

The New Exodus

Chapter 1: The Call to Mobility

By George Davis and Michael Clark with Douglas Weaver

Ever since the rebellion of Adam, the recurrent command to God's people at each new turn of seasons is summed up in one word - GO! God is never pleased with man's inherent tendency to settle and build, because it breeds a lethargic, complacent and ultimately backslidden generation.

God is speaking a fresh word of mobilization into the earth today. It's a word of release and exodus, just as it was in the time of Moses. God is telling the Pharaohs of our day, "Let my people go!" His message to His chosen ones is also the same as it was back then, "Come out from under your task masters and worship Me alone."

Young and old, male and female, Jew and Gentile, bond or free are all called to forsake ritualistic, traditional and impotent religious structures and break forth into God. We must move beyond revival manifestations to an entirely new way of thinking. God is challenging us to rethink our theology as He realigns our beliefs. God is calling the church back into migrant status.

From the time when Adam rebelled, man has been a migrant, either journeying with and towards God or against and away from Him. The fallen nature of man continually tries to stop his journey toward God, and to settle and build on the earth. God's Spirit always calls us to be aliens and strangers--sojourners with God as revealed in Leviticus 25:23. "[The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; for you are strangers and live as foreigners with me](#)" (Leviticus 25:23 WEB). Consequently we must always be ready to move when God calls us.

Right now the Spirit of God is calling the body of Christ to a deeper position with God. We must embrace new levels of truth. Each new truth that God brings forth amplifies the previous ones and brings them into a clearer light. As the cloud of His witness moves on, so must we.

We must migrate from one level of glory to another. God is speaking and releasing the impetus to migrate, to get us back on the journey of apprehending that for which we were apprehended.

Religious people like to think their belief system is complete, and they are threatened by the unknown. Religious man is insecure when he can't codify everything in his theology, and so it is difficult to accept the idea that there is more to come.

The Restoration of All Things

In Acts chapter 3, Peter and John healed a lame man who sat begging by the Beautiful Gate of the temple in Jerusalem. The people who witnessed this miracle were amazed. Peter, speaking of Jesus, said to them,

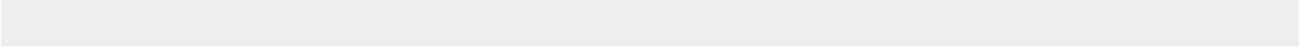
Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time. (Acts 3:19-21, NASB).

God intends to rectify all the disorders of the fall. The word restoration implies both a departure from and a return to God's original intention for mankind. Christ has purchased our full redemption, but creation groans, waiting for the full restoration and realization of the purpose it was created for. Even though all things are placed in subjection under Christ's feet, the author of Hebrews qualifies, "But now we don't see all things subjected to him, yet" (Hebrews 2:8 WEB). Seem like a contradiction? Not at all! He is Lord, but not all things have bowed to His lordship yet. The heavens have received Him until all things are placed at His feet--until all things are restored.

Full restoration is still waiting for the people of God. We must remain detached and ready to come out of everything that fails to express His full thought and glory and move on with Him to that restoration.

In order to understand the full impact and meaning of the restoration of all things, we must first understand that mankind has fallen and that everything we see around us falls short of God's glory. With that fixed firmly in our minds we must also understand that we are pilgrims on a journey of recovery, returning to that glory. This world, the

flesh and the devil resist this pilgrimage at every turn, exerting all their energies to sidetrack the sojourner, tempting them to settle and build. For this reason, it is imperative that we see our migratory status and what the scriptures say about it from the beginning. We will start with Genesis.



Chapter 2: Cain and Abel

The word *genesis* means origin or beginning. The book of Genesis starts out with darkness and chaos on the face of the deep. This was a spiritual darkness. The sun, moon and stars were not created until the fourth day. God's first act on the first day of creation was to separate His light from spiritual darkness. This establishes the pattern of all God's future acts upon His creation.

Because Adam and Eve fell into spiritual darkness, they lost man's first estate and were expelled from the Garden of Eden and banned from the Tree of Life. At the time of their expulsion, God gave them a promise of redemption--a promise of restoration. God said to the subtle serpent, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He will bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel" (Genesis 3:15 MKJV).

Adam and Eve initially had two sons, Cain and Abel. These two men are prototypes of mankind. Two distinct types emerge. The seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, the Godly and ungodly, the righteous and wicked, Christ and Anti-Christ, the Son of God and the son of perdition, the wheat and the tares, the sheep and the goats, the wise and the foolish virgins, the son of the bondwoman and the son of the free woman. In Abel and Cain we see the pilgrim and the city-builder. We see the godly tendency toward servanthood in Abel; he became a keeper of the flock. In Cain we discover the fleshly tendency to dominate the earth by his own strength and ingenuity. One was a nomad, following his herd in harmony with the earth. The other was fixed and territorial--a tiller and planter of the cursed earth that insisted on growing weeds and brambles.

It is widely believed that Eve considered her firstborn, Cain, to be the promised seed spoken of in Genesis 3:15. Alfred Edersheim explains:

Of the two sons of Adam and Eve, Cain was the elder, and indeed, as we gather, the first-born of all their children. Throughout antiquity, and in the East to this day, proper names are regarded as significant of a deeper meaning. When Eve called her first-born son Cain ('gotten,' or 'acquired'), she said, 'I have gotten a man from Yahveh.'

Apparently, she connected the birth of her son with the immediate fulfillment of the promise concerning the Seed, who was to bruise the head of the serpent. This expectation was, if we may be allowed the comparison, as natural on her part as that of the immediate return of our Lord by some of the early Christians. It also showed how deeply this hope had sunk into her heart, how lively was her faith in the fulfillment of the promise, and how ardent her longing for it. But if such had been her views, they must have been speedily disappointed. Perhaps for this very reason, or else because she had been more fully informed, or on other grounds with which we are not acquainted, the other son of Adam and Eve, mentioned in Scripture, was named Abel, that is 'breath,' or 'fading away.'¹

We know the story.

Cain was a religious man. Like righteous Abel, he came to worship God. God showed favor on Abel's offering. The obvious difference between his offering and Cain's was the shedding of blood in an animal sacrifice. A less obvious difference was Cain's inability to hear and follow God because of his heart condition. Cain brought his gifts and his offering to Jehovah but his sacrifice was unacceptable because his heart was not in it. It was not so much the nature of Abel's offering that God saw as acceptable, but it was the heart in which he did it. Note that God did not scold Cain for the type of offering, but the state of his heart (Genesis 4:6 and 7). God showing favor on the heart and sacrifice of Abel angered Cain so much that he killed his brother. History has been saturated with the blood of those led by the Spirit, whose lives have been taken by others who abide in the religious spirit of antichrist. God judged Cain as follows:

"And now you are cursed more than the ground which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it will not again give its strength to you. And you shall be a vagabond (a rover or wanderer) and a fugitive in the earth." And Cain said to Jehovah, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold! You have driven me out from the face of the earth today, and I shall be hidden from Your face. And I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth, and it shall be that anyone who finds me shall kill me." And Jehovah said to him, "Therefore whoever kills Cain shall be avenged seven times." And Jehovah set a mark upon Cain so that anyone who found him should not kill him. And Cain went out from the presence of Jehovah and lived in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife, and

she conceived and bore Enoch. And he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch. ([Genesis 4:11-17 MKJV](#))

When Adam and Eve fell, the earth was cursed. Now that curse was placed on a man in greater degree. Cain was not just cursed, but bitterly cursed beyond what was placed upon the ground. Because of Cain's act of violence, there was a great shift, an acceleration of sin that was unknown in God's creation before that time.

Ironically, Cain chose to settle in the land of Nod, which translates from the Hebrew as wandering. No matter a man's spiritual state, he continues to be a wanderer on the earth, searching for a place of rest. Instead of coming back home to his father's house, Cain found rest in building an empire after his own design. He built the first cities on earth for protection. He thought he had escaped the punishment of God, but no matter the outward appearance, he remained under the curse of being a fugitive and vagabond in the earth. He exhibited a form of Godliness but denied and walked away from the power of it.

The wandering man always attempts to settle and build in hope of meeting his insatiable need for rest. To his dismay, all his building only frustrates him further. The righteous man who is current with God is on a journey of certain completion and reward. He has ceased from his own labors and entered into his Father's rest (see Hebrews 4). He is no longer driven by the need to build his own empire because he has found his place in an eternal kingdom. He is now released to explore the profound depths of his Creator. Rather than bearing the burden of the builder or taskmaster, he is now built together with other living stones into a habitation of God in the Spirit. Great is the peace and rest of the man who forsakes the way of Cain to enter the Father's rest.

The Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, explains the changes that occurred in the earth as a direct result of Cain unleashing the sin that was crouching at the door.

And when Cain had traveled over many countries, he, with his wife, built a city, named Nod, which is a place so called, and there he settled his abode; where also he had children. However, he did not accept of his punishment in order to amendment, but to increase his wickedness; for he only aimed to procure every thing that was for his own bodily pleasure, though it obliged him to be injurious to his neighbors. He augmented his household substance with much wealth, by rapine (plundering or theft) and

violence; he excited his acquaintance to procure pleasures and spoils by robbery, and became a great leader of men into wicked courses. He also introduced a change in that way of simplicity wherein men lived before; and was the author of measures and weights. And whereas they lived innocently and generously while they knew nothing of such arts, he changed the world into cunning craftiness. He first of all set boundaries about lands: he built a city, and fortified it with walls, and he compelled his family to come together to it; and called that city Enoch, after the name of his eldest son Enoch. Now Jared was the son of Enoch; whose son was Malaliel; whose son was Mathusela; whose son was Lamech; who had seventy-seven children by two wives, Silla and Ada. Of those children by Ada, one was Jabal: he erected tents, and loved the life of a shepherd. But Jubal, who was born of the same mother with him, exercised himself in music; and invented the psaltery and the harp. But Tubal, one of his (Lamech's) children by the other wife, exceeded all men in strength, and was very expert and famous in martial performances. He procured what tended to the pleasures of the body by that method; and first of all invented the art of making brass. Lamech was also the father of a daughter, whose name was Naamah. And because he was so skillful in matters of divine revelation, that he knew he was to be punished for Cain's murder of his brother, he made that known to his wives. Nay, even while Adam was alive, it came to pass that the posterity of Cain became exceeding wicked, every one successively dying, one after another, more wicked than the former. They were intolerable in war, and vehement in robberies; and if any one were slow to murder people, yet was he bold in his profligate behavior, in acting unjustly, and doing injuries for gain.²

In Cain we see the birth of a new brand of wickedness, an ambition to procure everything for his own bodily pleasure, even at the expense of his neighbors. We see greed in the sense of amassing great wealth, gathered by plundering, theft and violence. Cain's greed found expression in the invention of measures and weights, which were often used to facilitate and legitimize open theft. The establishment of weights and measures also indicates an attitude of exacting, the antithesis of generosity. Greed not only fuels commerce, but is also the father of theft and oppression. The way of simplicity, living innocently and generously with one another, was changed into a world of cunning craftiness. In the city of Cain you have to watch your back.

Along these lines Alfred Edersheim wrote,

On the other hand, one who embraced the promises would consider himself a pilgrim and a stranger in this earth, and both in heart and outward conduct show that he believed in, and waited for, the fulfillment of the promise. We need scarcely say that the one describes the history of Cain and of his race; the other that of Abel, and afterwards of Seth and of his descendants. For around these two - Cain and Seth - as their representatives, all the children of Adam would group themselves according to their spiritual tendencies. . . Abel chose the pilgrim-life, Cain that of settled possession and enjoyment of earth.

On the one hand we see nomadic shepherds, pilgrims and sojourners, waiting for the promised Seed and the full restoration of all things. Conversely we see wanders, like Cain, seeking to find rest by tilling the ground and founding secure cities.

Edersheim continues:

The place of Abel could not remain unfilled, if God's purpose of mercy were to be carried out. Accordingly He gave to Adam and Eve another son, whom his mother significantly called "Seth," that is, "appointed," or rather "compensation;" for God, said she, "hath appointed me ('compensated me with') another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew." Before, however, detailing the history of Seth and his descendants, Scripture traces that of Cain to the fifth and sixth generations. Cain, as we know, had gone into the land of "Nod"-- "wandering," flight, "unrest," - and there built a city, which has been aptly described as the laying of the first foundations of that kingdom in which "the spirit of the beast" prevails (see Revelation chapters 17-19).

Cain was the first son of perdition, the prototype. The corrupt cities and governments of men are our inheritance from him. Cain's way is the beast system.

What does the way of Cain, who has been dead for all these years, have to do with us today? Cain is dead but his ways are not! The division between the descendants has continued down through history. The natures of these two brothers give us insight to the relationships of men to this very day. This becomes evident as the story continues.

The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men

With Abel dead and Cain gone from the presence of God to settle and build his own cities, we come to the birth of Seth. Seth's name means appointed. Eve gave him that

name because "God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed." Seth also had a son, and he called his name Enosh (Greek *Enos*). "Then men began to call upon the name of the LORD" (Genesis 4:25-26 NKJV.)

The marginal reading of this verse is translated, "Then began men to call themselves by the name of the Lord." We believe this is the correct rendering. In the time of Enosh, the true followers of God began to call themselves "the sons of God." The other branch of Adam's family, the hedonistic descendants of Cain, were the children of men. God later referred to them as flesh.

And Jehovah said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man; in their erring he is flesh. And his days shall be a hundred and twenty years. (Genesis 6:3 LITV)

As Adam Clark points out:

What an awful character does God give of the inhabitants of the antediluvian world! They were flesh, (verse 3,) wholly sensual, the desires of the mind overwhelmed and lost in the desires of the flesh, their souls no longer discerning their high destiny, but ever minding earthly things, so that they were sensualized, brutalized, and become flesh; incarnated so as not to retain God in their knowledge, and they lived, seeking their portion in this life.³

The ultimate corruption of the pre-flood race occurred when the lineage of Seth (the sons of God) began to inter-marry the daughters of men (the offspring of Cain). Edersheim amplified on this overt corruption of man when he wrote:

The corruption of mankind reached its highest point when even the difference between the Sethites and the Cainites became obliterated by intermarriages between the two parties, and that from sensual motives. We read that "the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." At that time the earth must have been in a great measure peopled, and its state is thus described, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

In Genesis chapter six, we are told how this intermingling brought on widespread trouble and violence among the races. So thorough was this corruption that God regretted having made man.

As a result, God purposed to start over. He brought judgment on the earth in the form of a great flood, saving only one righteous man and his family. This man's name was Noah. His name speaks of his calling and destiny; because it means rest. Nearly every child knows the story of how God saved the world through water. The rainbow represents God's promise never to judge the earth by water again.

God began to preserve purity by means of separation. By calling a people out unto Himself, He preserved a remnant. The calling out or exodus of a remnant from the corrupting influence of the world is God's way of advancing His redemptive purposes.

The Post-Flood Revival and Continuation of "The Way of Cain"

After the majority of mankind was destroyed by the flood, the remnant were sent out of the safe haven of the ark.

So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (Genesis 9:1, NKJV).

This purified generation out of the loins of Noah was to be short lived, for we next read of another rebellion. This time it was one of Noah's sons rebelling against him as God's righteous representative in that generation (Genesis 7:1).

And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside [Noah's tent].

But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were turned away, so that they did not see their father's nakedness.

When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him. So he said, "Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brothers."

He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, The God of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, And let him dwell in the tents of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant." (Genesis 9:22-27, NASB).

Hundreds of years later, God judged the people of Canaan, the descendants of Ham, by the hands of His righteous servants, because Canaan had become totally corrupted with its hedonistic practices.

"We Will Revolt"

The next stop on our walk through our common heritage is Ham's grandson, Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord. His name means we will revolt. He was an empire builder. The city he built--Babylon--is a symbol of opposition to God. At Babel men refused to obey God's command to go forth and fill the earth. Here for the first time, a man took the way of Cain into corporate rebellion, founding the first kingdom.

The *Jerusalem Targum* says of Nimrod,

And Kush begat Nimrod: he began to be mighty in sin, and to rebel before the Lord in the earth. He was a mighty rebel before the Lord; therefore it is said, From the day that the world was created there hath not been as Nimrod, mighty in hunting, and a rebel before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Bavel the Great.⁴

Nimrod was filled with the same ambition and violence first found in Cain. He is the epitome of fallen man's tendency to settle and build his own kingdom outside of God. From a worldly standpoint, Nimrod was successful, heroic and popular. In fact, "mighty one" is the same term used in Genesis 6:4 to describe the Nephalim, the offspring of the unholy mixture of the sons of god and the daughters of men. It describes someone who is intentionally making himself famous by committing bold and daring acts. Although the flood rid the earth of all corrupted flesh, the spiritual forces behind that corruption were again surfacing. (See Gen 6:4, Num 13:33). Babel is a model of the continuing desire of man to settle and build.

And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." (Genesis 11:4, NKJV).

So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. (Genesis 11:8, NKJV).

Notice there was a pseudo-unity from everyone speaking the same language. They journeyed until they came to the plain of Shinar, where they decided to settle. They built a city with bricks, not with stones; this is significant in itself. But for now let us focus on the mentality revealed in verse four above.

Their first efforts went toward building a city, and then building a tower. Their stated purpose was to establish a legacy that would keep them intact both generationally and geographically. They were reverting back to the way of Cain, building cities and naming those cities after themselves. Why did they so quickly repeat the errors that eventually lead to global destruction?

God confused their languages and scattered man upon the face of the earth as a stop-gap measure, before their rebellion reached its fullness. The very idea of kings and kingdoms sprang out of the heart of Nimrod. God never intended men to build city-states and appoint kings to rule over them. This was a direct affront against Him as their only Righteous King.

The following parable is a satire exposing the vanity of seeking a king.

Once the trees went forth to anoint a king over them, and they said to the olive tree, "Reign over us!"

But the olive tree said to them, "Shall I leave my fatness with which God and men are honored, and go to wave over the trees?"

Then the trees said to the fig tree, "You come, reign over us!"

But the fig tree said to them, "Shall I leave my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to wave over the trees?"

Then the trees said to the vine, "You come, reign over us!"

But the vine said to them, "Shall I leave my new wine, which cheers God and men, and go to wave over the trees?"

Finally all the trees said to the bramble, "You come, reign over us!"

And the bramble said to the trees, "If in truth you are anointing me as king over you, come and take refuge in my shade." ([Judges 9:8-15a](#), NASB).

All the fruitful trees and vines that provided oil, good fruit and new wine to honor God and men refused rule over the trees. To them, ruling was useless and demeaning. But the bramble, which otherwise serves no useful purpose, agreed to rule over the trees, setting only one condition. "If in truth you are anointing me as king over you, come and take refuge in my shade." The bramble has plenty of thorns but little shade from the blistering sun. If you attempt to take refuge under its covering, beware of its thorns.

Years later, Israel wanted to come under the rule of the bramble. When the prophet Samuel was of a ripe old age, Israel came seeking a king. Trusting God to govern them

was too fearful a thing, so they wanted to go the predictable way of the kings of the Gentiles. In so doing, they rejected the rule and sovereignty of God. They rejected God as their King. They would rather have a bramble rule over them--Saul, a herder of asses. Israel preferred the governmental style of Cain and Nimrod.

Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; and they said to him, "Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations."

But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the LORD.

And the LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day--in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods--so they are doing to you also." (1 Samuel 8:4-8, NASB).

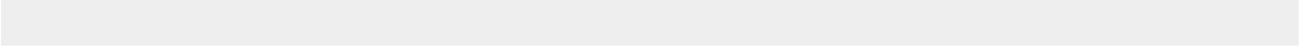
Note here that when Israel chose to have a mere man rule over them and be like the idolatrous nations around them, God was displeased and equated their lust for a king with serving other gods. The desire to have a king is tantamount to idolatry, because both replace the rule or Lordship of the true King.

A Return to Theocracy, the Direct Rule of God

The tempter's statement "you will be like God" reveals the true problem. Seeking to be self-governing like God, is in itself the rejection of God's kingdom and leads to nothing but corruption. When fallen men band together, they multiply their rebellion and soulish power, leading to greater decadence. As man consolidates his fleshly power, his government is bent toward degeneration and slavery and is at enmity with the government of God.

The government of man and the government of God oppose each other. (See Psalms 2:2-3) In the city of man, every new law is an increase of man's control and tyranny, supplanting the sovereignty of God. Men may not intentionally set out to do this, but it is the nature of their government, which originated in the way of Cain. For God's kingdom to be fully advanced, God must first call a remnant out unto Himself--a people governed by His Spirit (Romans 8:14 and 19) and called by His name--a people of another way.

Unfortunately, this remnant only wants to journey so far, and then build a tower. Such was the case with Israel. In Acts 7, Stephen rebukes the Jewish leaders for this very thing.



Chapter 3: Stephen's Discourse

Stephen was charged with speaking against the Temple and against the law of Moses and of saying that Jesus of Nazareth will destroy the Temple and change the customs Moses handed down (See Acts 6:11-14). Because of this he was arrested and brought before the high council. There Stephen made his final appeal to the elders of his people to come out, to exit the traditions that they so zealously defended, and embrace the Christ they had crucified. In a certain sense, Stephen's accusers were right, for Christ had come to do away with the old temple order, and yes, even make obsolete the customs and laws that Moses handed down.

Stephen's response to their accusations is a brief but thorough history of the pilgrimage of Israel and how God kept calling them out of the tribes of fallen man unto Himself. To view Stephen's discourse as a mere synopsis of their history is to miss the point altogether. Did Stephen pretend to teach the elders of Israel something that they knew quite well already? We can almost hear the ho hums rising from the yawning mouths, as this elite cast of scholars and elders sat half-listening to this nobody who dared to instruct them. Stephen's final words concealed the mystery of the church, not as an institution but as a sojourning assembly of called-out pilgrims, a people progressing toward a predetermined destination, having no continuing city. Stephen rebuked the high council for their failure to assume this nomadic posture and follow their Messiah, Jesus Christ, in the new exodus. Stephen's final words give us fresh insight into what Jesus meant when He said, "I will build My Church."

We encourage you to read Stephen's appeal (Acts 7:2-52) in its entirety, paying close attention to words like go out, came out, sent out, brought them out, come into, and so forth. God is always calling His people out and on toward the full restoration of all things. (Acts 3:21)

The Exodus and Faithful Abraham

Stephen starts his exhortation as follows:

Brothers and fathers, listen. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, "Get out of your

land, and from your relatives, and come into a land which I will show you." Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans [Babylon], and lived in Haran. From there, when his father was dead, God moved him into this land, where you are now living. (Acts 7:2-4 WEB)

This is the first time God called a people out instead of scattering them. God called a man named Abraham out of his idolatrous homeland to sojourn with Him in a strange land. God intended to make a covenant with Abraham that would bless the world, something He could not do while Abraham lived in the land of the Chaldeans. The purposes of God could never be realized in Babylon. The song of the Lord cannot be sung in a strange land (Psalms 137:4).

He gave him no inheritance in it, (the land) no, not so much as to set his foot on. He promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when he still had no child. God spoke in this way: that his seed would live as aliens in a strange land, and that they would be enslaved and mistreated for four hundred years. "I will judge the nation to which they will be in bondage," said God, "and after that will they come out, and serve me in this place." (Acts 7:5-7 WEB)

Here is another exodus. God revealed to Abraham that his seed would also be sojourners in a strange land, kept in slavery for 400 years. In the crucible of Egypt Abraham's seed became a nation. In the fullness of time they heard another call to come out! By the mighty hand of God, the promised seed returned to serve God in the Promised Land.

Toward the close of that 400 years, a deliverer was born among them. His name was Moses. After being retrieved from the river Nile as an infant, Moses was raised by Pharaoh's daughter and educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. As a man, he found himself in an exodus of his own. Like his forefather Abraham, he sojourned in a strange land. Moses saw the abuses of the Egyptian taskmasters and tried to deliver his people from the lash of oppression, but his deliverance ministry went wide of the mark. Beating taskmasters to death one at a time to set the people free was both tiring and ineffective. Fearing the consequences of his actions, Moses fled Egypt and became a stranger in the land of Midian.

After forty years of tending sheep for his father-in-law, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob appeared to Moses in the form of a burning bush saying, "I have seen the

affliction of My people in Egypt, and I have heard their groan; and I came down to pluck them out. And now come, I will send you into Egypt" (Acts 7:34 MKJV).

Through Moses, God did mighty miracles, defeating all the magicians and gods of Egypt, climaxing with that great event just preceding Israel's full deliverance, known to the generations that followed as the Passover.

The Passover--a call to Exodus

In Exodus 12: 1-51 we find the record of Israel's last night in bondage. Each house chose a lamb without blemish. As instructed by Yahweh, they killed the lamb and applied its blood to the lintels and doorposts of their individual dwellings. Then when the death angel came that night, only those houses that had the lamb's blood applied were passed over. Everyone else suffered the loss of the firstborn. After cooking their lamb, each family was instructed to eat it, leaving nothing over. They were also instructed to eat in haste, fully dressed, with their staves in hand and shoes on their feet.

This is how you shall eat it: with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste: it is Yahweh's Passover. (Exodus 12:11 WEB)

The Passover meal itself is a call to exodus--a call to go out and worship. When a person is born again and becomes a partaker of the Lamb of God, he must be ready to travel (John 3:8). We must eat with our loins girded, with our shoes on our feet and our staff in hand, mobile and ready to follow that holy Wind wherever and whenever He leads.

As unthinkable as it may seem, people find security in bondage. They find the whole concept of exodus frightening. For hundreds of years, Israel lived in bondage being beaten by the task masters of Egypt. They lived as slaves and had their children killed by their oppressors, but there is no record that any of them tried to escape until Moses. It requires faith like Abraham's to leave the tyranny of the familiar, however oppressing it may be, and journey into the unknown.

The sound of great mourning was heard in Egypt that night as the death angel passed over, but in those dwellings with blood stained door frames there was peace. God

called a remnant out of all the people on the earth and now they would come forth as distinctively His--a royal priesthood, a holy nation.

He brought them out after he had worked wonders and miracles in the land of Egypt and in the Red Sea and in the wilderness forty years. (Acts 7:36 MKJV)

At this point Stephen began to reveal the motive behind his history lesson. He now made an amazing comparison that not only revealed the scope of Christ's ministry but also defined the nature of the church.

This is that Moses who said to the sons of Israel, "The Lord your God shall raise up a Prophet to you from your brothers, One like me; you shall hear Him." (Acts 7:37 MKJV)
This is He, that was in the church [*ekklesia*] in the wilderness.
(Acts 7:38 KJV)

"I will build my church" (A Community in Exodus)

Here Stephen described the pilgrim nation of Israel, sojourning in the wilderness, as the *ekklesia* in the wilderness. *Ekklesia* is a compound Greek word, consisting of, *ek*, "out of," and *klesis*, "a calling," a called out assembly. Moses said, "The Lord your God shall raise up a Prophet. . .like me," referring to Jesus. Was Christ like Moses in appearance or in function? Christ was like Moses in that He also led an exodus. Christ led a people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, out of the bondage of the world and religion. If Christ is like Moses, leading a great exodus, then the church is like Israel, traveling to a promised country--seeking a city whose builder and Maker is God. In that sense the true Church is still the *ekklesia* in the wilderness.

Jesus led the great exodus out of religion (the old wineskin). He said to Peter, "I will build My church [*ekklesia*], and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." These words were carefully chosen to communicate this very thought of exodus--"I will build my called out ones." *Ekklesia* does imply a gathering together--a congregation--but in its classical usage it had no religious overtones (see Matthew 16:18). Once again God realized His greater purposes by calling a people out for His name's sake. He birthed a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people to show forth the praises of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. (See 1 Peter 2:9.)

The Synagogues of Men

In the time of the early church, the synagogue (Greek *Sunagoge*) was the closest representation of what is called the church. However, it is used in scripture only once of the *ekklesia*. This one use was by James, who wrote to Jewish believers, who were still gathering in synagogues or in synagogue-like meetings. (See James 2:2) Either way, they had not yet come out of the old order. The intended readers of this epistle were apparently exclusively Jewish, since it is addressed "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" (James 1:1). James broached the subject of swearing oaths (James: 5:12), which was part of the Jewish rabbinical tradition, indicating that these congregations were still attempting to keep the traditions of their fathers. The tradition of the synagogue came out of the Babylonian captivity, and when Jesus spoke to the Jews about these gathering places, He called them "your synagogues," implying that they were not of His Father. In fact, Jesus warned His disciples that they would be tried and beaten in these buildings (see Matthew 23:34). As we can see from the history of the Jewish exodus, it was one thing to extract the people out of Egypt, but a whole other thing to get Egypt out of the people of God. Traditions die hard.

Jesus had no intention of incorporating the old order into this new calling forth. He had not come to put His new wine in an old wineskin, nor did He come saying the old wine is better (Luke 5:39). The *ekklesia* that Christ builds can never be contained in the old wineskin of Judaism.

Paul further defined the *ekklesia* as "the Church which is His Body" (Ephesians 1:22). The living, vibrant Body of Christ stands in stark antithesis to the sociopolitical synagogue-like institution called the church. The church today represents a radical departure from the quintessential makeup of the Body, the *ekklesia* of Christ.

Jacques Ellul wrote,

There is in the church no association, according to the usual formula, whereby a sociological institution may also be the body of Christ, or the body of Christ may be forcibly put in sociological forms. Once the church organizes and clericalizes itself, it is intrinsically a transgression of God's order.⁵

The translators of the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament, used the word *ekklesia* as the equivalent of the Hebrew *qahal*. *Qahal* was used in the Old Testament to refer to

the congregation or community of Israel. *Ekklesia* or church should not be viewed as a static institutional entity, but as a growing, sojourning, community of pilgrims.

The Greek word *Sunogoge* denotes a bringing together, and in its first century context would have been perceived as a calling into a consecrated building. Nowhere in scripture can we find any evidence of God establishing the synagogue as such. Synagogues were first founded in Babylon during the exile. They were the creation of religious men, and synagogue leaders lorded over the people who met there. It is not surprising that the dominant characteristic of the synagogue is the very thing which Jesus forbids in the *ekklesia*, oppressive top-down hierarchy. (Matthew 20:25-28, Luke 22:25-26, Matthew 23:10-12)

Two times in the book of Revelations the Greek word for synagogue is used in connection with Satan, "the synagogue of Satan" (see Revelation 2:9, 3:9). Christ had not come to build a synagogue-like institution, with consecrated buildings, chief seats and Chief Rulers, but to lead a people out of that old religious mentality into a living, relational body with Himself as the only Head. Just as Moses was anointed to lead a people out of bondage, so the Spirit of the Lord was upon Jesus without measure. For God had anointed Him to "[preach the gospel to the poor, heal the brokenhearted, preach deliverance to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind and to set at liberty them that are bruised](#)" (Luke 4:18).

Did Jesus come to liberate Israel from the Roman occupation? He had many opportunities to confront them as He spoke to Roman centurions and figureheads. We cannot find one instance where Christ criticized the Roman Empire. Who were the captors of the people Jesus came to deliver? The only human agents who fit that description were the religious rulers of that time.

Jesus did criticize the religious rulers at every turn, calling them such names as snakes, brood of vipers, whited sepulchres, etc. The religious rulers were the true captors of the people of God. They were the taskmasters of their day, not Rome. They were the ones who bound "[heavy burdens and grievous to be borne. . . on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers](#)" (Matthew 23:4). They had enslaved the people by their traditions and shut up the kingdom of heaven against men (Matthew 23:13). Jesus was anointed to deliver Israel from the tyranny of its religious leaders and He is still doing the same today.

Stephen continues,

. . .to whom (Moses) our fathers wouldn't be obedient, but rejected him, and turned back in their hearts to Egypt, saying to Aaron, "Make us gods that will go before us, for as for this Moses, who led us out of the land of Egypt, we don't know what has become of him." (Acts 7:39-40 WEB)

Without doubt, religion is the subtlest form of idolatry. Its temples and sanctuaries, rites and rituals, decorations and priestly robes--which are said to exist for God's glory alone--become the venerated objects that take His place in the hearts of men. These are today's idols, the works of man's own hands, which entice the sojourner to compromise the journey and look back. This should give you a better understanding of Jesus' warning, "Remember Lot's wife."

Stephen continues,

They made a calf in those days, and brought a sacrifice to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their hands. But God turned, and gave them up to serve the host of the sky, as it is written in the book of the prophets, "Did you offer to me slain animals and sacrifices Forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? You took up the tent of Moloch, The star of your god Rephan, The figures which you made to worship. I will carry you away beyond Babylon." (Acts 7: 41-43 WEB)

The worship of Moloch was the worship of the sun. In the ancient world the objects of worship were chosen by one simple criterion. They worshipped what they saw as the source of life and the sun was their chief object of worship.

For 430 years Israel lived in the midst of an idolatrous nation. They had never seen anything else. Now in a time of testing, they reverted back to the ways of Egypt. Nothing except their location had really changed. Up until that time Israel knew only the works of God. They saw His mighty deeds in Egypt, but knew little of His nature and purposes. Another Witness was needed to show them the difference between the profane and the holy and to teach them fidelity to the ONE true God.

The light they needed was on the other side of the thick cloud of darkness, where He declared His name to Moses. However veiled it may have been, the Tabernacle of

Witness provided a place for God to dwell among His people, for He had originally called them ALL to be His priests.

You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel. (Exodus 19:4-6, NKJV)

Because of the rebellion of the people, the ark of His presence was veiled inside the tabernacle or tent of meeting from the people. The pattern of that tent spoke of a day when, with unveiled faces, we would behold His glory--a day when God would dwell openly among His people as was always His desire. Every detail of the tabernacle spoke of Christ, who later came as Immanuel, God with us. His body was referred to as the temple of his body (John 2:21), and His flesh as the veil. "By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" (Hebrews 10:20).

Stephen continues,

The tabernacle of witness was among our fathers in the wilderness, as commanded by God, speaking to Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen. Which also having received it by inheritance with Joshua, our fathers, with Joshua, in taking possession of the nations whom God drove out before the face of our fathers until the days of David, who found favor with God and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob; but Solomon built Him a house. But, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says, "Heaven is My throne and earth is My footstool. What house will you build Me, says the Lord, or what is the place of My rest? Has not My hand made all these things?" (Acts 7: 44-50 MKJV)

At this point you can almost see the hackles rising on the necks of the Jewish high council. God had abandoned what He once sanctified by His presence. His presence is no longer found among rebellious men in temples made with hands, but He is found in the living stones of a new and lasting tabernacle, the body of Christ. Although He once dwelt in an earthly tent and then in the temple, He no longer does so. The finished work of Christ changed everything. The perfect displaced the imperfect, as expressed

in 1 Corinthians 13:10, "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

Even Solomon himself knew that man could not build God a house when he said, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!" (1 Kings 8:27, NKJV). He knew his best attempts were imperfect.

The author of Hebrews wrote of the New Covenant,

In that he says, "A new covenant," he has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. (Hebrews 8:13 NKJV).

We see a common thread of exodus in these scriptures--a call to leave the old and imperfect that is vanishing away, and embrace the new. George Fox explains the transforming effect this revelation had upon him.

At another time it was opened in me that God, who made the world, did not dwell in temples made with hands. This, at first, seemed a strange word because both priests and people used to call their temples or churches, dreadful places, and holy ground, and the temples of God. But the Lord showed me, so that I did see clearly, that He did not dwell in these temples which men had commanded and set up, but in people's hearts; for both Stephen and the Apostle Paul bore testimony that he did not dwell in temples made with hands, not even in that which He once commanded to be built, since He had put an end to it; but that His people were His temple, and He dwelt in them.

If Christ's once for all sacrifice made the Old Testament system with its temple, priesthood, altars, furnishings, vestments and sacrifices obsolete, why is the residue of it still evident in Christendom today? Man has done all he can to preserve this bit of classical antiquity, guarding it as if it were a priceless heirloom. Some people are even ready to kill to preserve it.

Like Peter on the Mount of transfiguration, they want to enshrine the moment by starting a building program. "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." Peter's words were mindless. He did not know what he was saying. The Father was not impressed with

enshrining the moment. He has always had one desire and model for us, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!" (Luke 9:32-36)

Structures built to house the works of God are built on a foundation other than Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11). Building is the opposite of following God in obedience. Jesus tried to get Nicodemus to see this when He said, "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." (John 3:8, NKJV).

It was this antithesis or antichrist (instead of Christ) spirit which Stephen was now going to address:

O stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so you do.

Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you have now been the betrayers and murderers... (Acts 7:51-52 MKJV)

Here Stephen confronts the root cause behind religious man's refusal to move on with God. In Christ there was an exodus from the entire temple, sanctuary building, and hierarchy mentality. Those who truly follow the Lord should not concern themselves with these things. Like Abraham, they are sojourners, not kingdom builders or raisers of religious towers. The rending of the veil from top to bottom as Jesus hung on the cross marked the end of such holy places. It was the beginning of a new age where the believers themselves are the place of God's dwelling, the temple of the Holy Spirit. Consequently He no longer dwells in, nor is He worshipped in temples made with hands, nor has He been for the last 2000 years.

Isaiah prophesied of a time when God would not be confined to Jerusalem or Mount Gerizim, but a time in which His glorious presence would make all places sacred. A time when the earth "shall be full of the knowledge of Yahweh, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9).

Wherever Jesus reigns in the hearts of true believers, the kingdom of God exists, but we still look forward to the day of full restoration of all things.

Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (Revelation 11:15, NKJV).

Coming to the city of Samaria, the site of Jacob's well, Jesus sat down on the well to rest. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. During their conversation the woman perceived that Jesus was a prophet. This seemed an ideal time to settle an issue that had long been on her heart.

Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship. (John 4:20 WEB)

Jesus replied,

Woman, believe me, the hour comes, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, will you worship the Father. You worship that which you don't know. We worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such to be his worshippers. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. (John 4: 21-24 WEB)

God's plan from the beginning was for His knowledge and glory to fill the whole earth, NOT some sanctum sanctorum atop a mountain or in some holy city. His knowledge and glory are no longer confined to specific holy sites. Salvation came through the Jews and Jerusalem was the place of God's glory for a season, but Jesus saw a time when all that would change. He saw that God was leaving the Holy of Holies in the earthly sanctuary and He invited man to come into His presence in the heavenly sanctuary in spirit and in truth. The temple that had previously contained the glory of God was obsolete. The ark of His presence had never seen the inside of Herod's temple; it had been lost for hundreds of years. The Holy of Holies was empty. Jesus knew the Father would no longer be worshipped in man-made shrines, but would be worshipped in a manner consistent with His being. His temple is made of living stones by His Spirit.

Temple worship has been discarded by God. We must not be like the elders of Israel, who found their livelihood in the system that God had forsaken. Are we passionate for His glory or ambitious for our own--promoting my ministry, my gifting, my church? It is

really a matter of the heart. Just as the people of ancient Babel tried to make a name for themselves in their ambitious building program, so men today name their ministries after themselves.

Where are our treasures stored? If we seek to maintain our vested interests when the Spirit beckons, we will stiffen our necks and resist Him just as the Scribes and Pharisees did. They were not about to let Jesus, Stephen, Paul or even an angel cut into their control. They had too much invested in the temple. It was their power base. If God's glory motivates us, when He says come out, we will follow on.

Stephen's objective was to reveal an ancestral failing. Israel resisted the Holy Spirit at every stage of their journey. The new idol they worshiped was not Moloch or a golden calf, but a temple constructed by a traitorous king. It was a proud family tradition; their fathers in the wilderness had also gloried in the works of their hands. Stephen placed the High Council's devotion to the temple on the same level as the worship of Moloch. They missed the day of their visitation. They stopped following the cloud. They were to live just as their forefathers had, as sojourners--looking for that perfect city whose Builder and Maker is God. Many believers today also fail to see that the *ekklesia* of Christ, just like the *ekklesia* in the wilderness, is always in exodus--always moving on toward full restoration.

Today the church is pilgrim in name only. I (George) ran across an article on the Internet entitled, "Pilgrim Church Gets Ready to Move Again." Out of curiosity I read further, only to discover that the move consisted of selling one building and moving to another 18 miles to the east. This is the extent of the pilgrimage of the average Christian today. Having never abandoned the old order, they simply move it around from one mountain to another. Where are the sojourners?

Let us now turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews and observe the example of the great cloud of witnesses. Along with Abel, these witnesses walked by faith as pilgrims and sojourners. Their example is used to define faith itself.



Chapter 4: The Cloud of Witnesses

In this letter our spiritual ancestors receive commendation for a faith exemplified by their common attitude towards their earthly status.

By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.

Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude--innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country.

Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. (Hebrews 11:7-16, NKJV).

These great saints realized and accepted their true status on the earth. They were pilgrims, strangers and exiles who did not consider the earth their home. Instead they diligently pursued a better country, a heavenly country, a country that was not of this world. Even the thoughts or memories of the country they came from were put out of mind so they would not be tempted to return. Instead they turned their backs on the many pleasures and trappings of this world in order to stay on the nobler journey of apprehending God and manifesting His purposes in the earth. They were pressing on to lay hold of that for which they were laid hold of by Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:12).

These saints stayed true to the course even though the promise eluded their grasp. Please note that to walk by faith is to go out and walk upon this earth as Abraham did. It is a life of seeking a heavenly city that God has prepared, a city that has foundations, even Jesus Christ. (See Isaiah 28:16, 1 Corinthians 3:11)

Now we have entered the same race and the purpose of this race is to finish! We have been mobilized. All believers ought to be mobile--migrating from glory to glory in diligent pursuit of the fulfillment of God's global purpose. We are compelled to once again live as resident aliens on the earth.

God used the death of Stephen to start the church on its outward trek once again. Until then things were getting pretty cozy in Jerusalem. Even the temple priests were beginning to believe in the faith (Acts 6:7). There was no sign that the apostles were taking to heart the command of Jesus to take His gospel to the uttermost ends of the earth. Stephen spoke of a continuous exodus of God's faithful, and his death brought it to pass for this infant church.

We are not called to be city builders, denomination builders, or church builders We are called to be pilgrims in this earth as we follow the upward call. The early church knew this. They did not build a single church building for almost 300 years. They met in homes and kept moving outward with the Good News. They constantly referred to themselves as sojourners and pilgrims in the earth.

The opening words of the first Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, supposedly written during the lifetime of John, gives us an indication of the mindset of the churches at the close of the first century. Clement begins as follows. "The Church of God which sojourns at Rome, to the Church of God sojourning at Corinth, to them that are called and sanctified by the will of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Polycarp's letter to the Philippians was addressed to "the Church of God sojourning at Philippi." By this we see the mindset of the late first and early second century believers. They saw themselves as pilgrims and sojourners in a strange land. (See 1 Peter 2:11) They saw themselves as tent dwellers, not city builders. The ambition to settle and build cities for God came later with the full-blown apostasy of the church, which led to the present disorder.

The church is rife with denominations founded by and on the visions of mere men, each one claiming his handiwork to be the true city that we should give our money and

devotion to. Instead of answering that upward call, they end up playing the harlot with the world and giving birth to spiritual mutations that must be attended to like any deformed and disabled child. These offspring have no innate mobility and lack the ability to thoroughly mature without a release of miraculous power to reactivate their dead limbs. The cry of God's Spirit is for the church to once again arise and walk!

We are called forth to take up membership in ONE heavenly city and let our whole hearts be anchored there and there alone. This causes us to not seek His blessing on OUR city or movement, but draws us onward to His.

By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.

By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned. (Hebrews 11:23-29, NKJV).

Those who walk by faith cut themselves off from the success the world and its church system offers. They are single of focus like Moses, not content until they have seen the Living God face to face (Exodus 33:11). Sometimes this involves laying aside legitimate blessings. God will most assuredly demand that you put a knife to whatever has come between you and that heavenly city for your own sake.

Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented-- of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 11:35-12:2, NKJV).

If we are going to walk by faith, we must expect to be rejected by the inhabitants of this world and its systems, religious or otherwise. In modern churches today, time and attention is given to making the church palatable to the world. They attempt to remove the offense of the cross.

We must be ready for the long haul and keep focused on Jesus. He has not only called us to a life separate from the world, but to a life of suffering and rejection as well. From a worldly standpoint, this is not a selling point. Jesus came to His own and His own received him not, and we must expect to have fellowship with Christ in His sufferings. Jesus not only called us out of the world, but has promised to see to it that those who endure to the end get that heavenly reward.

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven."

Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire. (Hebrews 12:18-29, NKJV).

The writer of Hebrews draws our attention to the heavenly Jerusalem where Jesus sits as the Mediator of this present new covenant. As Paul wrote the Colossian believers, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Be mindful of things above, not on things on the earth." (Colossians 3:1-2 MKJV)

We are called to listen to His voice in order to escape the wrath of our God, who is a consuming fire. He warns us that all these created things that so easily distract us in this life will be removed and all that will remain is God's kingdom, which cannot be shaken.

We don't need another church growth seminar. We need a migration to the place where God is now. We need to be faithful to press on towards the ultimate finish, and to bring the purpose of God for this age to completion. We must return to the journey, to apprehending God and manifesting His purpose as a living organism. We are called to follow Jesus outside the camp of established religion, bearing His reproach.

Paul had a vision that was instilled in Him by the Lord like no other apostle. This vision went beyond any earthly institution. His vision was "in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," among that great cloud of witnesses. He wrote to the Ephesian church,

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. (Ephesians 1:3-6, NASB).

Here we see that Paul had something further in mind when he spoke of us as being in Christ. He first points out that EVERY spiritual blessing is in heavenly places in Christ. What? Doesn't God want to bless us here on earth? Doesn't He want us to live like a King's kids with all the riches that the world has to offer? No, I think that Paul has greater riches and blessings in mind than the things of this world that perish (Matthew 6:25).

Paul continues, "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him." Here he reveals that we were in Him before the

foundation of the world! Wow! Paul, do you really mean that? Could it be that God has made a body of spiritual cells, a body that pre-dates the universe as we know it? Were those same cells in that body fore-ordained to be manifest on this earth as His body, the body that shows Him to a lost and dying world? Are you still with us? It gets even better.

Paul taught, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20, KJV). Here we see that we were in Jesus' physical body on that cross outside the gates of Jerusalem. We also see that we walk out our spiritual lives by His faith, not ours. I find that very liberating. It is ALL JESUS! It is His faith, His death, His life and His love in us.

God is now calling for a new exodus from this weak and unworthy mixture. Those who embrace Christ's sacrifice are called to bear His reproach by going forth unto Him outside the camp. The word camp indicates an encampment, a mass gathering, and in this context refers to the city of Jerusalem, which was once a place of God's habitation. This city was once known as the city of the great King, but had become steeped in traditions that make void the commandments of God and had stopped living for His glory. They had stopped progressing with Him. When they discovered that Jesus would not fortify their existing institutions, the inhabitants of this city cried, "Crucify him, crucify him." It is the same today. Those who cling to the old wineskin, crucify Christ "afresh, putting Him to open shame." They make void the bidding of the Holy Spirit by clinging to their traditions. In an attempt to avoid His reproach, many have turned back in their hearts to the traditions of the past. They deny that Christ's sacrifice was intended to accomplish a continuing exodus from the things of this world and an ever-growing love for what is heavenly.

Jesus did not come to endorse the old temple order. Instead, He prophesied its end. (See Matthew 24:1-2) In 70 AD, Titus the Roman conqueror laid it in utter ruin. It had already outlived its usefulness by about 35 years. Just as Jesus had said, not one stone was left upon another--a testimony of its temporary Nature.

In that moment atop Calvary's hill, when Jesus uttered the words, "IT IS FINISHED," a great shift in heaven and earth occurred. The TIME that Jesus spoke of when true worshippers will worship God in Spirit and in truth had come. The Father can no longer

be worshipped in this mountain nor in Jerusalem. From that time on, there is a new altar that those serving the earthly tabernacle have no right to eat from. Those who worship in Spirit and in truth are those who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. (Revelation 14:4) They are the true Pilgrim Church. They have no continuing city here but look for one to come.

Paul also teaches us that we were resurrected with Christ. "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." (Romans 6:4,5, NASB). Yes, our bodies will be raised just like His, but in the spiritual sense, we are already there at the right hand of the Father dwelling in His resurrected power.

"We Have an Altar"

The book of Hebrews is an appeal to Jewish believers to exit the old order. Its author gives powerful witness to the fact that the old order has been made obsolete by a new and better Covenant. In God's economy the old system of temple worship has vanished away. In the closing chapter of Hebrews is an exhortation that can never make sense to those who cling to the old order, who have stopped journeying and have camped along the way, who lay stress upon earthly tabernacles.

We have an altar of which those serving the tabernacle have no authority to eat. For of the animals whose blood is brought by the high priest into the Holy of Holies concerning sins, of these the bodies are burned outside the camp. (See Leviticus 16:2, 27) Indeed, because of this, in order that He might sanctify the people by His own blood, Jesus suffered outside the gate. So let us go forth to Him outside the camp bearing His reproach. For we do not have here a continuing city, but we seek the city coming. Then through Him let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God always, that is, the fruit of the lips, confessing to His name. (Hebrews 13: 10-15 LITV)

Allegorically there are two altars today. One altar is of the earthly sanctuary or old order where worship is chiefly attached to observable places and events. The other is the heavenly tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man (Hebrews 8:2), where worship is in Spirit and in truth. Those who cling to the former order have no right to eat of the heavenly altar. Only those who go out to Him, leaving the old religious forms

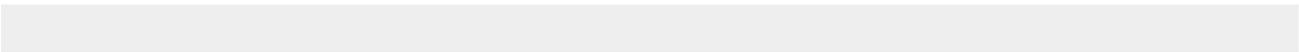
behind, may truly eat of it. Only those who suffer the reproach of Him who bore our sicknesses, carried our sorrows, was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities may eat of it. Those who go outside the camp unto Jesus can also expect to bear the same rejection and reproach that He did at the hands of the religious leaders, for this altar is often found in the presence of our enemies (Psalms 23:5).

By attempting to store new wine in old wineskins, Christianity today has become exactly what Christ warned against--a powerless mixture of the old and the new, unable to contain or sustain God's glory.

In Luke 5:36-39 Jesus explains the dire consequences of this mixture.

No one puts a piece of a new garment on an old garment; otherwise both the new will tear, and the old does not match the piece from the new. And no one puts new wine into old skins; otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins, and it will be poured out, and the skins will perish. But new wine is to be put into new skins, and both are preserved together. And no one drinking old wine immediately desires new; for he says, The old is better. (LITV)

How often has the Father poured the New Wine of His Spirit upon His children but the old wineskin couldn't contain it and the glory was short-lived? How often have we heard the stories of great revivals where God poured out His Spirit upon certain groups of people, but, in the end, things were worst off than before? Why is this? It is simple. Old wineskins cannot contain new wine. New wine will always burst old wineskins and the wine will spill out. I believe this is why sustained revival is so rare. The old obsolete religious system is too fixed and frail to contain the glory of the New Covenant. Contrary to Christ's advice, religious man is determined to mix the two.



Chapter 5: The Fullness of Iniquity and the Son of Perdition

In Genesis 15 we find the record of the cutting of the covenant between God and Abram.

And He said to Abram, You must surely know that your seed shall be a stranger in a land not theirs, and shall serve them. And they shall afflict them four hundred years. And also I will judge that nation whom they shall serve. And afterward they shall come out with great substance. And you shall go to your fathers in peace. You shall be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come here again, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. ([Genesis 15:13-16 MKJV](#))

Israel stayed in Egypt so long because the iniquity of a particular group of people had not reached its fullness. The iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full. There were many other people of the LAND that are not mentioned here. The Canaanites, the Gargashites, the Jebusites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, and the Hivites and many other "ites" also lived in the land of promise. All except the Amorites had reached the fullness of iniquity. God and the promised seed waited for the Amorites to reach the point of utter decadence that precedes judgment. God in His mercy would not pass judgment one moment sooner. As with the antediluvian race, His Spirit would not always strive with them.

God's timing is often dependent on the fullness of iniquity. The ultimate and final showdown between Christ--the Son of God--and the son of perdition at the end of the Church age also awaits the full expression of iniquity. If we do not understand this principle, we can never understand God's end-time purposes. At the end of this age iniquity will once again come to fullness, personified in one person called the son of perdition. This will set the stage for God's remnant to come into their fullness. Now let us consider the mystery surrounding this son of perdition.

The Son of Perdition

The first mention of the son of perdition is found in Christ's prayer in John 17:12.

["While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that you gave me I](#)

have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled."

Out of the twelve, the only one lost was the son of perdition, Judas. Judas is a type and a sign of the son of perdition who will be revealed in the close of the age. This is a mystery, the mystery of iniquity.

What scripture was Jesus referring to when He said, "and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled"? It is a reference to a passage found in the book of Zechariah. It was spoken at a time when the iniquity of Judah was full. In their idolatry and violence they followed full in the way of Cain. The time of judgment had come. God sent Zechariah to declare His judgment.

There is a voice of the howling of the shepherds; for their glory is destroyed. There is a voice of the roaring of young lions; for the pride of Jordan is destroyed. For so says Jehovah my God: Feed the flock of the slaughter, those buying them kill them, and hold themselves not guilty. And those who sell them say, Blessed be Jehovah, for I am rich; and their shepherds do not pity them. For I will never again pity the people of the land, says Jehovah; but lo, I will make the men come out, each one into his neighbor's hand and into his king's hand. And they shall strike the land, and I will not deliver out of their hand. And I fed the flock of slaughter, even the poor of the flock. And I took two staves for myself; the one I called Kindness, and the other I called Union. And I fed the flock. I also cut off three shepherds in one month; and my soul was impatient with them, and their soul also despised me. And I said, I will not feed you; that which dies, let it die; and that which is to be cut off, let it be cut off. And those left, let them eat, each woman her neighbor's flesh. And I took my staff Kindness, and broke it apart, to break My covenant which I had made with all the peoples. And it was broken in that day; and so the poor of the flock who were watching Me knew that it was the Word of Jehovah. And I said to them, If it is good, give My price; and if not, let it go. So they weighed My price thirty pieces of silver. And Jehovah said to me, Throw it to the potter, the magnificent price at which I was valued by them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of Jehovah. Then I broke My other staff Union apart, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel. And Jehovah said to me, Take to yourself yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd. For lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care for those going to ruin, nor will he seek the young, nor will heal that which is broken, nor will he feed that which

stands. But he shall eat the flesh of the fat and tear off their hoofs. Woe to the worthless shepherd who abandons the flock! The sword shall be on his arm and on his right eye; his arm shall be completely dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened. (Zechariah 11:3-17)

It is extremely important to note the context of this prophecy, in order to comprehend the full measure of what Jesus was conveying. God sent Zechariah to pronounce a word of judgment on Judah, and particularly on the shepherds of Judah. The flock was so wretchedly treated that they were called the flock of slaughter. They were bought, sold and killed. The buyers killed them and excused themselves of any guilt. The sellers had the audacity to view their ill-gotten gain as the blessing of God, saying, "Blessed be Jehovah, for I am rich."

In the late first century, Jude wrote of the ongoing defilement of Cain's way.

For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. (Jude 1:4)

Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. (Jude 1:11, NASB).

Cain, Balaam and Korah all had one thing in common--they refused to be governed by God. These men mentioned in Jude did for the early Church what Cain had done for the antediluvian world. They were corrupting influences, blemishes in their love feasts.

Jude further explained,

These are hidden rocky reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you, shepherds who without fear feed themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn leaves without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots." (Jude 1:12 WEB)

It was during a love feast in the upper room that Judas went out from the presence of God, just as Cain had. Judas was religious, just as Cain was. Like Cain, Judas was a thief, seeking his own. He even stole from the common moneybag. Like Cain, Judas was a kingdom builder, a militant zealot, seeking to rebuild the kingdom of Israel and restore it to its former glory. Like Cain, Judas also plotted the death of his brother

(Jesus) for personal gain, thirty pieces of silver. Judas also plotted the death of his brother (Jesus) and betrayed the Son of God for thirty pieces of silver. He later tried to repent by returning the silver to the temple rulers, but they would not receive it. To them, it was blood money, the price of blood. It is more than coincidental that Abel's blood cried out from the field where Cain had killed him and hidden his body, and here the thirty pieces of silver would be used to buy a field named "The field of blood" (Matthew 27:8).

So Zechariah went on to say essentially the very same thing as Jude.

. . .and their shepherds do not pity them. . .I will raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care for those going to ruin, nor will he seek the young, nor will heal that which is broken, nor will he feed that which stands. But he shall eat the flesh of the fat and tear off their hoofs.

Here we see the judgment on those who walked in the idolatry and violence of Cain. They reap what they sow. The very same violence would be enacted by shepherds who strongly exhibit the same iniquity, feeding on the flock in worship of themselves.

Judas had an entirely different goal than Christ. Judas wanted to build an earthly kingdom. His ambitions were counter to those of Jesus, who wanted to establish the Kingdom of God. These are two entirely different passions.

The chief characteristic of both Cain and Judas is a drive for an objective that is counter to God's purposes. Cain tried to advance himself by killing his brother. He not only contended with Abel but also disapproved of God's will. He did not accept God's choice. This was also the case with Judas, who betrayed Christ for his own advantage. The humble Servant Christ failed to meet Judas' grand expectations. Neither Cain nor Judas wanted or accepted God's will. Both wanted to establish earthly kingdoms by treachery. The greater ramifications of this will become more apparent as we go on.

Paul wrote to the Philippians,

And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token (manifestation made by act) of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake. (Philippians 1:28-29).

This suffering will be at the hands of men like Cain and Judas, religious men who offer sacrifices with their own gain in view. This is a clear manifestation of who they really are as they strive against you who truly believe.

Historically, the institutional church has fully exhibited the spirit of the son of perdition and is responsible for horrible violence and bloodshed. The perpetrators of this violence were religious people who thought they were doing God a service. Like Cain, they offered sacrifices, but betray and murder true believers wholesale. Although things are more civil in our day since murder is outlawed, the treachery and betrayal remain. Before the end of the age, as this mystery reaches its fullness, there will be a resurgence of the bloodshed as well. The son of perdition will be manifest in his fullness.

The government imposed by men can be no more perfect than the men who govern. For this reason God is calling men out of the corrupted cities to that city whose Builder and maker is God. This is more than figurative. It is a very real spiritual pilgrimage, with Jesus going before us as a Shepherd, leading the way. (See Isaiah 40:10,11).

Just as Israel could not come out of Egypt one moment before the iniquity of the Amorites was full, the fullness of this mystery, the mystery of iniquity, must also come before the manifest Sons of God can appear. All God's works are done in contrast. In His letter to the Romans, Paul asked a question that profoundly makes this point.

For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "Even for this same purpose I have raised you up, that I might show My power in you, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth" (Romans 9:17 MKJV).

We do not agree with the fatalism of Calvin, nor do we pretend to fully understand God's ways. We have no intention of getting into the traditional debate over predestination. We do want to show that God contrasts His power and glory on the backdrop of iniquity, like a diamond set on black velvet. In order for the mystery of Christ to reach its manifest fullness, there must first come the fullness of the mystery of iniquity.

Falling Away-The Mystery of Iniquity

Paul spoke of this final apostasy or falling away in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. In verse three we read these words, ". . .let no man beguile you in any wise: for it (the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him VS 1) will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (2 Thessalonians 2:3 ASV).

The falling away has already occurred for the most part, but like the iniquity of the Amorites, it is not yet full. God and His children wait for the full manifestation of this mystery, so that He might show His power and declare His name throughout the earth.

Paul continues to explain how this mystery will unfold.

. . .who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, setting himself forth, that he is God. (2 Thessalonians 2:4 MKJV)

This passage reveals several things about the son of perdition. The word sits in the phrase "he sits as God" is the Greek word *kathizo*. Although it is translated *set* in many instances, *kathizo* carries the thought of continuance. "To have fixed one's abode, to set, appoint, to confer a kingdom on one."⁶ The words "setting himself forth, that he is God" reveal the effort and objective of the son of perdition. He sits, posturing as though he were God, but he is also trying to consolidate that position. We have words for this in our English vocabulary such as imposter, counterfeit, and fraud. The purpose of the son of perdition is to displace the Son of God. He is Satan's counterfeit messiah. We believe this mystery will manifest in both an individual and corporate expression of iniquity in the final days. Just as Christ the true Messiah has a many-membered body called the Body of Christ, the son of perdition will also have a corporate expression, many antichrists. John wrote:

Little children, it is the last time: and as you have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. (1 John 2:18)

Both are waiting to come to fullness. The falling away had to occur first so the full manifestation of the son of perdition might be manifest. The sons of God will be displayed on this ebony backdrop.

Paul was not only speaking of the immediate fulfillment of Christ's words, "[For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will lead many astray](#)" ([Matthew 24:5 WEB](#).) He was more concerned with the long-term fulfillment of this iniquity--the fullness of the mystery of iniquity.

Jesus was lowly, emptying Himself, taking on the form of a servant. Antichrist, the opposite of Christ, exalts himself. This is the difference between the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of antichrist. In killing Abel, Cain preferred himself above his brother. He rose up, exalting himself in his own brutish way.

Because this is the message which you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain was of the evil one, and killed his brother. And for what did he kill him? Because his works were evil, but the things of his brother were righteous. ([1 John 3:11-12 LITV](#))

People who exalt themselves above their brothers are of the spirit of antichrist and have believed the lie (See [2 Thessalonians 2:11](#)). The article *the* in the Greek implies that there is only one lie that all others spring from. It is the lie that Satan used to tempt and deceive Eve. "[You shall be as God, knowing good and evil.](#)" It was the lie first born in the heart of Lucifer who said in his heart, "[I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High](#)" ([Isaiah 14:14](#)).

If we don't love the truth there is only one other option, The Lie. We can embrace Christ's humility, empty ourselves like He did and walk the way of the cross as servants, or we can take the path of self-exaltation. The strong delusion of [2 Thessalonians 2:11](#) is believing the lie and seeking to climb to the lofty heights of godhood. Any man who is going the wrong way while thinking he is on the right path is deluded. The way to life is through descending into the grave, possessing the mind of Jesus, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God and yet emptied himself, taking on the form of a servant. Those who choose the wrong path, climbing the heights or building towers to heaven, fully identify with Satan, who first planned to set his throne above the stars of heaven and exalt himself above all that is called God. The ambition to climb is the strong delusion, the antithesis of the humble, lowly servant Christ! The serpent that deceived Eve has enticed these deluded people onto another path so that their thoughts are corrupted from the purity of Christ. They have embraced another

Jesus, another spirit and another gospel. (See 2 Corinthians 11:3-4) This Deceiver knows no limits. He even tempted Jesus to climb up and rule over (Matthew 4:8-9).

The Mystery is how this darkness can be perceived as light. Atheism is not Satan's greatest deception. His greatest deception is religion! Remember Cain's sacrifice. The mystery of iniquity will be fully manifest in the context of a counterfeit church, driven by another spirit, manifesting a drive opposite to the Spirit of Christ.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:7, Paul sees this mystery coming out of the midst. "For the mystery of lawlessness already is working, only he is holding back now, until it comes out of the midst." (LITV)

This mystery was and will yet be manifest out from the midst of the true church. In his epistles Paul gives us a vivid picture of what this apostasy will look like. He told the Ephesian elders that after his departing, "savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves" (Acts 20:29-30, NKJV). Note the objective, to draw away disciples. Wolves rise up to do something that no one dared to do before. They try to draw away the disciples after themselves to establish congregations in their own name, with themselves as the center. Consequently, virtually every denomination has some man/women as its founder and namesake.

Just like Ishmael, this apostate corporate expression of the counterfeit son, the son of perdition, is intent on passing itself off as the real heir.

Beginning as early as the late first century, John warned: "Little children, these are the end times, and as you heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen. By this we know that it is the end times. They went out from us, but they didn't belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have continued with us. But they left, that they might be revealed that none of them belong to us" (1 John 2:18-19 WEB).

John later warns of one who rose up in the midst of the believers and ruled over them.

I wrote to the assembly, but he loving to be first of them, Diotrephes, does not receive us Because of this, if I come, I will recall his works which he does, ranting against us with evil words. And not being satisfied with these, neither does he receive the

brothers; and those intending it he prevents, and thrusts them out from the assembly. (3 John 1:10-11, LITV).

These people go out from the church by exalting themselves above their fellow believers or allowing others to exalt them. These who love the preeminence not only displace godly men like John, but they even displace Jesus. This is the true meaning of the word antichrist, for it not only means against Christ, but in place of Christ.

The danger here is not so much that one man will rise up among the saints, but that he would delude the rest of the body by his example. A little of this leaven has leavened the whole lump.

As Paul continues to warn,

I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers. (2 Timothy 4:1-3 NKJV).

As many a Protestant will attest, Paul looked into the future and saw the celibate priesthood of the papacy, which also forbade certain foods on certain days. But is this the greatest danger to the church?

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. (1 Timothy 4:1-3, NKJV).

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! (2 Timothy 3:1-5, NKJV).

Note here that men will heap to themselves teachers who will teach according to their own desires, not the will or desire of God. They are content with appearing to be godly, but in reality they deny Him access to their lives and become totally powerless in their faith. These passages give us a sense of the apostasy that did occur and is indeed occurring in the end times.

2000 Years of the Last Days

Some might say, "These things are prophesied for the last days and are still in the future." Note here that the first century believers understood that they were living in the last days. (See 1 John 2:18 and Hebrews 1: 1-2)

According to Joel, the Holy Spirit would be poured out in the last days. Those who witnessed the Spirit's outpouring on the day of Pentecost were living in the last days. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh" (Acts 2:17 NKJV).

The falling away has already happened. It happened in the last days, just as Paul and John foresaw. The church has fallen from power to a form of godliness. We have a lot of form and very little Spirit.

By the close of the first century, one church had all but utterly fallen and the rest were soon to follow. The church of the Laodiceans was about to have their candlestick removed. Revelation 3:20 depicts their condition as an assembly rudely leaving Christ standing at the door, knocking and asking to be let in. It had become so bad that even though He was knocking and asking, few were listening. He had clearly been shut out. By the close of the first century the falling away was already in full swing

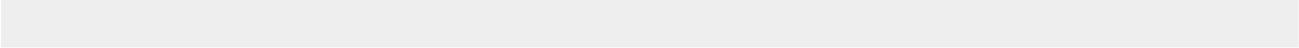
. John foresaw this mystery after it had come to fullness. Things worsened dramatically, for toward the close of the age, the apostate Church is depicted as a murderous harlot. On her forehead a name is written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations in the Earth (Revelation 17:5). The Kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. (Revelation 17:2) She is guilty of the blood of the Saints and in her hand is a cup full of that blood. (See Revelation 17:6)

From the time that Paul wrote, "[For the mystery of iniquity does already work](#)" (2 [Thessalonians 2:7](#)) to the time that John received the letters to the seven churches was only about 24 years. In that short time span the church at Laodicea had all but fallen so that God described them as "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:17). Things were escalating rather quickly. Only 200 years later Christianity became fully paganized with the help of a despotic Roman emperor.

How far the church had fallen can be seen in a brief review of church history. Under the direction of Roman emperors, the church embraced numerous pagan holidays. They adapted their priesthood after the order of the pagan priesthood. They erected buildings, now called churches, fashioned after the order of pagan temples and Roman civic centers. They took the garments of pagan priests, and the goddess of the pagan temples, Isis or Artemis the Great Virgin, the Mother of God, or the Queen of heaven, otherwise known as Mary. In keeping with the pagan custom of deifying men they venerated saints, naming temples after them. The Roman mosaic below shows how far the church had fallen. It depicts Christ as the sun god ascending into heaven in his chariot. The worship of the sun was not outlawed in the Roman church until the fifth century. Constantine, the supposed Christian emperor, maintained the title, Pontiff Maximus, the god over all other Roman gods. He later also took the title of the

thirteenth apostle. Christianity had fallen right into the lap of paganism. The worship of the Son had been confounded by the worship of the sun.

So much for the fall! Now for the recovery!



Chapter 6: The Reformation and the New Exodus

Reformation is a very telling word. For something to be reformed it must be fallen from its first and normal state. The word implies degeneration and malformation. The church as we know it is indeed deformed, having only a form of godliness. The Lord's cry to His people is "Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the first works" (Revelation 2:5).

Christendom fell by embracing paganism and the old religious order of legalistic Judaism. To the degree that these foreign elements remain in the church, there is yet the need for reformation, a need to remember from where we have fallen and repent.

The Reformation Cry—"Come out of her My people"

It all began with another call to exodus--a call heard by all true reformers, written in the book which foretold of things which must shortly come to pass.

Come out of her [the Mystery Babylon], My people, that you may not be partakers of her sins, and that you may not receive of her plagues. ([Revelation 18:4 MKJV](#))

The early reformers attempted to change the apostate church from within. An example of such a reformer is John Wycliffe of England (1329-1384). Wycliffe boldly attacked the papacy, striking at the sale of indulgences and other rites of pagan origin, such as the veneration or worship of saints. He paid for this with his life.

John Huss of Bohemia (1374-1415) was another who heard the call. Because of His devotion to Christ, he was burned at the stake. A paper crown with the details of his supposed heresy was placed upon his head. He gladly wore it to his death, proclaiming it was the least he could do for Him who wore a crown of thorns.

In time the reformers came to define the apostasy as "The Babylonian Captivity of popes" or as Luther put it, "The Babylonian captivity of the Church." This view changed the image from inner reform to exodus. The reformers began to see that the church could not be reformed--that she was a hopeless harlot bent on the destruction of the people of God.

They began to come out but they went only so far. Like the children of Israel, they turned back in their hearts and worshiped the works of their own hands. They built static institutions, and despite all efforts to the contrary, in time these institutions bore a pronounced resemblance to the apostate systems from which they had escaped. They came out but only to embrace anew the failings of the former system.

This Cain-like tendency to entrench ourselves in systems and mentalities that hinder and eventually halt our forward motion is evidenced by the myriad of denominational affiliations. Most of these denominations are stifled by the very boundaries they installed to protect their once powerful movement. Having come out from among the deadwood of their day, they succumbed to the very thing that caused their own petrification. Like all the moves before them, they hardened, refusing to move ahead with fresh growth. In defining creeds and drafting bylaws, they stiffened their necks and resisted any further change. It is rare for the second generation to have the vision of the founding generation.

Before long, some brave soul once again hears the call, comes out, and leads a new exodus. When this happens, the party of the first part sets themselves to kill the party of the second part in the same way the Scribes and Pharisees resisted anyone who tried to leave their ranks. Sadly, those who came out only sojourned a short time before repeating the same mistakes. In each case, what began with the Spirit degenerated into a movement, that further deteriorated into an institution, and in time, the institution became an immovable monument or mausoleum, guarded by stiff-necked Ecclesiarchs. This cycle has repeated itself over and over again right up unto this present time. It has never stopped!

The one telltale factor common in the recurrent demise of the moves of God is that the leaders repeat the error of Cain. When their sacrifice is rejected, they go out from the presence of the Lord and build cities around their revelation, naming those cities after themselves. This is the condition of much of the church today, especially in the United States. We have built great cities around our many revelations--the city of Methodist, Baptist, Pentecostal, Charismatic and others. These cities have generally become prisons and death camps for the saints of God who would dare to follow the Spirit. Movements come and go, but it seems that denominations last indefinitely.

As things grow more structured and complex, Jesus is once again left at the door knocking. At that point God calls a remnant out to begin anew. Are you being stirred to reevaluate your diligence and commitment to the race that is set before you? We hope so! Let God begin to speak to you regarding the cities you have built, and are helping to build.

A lot of building is going on today, much of it fleshly. The American church seems especially driven to conquer and build, thinking God is pleased by mere numerical and physical expansion. Great importance is placed in the size of a congregation or facility. Even our vocabulary is replete with inaccuracy as we foolishly continue to call our buildings the House of God or the Church.

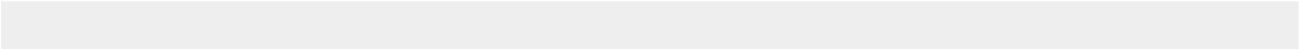
In spite of all their good intentions and reforms, the western church continued on with the framework and forms of the world, which are a fundamental transgression of God's order. In the reformation we witness a series of incremental strides toward the restoration of all things. We also see a principle. What does not continue moving with the cloud of His presence will resort to the way of Cain and go out from the presence of the Lord to build cities.

The Cain and Nimrod spirit is very distinctive in its outward manifestation for it always moves toward the building of empires, by men of renown who fail to understand the flexible mobility of the ekklesia. Understand these are gifted, talented, strong leaders who seem to have a vision and purpose. They are founders of civilizations and give birth to tradesmen, artisans, craftsmen and warriors. Some of Cain's descendants were Jabel, the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock; Jubal, the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe; and Tubal-Cain, the forger of all implements of bronze and iron. Nimrod established eight cities including such great metropolis as Nineveh and Babylon. Raising up empires and birthing gifted and talented offspring does not signify a Godly heritage.

Today, if a man employs the right amalgamation of sound business practices, targeted marketing techniques, well crafted sermons, and of course the talents of a finely tuned worship team, he can amass a group of followers that are willing to fund his empire. Men are often hunted to help build the empire by being offered good salaries, perks and the possibility of exposure to a greater audience for the advancement of their ministry.

God always calls his children out of anything that is fixed, apostate, and refuses to follow on. God is not seeking kingdom builders but pilgrims like Abraham.

How shall we then live? How does this truth shape our approach to the future? Up to this time we have focused on what God has done and what has already occurred among His people. Now we will focus on how these things affect the present and they will take shape as we approach the end of the age. God sets forth types, shadows or signs that prefigure His future purposes. One such foundational sign will occupy our thoughts for the next few moments.



Chapter 7: The Lord's Sign

The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold! The virgin will conceive and will bring forth a son; and she shall call His name Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14 LITV)

A sign points to a specific destination and is of value only relative to the destination. For example, a road sign foretells and points the way, but we never travel simply to get to the next sign. In this instance the Lord's sign points the way to the full realization of His eternal Purpose in Christ Jesus!

We are not suggesting that Jesus was sent merely as a sign. He is the redeemer, the Savior of the world! It is still true that the details of His birth and the name Immanuel give us prophetic signs that foretell end-time events. Just as He fulfilled all scripture in His first coming, his Body is destined to also fulfill prophecies and sometimes those prophecies that seem to apply only to Him are also being fulfilled in His body, the ekklesia. With this in mind let us carefully consider the Lord's sign, as prophesied by Isaiah in the passage quoted above.

Consider the words *the virgin*. In 2 Kings 19:21 we read about "[The virgin the daughter of Zion](#)." The prophet Jeremiah also prophesied about this same woman, "[For I heard a cry as of a woman in travail, anguish as of one bringing forth her first child, the cry of the daughter of Zion gasping for breath, stretching out her hands, 'Woe is me! I am fainting before murderers.'](#)" (Jeremiah 4:31)

Also Isaiah prophesied of Zion,

[Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in travail! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her that is married, says the LORD. \(Isaiah 54:1 RSV\)](#)

Reading further, we find a reference to God as Husband in verse 5, and to Israel/Zion as wife in verse 6. Zion was the virgin betrothed to God.

And I will betroth you to me for ever; I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you shall know the LORD. (Hosea 2:19-20 RSV)

This is the very language that Paul used to explain this mystery as related to the Church and Christ. As Israel was God's betrothed, so the Church is the bride of Christ.

The Hebrew word translated *virgin* in the above passage would more correctly be translated *bride*, one who is about to become a wife, one who is betrothed. This was exactly the case with Mary, the handmaiden of the Lord. She was a virgin, the betrothed of Joseph. Mary divinely conceived and bore a Son who was the fullness of God on earth, Immanuel--God with us. This sign also points to a future spiritual fulfillment. Another bride will birth a man-child, who will live to the full everything that is implied by the name Immanuel.

In Revelation chapter twelve God reaffirms the sign.

And a great sign was seen in the heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; and being with child she cried, being in travail, and in pain to bring forth. And another sign was seen in the heaven: and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems; and his tail draws the third part of the stars of the heaven; and he cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bring forth, in order that when she brought forth he might devour her child. And she brought forth a male son, who shall shepherd all the nations with an iron rod; and her child was caught up to God and to his throne. (Revelation 12:1-5 Darby)

We read of two signs in this passage. The first sign is the sign of Isaiah seven fourteen, spoken of here in its future fulfillment. Earlier John heard a voice like a trumpet saying, "Come up here, and I will show you the things which must happen after this" (Revelation 4:1 WEB).

We know then that the signs of Revelation affirm the sign of Isaiah and prophetically point toward future events. The details of this sign seen by John correspond so thoroughly to the birth and life of Christ that many theologians believe the sign must refer to Christ's physical birth. But these signs are a reference to things that must happen after this, after the time when John wrote about them. The woman and the

man-child are a clear reference to the end time bride of Christ and the birth and maturity of the end-time Body of Christ.

We will here make a statement that at first may be misunderstood. Please bear with us! Just as Jesus was Immanuel, God with us, so is the Body of Christ. Paul wrote of a mystery regarding the Body, "For even as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:12 Darby). We have used the Darby version because, in this instance, it is the closest to the original Greek. Notice the words, "so also is the Christ." The Christ that Paul was speaking of here was the whole Christ, Head plus Body. Christ is the Head. We are His Body. Together we make up the Christ. The definite article the, which is left out of most other translations, is significant. A thing is much different than the thing. The word the implies the genuine article, the real, exclusive and only one of its kind. Just as Christ in His physical body was Immanuel, the very temple or dwelling place of God, so the Body of Christ (Head plus Body) is the continuum of this mystery, the temple where God tabernacles on the earth. Immanuel--God with us!

We know that the Body Of Christ is also referred to as God's temple. Haggai prophesied, "'I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the Lord of Hosts. . . . 'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says the Lord of Hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the Lord of Hosts" (Haggai 2:7 to 9, NKJV).

There will be a latter day manifestation of the Body that will far exceed anything that has occurred upon the earth before. This latter-day Body will show forth the fullness of the stature of Christ as one new man, having reached maturity. They will reign and rule with Christ. They will be caught up to God and to his throne.

And He has put all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (Ephesians 1:22-23 MKJV)

And this until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ... (Ephesians 4:13 MKJV)

For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell... (Colossians 1:19)

For in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. (Colossians 2:9)

These scriptures show God's intention to fill all things with His Son by means of the Body of Christ. Satan knows this, and like any adversary he has set himself to oppose the advancement of the Kingdom.

There will be an end-time rebirthing of the Body of Christ. The primary target of Satan, the red dragon, is the Body of Christ, the expression of Christ in the earth. In creating the counterfeit body, his objective was to fully displace and scatter the true Body of Christ. There have been true believers down through the years, but the corporate expression where Christ is seen in His fullness was displaced early on.

There were individuals who shone with Christ's glory, as there still are, but one member does not make a body. Throughout history, whenever a corporate expression of Christ began to emerge, before long the red dragon came to devour it. He will tolerate every form of religion, but he cannot abide the thought of the many-membered body coming to its fullness and fully expressing the glory of God's Son. This fullness cannot be expressed through single members, however brightly they might shine, for they only possess a measure of the gift of Christ. The focus of all Satan's energies in the first century was to devour this corporate Body, and this effort continues today. Just as Herod tried to kill the infant Jesus, so the dragon wants to devour the man-child in His inception, before He should reach the fullness of the stature of Christ. Satan's proven and most effective means of offsetting the body of Christ is his substitute, religion.

Just as Jesus is Immanuel--God with us, in that God is resident in Him, so the Body of Christ in whom Christ now dwells, and will be fully manifest, is Immanuel on the earth. This is the mystery of the Body of Christ the fullness of Him who fills all things. This God with us existence in man is the glory of God. Paul taught extensively about this coming glory being restored to those who dwell in Christ.

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. (Romans 8:29,30, NASB).

We who are the members of His body were predestined to be there. We were predestined to be made perfectly into His image as parts of His spiritual body. God has set a process in motion from the foundation of the world, a process in which we are

predestined, called, justified, and finally glorified. If Christ is to be fully glorified, the body in which He lives must also be fully glorified.

So just how are we, his body, to be glorified? Paul continues in the next chapter of Romans.

What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?

And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. (Romans 9:22-24, NASB).

We existed before hand as spiritual members in His heavenly body and knew a certain level of His glory, but we are also being prepared for a greater glory, glory in its fullness. Just as Christ had to come to this earth and learn obedience through the things which he suffered, so we, too, are being perfected during our earthly sojourn for a greater glory. Christ was glorified in heaven before He came, and the Father had greater glory awaiting Him through His act of obedience. Consider this exchange with His Father over His impending crucifixion.

"Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Thy name." There came therefore a voice out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." (John 12:27,28, NASB).

To glorify the Father through His perfect obedience was also to glorify the Son. The same is true of His saints, the members of His body. To lay down our lives in obedience to Him is to glorify Christ. To glorify Christ by our obedience even unto death is to share in the Glory of the crucified Son. So many who call themselves Christians today want the power and the glory, without taking up the path of the cross which brings its fullness into our lives. We should consider Paul's prayer in his letter to the Philippians and make it your own.

. . .that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death. (Philippians 3:10, NASB).

Even those who strive for an earthly prize know, "No pain, no gain." The city of God, the New Jerusalem, Mount Zion, will yet be adorned with His glory at His coming.

(Paul and Barnabas) strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:22, NASB)

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. (Revelation 21:2, NASB).

Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God. Selah. (Psalms 87:3, NASB).

God knew beforehand that we could not be made perfect without a time of testing. We are here on this earth among vessels of wrath to learn the patience of God as we suffer at their hands. We share the sufferings of Jesus who is our Head.

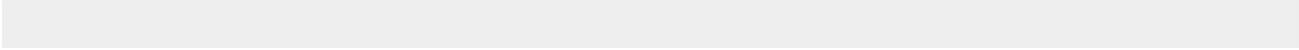
The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. (Romans 8:16-19, NASB).

Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica,

But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 2:13,14, NASB).

Paul speaks here of being chosen "from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth." This is the path we take to reach the glory of Christ. First God chooses us while we were yet sinners to be His sons and daughters. He makes us holy by enfolding us in Christ and giving us the gift of the Spirit of His righteousness. He gives us the faith of the indwelling Christ to believe in Him. Finally, He places His life-changing truth within us, conforming us into the very image of His Son. This is the process of His grace at work in us so that we can attain the glory of His Son as His joint heirs in the Beloved. It is this glorious bride who is

without spot or blemish for which the Bridegroom comes, not a bride who has not been proven and tested.



Chapter 8: "Your Father the Devil"

The seed of Satan came into being in the garden as a result of his successful enticement of mankind. His seed was planted in their hearts so that they would take up his quest to be like God. This was the birth of religion as we know it, which seeks to determine good and evil apart from the Spirit of God. A perfect example of this is found in the prayer of the Pharisee, "God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess." Because he has knowledge of good and evil, he judges himself righteous by his dead works and condemns the lowly tax collector who Jesus said would be justified (see Luke 18:11-12). Eve may have thought Cain was the promised Seed, but he turned out to be of the seed of the serpent, the wicked one. (See 1 John 3:12)

When Paul wrote, "But far be it from me to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Galatians 6:14 WEB), he was referring to the world of religion. This becomes crystal clear when we look at the previous verse, which reads, "For even they who receive circumcision don't keep the law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may boast in your flesh" (Galatians 6:13 WEB). Paul referred to religion as the world, and its principles as the rudiments or elements of the world (Colossians 2:8), expressed in the keeping of ordinances like "Don't handle, nor taste, nor touch. . . according to the precepts and doctrines of men." (Colossians 2:20-22 WEB)

Which things indeed appear like wisdom in self-imposed worship, and humility, and severity to the body; but aren't of any value against the indulgence of the flesh. (Colossians 2:23 WEB)

The seed of the serpent who would bruise Messiah's heel are the progeny of this ancient religion, dating back to Eden and the lie. It was to such religious men that Jesus said, "You are of your Father, the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and doesn't stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks on his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44 WEB).

Hebrews 11:4 reveals that even though he is dead, Abel still speaks. His very life was a prophecy that continues to speak and reveal things to us today. The spirit of Cain is evident in the most religious men who kill the current and relevant prophetic voice of God. We know that Cain killed Abel, but according to Jesus, the Pharisees were his murderers. Therefore Jesus saw the Pharisee position as aligned with Cain.

Therefore, behold, I send prophets and wise men and scribes to you. And you will kill and crucify some of them. And some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city; so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Berachiah, whom you killed between the temple and the altar. Truly I say to you, All these things shall come on this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to her, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you would not! Behold, your house is left to you desolate. For I say to you, You shall not see Me from now on until you say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord."
(Matthew 23:34-39 MKJV)

Here Jesus tracked the blood trail from Abel to Zechariah--a trail of treachery and murder--right up to Israel's front door, Jerusalem. The nation of Israel had once again gone in the way of Cain and their iniquity had reached its fullness. The time of their judgment had come, a judgment so harsh it was foretold in Jesus' words, "Behold, your house is left to you desolate."

The Sadducees and Pharisees are a classic representation of religious man. Jesus called them snakes after their father. Religion in general has the nature of the serpent, the nature of Cain. The inquisition is adequate proof of this. The viper is an interesting creature. It likes to disguise itself as something it isn't. The Pharisees who watched Jesus cast out a demon from a man, said that He cast it out by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of devils. Jesus equated this blasphemy against the Holy Spirit with the unforgivable sin. Then He points to the source of their speech when He says,

Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. The good man out of his

good treasure brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth what is evil. (Matthew 12:33-35, NASB).

These hypocrites loved to portray themselves as righteous while they condemned men from their lofty positions in Judaism, but Jesus told them that they were lower than a snake's belly in the eyes of God. Because that they were of an evil tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they could only bring forth evil fruit from their evil hearts.

There is a story of Paul being shipwrecked on the island of Malita in Acts chapter twenty-eight. While he was out gathering sticks to build a fire and ward off hypothermia, he inadvertently picked up a viper. The creature continued to act like a stick until Paul went to cast it into the fire. At this point it fastened itself on his hand, trying to kill him. Paul shook the viper off into the fire and God protected Paul from its venom.

Like the viper, religious hypocrites pose as something harmless to win you over and get you to open up to them. But when you turn to them for healing and warmth in a vulnerable moment, they strike and latch onto you, refusing to let go until you are just as dead as they are. Neither Jesus nor John the Baptist were fooled and called them what they were, spiritual vipers, and never let them get close or put any trust in them. This is a lesson many of us have learned the hard way.

Wheat and Tares

Jesus told a parable about the two types of seed planted in His Father's field. The one He planted was wheat, a type of the sons of Abel. The other was a near counterfeit called tares, planted by an enemy under the cover of darkness. The story goes like this:

Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared.

So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?'

He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?'

But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, 'First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.'" (Matthew 13:24-30, NKJV).

The phrase "while men slept" got our attention. The founding apostles and fathers of the Church were on watch for the ravenous wolves to spring up in the new Church as it was forming (See Matthew 7:15 & Colossians 2:8). Satan killed off the apostles early on, except John, who was exiled to a remote island. In this sense, these men slept (See Matthew 9:24). The absence of the apostles made room for Satan to come in and sow the tares, whose teachings are mixed with the true doctrines of the early apostles to this day. "But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared." The seeds of the false were planted early on.

I, Michael, did a study years ago on tares. In the wheat country of the northwest where I grew up, they are called wild oats, but their real name is Bearded Darnel. The Darnel in itself is not poisonous. It can be eaten and cause no harm. The problem is that it plays host to a fungus called the Ergot Smut fungus, which is deadly to both men and beast.

This is also the problem with hypocrites who find safe haven in God's field. A little leavening will spoil the whole lump. God forbids his servants to uproot them before the harvest, lest the wheat be ruined in the process.

The farmer deals with the wild oats by running them through a thresher that first removes the chaff from the wheat and then runs it over a sieve that allows the smaller Darnel to fall through and be cast off with the chaff. The deadly fungus it hosts goes away with the tares. The trials in our lives remove the chaff, expose and cast off the poisonous influences of the enemy, leaving only the purified wheat to be gathered up in the Lord's harvest.

Once the wheat is collected, it is ready to be ground into fine flour. The individual grains of wheat lose their own identity and take on the identity of the Lord, for it is then we become one loaf with Him, the Bread of Life.

These two mysteries are unfolding simultaneously. While the son of perdition is manifest in his corporate expression, the glorious mystery of His Body will be

understood and fully set on display. Then the tares and the wheat will be known for who they really are.

As in the Days of Noah and Lot

When He was asked about the coming of His kingdom, Jesus told His disciples how it would come.

As it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of man. They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was in the days of Lot--they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built, but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom fire and sulphur rained from heaven and destroyed them all-- so will it be on the day when the Son of man is revealed.

On that day, let him who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away; and likewise let him who is in the field not turn back.

Remember Lot's wife. (Luke 17:26-32, RSV).

As we near the close of the age, the prevailing condition upon the earth are identical to what existed before the judgment of the flood and also the judgment of Sodom. Iniquity will reach its fullness.

Before the judgment falls, it will be business as usual. Man will be fully corrupted. Men will be eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, buying and selling, planting and building right up until the end. What is Jesus saying here? What is wrong with eating and drinking? What is wrong with marrying and giving in marriage? What is wrong with buying and selling? Christ is referring to the hedonism of Cain, which led to the fullness of iniquity before the judgment of the flood. The marrying referred to here could be symbolic of the mixture of the sons of God and the daughters of men, implying apostasy and the failure of God's people to maintain their integrity. Could the planting and building Jesus spoke of be the tilling of the ground and the building of cities after the order of Cain? Could the buying and selling have to do with exacting or the unjust weights of Cain, constituting fraud or theft, such as is taking place at this moment in corporate America?

Before the end, the seed of the serpent will be manifesting their worst, having come into their fullness for the judgment. Just as the tares were bound together in bundles to

be burned, so there will be a binding together of the evil seed of Cain in the earth as they plot the overthrow of God and His kingdom. David prophesied this heinous plot when he wrote:

Why are the nations in an uproar, And the peoples devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand, And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed: "Let us tear their fetters apart, And cast away their cords from us!"

He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them. Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury. Hear the word of the LORD, You children of Israel, For the LORD brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land: "There is no truth or mercy Or knowledge of God in the land. By swearing and lying, Killing and stealing and committing adultery, They break all restraint, With bloodshed upon bloodshed. Therefore the land will mourn; And everyone who dwells there will waste away With the beasts of the field And the birds of the air; Even the fish of the sea will be taken away." (Hosea 4:1-3, NKJV)

In Psalm 2 we see the kings of the earth taking counsel against the Lord and His Christ to cast off their cords of influence. In Hosea we see the same heart of rebellion in the children of Israel as they break (cast off) all restraint. The fruit of this rebellion is all around us today. Those of the spirit of Cain despise truth, have no mercy in their hearts, speak profane things, lie, kill, steal, and commit adultery and the land mourns and wastes away.

Everywhere we turn we see the creation of God mourning and in travail like a woman whose hour has come. The more the sons of Cain put their hands to undoing the destruction they brought upon the earth as a result of their rebellion against God, the worse it gets. It is like the way they treat cancer; if the cancer does not kill you, the treatment will.

Man cannot expect to recreate what the Lord's Anointed has created while his every act causes the ground to cry out with the blood of righteous Abel. The only thing that could save the earth from the chaos we now see is coming into unity and agreement with the Lord's Anointed, the very one whom they seek to cast off.

How will we recognize the type of Sodom that will be destroyed in the last days? It might not be what you think. Ezekiel saw the decadence of Sodom in Jerusalem but more so in his day of prophesying before the Lord.

Behold, everyone who quotes proverbs will quote this proverb concerning you, saying, "Like mother, like daughter." You are the daughter of your mother, who loathed her husband and children. You are also the sister of your sisters, who loathed their husbands and children. Your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite. Now your older sister is Samaria, who lives north of you with her daughters; and your younger sister, who lives south of you, is Sodom with her daughters. Yet you have not merely walked in their ways or done according to their abominations; but, as if that were too little, you acted more corruptly in all your conduct than they.

"As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "Sodom, your sister, and her daughters, have not done as you and your daughters have done. Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food, and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy. Thus they were haughty and committed abominations before Me. Therefore I removed them when I saw it." (Ezekiel 16:44-50, NASB).

The world of Cain is full of arrogance, abundance, prosperity, and coldness toward the needs of the poor. A world where religious mean loathe the influence of their Husband, the Father. One where they loathe His children, the true saints of God. This sounds like business as usual in America and its worldly churches.

Sodom

How was it in the days of Lot? What was Jesus telling of us who are in the last days?

The wickedness of Sodom is proverbial. Along with its sister city Gomorrah, Sodom took on the way and corruption of Cain. Their iniquity had reached its fullness--the cry of it had reached the throne of God. Sodom is believed to have been located in the plain south of the Dead Sea, now covered with water. It was the preferred dwelling place of Abraham's nephew Lot. Where was Abraham during this time when Lot lived in this wicked city? He was in his tent, sojourning--dwelling as a stranger in the land of promise where he even entertained angels. Abraham refused the riches of Sodom and also its manner of life. (See Genesis 14:13-23).

God sent messengers to witness, firsthand, the corruption of Sodom. The men of Sodom were so evil that young and old alike gathered in front of Lot's door, demanding that Lot turn the two messengers over to them that they might have unnatural sex with them. The messengers of God blinded the men of Sodom, but they were so defiled that even blinded they continued their lustful quest.

The messengers of the Lord commanded Lot to leave the city and go to the mountains to escape the judgment of God, but Lot had become a city dweller at heart. He loved the walled cities and feared the apparent dangers of the mountains. He trusted in walls for his protection. The way of Abraham frightened Lot. So Lot pleaded with the Lord, "See now, this city is near to flee to, and it is a little one. Oh let me escape there, and my soul will live" (Genesis 19:20). Lot's woes were by no means over. For against the Lord's instruction, Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt. It is interesting that the Hebrew word translated pillar means "to take a stand." It is as if Lot's wife put her foot down and said, "I will go no further." After having retreated to the little city without her, his daughters got Lot drunk and committed incest with him. Although Sodom was destroyed, Lot and his family were still impacted by its perversion.

God wanted Lot to take the radical step of faith and go to the mountains but Lot pleaded to go to a little city, one not so corrupt. "Its just a little one, Lord!" God knew that just as a little leavening leavens the whole lump, so would a little corruption continue to corrupt Lot and his daughters.

As the fire fell from heaven, consuming Sodom, Abraham stood on the hills above and "looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and looked, and saw that the smoke of the land went up as the smoke of a furnace." Abraham was safe on the mountains. The place Lot feared was a place of safety to Abraham. Again we see the faith of the sojourner compared to the corruption of the city builder. This is how it will be at the close of the age. We trust the Holy Spirit to make any further applications in your hearts.

The Merchants Howl

We have addressed Mystery Babylon as it relates to religion as a whole. There is one aspect that is often overlooked which will occupy our thoughts for the next few moments. That aspect is the national and global economy of our day. Yes, this also is Babylon. In chapter 18 of Revelation the angel of the Lord cried in a loud voice,

"Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen." Then another cry is heard coming from the merchants of the earth, weeping and mourning over their lost revenue.

The merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise any more. (Revelation 18:11 WEB)

The fruits which your soul lusted after have been lost to you, and all things that were dainty and sumptuous have perished from you, and you will find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, who were made rich by her, will stand far away for the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning. (Revelation 18:14-15 WEB)

The economic system of the world, as we know it today, initially sprang from Cain's rebellion. Before that the inhabitants of the world lived in innocence and generosity. Cain's way of living utterly defiled the pre-flood race. After the flood the economy of Cain was revived again by Nimrod. As we shall soon see, this is an important distinction.

Throughout the history of mankind, we see man's repeated efforts to cast off the rule or kingdom of God. One such case in point is Israel's choice of Saul as their king, which was a rejection of God's sovereignty. In the Advent of Christ man is given another opportunity to choose. Christ came preaching the kingdom or rule of God. Like David, Jesus had a heart for the Kingdom of God. When standing before Pilate Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then my servants would fight, that I wouldn't be delivered to the Jews. But now my kingdom is not from here" (John 18:36 WEB). The Kingdom of God is in no way like the kingdoms of Cain and Nimrod. Because it is not of (Greek ek) or from this world. It does not find its origin in man's rebellion.

The kingdom Christ spoke of is of another realm, driven by other values and objectives. Its economy is motivated and sustained by entirely other means and principles. We cannot stress this enough. People that are native to a country have no difficulty detecting foreigners among them. Their language, their manners, their clothes, even the way they deport themselves betrays their alien status. Christians are not of this world and for that reason the world hates them. They dwell as pilgrims and sojourners, a colony of heaven, marked by a lifestyle of simplicity, devoid of greed. They have an entirely other economy. Jesus spoke of this heavenly economy in Luke chapter twelve.

Make no mistake here. Christ sat as an Alien among worldlings, speaking in a heavenly vocabulary about a heavenly kingdom.

Weights and measures or exacting is one of the expressions of the way of Cain. Out of that mentality came the system of commerce which we know today--a system of exactness, exacting the last farthing.

Not so the kingdom of God! Instead of an eye for an eye, Jesus said, "[Turn the other cheek. . .give to those that ask of you. . .go the second mile.](#)"

Luke gives a much more detailed account in his gospel, and includes the event which served as the springboard for Christ's Sermon on the Mount. It began when a man approached Jesus with this request. "[Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me](#)" (Luke 12:13). This was the question that prompted Christ's entire discourse regarding the cares of this life. Jesus' reply to this man's question was, "[Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?](#)" Jesus did not come to arbitrate the affairs of this life pertaining to mammon, but to bring and model the life and value system of another kingdom. If measured by worldly values, this value system must be judged irresponsible and fanciful, because it is an economy based upon an entirely different principle, not of weights and measures but of generosity.

Christ gave this man the following warning, "[Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses](#)" (Luke 12:14).

Wait a minute! Shouldn't this man receive his inheritance? Shouldn't Jesus be addressing the brother's greed in keeping this man's portion? Isn't this a lawful grievance? Jesus did not address the wrong but warned of greed, for that was the real danger.

He spoke a parable to illustrate further. "[The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have much goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, You fool, this night your soul shall be required of you: then whose shall those things be, which you have provided? So is he that lays up](#)

treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:16-21). The value of things is determined on an eternal scale. Clearly Jesus was not moved by this world's value system. He would have given today's Christian financial counselor fits. Wealth, prestige or any other of the fineries of this life could not move Him. He was rich toward God!

After having exhorted his disciples to take no thought for their lives, what they would eat, neither for the body, what they would put on. Jesus said something that may have sounded ridiculous to the needy who stood by. "For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing" (Luke 12:23 RSV). Christ is setting forth the values of the kingdom. Today these values would be repudiated as poor stewardship.

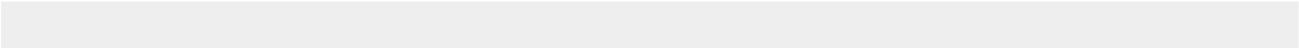
Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And which of you by being anxious can add a cubit to his span of life? If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass which is alive in the field today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O men of little faith! And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be of anxious mind. For all the nations of the world seek these things; and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things shall be yours as well. Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:24-32 RSV)

Jesus is contrasting two ambitions. The nations of the world seek the temporal things of this life, and do not pursue God's Kingdom. These two life pursuits are diametrically opposed. The attempt to harmonize them has resulted in the current lukewarm state of the Church.

Jesus asked these poor people to do something that is unthinkable from a worldly perspective. Rather than seeking to acquire possessions, Jesus asked them to take what little they had and sell it and give to the poor. "Sell your possessions, and give alms; provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys" (Luke 12:24-33 RSV). When it comes to the economy of Cain and Ham, Jesus is brutal. He knows that it takes a radical re-alignment of the hearts of men before they can be

effective citizens in His Father's kingdom. We are either allied with all the nations of the world, seeking first the things of this earth, or we are allied with His Father seeking His kingdom.

Jesus was asking the poor to enter into the generosity of the Father. What manner of hippie lifestyle is this? What is the Lord calling for here? He is calling for a return to the way of His generosity, which preceded Cain's sin. Let us consider how this took shape in the early Church.



Chapter 9: The Economy of the New Kingdom

When the day of Pentecost was fully come the Spirit of God came like a mighty rushing wind bring the kingdom of God to the hearts of men. Three thousand were added to the church that very day. In a real sense a nation was born in a day. This first century community of believers lived out, by the Spirit of God, the values of the kingdom and abode in the words of Jesus, "Sell your possessions."

They continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and prayer. Fear came on every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together, and had all things in common. They sold their possessions and goods, and distributed them to all, according as anyone had need. Day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. The Lord added to the assembly day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47 WEB)

The multitude of those who believed were of one heart and soul. Not one of them claimed that anything of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common. (Acts 4:32 WEB)

Those who believed were of one heart and soul and because of this oneness, none of them clung to their possessing but instead viewed them as belonging to the entire body of believers. When a man and a woman become one through marriage, from that time on they have all things in common. If the woman has great debt, her debt becomes his because they are one. The first century body of believers were so bound together in Christ's love that they could not imagine hoarding to themselves or ignoring the plight of those among them in need. They lived by the economy of the Kingdom. Constant watchfulness was required to preserve this heavenly economy, protecting it from the greed of Cain.

Paul wrote of this struggle.

For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. But I am afraid, lest as the serpent

deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully. (2 Corinthians 11:2-4, NASB).

What was that different gospel? Paul is speaking of it when he wrote to Timothy.

If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. Timothy 6:3-5, NASB).

It was the gospel of Gain or Cain that was of another spirit and portrayed a different Jesus. Look at the context of the following verses.

But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us. (2 Thessalonians 3:6-9, NKJV).

Paul was drawing the line between his example among them of not lusting after mammon and the way of the false teachers that had come in among them. It was this lusting after their bread and their goods that Paul denoted as being disorderly in these false teachers. His providing for himself by working among them night and day was the good example. "If a man does not work, he should not eat."

What is Mammon?

The Lord has been speaking to us about just how deep the western church has fallen into the love of mammon and away from Christ. The deceitfulness of riches has undermined our whole view of the gospel of Christ. How far we have fallen from Jesus'

teachings. In Luke 16:11-13, Jesus further differentiated between the economy of heaven and the world.

Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own? No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. (Luke 16:11-13, NKJV).

What did Jesus mean when He said, "You cannot serve God and mammon"? It is curious that out of all the Greek words for wealth and money, Jesus chose this one. Mammon is a Babylonian word meaning riches, and is believed to be one of the gods of Babylon. Jesus is addressing more than money here. He is saying that you cannot serve the God of Heaven and the Babylonian god of wealth at the same time. Christ is pointing to the origin of the system of commerce, as we know it, and addressing it as an idol. The worship of mammon is taking on the values of worldly Babylon, seeking the golden wedge and fine Babylonian garments, adapting the weights and measures so men are exacted, oppressed and brought into bondage. Jesus came declaring a Jubilee, "And this is the manner of the release: Every creditor that lends anything to his neighbor shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbor, or of his brother; because it is called the LORD's release" (Deuteronomy 15:2). The early church lived in a continuous Jubilee.

The word *exact* (Hebrew *nagas*--to press, drive, oppress, exact, exert demanding pressure) used in the above passage is also found in Exodus 5:6 where it is translated *taskmasters*, referring to those who oppressed the children of Israel during their Egyptian bondage. *Nagas* is also translated oppressor (Job 3:18), driver (Job 39:7), and raiser of taxes (Daniel 11:20). Out of Cain's rebellion sprang a system of weights and measures that gave rise to the oppressor, the raiser of taxes, and the taskmaster who exact and distress the peoples of the earth.

In 1 Samuel 22:2 we read of such an oppressed people. "Every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto David; and he became a captain over them." David was God's true anointed and had a heart to make God King and not replicate the kingdom of Saul.

God warned the children of Israel that because they rejected Him as their king and chose a king after the order of the pagan nations, many woes would follow. God warned them of the oppression that Saul would put upon the people. It happened just as God had warned. Before long the inhabitants of the land were feeling the pinch of their new king's taxation.

Israel had asked for this. God wanted them to know that the king they requested, like the kings of the nations round about, would be driven by the same passions that animate the heathen kings, kings like Cain and Nimrod. The social byproduct of such ambition is *nagas*, oppression.

At God's direction Samuel warned them of the oppressive consequences of their choice.

This will be the manner (Way) of the king who shall reign over you: he will take your sons, and appoint them to him, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and they shall run before his chariots; and he will appoint them to him for captains of thousands, and captains of fifties; and he will set some to plow his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and the instruments of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. He will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive groves, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. He will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. He will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your best young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks: and you shall be his servants. You shall cry out in that day because of your king whom you shall have chosen you; and Yahweh will not answer you in that day. (1 Samuel 8:11-19 WEB)

Six times in the above passage God warned, "he [Saul] will *take*." In spite of this warning the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel and insisted, "No: but we will have a king over us."

So they came by the droves, weary and oppressed, to the cave Adullam to David, a shepherd like Abel, the true anointed of God. David was hiding from Saul, who, like Cain, was enraged that God had favored another more than he. God had favored and anointed David and Saul was threatened by that anointing and rose up to kill.

Isaiah prophesied how thoroughly this way of Cain or worship of mammon would divide, corrupt and oppress the people of God.

The people will be oppressed (nagas), Everyone by another, And everyone by his neighbor. The child will behave himself proudly against the old man, And the base against the honorable. (Isaiah 3:5 WEB)

This worship of mammon is also seen in the church at Laodicea which said, "I am rich and have need of nothing." They were so deceived that they could not see that their true need, Jesus, was left standing outside the door, asking to be let in. They had gone the way of Balaam. Those who serve mammon are like Saul, they take and take and take, store and store, build and build, lay up treasures unto themselves and trust in their storehouses against the day of disaster. They say, "I am rich and have need of nothing." They say to their soul, "Soul, you have much goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry." But what frightening words are these? "You fool, this night your soul shall be required of you: then whose shall those things be, which you have provided? So is he that lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

It is interesting to note that the Laodicean church saw itself as rich, increased with goods and in need of nothing. Now look at the description of Babylon the Great and what is behind her closed door:

. . .merchandise of gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, fine linen, purple, silk, scarlet, all expensive wood, every vessel of ivory, every vessel made of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble. . . .and cinnamon, incense, perfume, frankincense, wine, olive oil, fine flour, wheat, sheep, horses, chariots, bodies, and people's souls. 18:12 -13 WEB)

In the western church we see an ever increasing accumulation of wealth. In western eyes, bigger is always better. Just as America has continued to gather wealth, so has the church. Today, America has about five percent of the world's population, but also has about eight-five percent of the world's wealth. As the wealth has increased in her, her benevolence and her outreach to the poor nations has become less and less. The same is true of the American church. Anyone who has served on a deacon board knows what a tiny percentage of the church income is given to the poor and needy in the community and to missions abroad.

I, Michael, spent some time in Guatemala working in a Christian orphanage. These precious children really touched my heart, though the poverty of these dear little saints of God was not nearly as great as those still living on the streets of Guatemala City. Later, on the way back from another trip to Central America, the brother who was driving me through Los Angeles wanted to take me on a short jaunt to see the famous Christian Crystal City, built around the ministry of a famous TV preacher. The contrast between that poor third world nation and what was built in the name of Jesus made me sick to my stomach.

The door of this Laodicean church system is not only closed against Jesus, keeping its wealth inside, but against "the least of these." We heap blessing after blessing upon ourselves and ignore the plight of our brothers and sisters in the third world. This is an affront to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus told many a parable about His Father having problems with stewards and their control of money. Tight fisted and stingy control of that wealth seems to be a common malady among them. The same is true in this last days church. We give a token offering to the poor so that we won't look bad, but who are the ones living in the fine houses and driving the fancy cars, the widows and orphans or the so-called benefactors who would be kings? If you have never gone on a short-term mission among the poor of the third world, you should. If you have the heart of Christ, it will change your life forever.

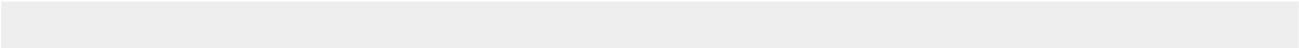
Jesus said,

"I was a stranger, and you didn't take me in; naked, and you didn't clothe me; sick, and in prison, and you didn't visit me." Then they will also answer, saying, "Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and didn't help you?" Then he will answer them, saying, "Most assuredly I tell you, inasmuch as you didn't do it to one of the least of these, you didn't do it to me." (Matthew 25:43-45 WEB)

Notice the surprise of the goats as they answer the Lord. "When did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and didn't help you?" They tithed and even put a couple bucks in the annual special missions offering, but they were NOT good stewards of what was given to them. They thought the money they blindly gave to the church coffers was all going to a good cause. This is not good stewardship. We are also responsible for how the money we give is spent. It is plain

from the New Testament that God's heart is not in providing big salaries to church rulers or providing castles for these kings to rule from. God's heart is on taking care of the widows and the orphans, the least of these, not the greatest (James 1:27).

We believe that the deceitful work of this false god called Mammon is undermining the gospel of Christ in the west and has made way for all the other perversions that are sweeping through the church and its leaders at this time. The reason for this is quite simple. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12:34 RSV).



Chapter 10: Outside the House

Lately the Lord has been telling us to come out and to join Him among the unchurched people of the world. We went to Casper, Wyoming, and ministered among the street people and poor of that town. Recently we went over to Missoula, Montana and met with a dear brother in Christ who works among the incarcerated Native American youth of that state. His name is Bud Heringer. That visit has changed our lives.

Bud was sharing with us how that He has found the presence of the Lord among the ochlas, the outcast multitudes. When he is serving these rejects of our society, he feels the presence of the Lord and knows the Lord's provision as he obeys Him and is a voice and hands for Jesus, the same Jesus who said, "When I was hungry, you fed me, thirsty, you gave me to drink, sick or in prison, you visited me, naked, you clothed me. . . what you did to the least of these, you have done unto me." Bud's words went into our hearts like an arrow when he said, "Jesus was among the ochlas two thousand years ago and He is still there today!"

There are many passages about Jesus and the multitudes in the gospels, but this is the passage that the Lord lead me to when we got back home from our trip to Montana:

On that day Jesus went out of the house, and was sitting by the sea. And great multitudes gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat down, and the whole multitude was standing on the beach. (Matthew 13:1,2, NASB).

Those who have the heart of Christ will be found outside the house among the multitudes. The word that was translated *multitudes* in Matthew 13:2 is:

Oclov ochlos {okh'los}

1) a crowd

1a) a casual collection of people

1a1) a multitude of men who have flocked together in some place

1a2) a throng

1b) a multitude

1b1) the common people, as opposed to the rulers and leading men

1b2) with contempt: the ignorant multitude, the populace

1c) a multitude

1c1) the multitudes, seems to denote troops of people gathered together without order

Do you want to sense Jesus' presence? Here is where you will find Him, not in the holy mountain or in the temples of today's fallen church system. He is STILL among the common people! Church is still being held on the seashore or in the parks or in (God forbid) the taverns! You will find Him wherever that one lost sheep is, not with the ninety and nine, safely tucked in some pastor's sheepfold. He is with the ordinary people who know they are sinners and in need of Him. Jesus never laid a hard trip on the harlots, sinners, tax collectors or the masses, but He had many a harsh word for the religious elite who desired to rule over them.

A few days ago, we went out of the house again and sat by the sea of the unchurched. He had us go to two secular coffee houses and just sit there and be available and watch for Him to give us divine appointments and He did. There was Craig from Indiana who was in town serving his dying mom. We were his friends. There was Tyler who was all ears when the Lord had George share that the kingdom of God was not a religion, but a family with God as the Father, Jesus the Son and the rest of us brothers and sisters in Christ. He was touched with the simplicity of the real gospel. God said that He is a Father to the fatherless and a Husband to the widows. There are a lot of fatherless people out there on the streets of this world and guess what? That is where Jesus still is! He is with the multitudes, the *ochlas*.

Oh yes, while we were at one of the coffee houses, we spent a half hour with a young Mormon girl whose room mate was in Salt Lake at the temple listening to their great prophet. We shared the truth with her that those who would worship Him would no longer do it in the temple nor up on the mountain, but would do it in Spirit and in Truth. Also that same Spirit would give her an unction so that she would need no man to teach her any longer, but He would lead her into all truth.

We will be going back and finding ourselves out of the house more often from now on, mingling with the common people, as opposed to the rulers and leading men (see definition of multitudes). We are tired of bandying words with religious people. Please

be praying that we will hear His voice as we pour out our souls to the hungry multitude outside the camp (see Isaiah 58).

After the great awakening the church started to once again to go outside the house taking the gospel to the lost of this world. The eighteen hundreds was marked by the founding of many missions organizations who were headed by men and women with a vision for the multitudes of the lost and dying upon this earth. Many a man and women from the 1600s to the 1800s made their mark upon the earth by reaching out to the poor and needy. But for most of the last 1700 years the institutional church has been holed-up behind its oak doors with Jesus outside knocking asking to be let in (Revelation 3:17-20). This last century has marked a great decline in the church's missions work and of its leaders reaching out beyond their doors and from the safe havens they have built in the free world. The 1900s culminated in churches feeding themselves and storing up wealth for themselves in a continual emphasis on tearing down their barns and building bigger ones so that they could store more (see Luke 12:13-21).

The sad thing is that just like it says in Revelations chapter three, they ARE rich, increased with goods and DO see themselves as needing nothing! They have accumulated wealth to themselves by ignoring the plight of the poor not only in America, but in the third world.

We believe that Jesus is now through standing outside the doors of Christendom, begging with hat in hand, for us to let Him into His own church. Many of us have come out unto Him and believe me, it is a whole different world out here! But let us be careful that we do not trade our larger church buildings for smaller ones as we start to meet in homes. When we hide behind closed doors of any size, we leave Jesus outside. His heart is out there with the *ochlas*.

Come up here!

Right after John saw the despicable state of the seven fallen churches in chapters two and three of Revelations, he saw Jesus in a new location. He was no longer walking among the seven lampstands of the seven churches or outside the door of the church of Laodicea.

After this I looked, and lo, in heaven an open door! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up hither, and I will show you what must take place after this." (Revelation 4:1, RSV).

It is amazing how God's truth all comes into perspective once you get off your pew and start walking it out by faith. It was Jesus' voice (see Revelation 1:10 and 11) calling through an open door in heaven like a trumpet calling an army to action. He was calling for John to "Come up here." If you want to really know what the Spirit is doing in the world today, you have to go outside the camp unto Him and bear His reproach as an outcast among your own people and a church system that refuses to follow Him (see Hebrews 13:12-16). Where Jesus was, you also find the multitudes of the disenfranchised. And where the disenfranchised are is where Jesus still is!

Elvis Has Left the Building!

There is a story that once at an Elvis Presley performance the crowd stayed in their seats waiting for Elvis to come back out and do an encore. They cheered and clapped and shouted, "Encore! Encore!", but no Elvis appeared. Finally, the MC came out on the stage and said the now famous and often quoted words, "Elvis has left the building!"

Jesus is outside of the house! Those inside the house are arguing over the Bible, making doctrines that they can use to bind up each other up, and trying to get a leg up over one another as they argue about who should be first. All the while they are giving praises to Jesus and calling, "Encore! Encore! Send a revival to OUR church." They are like Cain who on the one hand are making sacrifices to God and on the other rising up and killing the spiritual life in one another through overt control.

Men and women in the church today clamor for titles and recognition instead of seeking the one title and position that Jesus allowed, the title of... *doulos*!

But Jesus called them (His disciples) to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave (*doulos*); even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." And as they went out of Jericho, a great crowd followed him. (Matthew 20:25-29, RSV).

The word translated *slave* in the above verse means just that! *Doulos*! Look closely at its meaning:

doulov doulos {doo'-los}

1) a slave, bondman, man of servile condition

1a) a slave

1b) metaph., one who gives himself up to another's will

those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing his cause among men

1c) devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests

Do you see titles of esteem here? How about special vestments of the holy man? Pulpits and raised platforms? How about nice homes and fancy cars, surely they must be in this definition! Hmmm.

"Submit! Submit, They Cry!"

Those who would like to be known as the leaders inside the house want you to submit to them and their leadership. Like Jesus said of the Pharisees, "You do well to do as they say, but do not do as they do. For they say one thing and do another." If the "leaders" wanting you to follow and submit to them are truly your bond slaves, truly devoted to the church in disregard to their own interests, and are giving themselves to your needs on every level, both spiritual and temporal (that was what the famous apostle Paul did, by the way), chances are it is Christ abiding in them and you should follow their example and do as they do. But if that person is demanding and controlling and their attitude is one of "you must recognize who I am in this church," or "I am in charge here! You must do as I say, because I am one of the 'five-fold'," you can bet they are no *doulos* and have no place in God's true church leadership. They need to repent!

Look at what preceded Jesus' words in the above passage from Matthew!

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him, with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something.

And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Command that these two sons of mine may sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom."

But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" They said to him, "We are able."

He said to them, "You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."

And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers. (Matthew 20:20-24, RSV).

Clamoring for position is so church, but drinking His cup is not. Note, she asked Jesus to command that her two sons would be given elevated positions. He did not then and Jesus still does not command that we submit to those who would be like the kings of the Gentiles in the church today! If you are about to bring up some passage in the New Testament that says the laity should submit to the clergy, then you should go to your concordance and search it out. We already have searched it out, and many such passages were translated incorrectly to give power to the King so he could control the masses and rule over them through the church bishops. Even many of the newer translations carry on the traditions of the King James Bible. Top down authority is not in there folks, and it does not belong in the *ekklesia of Jesus, the servant of all, either.*

Look at verse 24. Anytime you have would-be leaders clamoring for folks to submit to them and positions and titles so that they can rule over the *ekklesia* of God, you have strife and indignation. You want people to follow you? First repent of your lording over mentality, get outside your house, mingle among the masses of lost sheep and just be one of them. That is how Hudson Taylor started out in China. That is how David Wilkerson started out in New York City and look what happened! That is how an eighteen year old English girl named Jackie Pullinger Tu started out in Hong Kong twenty years ago, serving the drug addicts, and prostitutes in the old walled city. From what we have been able to learn, Mother Theresa had the spirit of Christ and was walking this out among the destitute multitudes of Calcutta. She was never too good to dress the wounds of a leper or to change diapers. She just wanted to be where Jesus is.

That is how Jesus started out and finished the race there in Israel, too, walking among the masses with no recognition in the church system of 2000 years ago. He was crucified between two thieves. He did not need a title. He died with a placard over His head that read, "King of the Jews." "Blessed be the Son of David!" they cried, "Is He the Prophet?" People were telling HIM who He was! Just do the stuff! To hell with all

this hierarchical systems of men! That is where it all came from, so send it back! Just don't hang onto it or you will find yourself going there with it!

I want to share a little note I got from a sister who has the vision for the *ochlas* that a true doulos of God should have and is going outside the house to do it:

"Amen brother! We have got to go where the people are. I am so tired of being a bench warmer sitting in a pew. Well, I just can't do it any more -- it would be sin. While I was in the Philippines, I was walking in the market area and it was swarming with people. All kinds of people, and I thought, "this is just like it was in Jesus' day. The dirty and poor, blind and lame, along with the prostitutes and gays, passing by you. And I could feel Jesus. And I thought about how He would reach out to these people and heal them. Please pray for me as I go into this area and attempt to do the works of Christ."

You can believe that my prayers are with one such as this. So get out there and mingle, folks! Jesus is still here in this earth and He wants to use you to love the lost, the sick and the wounded outcasts who fear to darken the doors of a church where they might get wounded again. What you do to and for the least of these you do to Him.

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?"

And he answered and said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."

And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live. Do this and you will live."

But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

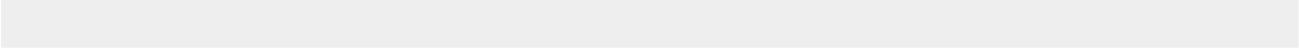
Jesus replied and said, "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went off leaving him half dead. And by chance a certain priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

"But a certain Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, and came to him, and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and

took care of him. And on the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return, I will repay you.'

"Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?"

And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same." (Luke 10:25-37, NASB).



Summary

At what point did the Reformation end? What was the date of its official ending? When did we reach the full restoration of all things? Is there no need for further change?

Although many sectarian groups believe the Reformation ended with their particular denominational movement, the Reformation is not over. It continues! It's a work in progress that actually started immediately after the fall of Adam and Eve.

The real question is, will we follow on in the example of the saints who have gone before us? Will we do as God has done and abandon the old temple order? Will we go out to meet Him in faith as Abraham did with Melchizedek? Or will we do as the elders of Israel did and cling to the old order of worship, bowing our necks and resisting HIM who comes to lead us on into His marvelous light? Will we go to Him? Will we suffer His reproach outside the camp? Will we, like Abraham, heed God's call? Will we abandon everything that refuses to express His glory to seek that city which He alone can build? Will we believe the words of Jesus and seek only the economy of God's kingdom and reject the god of mammon? Will we allow the Holy Spirit to lead us out of the unholy mixture that has brought the church to its current powerless condition?

Are we calling you to follow us in a New Exodus? Definitely not! We are no one's deliverers! Just as John in the wilderness refused to take a title to himself, but when pressed as to who he was by the Jewish leaders said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, saying make straight the path of the Lord," that is our call and we are exhorting the Lord's faithful saints to once again move freely and obey the call of His Spirit.

The Prophet like Moses--Jesus--is still calling. He is still delivering the captives. He is still saying, "Follow Me." He is leading the great and final exodus and those who go out unto Him will once again find themselves outside the camp.

God is always calling man into a higher relationship with Himself in Christ. In order for this to happen, we must be willing to leave behind all that we once held dear. Even good things that God had once ordained can get in the way if we let them become more meaningful to us than following the prompting of His Spirit. The soulish nature of man

and his need to have a permanent city or even buildings for worship here on earth have resisted the leading of the Spirit of God all through the ages. God made it clear from the beginning that His only spiritual house was to be made of living stones, those that truly love and follow Him alone.

We challenge each of you to listen to the voice of the Spirit of God within yourself and obey Him rather than the traditions of men that hold so many in bondage. Do only those things He asks of you. If He says stay, then stay, but if He is saying come out unto Him, then go forth to Him alone. There is a continuing upward call for the saints of God. To all who hear His call, welcome to the new exodus!

Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth. (Hosea 6:3, KJV).

Notes

¹ Alfred Edersheim, *Old Testament Bible History*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1972. Chapter 2. [Online at www.godrules.net](http://www.godrules.net)

² William Whiston, translator. *The Works of Josephus: Antiquities Of The Jews*. Book 1, Chapter 2, pg 31. Written in the thirteenth year of Domitian, 93-94 A.D.

³ Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary*. 6 vols. Carlton & Porter. 1857. NOTES ON CHAP. VI, Verse 5. [Online version at www.godrules.net](http://www.godrules.net)

⁴ J. W. Etheridge, M.A. *The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel On the Pentateuch With The Fragments of the Jerusalem Targum From the Chaldee*. 1862. Section II.

⁵ Jacques Ellul . *The Subversion of Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986. pg. 211.

⁶ James Strong. *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Associated Publishers and Authors