rise up and intercede for our President and for our Nation. †

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" 1 Timothy 2:1, 2.

"And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding." Daniel 2:21.

"For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another" Psalm 75:6-7.

"It is...very clear that the ultimate reason the Bible instructs us to intercede on behalf of our leaders is so that they might come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ."

—Franklin Graham