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*Bracketed comments following some scriptures assist the reader in understanding the intended meaning of these verses*

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***“DISCERNING TRUTH  
FROM ERROR”***

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# DISCERNING TRUTH FROM ERROR

This small teaching will help you discern in some areas between good and evil, that which is of God and that which is false teaching. We know that in the world there is much incorrect teaching and philosophy based on unproved theory, “gut feelings” and emotional responses. Therefore we need to be thoroughly grounded in God’s Word in order to distinguish right from wrong, and not be led astray by what someone thinks or feels in relation to truth, especially regarding spiritual and moral matters.

*Background Reading: Galatians 1:1-12*

Let’s turn to the Gospel of John:

**JOHN 1:1** **In the beginning** (speaks of creation) **was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

**JOHN 1:14** **And the Word was made flesh** (this was the Incarnation - God became man, a man called Jesus), **and dwelt among us**, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) **full of grace and truth** (as “flesh,” proclaimed His Humanity, “Grace and Truth” His Deity : E.S.B.)

**We as Christians have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us** (1 Corinthians 3:16). It is the Holy Spirit Who brings the essence of the Father and the Son to dwell with us.

**JOHN 14:23** **Jesus answered and said unto him, “If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him** (all through the Holy Spirit), **and make Our abode with him”** (Jesus explained that His manifestation of Himself was to the heart; it was inward and spiritual, so that the heart would consciously enjoy His abiding in it : E.S.B.).

**1 JOHN 4:15** **Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God** (the confession John speaks of here is a lifetime confession, and represents the sustained attitude of the heart : E.S.B.), **God dwells in him, and he in God.**

**However, there are numerous churches** and religions which do not preach that Jesus is God the Word (the second member of the Trinity) come in the flesh, the Creator of all. There are many religions which do not believe that Jesus is God, as clearly evidenced in the scriptures:

**COLOSSIANS 1:16** **For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible** (seen) **and invisible** (unseen), **whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him:**

**COLOSSIANS 1:17** **And He is before all things** (He pre-existed all things), **and by Him all things consist** (hold together). (Proverbs 8:22-31)

**HEBREWS 1:2** (God) Has in these last days (the Church Age) spoken unto us by His Son (Jesus Christ), Whom He has appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds;

**HEBREWS 1:3** Who being the brightness of His glory (*the radiance of God's Glory*), and the express image of His person (*the exact reproduction*), and upholding all things by the Word of His power (*carries the meaning of Jesus not only sustaining the weight of the universe, but also maintaining its coherence and carrying on its development*), when He had by Himself purged our sins (*which He did at the Cross, dealing with sin regarding its cause, its power, and its guilt*), sat down on the Right Hand of the Majesty on high (*speaks of the Finished Work of Christ, and that the Sacrifice was accepted by the Father*); (E.S.B.)

There are also some people who say, "Yes, we believe Jesus is God." And many of these may even say, "Jesus is the way," often leading people to believe they are saved and their churches are of God. However if we take a closer look at their doctrine, it could reveal that they also believe that we will all be gods one day or that Jesus developed into a god, or that Jesus is one of many gods, all of which deny His Divine identity as God the Word. Therefore we must be wary of false teachers and doctrines. Jesus Himself forewarned us about false teachers:

**MATTHEW 24:4** And Jesus answered and said unto them, "Take heed that no man deceive you.

**MATTHEW 24:5** For many shall come in My Name, saying, 'I am Christ;' and shall deceive many."

**LUKE 21:8** And He (Jesus) said, "Take heed that you be not deceived: for many shall come in My Name, saying, "I am Christ;" and the time draws near (for the Rapture): go you not therefore after them (do not follow them)."

The Apostle Paul gave further warnings, both to Timothy and the Galatian churches:

**1 TIMOTHY 4:1** Now the Spirit speaks expressly (explicitly), that in the latter times (the period in which we now live) some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing (deceiving) spirits, and doctrines of devils (doctrines inspired by demons but taught by man).

**GALATIANS 1:7** . . . but there be some that trouble you (cause confusion), and would pervert the Gospel of Christ (by false teaching).

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***“. . .if we take a closer look at their doctrine, it could reveal that they believe . . . that Jesus developed into a god, or that Jesus is one of many gods, all of which deny His Divine identity as God the Word. . .”***

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**GALATIANS 1:8** But though we (*Paul and his associates*), or an Angel from Heaven, Preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you (*Jesus*

*Christ and Him Crucified*), let him be accursed (eternally condemned; the Holy Spirit speaks this through Paul, making this very serious). (E.S.B.)

**2 TIMOTHY 4:3** For the time will come when they (men) will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers (who will teach them not truth but what they want to hear), having itching ears (ears itching to hear comfortable words);

**2 TIMOTHY 4:4** And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables (and thus darkness).

**Because they lack the knowledge** of God's Word in their hearts, many people are deceived by cults which teach false doctrines. Unfortunately sometimes Christians are also led astray by these cults and as a result, forfeit their salvation. Therefore we need to study the Word of God, so that we can recognize these false teachers and their false doctrines, not only for our own sakes, but also for the sake of our fellow man. We need to remember that the gift of salvation is precious beyond measure and the truth of the Gospel is the only light given to illuminate the way to life in this spiritually dead and darkened world. Therefore we need to allow the Word of God to direct us and light our pathway, hungering for the Law of God as the Psalmist did:

**PSALM 119:72** The law of Your mouth is better unto me than thousands of (pieces of) gold and silver (the Word is of more value than all the money in the world).

**PSALM 119:105** Your Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

**PSALM 119:165** Great peace have they who love Your law: and nothing shall offend them (cause them to stumble).

**PSALM 19:7** The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

**PSALM 19:8** The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

**PSALM 19:9** The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgements of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

**PSALM 19:10** More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

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*“. . .the truth of the Gospel is the only light given to illuminate the way to life in this spiritually dead and darkened world. . .”*

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## DISCERNING TRUTH

*Background Reading: Luke 6:43-44*

**If a person is open to the Spirit of Truth** (the Holy Spirit - our Teacher), the greatest sign to show that a teaching is of God will be God's convicting power on the Word of truth when it is spoken in wisdom and faith. As the Spirit bears witness with our spirit (Romans 8:16) that the words being spoken are from God, if truly open to this truth, we will experience an inner conviction. It is this inner witness (the knowing within) that will tell us whether a teaching is of God or not (again, that is if we are open to the Spirit of God). However, many may be unable to correctly perceive this leading. For this reason they need to be protected from the enemy and themselves through submitting to God-given leadership - their shepherds (pastors and teachers) within the Body.

God's purpose in shepherding His people doctrinally is revealed in His exhortation to Timothy:

**2 TIMOTHY 4:2 Herald and preach the Word! Keep your sense of urgency (stand by, be at hand and ready, whether the opportunity seems to be favorable or unfavorable, whether it is convenient or inconvenient, whether it be welcome or unwelcome, you as preacher of the Word are to show people in what way their lives are wrong) and convince them, rebuking and correcting, warning and urging and encouraging them, being unflagging and inexhaustible in patience and teaching. (Amp.)**

Another version reads:

**2 TIMOTHY 4:2 Preach the Word** (*refers to the whole body of revealed Truth, which means the entirety of the Word of God*); **be instant in season, out of season** (*presents the idea of the Preacher holding himself in constant readiness to proclaim the Word*); **reprove** (*the Preacher is to deal with sin, both in the lives of his unsaved hearers and in those of the Saints to whom he Ministers, and he is to do so in no uncertain tones and terms*), **rebuke** (*a suggestion in some cases of impending penalty*), **exhort with all longsuffering and Doctrine.** (*This tells us that the "reproving" and the "rebuking" must be done with gentleness . . .*) (E.S.B.)

Many become shipwrecked in their faith because they never put down roots, but move from church to church, thinking they are qualified to act as their own pastors. This goes against the teaching of scripture which states that God gave the offices of the Five Fold Ministry (Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers) to the Church for the express purpose of "*. . . the perfecting of the Saints, . . . the work of the ministry, . . . the edifying of the Body of Christ*" (Ephesians 4:11-12).

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***“ . . . Many become shipwrecked in their faith because they never put down roots, but move from church to church, thinking they are qualified to act as their own pastors. . . ”***

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**In fact part of God's prescribed order** for our Christian life is to become committed to a local church and to submit to those whom God has placed in authority over us in this place. There are shepherds and there are sheep - and the sheep are ill-equipped to shepherd themselves. Therefore we find specific instruction in God's Word to:

**HEBREWS 13:17** Obey them who have the rule over you, and submit yourselves (to them in the Lord): for they watch for your souls (have a responsibility for your spiritual welfare), as they who must give account (to the Lord), that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

This is not an authority which is to be exercised in a dictatorial way, for all things need to be taken to the Lord in prayer. While the shepherd must give account, each person is still responsible for their own spiritual walk. The key in all this is humility, and a heart's desire to please the Father:

**1 PETER 5:5** Likewise, you younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yes, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble. (Proverbs 3:34)

**1 PETER 5:6** Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time (*proclaims the route to the Blessings of God* : E.S.B.)

**The first sign** which shows that a teaching is of God is that it will line up with His Word - His principles. Then if it does, it must also be a balanced message, in context, and applicable for today. Indeed there are many hermeneutical rules which govern the interpretation of scripture. Biblical hermeneutics is the science of interpretation of scripture.

Note that we will not know if a teaching is correct by how much emotional response we have to it, or by how "comfortable" we feel. Both of these indicators can be based purely on the senses, and the senses are not able to accurately or objectively discern spiritual truth.

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***“. . .The first sign which shows that a teaching is of God is that it will line up with His Word - His principles. . .”***

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When God's teachings are received and acted upon in faith, His power will be released to back up His Word of truth. And there will be signs and wonders which accompany and confirm the preaching of the message of truth.

**ROMANS 1:16** For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation (of spirit, soul and body) to every one who believes . . .

**MARK 16:20** And they (the early Church) went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs (and wonders) following. Amen.

These signs will include lives transformed at an experiential level to express the fruit of the Spirit.

**GALATIANS 5:22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

**GALATIANS 5:23** Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (This fruit can only develop when Christians are led and empowered by the Spirit.)

**GALATIANS 5:24** And they who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

**GALATIANS 5:25** If we live in the Spirit (speaks of salvation), let us also walk in the Spirit (speaks of ongoing sanctification, i.e. living our life on a daily basis according to the graces and energies of the Divine Nature).

We cannot, however, rely on the numbers of people being saved and healed alone to tell us whether a certain teaching is truth or not. This is because people have wills and can reject the truth, thus choosing not to receive of God's teachings through His chosen vessels. By doing so, such people remain in bondage because of their unbelief or rebellion. Therefore we cannot rely on signs alone to establish the authenticity of a teacher or teaching.

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*“. . . We cannot, however, rely on the numbers of people being saved and healed alone to tell us whether a certain teaching is truth or not. . . ”*

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**Indeed the power of the Gospel** is only realized when people receive, believe and act on God's Word in faith - for until truth is believed and acted upon, it will remain merely empty or dead words. But when it is appropriated according to the conditions of God's Word, it is transformed into the living word which can release the power of God unto salvation of spirit, soul and body.

**We can see an example** of people rejecting God's teachings when Jesus, the greatest teacher of all, returned to Nazareth, His home town.

**MARK 6:1** And He went out from thence (Capernium), and came into His own country (hometown - Nazareth); and His Disciples follow (accompanied) Him.

**MARK 6:2** And when the Sabbath day was come, He began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing Him were astonished, saying, "From whence has this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto Him, that even such mighty works (miracles) are wrought by His hands? (They did not question the wisdom or the works, but rather His right to do such things. In their thoughts, He wasn't worthy!)" (E.S.B.)

**MARK 6:3** Is not this the carpenter, the Son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not His sisters here with us? " And they were offended at Him (disapproved of Him).

**MARK 6:4** But Jesus said unto them, “A Prophet is not without honour (proper deference and reverence), but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house (probably meaning His brothers and sisters).”

**MARK 6:5** And He could there do no mighty work, save that He laid His hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.

**MARK 6:6** And He marvelled (was amazed) because of their unbelief . . .

Even though God had performed many mighty miracles and wonders through Jesus’ ministry, people still rejected Jesus and His teachings, and the same still happens today to God’s ministers. Therefore a lack of signs and wonders does not necessarily mean that a teaching or a ministry is not of God.

**However, we can state categorically** that if a teaching does not line up with God’s Word, we need to reject it, no matter what so-called “signs” may accompany it (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). Thus to know if a teaching is correct and in context, we must know the principles contained within God’s Word. Otherwise we could be deceived by wrong teaching and succumb to confusion and error. We need proper doctrinal filters to work through the doctrines of the Bible. In other words, scripture will not contradict itself, and will always harmonize. As we understand basic doctrines, we can use these as a filter by which other doctrine can be tested, and if true, then digested. As scripture itself tells us, we must be built up, doctrine upon doctrine, “*For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little*” (Isaiah 28:10). In this way we can progress gradually from the milk of the Word to the meat of the Word:

**HEBREWS 5:13** For every one who uses milk (doesn’t refer to new Christians but those who have had opportunity to grow in the Word and haven’t done so) is unskilful in the Word of righteousness: for he is (still) a babe.

**HEBREWS 5:14** But strong meat (of the Word) belongs to them who are of full age (mature in the Lord), even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both (distinguish between) good and evil.

**EPHESIANS 4:14** That we henceforth be no more children (immature Christians), tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men (unscrupulous teachers of falsehood), and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive (by deliberate scheming)

Remember that the foundation of all doctrine is the Cross. Therefore anything, meaning any doctrine which is not based on Calvary - on the Cross (the Atonement) - will be false and will bring nothing but error and distraction of one kind or another.

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***“. . . We need proper doctrinal filters to work through the doctrines of the Bible. In other words, scripture will not contradict itself, and will always harmonize. . . ”***

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**We are responsible** for our own personal growth in the Lord. We are responsible for what we do with what we hear. God has commanded us to seek Him and His truth with all we have, and He promises that if we do, we will find both. To do anything less than this is to deny ourselves God's fellowship and love, and this may bring bondage into our lives and even cause others to remain in darkness (through a lack of discipleship and Christian witness on our part).

**God will protect new Christians** in their initial growth in a limited way as long as they follow Him wholeheartedly. Just as parents care for their children and protect them from harm when they can, God does the same. However the degree of help, protection and provision that God gives will depend on the individual's willingness to allow Him to do so. And we need also to allow God to direct us in regard to the church we attend and the ministry we sit under, for in these matters we are also responsible before God. We should allow these things to be of God's choosing, not ours - for in relation to God we are but babes, and it is He Who knows both us and the future. So leave the future in His hands, by allowing Him to lead in all these areas.

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*“. . .we need also to allow God to direct us in regard to the church we attend and the ministry we sit under, for in these matters we are also responsible before God. . .”*

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### **Common Worldly Error**

**In the world of the unsaved**, who have only their own natural thinking to light the pathway before them, we find commonly held misconceptions which relate to salvation and religion. Such misconceptions can be proven as such by a simple reading of scripture:

**JOHN 14:6** Jesus said unto him, **“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto (God) the Father, but by Me** (by Who He is, and by what He has done).”

Nevertheless, man, thinking with an unrenewed mind, will grasp such falsehoods as a form of security for eternal life.

**The first such common error** is the belief that if one's good works outweigh one's bad, then this will be sufficient to earn one a place in heaven. One famous film star who died recently was quoted as saying “I think I have done enough to get there (heaven).” Sadly this was reported just before his death. Josh McDowell speaks about this belief as follows:

***“Don't my good works count for anything? Will not God accept me if I've lived a good life?”***

*In the early sixties, a song came out by J. Frank Wilson and the Cavaliers, entitled “The Last Kiss.” The song is about a couple out on a date who get into a car accident. The girl dies in her boyfriend's arms. He mourns her death singing:*

*“Oh, where, oh where, can my baby be, The Lord took her away from me, She’s gone to heaven so I got to be good, So I can see my baby when I leave this world.”*

*This song sums up the attitude of a lot of people. They think if they can live a good life, if the good works they do outweigh the bad, then they will have earned their way to heaven.*

*Unfortunately, the Bible does not allow anyone to earn his way to heaven. The Scriptures teach that good works have nothing to do with one entering into a right relationship with God. This relationship is nothing we can earn, because God has done everything for us.*

*“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us” (Titus 3:5, KJV).*

*“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8, 9, KJV).*

*“But without faith it is impossible to please him” (Hebrews 11:6, KJV).*

*“This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (John 6:29, KJV).*

*If our eternal salvation was on the basis of works and we could earn it successfully, then God would be our debtor: He would owe us something (Romans 4:1–3). The Bible teaches that God owes no man anything, and our own righteousness is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6).*

*The simple reason is that God has a perfect standard, and all of us have sinned and come short of this mark (Romans 3:23). We like to compare ourselves to others, and thus we feel that we are not so bad after all. But God compares us to Jesus Christ, and next to Him we cannot help but fall far short, all of us without exception.*

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***“. . .The simple reason is that God has a perfect standard, and all of us have sinned and come short of this mark. . .”***

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*This can be illustrated by the following example. Out in Southern California, there is an island off the coast called Catalina, twenty-six miles from the pier at Newport Beach. Suppose that one day three men are standing on the end of the pier.*

*One is an alcoholic, grubby, sick, living in the streets. The second is the average American, and the third a fine, upstanding, pillar-of-the-community person.*

*All of a sudden, the alcoholic leaps off the edge of the pier five feet out into the water. The other two yell, “What are you trying to do?” The man in the water yells back, “I’m jumping to Catalina!”*

*The second man, the average man on the street, says, “Watch me. I can do better than that!” He proceeds to jump, landing ten feet out, twice as far as the alcoholic. The third man, very moral, upright, outstanding person that he is, laughs disdainfully at the two men in the water.*

*He moves back about fifty yards, takes a running leap and lands twenty feet out, twice as far as Mr. Average, and four times as far as Mr. Alcoholic.*

*The Coast Guard fishes them out of the water and asks what they are doing, to which they all reply, “We are jumping to Catalina,” and Mr. Average boasts of his beating Mr. Alcoholic, and Mr. Great boasts of his accomplishment in beating both of them.*

*The Coast Guard officer could only shake his head and exclaim, “You fools! You are all still twenty-six miles short of your mark.”*

*Although modern man considers himself better than - or at least as good as - others, he is still far from the target God has set for us. It is impossible for anyone to jump from the pier to Catalina, and it is impossible for anyone to reach heaven by his own deeds and apart from Jesus Christ. As Jesus Himself puts it, “No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (John 14:6, KJV).”<sup>1</sup>*

*(underlines added)*

**The second common error** is that all roads lead to Rome - in other words, all religions, if followed, will guide one to the same destination, which is heaven.

### **Don't all religions basically teach the same thing?**

*“Many people wonder why we make such a fuss about Jesus Christ and Christianity, since they believe all religions are basically the same. They assume that all faiths are all talking about the same thing, but are putting it in a different way.*

*One man once gave this illustration. He said, “Suppose you take 10 men and blindfold them, and lead them over to an elephant. You now let each of them touch a different part of the elephant - tail, trunk, etc. - without telling them what they are touching. You then lead them back inside, take off their blindfolds and tell them to describe what they touched.” The man then asked, “Would their descriptions agree?” The answer of course is no.*

*The man then made this observation: even though these ten men touched the same thing, they did not agree because each touched a different part or, if you please, experienced it from a different angle. He went on to conclude, “Isn't it the same in the area of religion?”*

*Aren't all the different religious groups - Christians, Moslems, Mormons, Buddhists, etc. - experiencing the same God, yet explaining it in different ways? Thus can't they all be true, but with each giving a different emphasis?”*

*The problem with this illustration is identifying the elephant with God. You are assuming that all these people are experiencing the same God, when in fact this is not true. Christianity and Islam cannot both be true at the same time. Neither can Mormonism and Buddhism both be correct simultaneously, nor can Christian Science and Roman Catholicism.*

*All religions cannot be true at the same time, because they teach many things completely opposite from one another. They all may be wrong, but certainly they all cannot be right, for the claims of one will exclude the other.*

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***“ . . . All religions cannot be true at the same time,  
because they teach many things completely opposite  
from one another. . . ”***

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*As to matters of salvation and the person of Jesus Christ, only historic Christianity recognizes Him as the eternal God becoming a man who died for the sins of the world and arose again the third day. Salvation is obtained only by putting one's trust in this Jesus.*

The Jesus of Islam was not the Son of God who died for the sins of the world; neither is the Jesus of Mormonism or Christian Science the same Jesus as revealed in the Bible.

Salvation is not by grace and through faith in these religions, but it is a matter of works. It can then be observed that we are dealing with different religious ideas that are not compatible with one another.

Even though many religions seem to be the same on the surface, the closer one gets to the central teachings the more apparent the differences become. It is totally incorrect to say that all religions are the same.

The God of the Christians is not the same God as that of the Mormons, Moslems, or Christian Scientists. If the God of the Bible is the only true God, then the other gods are non-existent and should not be worshiped.”<sup>2</sup>

(underlines added)

A further error is that Islam and Christianity, the world’s largest monotheistic religions, are compatible.

### ***Is Islam compatible with Christianity?***

“As with all world religions, there are tremendous differences between biblical Christianity and Islam. A close examination of the two faiths will find their beliefs to be incompatible.

Mohammed claimed that the revelations given him by God were infallible, thus making the Quran the standard by which the other Scriptures are to be tested. However, the mere claim to revelations is meaningless unless backed up by some kind of adequate evidence.

The evidence for the inspiration and historical reliability of the Bible is overwhelming, while evidence for the infallibility of the Quran is lacking.

Mohammed also asserted that the Gospel portrait of Jesus is incorrect, while the proper view was revealed to him by God. The Moslem thus believes the report in the Quran of the life of Jesus, rather than the New Testament account. The Jesus who is revealed in the Quran is not the same Jesus who is portrayed in the Gospels. Both accounts cannot be true at the same time.

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***“ . . . Even though many religions seem to be the same on the surface, the closer one gets to the central teachings the more apparent the differences become. . . ”***

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In any event, the teachings of Christianity and Islam cannot be reconciled. The Quran is in direct conflict with the Scriptures on the character of Jesus Christ. “Jesus Christ, the son of Mary, was no more than an apostle of God” (Sura 19:92).

Furthermore, the Quran states that Jesus is a prophet only to the nation Israel, while Mohammed is the last and greatest prophet to the whole world.

Contrast that with the biblical view of Jesus Christ. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1, KJV), “He who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9, RSV), “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”

(Matthew 16:16, MLVB), “And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:3, NASB).

The Quran, speaking of the death of Christ, states, “They neither killed nor crucified him; it had only the appearance of it.”

The New Testament, however, makes the mode of Jesus’ death very clear: “And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him” (Luke 23:33, KJV), “and when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost” (Luke 23:46, KJV).

The Bible teaches that Jesus was the virgin-born Son of Mary, God in human flesh. “And the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus’” (Luke 1:30, 31, RSV); “And the angel answered and said to her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore that holy Offspring will be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35, MLVB).

Islam teaches that Jesus was born miraculously from Mary but they do not believe in the biblical virgin birth. They believe that, as Adam was created from the earth, Jesus was created by God in the womb of Mary. They say He is not a god or the Son of God. Although this would be a miraculous conception, it is not the same as the biblical virgin birth.

Islam also teaches salvation by works: “They whose balances shall be heavy shall be blest. But they whose balances shall be light, they shall lose their soul, abiding in hell forever” (Sura 13:102–140). Thus if the scale tips in favor of good works, the Moslem will reach paradise, but if this be not the case then he will be banished to hell.

The Bible teaches a salvation by grace through faith and not of works. “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast” (Ephesians 2:8, 9, NASB), “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us” (Titus 3:5, KJV).

A major problem with accepting Mohammed’s account is that his testimony is 600 years after the events occurred, while the New Testament contains eyewitness or firsthand testimony of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Jesus made the distinction very clear; “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent” (John 6:29, RSV).”<sup>3</sup>  
(underlines added)

## Biblical Hermeneutics

**The word hermeneutics** comes from the Greek word HERMENEUO. It means to explain, interpret, or translate. When used as a noun, HERMENEUO refers to the power or faculty of interpreting and explaining the meaning of a text.

Larry Hunt has rightly said in his book “Biblical Exposition” page 13 (underlines added), “Students have come to me claiming they see no need to investigate hermeneutical principles or to acquire an understanding of what a passage meant to its original hearers or readers. To them, it is not necessary to spend time doing word studies. They especially see no need to consider grammatical construction because, as they emotionally point out,



*the Bible itself declares that the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth. This opens an area of discussion which is too large to deal with at length in this context, and yet it is consequential enough to address it. Sufficient for the moment, however, is the declaration that a mere cognitive understanding of historical settings, grammar, word meanings, etc. is not good enough. You can get that much in any 'decent, dead' Bible college or seminary or church, for that matter, and there are plenty of them to go around! What we need is to know the presence, leading, and mind of the Holy Spirit Who inspired this great Word of God, for the Word He inspired is certainly not dead. Quite to the contrary, it is alive, quick, and powerful to the point that it gets right into the tiny cracks and crevices of our lives, exposes them, convicts us about them, instructs us what to do, lists out the alternatives, and demands a decision. Only the Holy Spirit can do that.”<sup>4</sup>*

Therefore we can understand that both are needed - an understanding of how to interpret the Bible, plus the Anointing of the Holy Spirit which brings life and revelation to what may otherwise be the dead letter.

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***“. . .What we need is to know the presence, leading,  
and mind of the Holy Spirit Who inspired  
this great Word of God. . .”***

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“Hermeneutics” can be explained in these terms:

### ***The Science of Hermeneutics.***

*“We have defined hermeneutics as the science and art of interpretation. It is a science because it can reduce interpretation, within limits, to a set of rules. It is an art in that the application of the rules remains complex, requiring a skilled interpreter. Hermeneutics is the pivotal point of all science because it is the bridge of communication. We will now consider the necessity and importance of hermeneutics under the following two headings: General Hermeneutics, including all forms of communication; and Biblical Hermeneutics, dealing with God’s communication to man.*

#### ***A. General Hermeneutics***

*General hermeneutics refers to the various sets of rules which are used in the interpretation of the materials presented through the many forms of communication. Communication is the transmission and reception of thoughts and feelings in a medium common to both sender and receiver. All forms of communication, including speech, literature, and the arts, present subject matter which need interpretation by the proper application of the rules of general hermeneutics. When something hinders clear understanding in the process of communication, there arises the need for interpretation.*

*Whenever communication is to take place, it must be recognized that a gap in understanding may exist between the communicator and the receiver. For communication to be successful, there must be a common medium between the two in order that this gap may be bridged. The rules of interpretation supply us with the materials with which the bridge can be built. Between the sender and receiver there lies a vast field of experience*

which may contain differences that cause understanding gaps. In other words, both sender and receiver has his own frame of reference around the message being relayed.

### **B. Biblical Hermeneutics**

General hermeneutics is the science of interpreting the communication of man to man. Biblical hermeneutics is the science of interpreting the communication of God to man. This Divine communication has come to man in the form of sacred literature - the Bible.

It is certain that God has spoken to man in His Word: Jesus - the Living Word; and the Bible - the Written Word. But what has He said? The primary purpose of Biblical hermeneutics is to ascertain what God has said in the Scriptures and to determine its meaning. We derive no benefit from the fact that God has spoken unless we understand what is meant by what He said.

As previously noted, there is an understanding gap between the minds of the communicator and receiver which must be bridged in order for an effective transfer of ideas to take place. If this is true concerning man to man communication, how much more it applies to communication from the infinite God, who is omniscient, to the mind of the finite man, whose frame of reference is limited.

It must also be recognized that God communicated His truth through human writers utilizing their frames of reference. This serves to doubly necessitate the proper interpretation of Scripture. (Both God to man; and God through man, to man).”<sup>5</sup>

(underlines added).

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**“. . .The primary purpose of Biblical hermeneutics is to ascertain what God has said in the Scriptures and to determine its meaning. . .”**

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Again, Kevin Connor’s book outlines the various Biblical sciences and how they inter-relate. These are some terms of which we as Bible students need to be aware.

### **Hermeneutics and other Biblical Sciences**

“It is necessary that the Bible scholar have an understanding of the inter-relatedness of the various Biblical sciences. Hermeneutics is not to be viewed as a solitary science, but rather as a link in a chain of related sciences. The major Bible sciences are the study of the Canon (Canonology), Historical Criticism, Textual Criticism, Hermeneutics, Exegesis and Biblical Theology.

**A. Canonology** - The word “canon” simply means “a rod, rule, or measuring stick.” This science has to do with determining which sacred books measure up to the standing of Divine inspiration. By Divine inspiration we mean that God inspired the very thoughts and words of Scripture, utilizing the writer’s frame of reference yet without corrupting the communication.

*The books which measure up to this standard are to be recognized as “God-breathed” - the very Word of God (II Timothy 3:16). These would include the sixty-six books of the Authorized Version of the Bible. The Apocrypha is excluded.*

**B. Historical Criticism** - The word “criticism” is not used here, nor in the following section, in the negative destructive sense. Rather it is used to connote discernment. This science deals with the authorship, date, historical circumstances, authenticity of contents, and literary unity of the books.

**C. Textual Criticism** - The word “textual” refers to the actual wording of a book. This science does not attempt to undermine the inspiration of Scripture but rather to determine as accurately as possible the original wording of the inspired text. This process is complicated by the fact that the original manuscripts no longer exist. Those copies which do exist are many and vary in quality. This requires keen discernment on the part of the textual critic.

**D. Hermeneutics** - This science is not concerned with inspiration (Canonology), background (Historical Criticism), or the wording of the books (Textual Criticism), but instead is concerned with determining the principles by which the books may be interpreted.

**E. Exegesis** - The word “exegesis” comes from a Greek word (*exhegesisthai*) meaning “to guide or lead out.” It refers to bringing out the meaning of any writing which might otherwise be difficult to understand. The science involves the application of the rules of hermeneutics. While hermeneutics provides us with the tools, exegesis refers to the actual use of these tools; hermeneutics supplies the principles of interpretation, while exegesis is the process of interpretation. Exegesis, then, can be thought of as applied hermeneutics.

**F. Biblical Theology** - The word “theology” comes from two Greek words (*theos* = God and *logos* = word), and means literally, “the study and discourse of God.” The science of Biblical theology involves the compilation, categorization, and summarization of Biblical doctrines. It formulates conclusions on a Biblical subject by considering all the Scripture relative to that subject.

*A definite progression can be seen in these six related Bible sciences. As noted by Ramm. (p.10):*

- 1. The study of the canon determines the inspired books.*
- 2. The study of historical criticism gives us the framework of the books.*
- 3. The study of textual criticism determines the wording of the books.*
- 4. Hermeneutics gives us the rules for the interpretation of the books.*
- 5. Exegesis is the application of these rules to the books.*
- 6. Biblical theology is the result.*

*These six sciences can be easily divided into two groups of three: the first group deals with the infallible materials the Bible student has available; the second group is concerned with his use of these materials. Both groups are units; three-fold cords which should not be broken (Ecclesiastes 4:12). Canonology, historical criticism, and textual criticism are*

bound together and provide the Bible student with a solid basis upon which he can build. These three are then completed by the second group. Hermeneutics provides the guidelines for exegesis, which in turn sets the stage for Biblical theology.

Proper application of God's Word is dependent upon proper interpretation of it. All exposition, preaching, and teaching must, therefore, be based on the appropriate exercise of the principles of hermeneutics, exegesis, and Biblical theology.

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***“. . .Proper application of God's Word is dependent upon proper interpretation of it. . .”***

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### ***Hermeneutics and Church Divisions***

It is important to recognize that many of the divisions within Christianity have arisen, not only out of carnality or sectarianism, but also because of differences in the field of hermeneutics. It must be understood that one's theological viewpoint is determined primarily by his hermeneutics. Thus a difference in hermeneutics will most likely lead to a difference in doctrine.

The issue debated in Christendom is not so much whether God has spoken (though many skeptics argue this point); nor is it so much the specific books in which He has spoken. It concerns, rather, the question of what God meant by what He said. The problems that arise, in other words, are not over inspiration as much as they concern interpretation and application.

It should be noted, however, that it is possible to adhere to the same system of hermeneutics and still reach differing doctrinal conclusions as a result of a difference in exegetical approach.

It can be concluded, then, that one of the most logical and effective means of solving the problem of divisions within Christianity would be to first settle the differences that exist in the principles and application of hermeneutics. If the principles used in the interpretation of Scripture were applied uniformly, there would be a basic agreement in the resultant theology. This, in turn, would eliminate or minimize many of the doctrinal differences which now divide the Body of Christ.”<sup>6</sup>

(underlines added).

Larry Hunt sums it all up as follows: “The vast majority of error, if not all, has its roots (although not exclusively so) in the absence of good hermeneutical principles. As a result, truth has been turned into falsehoods that lead many down the pathway of darkness instead of light. Hermeneutics, therefore, is not a negative word to those who actually understand the meaning, significance, and importance of correct Biblical interpretation. Furthermore, those who take their calling personally and seriously will also be interested in how to properly interpret the Bible.”<sup>7</sup>

(underlines added)

**Of course we were never designed** to be islands unto ourselves, and our Christian walk includes commitment to a local body of Believers with whom we can share our faith and be mutually encouraged and edified. We can also understand that Christians are not

meant to teach or pastor themselves in the sense of being independent, and isolated from the Body. Yes the Holy Spirit will bring revelation of the Word, yet this almost always takes place in the context of submission to God-ordained ministers of the Gospel, teachers and pastors through whom the Lord works in order to edify and develop the maturity of the Saints of the Kingdom.

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***“ . . .we were never designed to be islands unto ourselves. . .Christians are not meant to teach or pastor themselves in the sense of being independent, and isolated from the Body. . .”***

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## UNDERSTANDING THE SCRIPTURES

**There are many methods of interpretation of scripture** including the allegorical method, the mystical method, the devotional method, the rationalistic method, the literal method, etc. The two we will mention here are the allegorical method and the literal method.

*“The allegorical method presumes that beneath the plain and obvious sense of scripture lies its true meaning. It believes that what the words of Scripture literally say are only external “chaff” which hides the true spiritual “wheat” of the Word.*

*In relation to Scripture, the literal method of interpretation is the oldest in existence. It is said to have originated with Ezra, the Father of Hermeneutics . . .*

*The literal method assumes that the words of Scripture in their plain evident meaning are reliable; that God intended His revelation to be understood by all who believe; that the words of Scripture communicate what God wants man to know; and that God based the communication of truth on the regular laws governing written communication, thereby intending for it to be interpreted by those same laws. This is not to deny the Holy Spirit’s involvement in both the production and the interpretation of the Bible.”<sup>8</sup>*

(underlines added)

It is not our task to introduce meaning into scripture but to extract meaning from scripture. This should be primarily done according to the literal methodology whereby scripture is interpreted in terms of context. This involves plain and evident meanings which must always integrate harmoniously with the Bible as a whole. These meanings are to be understood, with the help of the Holy Spirit, by all who believe. As we interpret scripture according to the literal method, we discover that the Holy Spirit reveals not only “the letter of the law” but “the spirit of the law” as well. The interpretation of scripture must also, of necessity, allow for the use of idiom and various forms of exaggerated language - for the literal truth will be in the figurative language, e.g. Matthew 7:3-5; Matthew 23:24, 27; Mark 10:25; Luke 14:26.

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***“ . . .It is not our task to introduce meaning into scripture but to extract meaning from scripture. . .”***

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**There are some truths** contained in the scriptures which do require the use of so called “spiritual maths” to be clearly discerned. This includes the interpretation of some prophetic, and also some symbolic material. Within this context, interpretation must always agree with the harmony of the scriptures. For this kind of interpretive work, we are always dependent, of course, on the Person of the Holy Spirit, for it is He Who functions as the Revealer of truth (John 14:26; John 16:13, 14).

Again let us state that we are to seek, find and embrace the meaning of scripture. We are not to give meaning to scripture, but rather, with proper hermeneutics and the graces of the Holy Spirit, to find out what scripture means or is saying. This way will lead us to understand the Bible by literal interpretation. This is Biblical “exegesis” which is the determination of the meaning of the Biblical text in its historical and literary contexts. Note that “exegesis” is the process of interpretation, otherwise known as applied hermeneutics (which supplies the principles of interpretation). Exegesis is in contrast to “eisegesis” which is to determine meaning by reading one’s own ideas into a passage. This is what takes place with, for instance, the allegorical, mystical and rationalistic methods of Biblical interpretation. We, along with many others in the Christian faith, believe, teach and practise an exegetical approach to scripture. The allegorical method of interpreting the Bible leads people into inappropriate mystical meanings concerning the scriptures, for this method assumes that what is plainly stated is not what God really meant. The literal method, on the other hand, considers, in general, that the scriptures, when proper hermeneutics are applied, are both plain and evident, and therefore clearly understood.

*“God has revealed Himself and His will in written form because humanity is comprised of intelligent beings capable of thought and reason. Assuming that God desired to reveal Himself and His will to His creation, especially humanity, in a way in which humanity would clearly understand it, does it not make sense that He would do so in a medium which could essentially be universally understood, namely, in accordance with known rules of language? In other words, is it not logical to assume that God would communicate His truth to His creation on an understandable level of that creation? If the words of God were to be understood by humanity, of necessity God would have to use language, including the universal rules of grammar applicable to and which control all language which was understandable to humanity. Therefore, it is incumbent for the interpreter to search out the plain and simple meaning of the words which the biblical writers were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write. This is what is meant, by the way, by literal interpretation. Literal interpretation is nothing more and nothing less than the grammatical understanding and interpretation of the Bible. Martin Luther once said:*

*I here once more repeat, what I have so often insisted on, that the Christian should direct his efforts toward understanding the so-called literal sense of Scripture, which alone is the substance of faith and of Christian theology, which alone will sustain in the hour of trouble and temptation, and which will triumph over sin, death, and the gates of hell, to the praise and glory of God. The allegorical sense is usually uncertain, and by no means safe to build our faith upon; for it depends for the most part on human opinion only, on which if a man lean he will find it no better than an Egyptian reed.’ ’ ’<sup>9</sup>*

(underlines added)

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***“...God has revealed Himself and His will in written form because humanity is comprised of intelligent beings capable of thought and reason. . .”***

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**Within literal interpretation**, also called the grammatical and historical method, when figures or metaphors are used, the passage of scripture still teaches literal truth, e.g. John 10:1-16, 26-29; John 15:1-8. So even throughout scripture, when allegory and figurative language are occasionally used, there will be clear literal truth which is easily discerned with the help of God’s graces. As stated, we cannot read into scripture what we think but rather we must allow the scripture to speak to us its own message. We believe that only through literal interpretation can we have the proper focus needed so that the scripture can reveal to us its meaning. The literal truth revealed by the figures in Luke 8:4-15, for example, is clearly understandable, and actually explained by the scriptures themselves.

When interpreting let’s say the figurative language and the prophetic in books like Ezekiel and Revelation, we believe that the images and figures should be understood by a literal meaning. For example, there will truly be a future regenerated earth (Revelation.21:1), there are actually elders who are positioned around the throne of God (Revelation 4:4), there are also seal, vial and trumpet judgements which will be poured out upon the earth: e.g. Revelation Ch.6; Revelation 8:7-13; Revelation Ch.16! Even the symbolic imagery of Revelation, such as the “*man-child*” of Revelation 12:5, which is Jesus, or the terrible beast seen by the Apostle John (Revelation 12:1-4) which represents all the earthly Kingdoms that have oppressed Israel during Daniel’s prophetic time frame, has clear literal meaning. So too the temple illustrated in so much detail in Ezekiel Ch’s 40 to 48, describes the actual Millennial Temple which will exist during Christ’s 1,000 year reign on earth.

**People who spiritualize scriptures** presume that there are allegories when there are none and so create a meaning never intended. For example, they may say that Noah’s flood was not a literal flood but a myth which exemplified the particular concepts of good, evil and judgement which the people of the day adhered to. This is to take a “liberal” approach to the interpretation of scripture and to impose meaning rather than extract meaning. A fundamentalist approach to scripture holds the view that the Word of God is true and inspired, and interprets what is there in a literal sense.

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***“...People who spiritualize scriptures presume that there are allegories when there are none and so create a meaning never intended. . .”***

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To use this method of literal interpretation of eschatology will lead one to premillennialism, a belief that following Christ’s Second Coming, He will reign on the earth for 1,000 years. Eschatology is a word derived from the Greek “*eschatos*” which means “last” or “last things.” So eschatology is the study of “last things.” Included in this are all the predictions that related to future events at the time they were written, but have since been fulfilled. If one does not have this literal approach to interpreting these

prophecies, then one will be led into error. An example of such error is amillennialism, the view which denies the 1,000 year reign of Christ after the Second Coming. Non-literal interpretation can also lead one to support postmillennialism, the view that a golden age of 1,000 years will precede Christ's Second Coming

**There is much to be studied** in relation to this subject of interpreting the scriptures. At this point we are only making you aware of this subject and some of the ramifications of the different approaches that exist. We will leave you to study this subject in greater depth. The two books out of which we have taken some extracts are excellent study books that we would highly recommend to all students of the Bible.

## Understanding The Bible Versus Receiving Truth

Again, in relation to understanding the truths of scripture, let us examine the following:

**1 CORINTHIANS 2:12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world (the power of darkness), but the Spirit which is of God (upon salvation we receive the Holy Spirit); that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

**1 CORINTHIANS 2:13** Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches (to bring an understanding of God's Word); comparing spiritual things with spiritual (teaching spiritual truths to spiritual men).

**1 CORINTHIANS 2:14** But the natural (unregenerated) man receives (welcomes, embraces) not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness (meaningless nonsense) unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Larry Hunt writes "*someone usually quotes 1 Corinthians 2:14, . . . thinking that this verse opens the door to a deeper, mystical, spiritualized meaning of Scripture. But such is not the case. The issue is not that an unsaved person cannot understand what the Bible is saying. If this were the case, how could any unsaved person read the Bible and accept Jesus as a result of reading the Bible? . . . So this is not what this passage is saying. The word translated as "receive" is the Greek work DECHOMAI. It refers to a hearty welcome, to embracing, or to receiving something or someone with open arms. This verse does not say that the unsaved person cannot understand what the Bible is saying. Quite to the contrary, this verse actually admits to the fact that the unsaved person does indeed understand what the Bible says, but the unsaved person does not welcome it and does not embrace it. Why? Because the unsaved person has pronounced it as being foolish. You see, it is not that the person does not understand the Bible; it is that he does not accept the Bible because he believes it to be foolishness. To pronounce something as being foolish presupposes a literal, grammatical understanding of it. It is true, however, that the unsaved person cannot know the things of the Bible. The word "know" refers to an experience of them, a relationship with God.*"<sup>10</sup>

(underlines added)



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***“ . . . It refers to a hearty welcome, to embracing, or to receiving something or someone with open arms. . . ”***

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To “*know*” God’s truths is not just to know them intellectually. Rather it is to become one with and to experience God’s Truth by receiving it through the graces and energies that would cause it to be assimilated into us. In this way we are able to truly become one with God and His Word of Truth. Then, because God has developed in us holy faith in regard to this holy Truth, we will truly know this Truth and the Truth shall set us free.

**JOHN 8:32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**

**Natural or unsaved man** cannot receive or know, in a spiritual sense, the things of God, i.e. His truths, the depth, width and breadth of them.

Natural man can know about much of God’s Truth with his intellect, but to experience God’s Truth he must be born again so as to “*have the mind of Christ*” (1 Corinthians 2:16) on any matter that matters. This comes about through the Divine Nature energizing our heart and mind in the graces of God. From the Divine Nature comes liberating, empowering, holy Light that not only reveals Truth to humble and open souls in Christ, but brings grace that would cause us to have a passion for God’s Truth. This passion can only be experienced by the heart of man, for it is called holy Love. Only in this way can we truly “*know*” (experience) the things of God. This comes after we seek, with the help of the Holy Spirit, and then find and truly embrace, not just the things of God, but God Himself. Through our relationship with Jesus, we can then embrace God and His wonderful truths on a daily basis.

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***“ . . . From the Divine Nature comes liberating, empowering, holy Light that not only reveals Truth to humble and open souls in Christ, but brings grace that would cause us to have a passion for God’s Truth. . . ”***

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Again let us say that we are to seek, find and embrace, with the help of the Holy Spirit, the meaning of scripture. We are not to impose meaning on scripture but to extract the true meaning of scripture. This will enable us to understand the Bible according to its real interpretation, i.e. the way God intended.

### **The Need To Find The Right Church**

**We are instructed by scripture** to seek out fellow Believers, which includes attending and supporting a local church of the Lord’s choosing, located of course after much prayer that has sought the Holy Spirit’s leading.

**HEBREWS 10:25** Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together [as Believers] (at church and teaching meetings), as is the habit of some people, but admonishing - warning, urging and encouraging - one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching (the return of our Lord Jesus Christ). (Amp.)

If Christians are attending churches which they find are not teaching correctly in major areas, they should pray and ask the Lord for direction concerning this, i.e. whether to find another church or not. The reason for this is that if Christians remain in these places, they may become weakened in their faith, stunted in their spiritual growth, or even led into error.

The devil will use such situations to weaken Christians spiritually, keeping them in ignorance and bringing them into unbelief. You can be sure that Satan does not want Christians absorbing the powerful truths of God's Word. His ploy is to try to stop Christians believing on the Word of God, having them say, for example, "Healing is not for today," "God doesn't do miracles any more," "God put this sickness on me to make me humble and to test me," or make other kinds of erroneous statements which he can deceive people into believing and proclaiming as truth. Of course what accompanies unbelief and wrong teaching is usually a lack of true compassion and love for one's fellow man. Christians may try in the flesh (emotions) to love, but it will not be love which flows from God's Divine power working within. Sadly judgement, backbiting, gossip and people justifying their sin usually constitute further fruit of "weak Saints," strong in the flesh but weak in the power of the Lord.

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***“. . .if Christians remain in these places, they may become weakened in their faith, stunted in their spiritual growth, or even led into error. . .”***

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**The devil will use anything** he can to keep people from the truth and from having true victory in every area of their lives. So if Christians purpose to study and believe for healing or deliverance (or one of the many other promises in God's Word), and then go to church and hear that healing is not for today (and other erroneous teaching), it can hinder or stunt their growth in this area. This is why some may need, according to the Lord's leading, to change their place of fellowship - so that God can teach them and nurture them in His truths. Otherwise there is a danger that they will experience defeat and spiritual bankruptcy in many areas of their lives, as they are suffocated and weakened by a lack of the spiritual food needed to strengthen their inner man.

**Just a warning** - quite often the very church the Lord would want you to attend may be labelled by lukewarm Christians as "weird" and "fanatical" because of its uncompromising stance concerning the standard required by the Word of God. Do not let the opinions of others rob you of hearing the voice of the Spirit. If Satan cannot rob you from outside the church, he will try to do so from within the church and sad to say, he has much success.

**Know, however,** that everything which matters to us in this New Testament Age of Grace is written down in God's Word. The Old Testament pointed towards Calvary and the

New Testament points back at Calvary. In fact every promise to us, Jew or Gentile, has and will come via the Cross. The foundation by which the Lord's grace is released to us is Calvary. The Jews rejected the Cornerstone of Calvary (1 Peter 2:6) - Christ the crucified One Who was raised from the dead after shedding His Blood for the sin of the world. The cornerstone of all doctrine is Christ and only Christ. We must then, by the grace of God, be identified in His death and Resurrection, both positionally and conditionally, and from yielded lives, experience the Divine Nature energizing our very beings. This is the only pathway to true victory in the Christian life, and the only means by which we may please the Father. Unbelief and works of the flesh are but filthy rags:

**ISAIAH 64:6** But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses (works of the flesh) are as filthy rags . . .

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***“ . . . If Satan cannot rob you from outside the church, he will try to do so from within the church and sad to say, he has much success. . . ”***

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## **THE SCHEMES OF THE DEVIL**

*Background Reading: 1 Peter 5:6-9*

**Satan tries to throw doubt** on God's Word in order to keep people in unbelief. We can see an example of this in the Book of Genesis, Ch.3:

**GENESIS 3:1** Now the serpent (through whom the devil spoke) was more subtle (crafty) than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, **“Yes, has God said** (did God really say), **‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’**” (he begins to question the Word of God)

**GENESIS 3:2** And the woman said unto the serpent, **“We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:**

**GENESIS 3:3** But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil), **God has said, ‘You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die’** (Eve quoted the Lord's words).”

**GENESIS 3:4** And **the serpent said unto the woman, “You shall not surely die”** (he directly contradicts the Word of God : John 8:44):

**GENESIS 3:5** For God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened (*suggests the attainment of higher wisdom*), and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. (. . . God is Omniscient, meaning that His knowledge of evil is thorough, but not by personal experience. By His very Nature, He is totally separate from all that is evil. The knowledge of evil that Adam and Eve would learn would be by moral degradation, which would bring wreckage . . . : E.S.B)

**The devil deceived Eve** into eating of “*the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*” by casting doubt on what God had really said, and promising great personal advancement if she did so. Choosing to self-rule, Eve then yielded to the lie. So too today, Satan is trying to keep people spiritually blinded to the truths of God’s Word, and fearful of what they will lose if they truly seek God. In this way he can keep the unsaved on the road to hell, and even prevent Christians from operating in God’s power. Some of his main weapons in all of this are unbelief and deception, for Satan is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44). The original sin of the Garden, which is self-rule, still plagues both the heathen and the Christian today.

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***“. . .Satan is trying to keep people spiritually blinded to the truths of God’s Word, and fearful of what they will lose if they truly seek God. . .”***

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Satan knows that when people receive and act on God’s truths in the power of the Spirit, he will be rendered powerless in those areas in which truth is acted upon. And he knows God’s power is real, for when Jesus rose from the dead, Satan was stripped of all his authority and power - concerning those who would receive Jesus as Lord.

**REVELATION 1:18** **I (Jesus) am He Who lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death** (the keys of truth, wrested from Satan’s grasp at the Resurrection).

**COLOSSIANS 2:15** **And having spoiled** (disarmed) **principalities and powers** (*Satan and all of his henchmen were defeated at the Cross by Christ Atoning for all sin; sin was the legal right Satan had to hold man in captivity; with all sin atoned, he has no more legal right to hold anyone in bondage : E.S.B.*), **He (Christ) made a show of them openly** (seen by the whole spirit realm), **triumphing over them in it** (by His completed Atonement).

The only power Satan now has is that which is given to him when people either remain in the state of sin or obey him through sinning.

**ROMANS 6:16** **Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin** (the devil’s way) **unto** (which leads to) **death** (or bondage), **or of obedience** (God’s way) **unto** (which leads to) **righteousness** (and empowerment)?

**Clearly man cannot stand alone.** His soul is either owned by Satan or Jesus. However, even when we belong to Jesus, if God is not our total master, then the areas in which we have not allowed Him to be Lord belong to the devil, and he is our master in these areas.

Also, if the opportunity arises and we do not choose to act on the spiritual truths which have been revealed to us, we are giving legal ground to the enemy to enter our lives through these areas of disobedience. In this case the devil then has the legal right to take the Word of faith out of our hearts. This can result in us only retaining intellectual knowledge and not true heart-knowledge of God’s Word.

**MARK 4:15** And these are they by the way side, where the Word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan comes immediately, and (because these people allow him to do so, Satan) takes away the Word that was sown in their hearts.

Therefore God commands us to love and to serve Him with total commitment, believing and trusting in Him and His Word. We are to seek His Word, to find it and embrace it, to meditate on it and to speak of it (Joshua 1:8). This is so that the devil can have no part in our lives, and so that our relationship with the Lord can grow in relation to the reliance we have on Him.

The ironic thing is that while Christians will often allow Satan to walk all over them, they will not allow the Holy Spirit to give them direction - when it goes against their bias, be this in relation to flesh or ignorance. The Holy Spirit is a gentleman and He will not bulldoze His way into people's lives and force them to do as He says. Indeed God is Love and He has given us a free will to choose, this being a sacred scriptural principle. His commands are for our own benefit, but He will never force His will upon us.

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*“ . . . The ironic thing is that while Christians will often allow Satan to walk all over them, they will not allow the Holy Spirit to give them direction. . . ”*

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Satan, however, will try to bulldoze his way into our lives and deceive us through false direction and false doctrine. He will try to attack our finances, our health, our family and friends, and anything else he can manipulate. For this reason we need to put on the whole armour of God through listening to, and acting in faith on, the good sound teaching of God's Word. We need to reject that which is evil (anything contrary to God's Word) and hold fast to that which is good in the power of His grace (Romans 12:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:22). As we do all this, the enemy will gain no legal ground in our lives from which he can attack us. We will also be pleasing our Heavenly Father, which should be the greatest goal of our earthly walk.

## THE NARCOTIC OF DARKNESS

The Word tells us:

**1 PETER 5:8** Be sober (mentally alert), be vigilant (watchful); because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour (destroy)

However his attacks can be subtle and insidious to the point where Christians have no idea that they have ingested darkness from his evil storehouse. This darkness, once tasted and consumed by the flesh, becomes addictive. Unless the Christian is an earnest seeker of truth, and wants an ongoing relationship with the Author of all truth, they can become so

blinded and paralyzed by this evil onslaught that they are rendered ineffective, at best, for the term of their earthly journey.

**The narcotic of darkness** is the drug that puts Pentecostal, Charismatic and mainline Christians into a stupor, bringing a haze across their minds so that they have no proper perception, in a doctrinal sense, of right and wrong. In other words, they cannot see truly. The sad thing is that many of them love the closet of darkness, for where there is no light, little is revealed and so little is seemingly required of them by God. This in their willing ignorance appeals to them. It is, however, totally wrong.

**JOHN 3:19** And this is the condemnation (verdict), that **Light is come into the world** (Jesus is the Light Who has come), **and men loved darkness (sin) rather than light** (they reject the Light), **because their deeds were evil** (they are sinners desiring to sin).

**JOHN 3:20** For every one who does evil **hates the Light**, neither comes to the Light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd (exposed and revealed for what they are).

**JOHN 3:21** But he who does (practises) **truth** (and lives by it) comes to the Light, that his deeds may be made **manifest** (clearly revealed), **that they are wrought in God** (have been divinely prompted and done with God's help).

**Ignorance due to slackness and unbelief is not bliss but sin**, and with it comes not only the stench of hell but also its power to stir the lusts of the flesh. But again there are those in the Church who love darkness or part of it more than the light of God's Word (and will). Once addicted to this darkness, people crave more, and gather around themselves teachers who will accommodate their desires (2 Timothy 4:3).

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***“. . .The narcotic of darkness is the drug that puts Pentecostal, Charismatic and mainline Christians into a stupor, bringing a haze across their minds. . .”***

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Many, out of a sense of self-preservation, only allow a certain level of darkness into their lives. This level of darkness, because of their self-preservation, will not cause a loss of salvation but it will cause them to be ineffective and unfruitful as Christians. They choose only a little of hell/darkness so they can remain saved but still serve their own wants and fears.

If one does not fill one's life, however, with what God's desires for them, then all that remains is for man to rule his own life from the beach on which he has built his kingdom of self-rule. Then with one storm, or even a high tide, the sand on which his desires rest will be washed away. Great is the ruin of a life built on these sands. Only on the rock of God's Word and will can a life be worthwhile and of value, producing fruit that will have an everlasting effect. No matter what storm comes against this house contained inside God's city, it will not fall (Matthew 7:24-27).

**Our lives need to be built on and rooted in God's Word.** The Bible says that God's Word is the seed that must be allowed to take root in the soil of our hearts. Then for this heavenly seed to germinate in our lives, heavenly water, which brings the spiritual elements needed to do this, must be applied to the heart of the hearer. When the Christian does not

open up their heart to heaven's rains brought by the Holy Spirit, then no word, no crop, no heavenly manna will be on the table of their heart. With no spiritual food to digest, the Christian will be spiritually weak, and this will show forth in their life - in the compromised decisions they make, in the way they always choose the easy road, in their failure to stand up for what is right and righteous, etc.

**LUKE 8:11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the Word of God.**

**LUKE 8:12 Those by the way side are they who hear; then comes the devil, and takes away the Word out of their hearts (because they have little regard for it), lest they should believe and be saved.**

**LUKE 8:13 They on the rock are they, who, when they hear, receive the Word with joy; and these have no root, who for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.**

**LUKE 8:14 And that which fell among thorns are they, who, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.**

**God has already given His Word to the Church**, but the rain of the Holy Spirit must germinate the seed of His Word in our hearts. So first we must seek His seed, and with the Spirit's help, we must find that seed. Then we must pray that God will bring the "rain of His Anointing" upon it. Without all this happening, we will remain spiritually bankrupt, destitute, empty and hungry. Intellectual mental assent will never germinate God's seed - otherwise it would be a work of self. Because we live in an Age of Grace, self can never be the source. God must be our Jehovah Jireh, our Provider, in all things.

**Anointing on the Word of God** (the heavenly seed) causes a spiritual "chemical" reaction to take place in the heart of a yielded Saint. God has chosen that the soil in which He is to bury His precious seed is to be the hearts of men and women "in Christ." It is in Christ that the Father has placed all the heavenly manna we will ever need - and the real need for us and others is nothing but the Father's will. This indeed is the promised land that will not only give us our seed but also our harvest. So we should seek God's will so that, by God's grace at work in us, we can abundantly receive from the Lord of the harvest. Then we can praise His Name and worship Him for the abundance of His Word which has caused our hearts and minds to be changed and transformed in the Light of love and power, now and forevermore.

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***“. . .Anointing on the Word of God (the heavenly seed) causes a spiritual “chemical” reaction to take place in the heart of a yielded Saint. . .”***

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**Sadly the fleshly lust for more**, on whatever plane and to whatever degree, is the driving force for many Christians to grasp false doctrine within the Church and so maintain their hearts as sterile ground in which the true Word of God cannot take root.

Self is promoted when lust is the goal.

God is promoted when God's will is truly the goal.

Another word for lust is desire, and worldly Christians even use scripture, taken out of context, of course, to validate their sin. For example Jesus said:

**MARK 11:23** “For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, ‘Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea;’ and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he says shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he says.

**MARK 11:24** Therefore I say unto you, What things soever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them.” (When we are seeking the will of God, we will be desiring what He desires.) *(As is obvious here, the receiving of these things, whatever they might be, requires relationship, and that is the key : E.S.B.)*

This scripture is often used by carnal Christians to back up all kinds of material, worldly and temporal desires being supposedly confessed into existence, all emanating from self-wants rather than God's desire for their lives!

Talk about calling evil good, and good evil! (Isaiah 5:20-21).

**In self-determining our lives** we really become gods. But only God has this right and the necessary wisdom - being all-knowing, all-powerful and all-loving - to daily direct us in the important issues of our lives. Man was created to rely on God in all things, not on the flesh with the sin nature enthroned (Galatians 5:17). Many Christians are taught to pray to the Father with the attitude that God must give me my desires because they are “good” desires. How ridiculous!

**How can man think he can desire rightly within himself?** To trust himself in this is to become totally foolish, i.e. man trying to become a little god. But this is what is taught as a formula to “success,” another word that appeals to man's lusts. We could go on and on, but we are just bringing this foolishness to the table of teaching. “Prosperity” teachers promote this approach which then stirs up the “flesh” in Christians' lives, and therefore their wants. This leads them into a form of lust, and diverts their attention and focus away from what should be their primary aims - to develop their love-relationship with the Lord and to serve Him in the Kingdom.

**Lust in a Christian's life** is built up in that life or rules that life when a person lacks the desire to seek God's truth and His will on every matter through His Word. In fact the reason for every deception found within the Church is the lack of desire for truth, for the very reasons we have discussed. Lust is a spiritual drug of darkness that is addictive. Lust is promoted when the Christian is told by Christian teachers that our self-wants are our rightful inheritance, backing up their teaching with scriptures taken out of context or misinterpreted. When this happens, the Christian is convinced, rather easily in most cases, and so the fires of lust are given the fuel to burn to motivate the carnal Christian. Only seeking, finding and embracing God's will in all things in our life will extinguish these fleshy fires and deliver us from the driving need to self-rule. When this happens, we are delivered by God's power of truth and love (in the Name of Jesus, our wonderful Saviour and Lord) from the spiritual narcotic of darkness at an experiential level.



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***“ . . . Lust in a Christian’s life is built up in that life or rules that life when a person lacks the desire to seek God’s truth and His will on every matter through His Word. . . ”***

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## **PENTECOSTAL VS CHARISMATIC**

**The spiritual narcotic of darkness** permeates the Church world, with false doctrines feeding fleshy lusts for self-rule and material possessions. In the following sections, we endeavour to briefly address some of the heresies which are currently flourishing and are diverting Christians from sound Biblical truth. As Paul warned the Pastors from Ephesus:

**ACTS 20:28** Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed the church of God (to shepherd the people), which He has purchased with His own Blood (at great price).

**ACTS 20:29** For I (Paul) know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

**ACTS 20:30** Also of your own selves (from within) shall men arise, speaking perverse (distorted and corrupt) things, to draw away Disciples after them (rather than Christ).

Today more and more Pentecostal churches and ministries have become Charismatic in nature while remaining Pentecostal in name. We as Christians really need to know and understand the fundamental doctrines of the Bible in order to recognise the difference which is implied by these two terms.

**The difference between these two terms** is not always easily discerned by a superficial glance at a ministry or church. However we can know by their doctrines and the application of these doctrines - in other words, the way the people concerned walk and apply their faith (or so-called), and how much of the love and power (the graces) of God flow in their churches and lives (1 Corinthians 1:24-30).

Let us state from the beginning that there are vast differences between Biblical Pentecostal fundamentalism (adherence to the core fundamentals of the Word of God) and the modern Charismatic movement that has swept into the Church in the last few decades.

We, in this study, are not addressing heresy in the mainline churches, which, incidentally, dominates the seminaries around the world, especially those in the USA. Here the major school of thought endorsed is based on the heretical doctrine called “Higher Criticism” which invaded America in the 1920’s. According to this view, the Bible is not the infallible, authoritative, revealed Word of God. Rather it is man’s search for God, and therefore it is filled with myth, legend and superstition. Proponents of this view believe that the Bible is to be studied, not to be believed and obeyed but to be analyzed, dissected and criticized. The result is that the scriptures lose their authority, and the churches which bring these apostates into their pulpits then deny the virgin birth, the Resurrection, the miracles of Jesus and the Second Coming, etc. They may then teach: “Christ is one of the

ways to God, for God is everywhere,” and “Man is innately good - there is therefore no need to be born again and no need to repent of sin.”

**Note:** This is a “liberal” approach to the scriptures. The word “liberal” describes those who don’t take the Bible literally, especially in regard to fundamentals. True liberals, because of this, are not saved.

**Without the virgin birth,** the Deity of Christ and His bodily Resurrection, there can be no salvation. Instead man seeks his own way of “redemption.” Consequently, these apostates centre their doctrines around man instead of God and produce such teachings as the false doctrine of self-esteem. With twisted thinking, man becomes his own god, to rule and do as he sees fit as long as he feels emotionally comfortable with his actions. Such are fools!

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***“. . .Let us state from the beginning that there are vast differences between Biblical Pentecostal fundamentalism. . .and the modern Charismatic movement. . .”***

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In this short study we will identify and discuss some false and heretical doctrines that can lead to apostasy within the so-called Pentecostal churches. Now it is a serious thing to call a church or individual an “apostate.” It is also a serious thing to give a false gospel which engenders false hope. For example, to teach directly or indirectly that once you are truly saved, you can never forfeit your salvation is definitely heretical - the kind of heresy (false teaching about God and His Word) that can lead to apostasy (a falling away from the faith). This is because it distorts and interferes with the Biblical doctrine of man’s sin and the Blood of Jesus. Yet in fact many, many of the churches that say they are Pentecostal do this very thing.

**The truth is that many are lost** because they have been taught this false gospel of forgiveness without repentance e.g. “God will understand the position I am in (my sin) and He will not hold it against me.” Even if by never addressing this issue from the pulpit, these churches in fact are teaching by omission that all is well in the next life if you say “Yes Jesus, You are Lord.” But the Bible says not all who say “*Lord Lord,*” will be welcomed into heaven (Matthew 7:22-24). If this demonic doctrine is promoted in the churches, you can rest assured that many are unsaved and undelivered, having violated the boundaries of salvation through a lack of repentance.

This makes many in these churches, who have fallen from grace, apostates. We must then wonder are these churches apostate churches? There are other false doctrines within the Charismatic world that fall into this category, and sometimes there is a fine line between false doctrine and heretical doctrine that leads to apostasy.

**The recent Pentecostal outpouring** that really began to change the Christian Church originated around 1900. Since then the Pentecostal Church has evangelized the world with the goal of enriching the Kingdom - both with souls, and in bringing the holiness of God into men’s lives through the direction and power of the Holy Spirit.

Many members of the mainline churches were Spirit-baptized and were called “Charismatics.” They stayed within their mainline structures and often conducted separate and additional Charismatic meetings for those concerned.

**The Charismatic movement** itself had its beginnings around 1960 with the introduction of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit into many mainline churches. Certainly this was God beginning to wake people up to His holy Pentecostal standard - the Spirit Baptism and the power which is available through this grace. After 10 years or so, it became apparent that many of the people who were Spirit-baptized were not prepared to leave their comfortable mainline surrounds. They wanted the blessings of the Cross without changing their lifestyles or setting aside their loyalties to particular churches or denominations, no matter how little of God’s Word and Anointing were to be found in these places. Many compromises took place or were encouraged. For example, “If we have agape love, we will just overlook our differences,” or “We are staying here to change our church from the inside . . .” (which never happened). Many meetings then turned into acceptance meetings which contained an overwhelming feeling of brotherhood with little or no mention of repentance or salvation. The focus was and still is “brotherhood in Christ,” to the detriment of truth and doctrine.

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***“ . . .The truth is that many are lost because they  
have been taught this false gospel of  
forgiveness without repentance. . . ”***

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We are told in scripture to be in unity, but this is not what can be termed the unity of man. Rather it is “*the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*” (Ephesians 4:3) - not worldly peace, but peace with God. While fostering and promoting the unity of man, a church can become sterilized in a toxic shell of ecumenicalism and therefore insensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Unity of man is not scriptural but rather worldly and fleshy - and it will cause God’s principles and truths to be compromised. Let us make this fundamental statement: **Truth forsaken at the expense of unity of man is nothing more than evil treason against God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.**

**At the beginning of the Charismatic movement** there were teachers and preachers who became sidetracked and forsook the proper rules of scriptural interpretation. Faulty hermeneutics (or no hermeneutics) then resulted in much doctrinal error which produced a weakened form of Christianity that had its base and roots in emotionalism and “success.” This rickety foundation has then been espoused in the last few decades by Pentecostals. False doctrines have thus seeped into the Pentecostal Church to weaken it and produce a worldly, fleshy focus which its proponents back up with wrested (twisted) scripture. These doctrines have served to influence even once devout Pentecostals.

**As a result, the pure doctrines** once held tightly by the Pentecostal Church, e.g. the Cross and the Blood, sanctification, holiness, dedication to God and the building of the Kingdom through evangelism, were soon put on the shelf. What took their place was a plethora of doctrine concerned with “blessing.” In other words, the measure of your success in the Lord is to be determined by your numerical and material increase, whether this be the value of your assets or the numbers in your church. Guided by this kind of

success-based approach to Christianity, which incidentally is called “the prosperity doctrine,” we have to conclude that Noah, for example, was a failure. He only had eight souls, including himself, after preaching the entire time he was building the Ark (2 Peter 2:5). He and many others after him, who suffered and died for their faith, would likewise be considered failures. The suffering and death of the Apostles, for instance, is viewed in these terms. “Prosperity focused” Christians say, “If they had had more faith, these terrible experiences would not have come upon them!” Then they who supposedly now have more faith owing to “progressive revelation” (greater revelation of the Bible since it has been written!!!) are considered to be functioning at a higher spiritual level. What nonsense!

**Note:** Out of the prosperity teaching has emerged the “seed” doctrine. This simply teaches that for the purpose of increasing personal riches, one has only to plant dollars as seed (to give to the Lord’s work) in order to reap a harvest of a hundred fold - possibly a hundred times the value of the “seed” planted. What a great investment for the greedy! Many preachers, churches and ministries have climbed aboard this doctrinal bandwagon and preached it hard, so stirring up the lusts in people’s hearts for temporal treasures. The leaders of these movements now seek through this teaching to own large houses, expensive cars and even private jets. These kinds of paraphernalia then, they ignorantly think, testify to the overwhelming blessing of God in their lives, and His approval of their doctrines and lifestyle. (But the Word says we shall be known by our fruits, not our gifts and certainly not our belongings : Matthew 7:20).

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***“. . . Truth forsaken at the expense of unity of man is  
nothing more than evil treason against God. . .”***

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**Unfortunately many false doctrines** have sprung up because of the bias involved with this goal of “prosperity” (usually measured in worldly terms). If Christ is not the head of every thought in our life, then our course is not of God. Every desire must be worked by the Spirit into our hearts. It cannot be our desire that God must bless. Without this kind of yielding, without a total servitude with a “not counting the cost” attitude and commitment, a resulting high tolerance for false doctrine in the name of one’s agenda or bias will follow, e.g. unity of man, material prosperity as the measure of one’s success in the Lord, blessing upon blessing as a primary focus and rightful expectation, etc.

A **sugary doctrinal diet** has spoilt the ex-Pentecostals and turned them into Charismatics. The evil fire of Charismaticism brings with it an atmosphere that promotes the lusts of the flesh and burns (sears) the conscience of the now converted Charismatics so that they cannot discern, in many cases, between good and evil, truth and error. In other words, they do not know the difference between God’s voice and the devil’s voice, being unable to discern God’s voice because of their bias (which usually equates with their wants and desires).

**Only those who are open and yielded to the Spirit**, who are prepared to leave behind their denominational biases, doctrines and traditions, can come to understand the heart of God and be properly taught by the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:27). This does not mean that a Christian should rebel against authority within the church. Rather, as Hebrews 13:17 tells us, we should submit to our elders in the Lord. But this must be done in the Lord, for we

are to submit not according to blind faith in a man or a denomination, but in and according to the Spirit of God. It is to be a submission which is qualified in God and His Word.

### **Modern Charismatic Methods And Approaches**

Many Charismatic preachers with enticing words, entertaining presentations, and emotional methods and programs, force excitement on the people, bringing them to a frenzy. Then all together as if they were at a football match, they begin to shout “revival,” “God send revival.” Wrong, wrong, wrong!

Unfortunately the methodology in these places is aimed at producing “hype,” an exaggerated emotional state procured through unscriptural philosophy. With audiences excited to an emotional high, there is no difference, sad to say, between positive motivation seminars and many so-called sermons presented by the new breed of Charismatic preachers.

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***“ . . .without a total servitude with a “not counting the cost” attitude and commitment, a resulting high tolerance for false doctrine in the name of one’s agenda or bias will follow. . . ”***

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**With the goal of always presenting their teaching in a positive light**, proponents of this “new age” philosophy (but nothing is new under the sun - sin is still sin) ignore most scriptural teaching that is seemingly negative. For example, anyone who accepted Christ say 20 years ago, and is now living a life of sin, is called a “backslider.” What a play on words! They should be called heathen, the unsaved, and told that unless they repent and allow the Blood of Christ to wash their sin away, hell will be their home for eternity (Exodus 32:33). But no, that is too negative for the Charismatics. In fact many are so deluded that through ignoring the many, many scriptures which teach us this very thing, they foolishly have chosen to believe in the false teaching promoted by hell itself that once you are saved you will always remain saved, no matter how far you “backslide!” To support this demonic doctrine, they take certain scripture and twist it, ignoring any that would contradict their “bless me club” beliefs.

A fruit of these ecumenical and acceptance doctrines is a high tolerance for lifestyles that cause people to become unsaved. But many Charismatics ease their minds with the unscriptural doctrine of unconditional eternal security. Armed with this falsehood, they feel no obligation to help save people from sin, only to teach them how God loves them and can bless them.

**Their new age doctrines truly centre around me, myself and I.** In other words they are man-centred instead of God-centred. Oh yes they teach about God, but only in terms of what He can do for us, instead of what we are to do for Him through the graces afforded to us by the Cross! Indeed the Word tells us that we are not our own but have been bought with a price. Therefore our chief aim should be to glorify God, not to constantly and persistently seek blessing so that our life may be comfortable and enjoyable to the flesh.

**1 CORINTHIANS 6:19** What! Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, Who is in you, Who you have of God, and you are not your own?

**1 CORINTHIANS 6:20** For you are bought with a price (Jesus' shed Blood): therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (now belong to Him).

**ROMANS 12:1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy (because of the Blood), acceptable unto God (only because of the Cross), which is your reasonable (spiritual) service.

**Back to the shouts of revival** in modern auditoriums, being encouraged by the preacher through the latest public address systems. Here men and women are digesting food which is palatable to the flesh, offerings from the doctrinal food factories of the Charismatic teachers. Food of this kind has much leaven in it (1 Corinthians 5:6-8), much poison which affects and distorts the minds of many Christians. Unfortunately, presenting these doctrines, or should we say philosophies, is like giving drugs to an addict - and, as God's Word declares, they keep coming back for more:

**2 TIMOTHY 4:3** For the time will come when they will not endure sound Doctrine (*"sound Doctrine" pertains to overriding principles: the Salvation of the sinner, and the Sanctification of the Saint; the Cross is the answer for both, and is the only answer for both*); but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears (*refers to the people who have ears that "itch" for the smooth and comfortable word, and are willing to reward handsomely the man who is sufficiently compromising to speak it; hearers of this type have rejected the Truth and prefer to hear the lie*); (E.S.B.)

**2 TIMOTHY 4:4** And they shall turn away their ears from the Truth (*those who follow false teachers not only turn away their ears from the Truth, but see to it that the ears are always in a position such that they will never come in contact with the Truth*), and shall be turned unto fables. (*If it's not the "Message of the Cross," then it is "fables" [1 Corinthians 1:18].*) (E.S.B.)

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***“. . . A fruit of these ecumenical and acceptance doctrines is a high tolerance for lifestyles that cause people to become unsaved. . . ”***

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A. W. Tozer before his death in 1963 said: *“Have you noticed how much praying for revival has been going on of late and how little revival has resulted? I believe the problem is that we have been trying to substitute praying for obeying, and it simply will not work. To pray for revival while ignoring the plain precept laid down in Scripture is to waste a lot of words and get nothing for our trouble. Prayer will become effective when we stop using it as a substitute for obedience.”*<sup>11</sup>

**We must first be prepared for revival** by the Spirit, being humbled (1 Peter 5:6) under God's mighty hand so that, as when the Church began, we are prepared to give up everything - ambitions, desires, riches, family, this world - all this and more, if needed, if called by God to do so for the sake of His Kingdom, i.e. His will being done. To do this we

need to be partaking of the graces and energies of the Divine Nature. Remember Jesus' Words:

**MATTHEW 10:37** He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me (in the life of the Disciple, Christ is first): and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

**MATTHEW 10:38** And he who takes not his cross (of self-denial), and follows after Me (seeking God's will first), is not worthy of Me (*not worthy of the blessings afforded by the "victory" of the Cross: E.S.B.*).

**The true Pentecostal Church**, being Bible-based, will also promote and support:

- the preaching of Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians.1:25)
- the preaching of the Spirit Baptism (Matthew 3:11)
- the preaching of sanctification of the mind (we are a work in progress)
- the preaching of doing God's will (no matter what cost is involved)
- the preaching that only by God's power can we overcome (only with His power at work in us can we do His will (Philippians 2:12, 13; 2 Peter 1:4)
- the preaching of judgement in the context of fleeing from "*the wrath to come*" (Luke 3:7).

Anything less than this and the so-called Pentecostal church or ministry has become Charismatic. And we could define a Charismatic as someone having the gift of the Spirit Baptism but lacking any power from it because of their heresy - this being a departure from the true teaching of the Cross, service and holiness.

**Take the doctrinal theme of judgement.** Even though a major teaching in both the Old and New Testaments, it is seldom taught in Charismatic circles because it might offend the sensibilities of the people. In other words, it is not pleasant to think about and so is unpalatable. Again Charismatics adjust their preaching programs so as to make their sermons "seeker sensitive." For the preacher not to preach a balanced message (e.g. love and judgement together) is a grave mistake, and they will be held accountable by God. But worst of all, not to preach these fundamentals will cause many to believe with false hope, thinking they are still okay with God when they may be practising serious sin. The result can then be their eternal entrance into the Lake of Fire. What a cost it is to take the easy road (Hebrews 3:12-14)!

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***“ . . .Charismatics adjust their preaching programs so as to make their sermons seeker sensitive. . . ”***

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Yes love must be preached, but alongside it the judgement of God must also be preached if a balance is to be heard and understood. Only the teaching of the Blood and all it entails can give this balance. However you will see in some churches that reference to the Blood is virtually non-existent. Fools, the message of the Blood is the foundational doctrine that, when revered fully and embraced, will remove apostasy and sin's curse from the Church.

**God has chosen the foolishness of preaching** under the Anointing of the Holy Spirit to convict the sinner so that he can be saved through the Blood of Christ being applied. The teaching of judgement and the boundaries of salvation must be preached in the so-called Pentecostal churches so that all sin can be addressed and dealt with, both that of the unsaved and that of the Christian.

**1 CORINTHIANS 1:18** For the preaching of the Cross is to them who perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God.

**1 CORINTHIANS 1:19** For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent (means those who are wise in their own eyes). (Isaiah 29:14)

**1 CORINTHIANS 1:20** Where is the wise (learned Jew)? where is the scribe (Jewish theologian)? where is the disputer of this world (Greek philosopher)? **has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world** (God's wisdom sent His Son to die on the Cross for the purpose of mankind's redemption)?

**1 CORINTHIANS 1:21** For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God (man by his wisdom could not know God in any way) **it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them who believe** (God's way to reach man and save him is through the preaching of the Cross).

**The Charismatic programs**, or latest doctrines (philosophies) designed to hold the interests of Christians with itching ears, are like comets in the sky. They come and they go just as quickly because these doctrines cannot be sustained for the long term haul - unlike the true, tried and tested "full Gospel" programs and doctrines of Pentecost which remain from the Cross to this very day. These will still bring the Divine power and energy which causes hell and its rulers to shake, and releases the bound from hell's grip, causing joy unspeakable to be felt in the heart of the committed God-seeker.

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***“. . .The message of the Blood is the foundational doctrine that, when revered fully and embraced, will remove apostasy and sin's curse from the Church. . .”***

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**Heresy began a number of years ago** in earnest amongst the modern Pentecostal movement. When churches do not, after the Cross, promote, teach and preach the mighty Spirit Baptism with the evidence of speaking with other tongues, then they have lost their way. They become little more than mainline with a Pentecostal badge, teaching so-called Christian, new age philosophies. Yes some in these churches promote the Spirit Baptism to some extent, but many are not even encouraged to believe that it is absolutely necessary if one is to progress in God. As when one buys a car, it is taught as an optional extra which one can take or leave.

This approach is taken so that those who feel uncomfortable about the Spirit Baptism are placed under no pressure. In this way, they hope to keep the "half committed" in their church. Many have trouble, for whatever reason, in coming through with the Baptism in



the Holy Spirit. To make them feel comfortable, the “optional extra” teaching, in its various forms, has emerged and become rampant.

Scripture tells us however that the Spirit Baptism is not optional. To have the potential to walk properly and fully in God’s will, we must partake of this second great grace which Calvary has afforded us.

It is like being given spiritual shoes with which we can walk on the hot stones that life’s path is paved with. With these shoes on, we will not be spiritually burned on the soles of our feet. With these spiritual shoes we can also run further and accomplish more for the Kingdom in the race of life (Hebrews 12:1; Philippians 3:13-14).

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***“ . . .When churches do not, after the Cross, promote, teach and preach the mighty Spirit Baptism with the evidence of speaking with other tongues, then they have lost their way. . .”***

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**The heresy has spread** and is so bad, in fact, that some churches, so as to appear “normal” to the world, “rebadge” themselves in order to leave out any reference to “Pentecostalism” for fear that this could frighten off potential members. If you look through these people’s literature, the words God, Jesus, Calvary, the Blood of Christ and faith are used sparingly.

Others seemingly say the right things. They profess yet do not possess the power to walk righteously. Therefore in many areas relating to life itself as well as doctrine, they cannot discern right from wrong - in other words, God’s will on the matter.

**Many new Charismatic churches** with seemingly Pentecostal doors through which to invite the unsuspecting, have new Evangelists who preach a false hope, seeking not to confront or offend in any Biblical way. The result is that many in these transformed Pentecostal churches or newly-badged Charismatic churches are not saved by the Blood because the message of the Cross is not preached in its entirety. Again, how can people gain faith if faith in the Cross (Romans 10:17) is not preached?

And if the message of the Blood is not preached as their central doctrine, then their gospel is no gospel, and cannot lead them to salvation.

New-styled preachers tell the people “Let us praise God!” They then proceed to tell them, sometimes in a “Thus saith the Lord” prophetic message, that God loves them and is pleased with them and has nothing but blessings for them. Sin is rarely addressed in any real way, and so the remedy of repentance and the Blood is left out of their sermons.

**People love these new messages** by these new Evangelists, messages that emphasise blessing upon blessing, and that God loves them and accepts them for whoever they are and no matter what they do. Those who seek this false acceptance outside of Christ and His Blood inject themselves with their spiritual drug of choice. What does this drug do? The drug of choice gives them a false sense of their spiritual surroundings, their position and their responsibility - or lack of it. In this way, an unreal, fantasised spiritual world is produced, a false perception. However the people love it because they feel good emotionally, and to them this is all that matters i.e., how they feel. Many of these new teachers are sincere, but have deceived themselves into thinking that they are right.

Nevertheless, a lie is a lie and with it comes hell, for darkness must follow sin because the two are inseparable. The people who have been brought into this false, spiritual world of blessing without obedience, sacrifice or true faith, love it so much that they don't care about anything else unless it gives them this same spiritually-darkened emotional high as well as a false feeling of acceptance. In this environment, people's emotions become the source of their so-called "higher revelation." Then it is they alone who possess this "superior knowledge," knowledge which in fact contradicts God's Word - if they would care to look!

What a joke this is - man stepping into the role that is God's alone. Only He can give us truth and wisdom, and the power to walk according to His will, not our false perceptions.

They are taught that they are what they feel, and if they feel accepted by God (no matter how they live their lives) then it must be true because of this "conviction in the heart." How easy it is to be deceived when we leave the pathway of God's Word, stray from the Cross and wander down dark highways of our own thinking, relying on our emotions to give us the all important check (or discernment).

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***“. . .In this environment, people's emotions become the source of their so-called "higher revelation. . ."***

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**God's Word also says** that those who live a Godly life will suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:12). But many Charismatics do not want to preach or hear this or anything like it because it does not fit their perception and therefore their philosophy. To be balanced though, "persecution" is to be met head on in the love and power of God available to us through the Divine Nature that we who are in Christ are partakers of. We are to walk as Jesus did in this love and power, for we, as God's children, have access to the mind and power of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). Amen.

### **Relativism**

**Too many sermons** in "Pentecostal-by-name, Charismatic-by-nature" churches (or ministries) are full of so-called "relativism" according to the world. While the Word tells us to be separate from the world, Charismatic philosophy encourages the Christian Church to look, act and talk like the world so as to connect with it. For instance, if the senses are offended or repulsed by teaching about the Blood of Christ, God's wrath and His holy standards, then they say we must preach on topics which are positive (and which connect with the flesh and the unrenewed mind). Some such topics which connect with the flesh are: how to accumulate wealth, how to receive blessing, maximizing one's potential, improving one's self-esteem, etc. To not preach about the standard of modesty as set out by God (how to dress is part of His moral standard) and what T.V. programs and movies Christians ought not watch is to be relative to the world and to reflect its standards. All this breeds is more ground for divorce and sexual sins in the church, all in the name of relativism. And divorce becomes a "trivialised solution" if Christians aren't getting on

well! This is a worldly humanistic teaching that replaces the Biblical command which Jesus gave concerning Christians and divorce (Matthew 19:9).

As we have said, to compromise the teaching of God's holy Word and standards is to promote a church that looks, thinks and acts like the world. This is worldly "relativism" instead of "Biblical relativism." The latter states that we are dead in sin and need forgiveness through repentance and cleansing by the Blood of Calvary - so that we may then be led by the Holy Spirit and walk in righteousness in the power of the Spirit.

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***“. . .While the Word tells us to be separate from the world, Charismatic philosophy encourages the Christian Church to look, act and talk like the world so as to connect with it. . .”***

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## Music

**Worldly music is the latest “golden calf”** (idol) of the Pentecostal - Charismatic world. Many simply worship the music - above truth, wisdom and even God. But this they deny with a conviction that looks and sounds believable to the untrained enquirer.

Many Charismatic churches and ministries use musical concerts to replace the God-ordained method of preaching. Some may use a little so-called preaching but major on the musical content so as to be “seeker sensitive” and relate to the modern audience!! However the Bible, God's Word on the matter, says: *“It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them who believe”* (1 Corinthians 1:21).

Therefore, in many churches, man in his foolishness is choosing to deliver God's Word contrary to His Word! Yes music is important as a support to the preaching of God's Word to the masses. Music can soften the heart of the hearer - before God plants His life-giving seed. Yes it has its place and can be used for great benefit. But sadly, concerts in the Charismatic churches are becoming the order of the day - concerts that do little more than entertain. These churches then become entertainment providers under the guise of Christianity and in this way, the people involved get their entertainment fix.

**Christianity is not about entertainment**, it is about relationship and us serving a holy God, becoming more Christ-like, being prepared for battle and bringing home the lost. It is about *“the foolishness of (Holy Spirit anointed) preaching,”* and born-again Believers growing in Christ so as to help spread God's light to a darkened world. There is a price to pay and a cause to advance. Christianity is not something to play with or trivialize to the extent of merely feeding the flesh for entertainment purposes.

Remember the goal is always to allow the Spirit to anoint the music. This helps the Christian have a heart focus (on truth) and an emotional focus (love for God). The Holy Spirit then empowers us, through the Divine Nature, to worship the Lord in spirit and truth. The Anointing turns that which is natural, i.e. the music, into something which is spiritual and holy. Some styles of music simply will not allow this to take place, for the Spirit will not anoint music which has been corrupted by the world, the flesh and the devil.

Anyone truly in tune with the Spirit of God, living for God and truly in love with God will, by the Spirit's teaching and leading, discern correctly that which is or is not holy and

acceptable to God. Sadly many simply go by what is acceptable to their flesh and emotional bias. Let every man be a liar but let God be true. In other words, find out what God's mind is on the matter rather than allowing yourself to be governed by your culture, your education or peer pressure. Remember that our fleshy desires, our intellect (unrenewed mind) and our human emotions will not bring us to the truth of a matter or lead us to victory! God's acceptance, not human acceptance, must be the measuring stick applied to everything that takes place in the church. Therefore we should be:

**2 CORINTHIANS 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ**

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***“ . . . Whether the music is anointed by God should be the order of the day, not whether it is accepted by the ignorant, fleshy masses. . . ”***

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**We must seek God's will** and His thinking in everything we do, for our natural thinking is far from His (Isaiah 55:8-9). Then with renewed, illuminated minds, we can order our behaviour by His power at work in our hearts. Sometimes young Christians can be in bondage to the kind of music we have described, so that they lack the power or even the desire to break free from it. Even if told of its evil origin and work in their lives, they choose to hold firmly to their idol and its incumbent darkness. It is only through heartfelt repentance that this problem can be dealt with, and Satan's hold broken.

**The Blood is the answer** to every crooked intent, every sin. Christians after salvation must repent of committed sin, even the sin of addiction to wrong music, if the curse of it is to be experientially removed. Only the Blood of the Cross can deal with sin, and deliver its victim by the power of God.

**Many Charismatic-by-nature churches**, however, say that the message of the Blood in its fullness only confuses and does no good. In fact they don't want to upset the congregation or put people off - God forbid that numbers might decrease, along with tithes, and digital on line sales!

Let's keep the young people happy with worldly music (with Christian lyrics of course) and all that goes with it. With a wrong focus, that of pleasing the people and satisfying their flesh, there is no real recognition of good and evil, and therefore no awareness of the need for repentance. With biased minds, ministers and leaders who should know better hold up the golden calf of music for the people to worship, and say "Look how the Lord has blessed us! Let us worship Him!" But He finds no pleasure in it!! (2 Corinthians 6:17).

Furthermore, there is an emphasis in some Christian's lives on having fun and being entertained. Fun and entertainment are okay if they are not one's major purpose in life, for balance is needed in prioritizing our limited time on this earth. Entertainment can give us enjoyment with our loved ones etc., and there is nothing wrong with that. But many plan

their whole life around having “fun.” This will only last for a moment, and our life needs to also have proper purpose if our destiny is to be properly sealed.

Many in the Church desire to remain as immature Christians - in the playpen full of the world’s colourful toys with which they can play, or by which they can be entertained. With this mindset there is no responsibility and no accountability, only the expectation of being entertained which becomes their life’s quest. So they gather together with like-minded people and call it “church.”

**Purpose, day by day, will determine our destiny** - and our God-ordained destiny is to follow Jesus and so serve God. But we must choose to do this, for the Lord will not force us. Souls and sanctification should be our highest agenda - our relationship with the Lord and serving Him in the Kingdom. This should be our priority - not to satisfy the flesh through music, entertainment and the pursuit of enjoyment - week after week, year after year.

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*“. . . Many in the Church desire to remain as immature Christians - in the playpen full of the world’s colourful toys with which they can play, or by which they can be entertained. . .”*

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### **The Deception Of Success Rather Than Victory**

**Let us look at the Charismatic new age thinking** that success is the goal and the measure of our spirituality. On this basis then, let us firstly state that Calvary was not a success by worldly terms. Rather it was a heavenly victory planned and arranged by God. He supplied the sacrifice and Christ yielded to the Father’s will in perfect righteousness, dying and then being raised from the dead. With Christian understanding and a renewed mind, it was a victory. God through Christ did not have a small victory in the battle against darkness - no He totally conquered it so that even death was defeated. How? By Christ dying as a righteous man on behalf of all unrighteous men - heaven’s Best for earth’s worst. Hell tried its utmost but it could not hold an innocent man - so He rose from the dead (Colossians 2:12-15). What a victory!

**Today the same holds.** The Holy Spirit was sent after Christ sat down at the right hand of the Father, not to make you “a success” but rather to bring you to Christ and to give you “in Him” the graces you need to die to self and take up your cross daily. Scripture is quite clear in this regard:

**LUKE 9:23** And He said to them all, “If any man will come after Me (as a Disciple), let him deny himself (be ruled by God not self), and take up his cross daily (in the power of the Spirit), and follow Me. (Luke 22:42)

**LUKE 9:24** For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it.”

**Note:** To take up our cross begins with us remembering that our source of righteousness has to be God. Therefore we take up our cross in the strength made available to us through His Cross. To do things in our own strength is to try and please God through religion. To identify with Christ at an experiential level is to be in Him and yielded to Him, thereby being a partaker of God's Divine Nature. Only in this way can our character and faith be developed.

**To take up the cross of self-denial** is true Pentecostal doctrine that the Charismatics reject. Why? Because then they would have to let God rule their lives totally, by allowing Him to place His desires, not theirs, into their hearts and minds. How can we know that this "way" is rejected? The simple answer is the type of fruit, or lack of righteous fruit, produced (Galatians 5:22-23).

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***“. . .To take up the cross of self-denial is true  
Pentecostal doctrine that the Charismatics reject. . .”***

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We do not doubt that a side benefit to serving God, especially in this western world, can be financial blessing. However it is not to be very high on one's list of priorities. Otherwise with a wrong focus, the flesh can quickly gain a stronghold. Souls and sanctification should be the order of the day and with these priorities will come victory for our sake and the Kingdom's sake, real spiritual victory not temporal gain which will decay and rust, or momentary gain that is here today and gone tomorrow:

**MATTHEW 6:19** Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth (which are temporal), where moth and rust does corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal (*if the eye be set upon treasures on Earth, the life and character of the Believer will be shrouded in moral darkness* : E.S.B.):

**MATTHEW 6:20** But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven (Colossians 3:1-3), where neither moth nor rust does corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

**MATTHEW 6:21** For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (*a man's aim determines his character; if that aim be not simple and Heavenward but earthward and double, all the faculties and principles of his nature will become a mass of darkness; it is impossible to give a divided allegiance*) (E.S.B.).

**Riches and wealth can bring a worldly, temporal success but do not bring spiritual victory.**

**Real spiritual victory is God's will being done in our lives.**

**Success is a cheap substitute for victory.** While success is a worldly treasure, spiritual victory brings a closure on hell and the flesh with a conquering battle cry that should be heard in the prayers of Pentecostal Saints who are serving God (Revelation 12:11).

**Let us expose the extreme danger** of chasing the false new age "success" doctrines of the Charismatics. If success (being blessings) is our goal and the measure of spirituality, we will gain a false sense that all that comes to us in the form of so-called "blessings" (being

our wants fulfilled or our perceived needs met) is of God and He is pleased with us. Everything will be viewed from this false perspective, and there will be no reality, no proper discernment of right and wrong, good and evil (Hebrews 5:14).

If man measures the intent of his heart by external, temporal blessings, then foolish is he. Only through the filter of the doctrines of God's Word, then properly applied and understood, can he qualify every intent, deed and so-called blessing (Hebrews 4:12).

**Churches are meant to be built on the proper Pentecostal doctrines** given by the Spirit to the Apostles and Prophets, nothing else. Then the Church is built on the Rock of God's revealed Word, backed up by power from heaven, and not on the sand which lies underneath the emotional wants and fears of man. The modern Charismatic doctrines do not stand up to proper scriptural appraisal or scrutiny because proper hermeneutics have not been used in their formation. Many of these so-called "doctrines" are simply worldly, selfish and demonic, and promote nothing but self-rule. With willing assistance from the Kingdom of Darkness, these doctrines take Christians back to the garden of self-rule. Scripture is taken out of context at every opportunity for the sake of "blessing". For example, they say that whatever seems like a good idea should be brought to God so that He would (be compelled to) bless it (the only condition being that it is not scripturally immoral - or so they believe). Also it is said that scripture states, "He will give us the desires of our heart." Let us then speak this blessing of our own desires into existence - of course, in the Name of Jesus. However, we are not to take the place of God. He is to be the architect and builder of our life, and we, with the Holy Spirit's empowerment, are to be His workmen, "*rightly dividing the Word of truth*" (2 Timothy 2:15). Unless He is the author of the desire, we cannot rightfully claim it. Otherwise we and our flesh will be ruling our lives.

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***“. . . Then the Church is built on the Rock of God's revealed Word, backed up by power from heaven, and not on the sand which lies underneath the emotional wants and fears of man. . . ”***

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**New Age Charismatics**, however, think that as long as something sounds "good," then God must bless it, for He must give us the desires of our heart. In this light of self-appraisal or self-determination, every "good" thing they do or experience or gain (whatever they deem to be "good") is a blessing and so a sign God is with them in their endeavours. They set their course, plot their journey and fill it with "good" (as they see "good"). Blessing is the goal, and they design and shape their own pathway to this goal. Yes they may pray, go to church, support the Gospel in some way - but it is all done and qualified by their own bias. This really amounts to nothing more than self-rule, that really brings no character growth of a heavenly kind. Yes good people by the world's standards, but not faith, led-by-the-Holy-Spirit people, even if their name badge or their title proclaims they belong to a "Full Gospel - Pentecostal" Church.

**In regard to personal direction** in life, Charismatics cannot properly hear the voice of God because of their personal bias. To counteract this problem (and obvious need) in their lives, they become their own god, with self-rule gaining ascendancy.

In this their own ideas are promoted and touted as coming from God, e.g. "God told me," or "I had a witness that God wanted me to have . . . ," or "God urged me to believe

for,” or “I had a dream that God wanted to bless me,” etc., etc. This list goes on and on. In short, they become their own god concerning their own personal direction in life, even being unaware of the deception involved. Yes many, surprisingly enough, are saved, but many are not because of sins that have not been put under the Blood.

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***“. . .New Age Charismatics, however, think that as long as something sounds “good,” then God must bless it, for He must give us the desires of our heart. . .”***

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Let us also take the example of a Charismatic-by-nature’s approach to the Luke 24:49 words, “*endued with power from on high.*” Many in these circles or camps would jump on this word “*power*” which comes from the Greek work “*dunamis*” meaning ability, efficiency and might. But off they go saying, “I can do in God, with the help of His “*dunamis*” power, whatever my heart’s desire is to do, as long as it sounds “good.” ” How foolish it is for man to be the discernor of what is good. Only God Who knows us and the future is qualified to understand what is good for the individual and his life, and He has written about this good in His Word.

**True Pentecostals**, when they speak of this “*dunamis*” power of the Holy Spirit, say that as we seek, find and embrace God’s will, it is this *dunamis* power of the Holy Spirit that will be at work in and through us to both desire and then to do of His good pleasure (Philippians 2:12, 13). True Pentecostals, leaving their bias, flesh and emotions on the shelf, pray with an open heart, saying “Whatever the cost, wherever You want me to go, no matter how hard, I will do it in and by the “*dunamis*” power of Your precious Holy Spirit” (Matthew 26:39). This may not happen immediately, but they are trusting in God to prepare them.

The attitude of the true Pentecostal is always “Let’s pray and ask God for His plan, for He, the Creator, knows me better than I know myself. In fact He knows my heart, my future, and my past, and I will trust Him. God knows the future, and knows what is best for me so that I may please Him and be of use in His plan.”

**The right foundation and focus** is always to seek God and His plan, to find this plan by God’s grace and then to embrace it so as to live in it - again by His grace afforded to us at the Cross. This is the life lived by a true Pentecostal, so different to the “*bless my ways, my ideas*” Charismatic. One lifestyle will plan for fame or acceptance, the riches of this world and the comforts of the flesh. The other lifestyle will plan for God’s will to be done, even at the expense of fame or acceptance, and the riches and comforts of this world. What a huge difference in attitude and altitude - one earthly, fleshy, and the other heavenly and Godly.

### **Pentecostal Teaching vs Charismatic Teaching**

Some quick comparisons to help you discern between heresy and truth in these areas we have discussed are as follows:



Charismatics are success orientated  
 True Pentecostals are righteousness orientated  
 Charismatics emphasize riches over righteousness  
 Pentecostals emphasize righteousness over riches  
 Charismatics try to relate to worldly values  
 Pentecostals strictly seek that which relates to the Bible.

To simplify the distinction, we have included the following table:

**Pentecostal Teaching vs Charismatic Teaching**  
**This teaching has been replaced with This teaching**

<b>Truth</b> applied is sacrificed for:	<b>Personal Preference</b> 2 Timothy 4:3-4
<b>Character</b> (Holy) (placing importance on personal holiness) Romans 12:1	<b>Personality</b> (placing importance on self-esteem, external appearances and prosperity)
<b>Anointing</b> (the supernatural) Mark 16:20; Acts 5:12, 15, 16; Acts 10:44	<b>Charisma</b> (the human)
<b>Repentance</b> (and with it the fruit of it) Acts 26:20	<b>Forgiveness</b> (only that put under the Blood can be forgiven - if one believes they are forgiven without putting sin under the Blood, then no fruit will come and there will be no forgiveness from heaven)
<b>Sacrifice</b> (is yielding to all God desires) Romans 12:1	<b>Prosperity</b> (is having all your desires met, particularly temporal ones) 1 Timothy 6:5
<b>Prayer</b> (empowered by faith developed by the Holy Spirit) James 5:16	<b>Praise</b> (given to God through good intentions) Luke 6:46
<b>Obedience</b>	<b>Pragmatism - Expediency</b>

Proverbs 1:25-32	(executed by the arm of the flesh - no empowerment but a quick substitute, keeping self happy)
<b>Modesty</b> (so as to cause no-one to stumble) 1 Corinthians 8:9	<b>Glamour</b> (so as to fit in with the world) 1 John 2:15
<b>Separation</b> (that allows us to live in the world without becoming part of it) 2 Corinthians 6:14-17; 7:1	<b>Worldliness</b> (when one can't tell the Christian from the unsaved) 1 John 2:16
<b>Doctrine</b> (that is rooted firmly in God's holy Word - His mind on the matter) 2 Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 5:14	<b>Philosophy</b> (based on man's mind on the matter) Mark 7:7; 2 Peter 3:16-17
<b>Law</b> (which shows us the fruits of love) Romans 7:22; 8:7-8	<b>Love</b> (human love to produce the unity of man)
<b>Worship</b> (in spirit and truth - only with the enabling grace of the Divine Nature can we worship in spirit and truth) John 4:23-24	<b>Entertainment</b> (using the Name of Jesus doesn't guarantee His presence)

There are so many things that we could say, in fact volumes could be written. However at this stage we are only making you aware of the heresy which exists, even in our so-called ranks. Whole Pentecostal denominations that have stood for over 100 years are gradually being "termited" (eroded and undermined) by modern Charismatic doctrines which are turning a once powerful body of Believers in Christ into a weak body of Believers where the blind-in-Christ are leading the blind-in-Christ! Nevertheless, we believe in these last days of the Church Age that God is raising up an army of Believers who will not bow their knee to the flesh, the devil or the world. Amen.

**Churches which do not preach repentance** from sin, the Blood of Christ, the wrath of God, and the love and grace of God which come through the Cross and are needed for salvation and ongoing sanctification, are nothing but dead branches on the Tree of Life (Christ). These branches have no sap and so provide no heavenly nutritional value within their four walls or via their ministers (corporately speaking). All who attach themselves to these types of branches will, with the branch, wither, and sadly many will die lost, and come under eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 2:1-29).

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***“ . . . Whole Pentecostal denominations that have stood for over 100 years are gradually being “termited” (eroded and undermined) by modern Charismatic doctrines . . . ”***

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Again, as we have said, scripture warns that people within the Church would, because of their own lusts (desires), create and invite teachers of their own persuasion to shepherd, teach and counsel them (2 Timothy 4:3-4). In other words, many Christians languish in dead churches with dead pastors who preach dead sermons that give no light to the barely alive. The blind lead those desiring to stay blind to the things of God. Sad isn't it. But they want this darkness, seeking, finding and embracing it (John 3:20). These, the living dead, then say that anyone living truly for God is “fanatical,” and too spiritual to relate to the world in which they live. The Charismatic message is what they crave, and true Pentecostal doctrines they swiftly turn away from, and avoid it at all costs, even hating that which would expose the darkness within.

**We say let God expose darkness** no matter where it is, then let Him show forth His glorious Light of truth, power and love. This He pronounced to the Laodicean Church:

**REVELATION 3:14** **And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans** (this is the “Apostate Church,” both then and now) **write; These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning** (Source) **of the creation of God** (this is Jesus);

**REVELATION 3:15** **“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot: I would you were cold or hot.**

**REVELATION 3:16** **So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth.**

**REVELATION 3:17** **Because you say, ‘I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;’ and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”**

**This is a snapshot in Revelation of the modern Charismatic “bless me club” - “I am rich . . . and have need of nothing.”** The modern Charismatics say this is so because “God has blessed me.” Fools, God wants to spew them from His mouth. Why would God say this to the church of Believers in Laodicea, Saints in Christ? It is because they were indifferent to His righteousness and His righteous standard, so much so that He could not convict them of sin. Hot, they would have been able to be led by the Spirit but lukewarm, this was impossible. These Saints thought they were doing well in their Charismatic heresy because of their bias, personal preferences and unrealistic spiritual perspective. In other words, these people who somehow thought they were right were hard people for God to convict of sin, to teach and to lead. Therefore they were unable to be used by Him in any

proper way. The same applies today. The Laodicean Church was a real church, but also a type-pattern of Christian churches, today.

**The Laodicean Church** is not the true Pentecostal Church but it is the picture for us today of the modern, end-time Charismatic Church being spiritually “*wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,*” even if those who are involved think they are rich, abounding with goods, material wealth and numerical increase. They may be materially prosperous but they are spiritually bankrupt - and don’t know the difference!

The Believers in a true Pentecostal church are to be blessed, full of joy, desiring God’s will and walking in it, dressed for battle in the robes of Christ’s righteousness, baptized in, empowered and led by the Holy Spirit, and having a two-edged sword in their hands so as to perform His will (Ephesians 6:17; Revelation 1:16).

Let us be that church in that power at this time in the Name of Jesus. Amen.

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***“ . . . The Laodicean Church is not the true Pentecostal Church but it is the picture for us today of the modern, end-time Charismatic Church. . . ”***

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**We have written this** to alert new Christians and to attempt to awaken and rouse older Christians, if possible, to the widespread heretical teaching in these last days before the Lord’s return. There are many churches within the Pentecostal-Charismatic continuum. Many of these churches uphold and embrace some heresy in some areas and to some degree, while others fit fully into the Laodicean mould - and these God has spewed from His mouth. In other words, they have no candle-stick and therefore no corporate light or Anointing, and so no real power to lead and deliver the captive:

**REVELATION 2:5** Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto you quickly, and will remove your candlestick out of its place, except (unless) you repent.

## **HERESIES WITHIN THE CHURCH**

We will endeavour to briefly describe some of the different kinds of false teaching which the Church world has embraced in these last days - to their detriment and the destruction of many lives. We have already touched on some of these teachings in the previous section.

**Today God still equips and strengthens those** who would listen to His Spirit and the message of the Cross - what it has afforded those who would believe. Today there is a strong wind of the Spirit blowing from heaven to give revelation that would bring the standard and the power of God into the Church in these last days. Indeed God has said in His Word, “*When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him*” (Isaiah 59:19). Amen.

**When revival which embraces this holy standard** sweeps the Church and the lands of the earth, it will not be like the revivals of the past in one respect, for God has left the best

till last. Why has He done this? It is because the world has returned with full vigour to Sodom and Gomorrah. Indeed our world has travelled down an unholy road that produces sin of the most hellish origin, inciting the lust of corrupt hearts to allow abortion (murder), de facto relationships instead of marriage, same sex marriages, euthanasia etc. Some faithful Saints of the Cross believe that because of this evil that the western world has never before experienced on this scale or to this level, God will raise up an opposing standard of revelation and provide an increased level of power to those who would seek and follow His will for their lives in total surrender. God will use these, the few, not the many, to bring revival first to the Church, then to the nations of the earth. At this time the Pentecostal power of the Church (or part of it), surrendered to God, will turn timid pussy cats into bold lions of God - as happened with the equipping of the Church on the Day of Pentecost (Acts Ch.2). The revival fires of Pentecost will then bring the standard of the Spirit to the Church, to break down the walls of hell in people's hearts and lives, adding thousands and even millions to the Kingdom.

**Some believe that as the Church** as a corporate body began in revival on the Day of Pentecost, so it will finish in revival, and that God has saved His best until then. Sadly, along with this revival will come apostasy, at the very least that which is evident within the Church today but probably far worse. Nevertheless, much revelation and power will be the order of the day in this last revival, and with this will also come much persecution. If the people in Jesus' day nailed a man to a cross who healed the sick and raised the dead, in other words, came in much power and revelation, then shouldn't we also be prepared for persecution! Indeed we are promised in the Word of God:

**2 TIMOTHY 3:12** Yes, and all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Once again, the answer to persecution is to meet it head on, with and by the power that comes to us through the Cross - the power of the Divine Nature and the Anointing of God.

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***“ . . . Today there is a strong wind of the Spirit blowing from heaven to give revelation that would bring the standard and the power of God into the Church in these last days. . . ”***

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**In these end times**, however, the Church desperately needs God's Spirit of revelation and power because much of the Church has fallen into doctrinal disrepair and therefore heresy which leads to apostasy. The result of heresy will be a lack of power to fight the good fight on both corporate and personal levels, and to wage spiritual warfare. Let us look more closely at the terms “heresy” and “apostasy” to discover what is involved and what are the consequences when the Church (or a large section of it) espouses false doctrine.

A simple introduction to the words “heresy” and “apostasy” is as follows:

**Heresy is teaching lies about God and His Word**, knowingly or unknowingly. The word heresy in an historical sense describes beliefs, views and teaching that contradict the core doctrines of the Christian faith. Such doctrines, also called “Christian orthodoxy,” include those that relate to God, Christ, salvation and certain Biblical revelation. As such these doctrines are vital in regard to one’s redemption, ongoing walk with the Lord and entrance into heaven. To develop and teach error within these core doctrines is to undermine the finished work of Christ on the Cross, and all that pertains to it - God’s wonderful plan of redemption fulfilled at Calvary.

**Apostasy, on the other hand, is treason** - an abandonment of the faith that makes the apostate a deserter, one who has abandoned what he formerly professed. The English word “apostasy” comes from the Greek “apostasis” meaning “defection” or “revolt.” It can also mean “a falling away.”

**Therefore there can be no apostasy (falling away) without heresy (false teaching), and there can be no heresy without dogma** (the system of true Christian doctrine to measure all teaching against). Heretical teachings and doctrines within the Church bring those who embrace them into apostasy - of varying degrees, depending on the gravity or seriousness of the heresy.

As we have said, apostasy is “a falling away” from the faith of Jesus Christ and the Cross of Calvary where He became the atoning sacrifice that satisfied the courts of heaven. Apostasy is also the Church turning from taking up the cross in the power of Pentecost to do God’s will - to becoming a formularized religion. Again apostasy is a falling away from faith in the foundational fundamentals of Calvary - Christ being the vicarious atoning offering for man. Synonyms for apostasy are “defection,” “desertion,” “falsehood.”

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***“ . . . Heretical teachings and doctrines within the Church bring those who embrace them into apostasy - of varying degrees, depending on the gravity or seriousness of the heresy. . . ”***

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**Concerning the Christian faith**, apostasy has, in one form or another, always existed. Paul said this concerning apostasy, in the latter days before Christ’s return:

**1 TIMOTHY 4:1** Now the Spirit speaks expressly (clearly and pointedly), that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils (doctrines inspired by demons and taught by men);

**1 TIMOTHY 4:2** Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron

**Apostasy is a turning away from truth**, through heresy. Most heresy is a deadly combination of a little of the Word of God mixed with human ideas. This causes the truth of God’s Word to be polluted, and creates doctrines that take people away from the faith. So by the mixing of God’s Word and man’s ideas, heresies are created within the Church. As we have said, this term is usually reserved for teachings which depart from the

fundamentals of God's Word, and thus, when believed, cause problems in relation to salvation, e.g. the Cross, the Blood, eternal life, etc.

**There are many heresies** taught within the Church today. For example, we find the following false doctrines to be extremely prevalent: once you are saved you cannot fall away and so become unsaved, Jesus died spiritually and needed to be born again in hell, the Cross is a place of defeat, Jesus actually became sin on the Cross, to gain what we desire we must have faith in faith. All these false heretical teachings will invariably take people away from the message of the Cross and our need for repentance so that the Blood may wash us and ready us to serve the Father in Christ.

**The term Apostate Church** is quite often used. There are two versions of the Apostate Church:

1. That which ignores the Cross altogether, by teaching its own brand of righteousness.
2. That which claims to believe in the Cross, but adds to the finished work of Christ, so really nullifying what Christ has done.

**Depending on the degree of heresy/apostasy**, there will be problems which relate to:

**(a)** People becoming born again (through repentance and forgiveness, the Blood of the Lamb and Christ's vicarious sacrifice)

**(b)** Christians frustrating the grace of God by which they could walk in His will and be progressively freed from bondages of the mind and the flesh.

**GALATIANS 2:21** I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the Law (any kind of law or works), then Christ is dead (has died) in vain.

**JOHN 8:31** Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on Him, "If you continue in My Word (seek, find and embrace My teachings), then are you My Disciples indeed;

**JOHN 8:32** And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (deliver you from bondage)."

When men devise (even with so-called good intentions) their own rules, so as to take away from or even add to the Cross, then this becomes heretical teaching and causes a departure from the Truth.

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***“. . .Most heresy is a deadly combination of a little of the Word of God mixed with human ideas. . .”***

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**We quote on the subject of heresy:** *“The 21st-century Christian is faced with a plethora, a virtual ‘legion’ of gospels. All of these are garbed in the most alluring of dress and call to the Believer in the most seductive of whispers. As quoted above, Irenaeus, the great 2nd-century defender of the faith against the heresy of Gnosticism, warned that error is never put forward in a manner that exposes its grotesque deformities. Instead, it is*

*packaged in outward adornment so appealing that it appears 'more true than truth itself.' The tremendous appeal of heresy is that it looks and sounds like the real thing! Consequently, the demarcation between heresy and orthodoxy is rarely clear cut.*

*The most dangerous heresies lie in the gray area, a shadowy place of both light and darkness. These 'different gospels' may vary in the particular doctrinal error they propagate but all heresies have one thing in common: their threat to the Church is directly proportionate to the degree in which they appear orthodox. The most dangerous of lies is not the bald-faced lie, for that is easily detected and rejected. A half-truth always does far more damage than a bald-faced lie." <sup>12</sup>*

(underlines added)

Some modern day examples of heresies which are prevalent within the Church today are as follows:

### **1. Humanistic Psychology**

**Most of the Body of Christ** has embraced humanistic psychology. This is a definite departure from the teaching of Romans Ch.6 and therefore the Gospel that Jesus gave to the Church to proclaim to the ends of the earth. Psychology consists of man's ideas on how man functions, and is based on anything but God's Word. Even the Church, by and large, seeks victory through its philosophies and methods. Nothing will ever compare, however, to the Creator's Manual of Life which tells us that evil must be dealt with in a person's life, and only repentance, the Blood of Calvary and the grace it affords can do this. There is no other way for man's woes, either in the short term or the long term, to be dealt with effectively. The root of man's problems and ills is spiritual. Thus we must come to God through Christ if we are to have the victory. We therefore need the wisdom of God and the gifts of the Spirit to help others - to identify problems and give direction to highly complex individuals for whom formulas and generalizations will not work.

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***“. . .Psychology consists of man's ideas on how man functions, and is based on anything but God's Word. . .”***

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**The reason most of the so-called Bible Colleges** and Charismatic ministries have embraced psychology is because the doctrines that the majority of the churches are teaching are not giving the answers required and so are not meeting the needs of man. Charismatic doctrine will never provide what is needed to do God's will in the power of His Spirit. Along with their feeble doctrines, ministers add new so-called "revelations" from God in order to keep the interest of the sheep. So they add a new arm to the arsenal of their doctrinal mix and guess what, humanistic psychology comes to be included in the syllabus of their particular Charismatic Bible College. These then churn out "ministers" to doctrinally pollute and poison the streams and rivers of the Church world.

**Human thought (accepted thinking) has been progressively corrupted by psychology,** and this corruption has been embraced by most of the Church. Psychology is



really a philosophy that gives man credibility within society to address and rectify the woes of man. In embracing psychology, Christianity has become philosophized. The reason psychology has crept into the Church is because of unbelief - man trusting man instead of God and His Word! Many churchgoers simply do not believe in God's power operating through the Cross, and what it can do according to His Word. They may acknowledge that there is a God, but they do not embrace the Word of God. There is therefore no power to deliver or restore.

For many years there has been debate in the Church world concerning many aspects of the Bible, as to whether different areas are of God or not. Some areas are regarded as true and other areas are seen as fables, myths and symbols. In other words, the authority and the infallibility of God's Word are questioned. Many do not believe the Word is authoritative, or they wouldn't meddle with it in the way they do. As a consequence of unbelief, men and women in deep turmoil and suffering depression go to the elders of the churches for help and are referred to so-called "Christian psychologists." The Word tells us to do something different, and reveals to us what the outcome can be.

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*“. . .As a consequence of unbelief, men and women in deep turmoil and suffering depression go to the elders of the churches for help and are referred to so-called “Christian psychologists.”. . .”*

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**God says that those who are sick** (in mind or body) should call on the elders of the church, confess their sins in repentance and allow the Blood to cleanse them. Then the elders are to pray the prayer of faith in Jesus' Name, according to the Word of God. Responding to an open heart and the prayer of faith, God will raise that man or woman up out of their sickness, spiritually and physically:

**JAMES 5:14** *Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord* (the oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit; here it is to be used as a point of contact from which one can release one's faith when the prayer is prayed):

**JAMES 5:15** *And the prayer of faith shall save (heal) the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him* (if he repents).

**JAMES 5:16** *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*

**This kind of prayer** can bring healing to those with physical sickness and mental sickness which includes mood and emotion disorders, and serious psychiatric illness. However, just as many Christians fail to gain healing of the body, many also fail to gain healing of the mind. These then need to seek medical help and appropriate counsel. For some, medication will be required to counter extreme mental problems - to level out emotions or nullify hallucinations and delusions for instance.

Mind disorders vary from minor to the extreme. Today many so-called normal people are not thinking clearly and become depressed and even suicidal. Anxious and negative

thoughts flood and virtually drown them so that they cannot function properly in day-to-day life. They need friendship, love and common-sense counsel, not a donkey to pin the tail on. They may even need medication for an interim period. What they don't need is humanistic psychiatry or psychology which looks for the reason for our ills, in other words, someone or something other than ourselves to blame!!

**At another level entirely**, we find people with schizophrenia or other forms of psychosis who are experiencing delusions (believing things that aren't true e.g. paranoia) and hallucinations (seeing or hearing something that doesn't exist). This kind of problem involves a loss of connection with reality and requires intervention by appropriately trained doctors i.e. psychiatrists. Psychiatry can assist people and level out such extremes of mind disorders. Psychiatry mixed with common-sense counselling can bring relief to sufferers and help to some extent, but psychiatry mixed with human psychology treats no man effectively.

**The complexity of this subject is overwhelming** and there are no formulas for success because each individual is different, and needs vary from person to person. Mind problems can be the result of poor genetics, chemical imbalances, neurological disorders and even chemical abuse. Today it is being found, for instance, that the use of marijuana can trigger off schizophrenia in people who have a predisposition towards this illness, despite no prior symptoms.

As stated, medication may be needed, at times or for periods - sometimes lengthy periods. However any counselling that people receive, to be of any true value in the long term, must be based on God's truth. This truth is that man without God's help or reliance on God's grace will always be a failure as a person - a sinner needing the Blood of Jesus to wash their sin through repentance and the acceptance of Jesus' Lordship. It is not to be denied that men, because of the Fall, have "bad genetics" that affect them at a neurological and even psychological level.

**One of the problems with psychology** is its core belief that man is inherently good. Psychologists then tell man how good he really is, and that his problems have arisen through externals - environmental inconsistencies and training. Then because he is inherently "good," within him dwells the strength and goodness to do good, firstly for his own benefit, and secondly for the benefit of others. However we see that the Bible teaches the very opposite. Indeed man is inherently evil, dominated by the sin nature and able to do nothing but sin against God (Jeremiah 17:9). Without God's help, he will remain a sinner who sins, bound for eternal punishment. There is no inherent goodness in man, only a shadow of God's image that causes man to do "good" things, even with seemingly good motives. Man, however, cannot deal with his own sin, and cannot truly treat his fellow man as he ought until he deals with God first. This is the reality of the situation, despite the psychologists' claim that man can deal with man, addressing the difficulties which supposedly have arisen purely from circumstances rather than circumstances plus an indwelling and intrinsic sin problem.

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***“. . .One of the problems with psychology is its core belief that man is inherently good. . .However we see that the Bible teaches the very opposite. . .man is***

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***inherently evil, dominated by the sin nature and able  
to do nothing but sin against God. . .”***

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**When will the Church ever wake up** to the incumbent darkness that is more than a shadow - it is like an eclipse on the landscape that is frozen in time, causing hearts to grow or remain cold towards the things of God. Only when churches and ministries come back to the Cross, the Blood and the Book of Acts, will Pentecostals be led and empowered by the Spirit. Only then will hearts be thawed by the Pentecostal flame so as to bring the passion of God into the Church. Only then will the Pentecostal Church be truly Pentecostal, which is to be Spirit-led and Spirit-empowered, and to bring the passion of true love into the Church.

## **2. Methods And Formulas**

**Satan has his hordes working overtime**, attacking the Christian churches from within. When Pentecostal churches use mainline human-devised methods (e.g. the “purpose driven” life) and the formulas of the seeker-sensitive Charismatics that have replaced seeking the Lord’s mind on all matters, no matter what cost is involved, then they have lost their Pentecostal way and have no real experiential relationship with God. Indeed magic formulas are religion not relationship, for religion follows formulas, even if these seem to be “good” to the natural mind. God said clearly in Isaiah 55:8-9:

**ISAIAH 55:8 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” says the Lord.**

**ISAIAH 55:9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”**

He has told us to base our relationship with Him on His truth illuminated by His Light (John 8:31-32), and to be led by His power at work in us. This is a daily ongoing journey of faith, not a response to a set of formulas.

Let us be clear and state that any person not empowered and enriched by God’s Light (and this is the Holy Spirit’s ministry) cannot properly see the righteous path of God’s choosing - His will for them. Some examples of the way the Light of God (the leading and empowerment of the Spirit) is rejected, and the consequences of doing so, are as follows:

The grace of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is not promoted as it should be in many Charismatic churches - or if it is, it is not for the right reasons. If this is so then it is a rejection of God’s way.

**“Charismatic” Pentecostal churches** which use mainline teachers and preachers in order to promote unity are really promoting the unholy ecumenical movement. In other words, to do this is to promote the unity of man, while calling it the unity of the Spirit of

God. It is a joke to suggest we bring in grade one teachers to instruct the teachers of grade six. This, spiritually speaking, is what is taking place and it makes no sense.

The mandate of mainline teachers at Charismatic conferences, churches and meetings is to keep unity. Therefore they only teach doctrinally that which would cause this bond to be strengthened. Anything controversial, or whatever would cause argument, is avoided. Just because they say “I believe God has brought us together,” does not mean that He has.

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***“. . . “Charismatic” Pentecostal churches which use mainline teachers and preachers in order to promote unity are really promoting the unholy ecumenical movement. . . ”***

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**This practice causes spiritual apathy** because what is said is devised from the human mind with human intentions, at best, with no power of the Spirit. What else can it bring but apathy because like all religion, it preaches something it cannot deliver. Spiritual apathy comes when churches do not follow that which Christ has said to do, i.e., to be saved, be water-baptized, be Spirit-baptized and then follow the leading of the Spirit. What follows apathy, if not corrected, is usually heresy, and unfortunately this is what has happened in most of the Church.

The Pentecostal way will always try to bring the yielded Saint to experience a relationship with God at the most intimate level - in fact to try to bring that person not just to heaven’s gates but into the atmosphere of God in His throneroom. The Charismatic way with its glitzy formulas, cannot even transport you out of earth’s atmosphere, let alone bring you to the gates of heaven. The reason is that Charismatic doctrine is not built on the rock of God’s revealed Word. Rather, as we have said, it is built on the sand of man’s emotional desires and demands.

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***“. . . The Pentecostal way will always try to bring the yielded Saint to experience a relationship with God at the most intimate level . . . ”***

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**We are to love mainline and Charismatic Christians** and encourage them if possible (if they have an open heart) in the Pentecostal truth that God has given, not the religion man has made out of Christianity. Yes we can have limited fellowship of sorts, and for their sake, we are not to ignore them completely, the genuinely saved. We are to give them at least a chance to hear the truth we know in God, but we cannot share a platform that denies the power of Pentecost in any way. This method is powerless through the compromise that religion exercises. Therefore we are not to bow our knee to ecumenicalism at the expense of fundamental truth - for if we do so, it is treason. In fact to reject God’s way is sin, for there can be no compromise with God on the matter. It is our responsibility as Christians to seek His will according to the scriptures, knowing that if we

seek properly (with an open heart), we will find His will. Scripture shows us that all churches are to be “Book of Acts” churches, promoting first Calvary and the Blood of Christ. They are then to promote the second great grace after salvation, the Baptism in the Holy Spirit - again with all the energy that is available to them. In the last days of the Church Age, Paul warned:

**2 TIMOTHY 3:1** This know also, that in the last days perilous (difficult, spiritually dangerous) times shall come.

**2 TIMOTHY 3:2** For men (who call themselves Christians: 2 Timothy 3:5) shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous (lovers of money), boasters, proud (arrogant), blasphemers (abusive), disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy (profane),

**2 TIMOTHY 3:3** Without natural affection (unloving), trucebreakers (unforgiving, seeking no reconciliation), false accusers (slanderers), incontinent (lacking self-control), fierce (brutal), despisers of those who are good,

**2 TIMOTHY 3:4** Traitors (treacherous), heady (rash), highminded (conceited), lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

**2 TIMOTHY 3:5** Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away (avoid such people because their conduct contradicts what they profess).

**2 TIMOTHY 3:6** For of this sort (for among them) are they who creep into houses, and lead captive (captive) silly women laden with sins, led away (swayed and led) with (by) divers lusts (various evil desires),

**2 TIMOTHY 3:7** Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth (because of carnality and bias).

Of course at worst these scriptures talk about people who call themselves Christians but are enshrouded in deep darkness and living a lie. At best they speak of Christians who are forever looking for truth that suits their agendas. If one looks at the beginning of this chapter, the Spirit through Paul is addressing the end-time Church and the part that has been corrupted. Revelation 3:14-22 prophetically addresses the Laodicean Church of the end times. We believe we are now living in the end times of the Church Age and that many of the Pentecostal churches are “Laodicean” in nature and so have become “Charismatic.” Let us therefore be aware, and warn our brothers and sisters, as we have the opportunity, of the false teaching within the Church, i.e. the departure from the Gospel truths of the Cross, holiness and service.

### 3. The Inclusion Doctrine

With the false teaching and heresy so evident in the Church today, from some mainline and Charismatic churches comes doctrine that gives false hope of “inclusion” to many outside the Kingdom - and this, of course, appeals to human nature, flawed as it is in the absence of God’s Light or empowerment. Their argument to support this doctrine is based on their imaginations, on what they think, and is therefore, as we have said, built on

sand, having no true Biblical foundation. Yet they raise a darkened banner to proclaim its authenticity. “Inclusion” is a demonic doctrine that includes, at worst, all (i.e. all will enter heaven), and a little less than worst, many from false religions, be they Moslems or Buddhists or Hindus, can enter heaven through Christ even though they don’t know Him!!!

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**The Inclusion Doctrine** encompasses what is known to Universalism. Basic to this gross heresy is the belief that Jesus Christ, through His death and Resurrection, paid the price for all of humanity to enter heaven, without anyone being required to repent of sin and receive the gift of salvation. Therefore salvation is unconditional, and all people, regardless of their worship of idols or religious beliefs, will have their destiny in heaven. This of course is a complete contradiction of Biblical truth.

Another aspect of the inclusion doctrine that is being proclaimed today by some well known ministers is what is termed “the Wider Mercy Doctrine.” This maintains that those who have never heard of Christ and have never been exposed to a Bible but who try to live good lives and know in their hearts that there is a God, will enter heaven. In other words, only God can judge a man’s heart, and we will not know who we will see in heaven, once again “good” Buddhists, Muslims and Hindus etc.

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All of this contravenes what the Bible, God’s holy Word, says about the situation. For example, Romans 10:9 and 10 teach us that faith comes by hearing the message of truth proclaimed, and that salvation is received through faith - by confessing the Lordship of Christ and receiving Him as such. Why preach the Gospel to every tribe and tongue if heaven is open to those without light? Why did Jesus give the Great Commission to the Church to be its pre-eminent purpose if its declaration was not to be the only means by which people could be saved? And why empower the Church to evangelise the world through the mighty Spirit Baptism if there existed other ways to obtain eternal life? Jesus Himself said with absolute clarity:

**JOHN 14:6 . . . . “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by Me.”**

**MATTHEW 7:13** “Enter ye in at the strait (narrow) gate (this is the only Door - Jesus: John 10:1): for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

**MATTHEW 7:14** Because strait (narrow, small) is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads unto life, and few there be that find it.”

**The inclusion doctrine**, if proclaimed at any level, again brings an unholy ecumenical spirit into the Church to produce a corrupt foundation. God’s answer to this heresy within the churches was planned before creation and revealed at the Cross. Again it was and is only the Blood of Christ that saves us from our sin. There is no other way, no other formula, no second chance. Christ is the one and only Mediator between God and man, and repentance and receiving Him as Lord and Saviour is the only way to enter heaven.

Another aspect of the inclusion heresy is concerned with unconditional eternal security, and the false belief that those who receive salvation can never become unsaved. How absolutely unscriptural! (Matthew 5:13; Galatians 5:4; 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Peter 2:20-22). Yet man without God’s help will gladly embrace anything that will give him control, that will give him licence to self-rule or satisfy his greed while absolving him from all responsibility. Those who repent of their sin and accept Him, but then turn away, cannot be “included” - for they have chosen through unbelief, or other sin unto death, to re-enter the darkness (Hebrews 10:26-31). Unless they repent, they remain outside His Kingdom, and eternally lost.

**Ministers who don’t warn their people**, especially their young people, concerning the boundaries of salvation, will be held accountable by God. As a consequence of the heretical ramblings of these so-called ministers, many sitting in Pentecostal congregations are unsaved, ignorant of foundational doctrines which relate to salvation, and unaware of their deathly plight.

#### **4. Denominationalism**

It is sad today to see the brick walls of denominations causing segregation, even among Pentecostal churches, in terms of fellowship and denial of truth.

Denominationalism has robbed untold numbers of Christians of vital truths understood and explained by anointed teachers outside their particular denominations.

Concerned about error, Pastors of these churches, like overprotective fathers, treat their 60 year old members like 10 year old children. The answer is to seek truth whatever it is and wherever it is to be found. Their fault or mistake lies in their bias regarding their own denomination. God’s truth is not given to just one denomination, let alone one church - how foolish.

**God has given to the whole Church** - all Believers - His whole Word, and no one has copyright, sole ownership or complete understanding. Therefore we need one another, or should we say God in and through one another. But every morsel of understanding must come through the Light of Calvary and the power of the Spirit. There is no other way, method or means of revelation.

Scripture shows us from the beginning that church structure consisted of local independent bodies (churches) gathering under the banner of Christ, and relying on the Holy Spirit for leading and power. As the Church grew, denominations became one means by which churches could affiliate, bringing a common Holy Spirit standard which all agreed upon for the sake of integrity.

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**The Church government of denominations** is good if this type of government helps bring a Holy Spirit standard to the churches - again gathering under the banner of Christ and the Cross. But a local independent church, which may have affiliations with other churches or denominations but stands on its own with regard to its own independence, should be seen in the same light as a recognized denominational church. In all things we are to be led by the Spirit, with or without denominations. The only thing which is right for a local body is the direction the Spirit gives, i.e. to be independent with or without affiliations, or to be part of a denominational structure.

Both independent (with or without legal affiliation) and denominational churches have their place in the Body of Christ. Furthermore, it is not necessary to belong to a particular denomination, or indeed any denomination in order to be saved. What is required is a personal commitment and faith in that commitment until one's last breath, so that one may "stay in Christ." This is the only guarantee of salvation - repentance, the acceptance of Jesus' Lordship, and continuing to abide in Him! Let us therefore fellowship together in the knowledge of Him Who has made us one by His Blood. Also, God's holy Word must have the last say on all matters, for no board, pope, or church can overrule or overturn that which God has declared on any matter in His Word. It is to be the first and final authority and should not be taken out of context or interpreted outside of the harmony of scripture.

## **5. The New "Evangelists"**

In the Church today we have a new breed of so-called "evangelists" who espouse and preach a new gospel. At the heart of this gospel is not the Cross of Calvary and the cross of self-denial (Matthew 10:37-39; Luke 9:23, 24) but the satisfaction of human wants and desires.

**Unchurched new converts** within the Charismatic churches must be made comfortable in church life, so all is geared to achieve this goal. Sermons to stimulate the interest of the masses include those which focus on self esteem, self-wants and all is wonderful so just rest in His blessings! Let us give you the formulas, the buttons to press so you can have all you desire. These are the unholy doctrines of a Laodecean Church.

**If preachers had the power of the Holy Spirit** operating in their ministries, this human response to man's spiritual needs would be shunned. The reason churches and



ministers appeal to their converts in this way is because they do not truly know the ways of the Holy Spirit. Therefore in their responses to men's needs, there is no evidence of God's power moving through their ministries or coming forth from their so-called doctrine. Because very little seems to work, new doctrine is continually churned out and preached from the pulpit in order to maintain an appearance of life and progress in these churches and ministries. In fact there is little life and much darkness, and heartache results! The failure rate is like an ever increasing road toll, perpetuated year after year with no end in sight.

**Nothing much will work in these churches** or ministries spiritually speaking, let us say it again, without the preaching of Christ and Him crucified, and that all sin must be put under the Blood through repentance. Then the mighty Baptism in the Holy Spirit must be preached and accepted in order to bring the enriched atmosphere of heaven to the Believer's heart so He is better able to absorb heaven's graces and so do God's will.

Ongoing sanctification, obedience and yielding to the Father's will are neglected by the new Evangelists while Believers are encouraged to seek the desires of their hearts which God will and must deliver to them in the form of blessing after blessing. There is no focus on personal responsibility, just on what can be gained, what is rightfully ours! This is worldly, fleshy and unscriptural.

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***“. . .Ongoing sanctification, obedience and yielding to the Father's will are neglected by the new Evangelists while Believers are encouraged to seek the desires of their hearts. . .”***

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All doctrine regarding our personal responsibility must have its roots in Calvary. This spells ongoing relationship and complete dependence on the Lord and His leading.

**Doctrine is not to be baked in the oven of the human mind** to produce a formula for human manna (food). No, doctrine is to lead us deeper into our relationship with our loving Father through Jesus Christ by the intimate power of the Holy Spirit. This is the Gospel which should be preached in the churches all around the world.

**The new Evangelists**, however, bring a new gospel that omits nearly all of this. Whether this occurs by choice or by ignorance does not excuse them. Nor does it excuse the people with itching ears who come to hear their latest so-called revelation or dream.

Again let us state that doctrine is meant to bring us into deeper relationship, not give us formulas so we can press all the right buttons (in prayer of course!) and wait for the mailman (who is God) to deliver the heavenly package. This turns the Bible into a mail order catalogue!! Whatever you desire can be yours! How impersonal and how wrong. God will never respond by rewarding His children who treat or try to use His holy Word in this manner. He is a personal God Who wants to fellowship in an intimate and powerful way with His sons and daughters, in all aspects of their lives. To reduce His living Word to a set of formulas aimed at personal gain shuts the door on God. Faith comes, yes in part by hearing, but we must not stop there for relationship must be incorporated in order for His Divine gift (of faith) to be developed in the mind and heart of the Believer.

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*“. . .Again let us state that doctrine is meant to bring us into deeper relationship, not give us formulas so we can press all the right buttons. . .”*

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**Let us pray that God will raise up a standard** against these new Evangelists that will expose their doctrine for what it is - darkened, decaying rubbish that people are digesting with the result that their minds become infected. Let us pray that a holy standard of God's grace will be set in place in the Church, a standard which cannot be ignored. Amen.

## **6. Government of Twelve**

**There is a growing movement** within the Body of Christ called “the Government of Twelve” or “G12,” and it epitomizes what we have taught in regard to formulas. This is a system of church rule which basically constitutes cell groups only, under the leadership or rule of particular men who are answerable to other leaders in a pyramid structure. At the top level are 12 leaders who are answerable to a single head. Thus the acronym “G12.” There is no corporate worship or structure as in a normal church, just cell groups. This full emphasis on cell groups gives opportunity for control and denies the normal checks and balances which are present when ministers operate in a typical church environment. The freedom present in the normal church setting is also denied in the “G12” cell group system.

**This system has the goal** of winning people to Christ, but under a tyrannical kind of rule. “Trained leaders” bring to the groups intense teaching, including the breaking of generational curses, the false doctrine of inner healing and much more. A large amount of this teaching is based on visualization methods and so much time is spend on the devotees “visualizing what God has for them.” Let us state that nowhere in scripture is this validated. Rather we are to be led personally, first and always, by the Holy Spirit, and not by what we dream up or decide we want - in other words, “visualize.”

**The G-12 movement** believe they have a mandate from God to rule disciplined nations as a religious government. In believing this they are actually taking on aspects of the Dominion (Kingdom Now) teaching which we will discuss later in this document. In this they pull away from individual relationships with the Lord at an intimate level, to turn their religious zeal loose on this goal. The end result is quite often a religiously based political movement that uses the “Church” to recruit volunteers who can bring them into government, all this of course, “in the Name of the Lord.” Such a “Christian government” sounds very appealing, but the Bible gives no mandate for such - only to win the lost by sharing and preaching, to heal the sick and to take up our cross and follow Jesus!

Without going into great detail, let us tell you that the goal of this movement, in terms of the individual, is to control them, again “in the Name of Jesus.” Some of the methods used are comprised of nothing more than the cult practice of brainwashing - using psychological methods to condition the converts to submit to the leaders of their group. In other words, they use the Bible to make a law out of their faith, and therefore a religion. To live in the Law of God without the grace of the Spirit empowering us is to bring our Christianity to the level of a dead religion. It is lifeless but it appeals to some because they

falsely believe that “works” please God. In this system of works, man is self-ruling with no grace. This means that only defeat and failure will follow. Jesus said:

**COLOSSIANS 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you (take you captive) through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men (man’s ideas not God’s), after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.**

**MARK 7:7 Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.**

We have not covered “G-12” in detail, only sufficiently to bring to you an awareness of this new brand of false teaching in Charismatic circles. It is a system that tries to bring an unholy control into the Body of Christ. Although the proponents say they are wanting to win people to Christ, their methods and practices are unscriptural and, in fact, evil. All that will be accomplished by these methods is to place and keep people in bondage. Love does not control. It gives people space to live and breathe, and allows people to make their own choices. Yes love will, if allowed, inform and challenge in regard to truth, i.e. tell it like it is, in wisdom of course. But love will always give the other person the right to choose, in their own time. The system of “G12” does the very opposite.

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***“ . . . The G-12 movement believe they have a mandate from God to rule disciplined nations as a religious government . . . but the Bible gives no mandate for such - only to win the lost. . . ”***

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**In fact the more one properly researches** the G-12 movement, the more one can see the unscriptural practices and principles it teaches. It is not a movement in which to be involved, or with whose members to fellowship.

Our advice is to keep away from it, warn others about it and pray for anyone you know who is involved in it that they may see the Light of God’s way and decide to fellowship in a proper church which is flowing in the power of God’s love and truth.

### **7. The Circuit of Positive Motivation Seminars**

**Certain corners of the Charismatic world** provide nothing more than a platform for a circuit of positive motivation speakers. These people teach false doctrine, using scripture taken out of context to put their “Christian” slant on their teachings. This makes what they say sound like the greatest “deal” going when nothing could be further from the truth. You can dress up a pig all you like, but even with the most expensive clothes and the best makeup, it will always be a pig. It is the same with false doctrine. No matter how much scripture one uses, unless doctrine is validated by the whole Word of God, not taken out of context and not backed up by an invalid translation, a paraphrased distortion of the original meaning, it is not truth.

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***“...Certain corners of the Charismatic world provide nothing more than a platform for a circuit of positive motivation speakers. . .”***

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**The Bible is there to lead us to God** and reveal His thinking on all matters - in order to help us in our daily relationship and reveal our responsibility to Him in our position in Christ. Many Charismatics use the Bible for their own purposes, interpreting it according to their own bias and agenda, or finding a translation that will do so, always referring to scripture to prove that God must act accordingly if you press the three designated scriptural buttons. This is sometimes termed “working the Word.” On they go with formula after formula, replacing the teaching of proper Divine relationship with their view of what God has put into place so that all we have to do is confess our desires into existence. Let us tell you that unless you develop, after salvation, a personal relationship which is expressed on a daily basis, you will disqualify yourself from heaven’s graces on this earth - which are needed to live your life experientially in Him. So do not place your intellectual knowledge of the Bible, important as it is, above your personal relationship with the Lord.

In this, the Bible as an entity in itself is considered to be the source of all that is good, containing, as it does, all the necessary magic formulas. Without an ongoing two-way relationship which is expressed on a daily basis, however, we can make the Bible (which is good) an idol in our so-called faith.

Once we are saved, if we don’t experience the Divine energies afforded to us through the Cross according to our Divine connection (which is us experientially partaking of the Divine Nature), there will be no real experiential relationship.

**We are not to worship the Bible**, as important and invaluable as it is, but rather the Author of it. Then if we yield to Him with an open heart, He will show us how to read and understand it (or Him) as we seek His truth contained in it with no personal agenda - no desire for self-gain (Luke 24:45). Our desire should be to know more of God and His ways, and to be growing to be more Christ-like. Then God will use us to help build the Kingdom, according to the plan and purpose He has set for us.

The preachers who are no more than positive motivation speakers fanning the evil flame of the “prosperity doctrine” shout from the microphone, “I believe God wants to do a new thing in the Church.” It is deceptive and misleading for it appeals to the emotional wants of the trained hearer to expect “new” things from God. The truth is that there is nothing “new,” for the truth needed to serve and live for God has already been given. Yes God allows for the cultural changes that have occurred throughout history - but not at the expense of His principles. His grace and mercy are new every morning, but God never changes and neither do His Kingdom principles. They are not new and they never change.

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***“...unless you develop, after salvation, a personal relationship which is expressed on a daily basis, you will disqualify yourself from heaven’s graces on this earth. . .”***

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Self-esteem classes based on humanistic psychology will never deliver a person from the sin of self-rule. But this many so-called preachers promote. These philosophies are heralded as the formulas for success. They are nothing but cheap, dark substitutes for the power of truth and the fire of Pentecost. They are broken cisterns that will not hold God's living water needed to germinate the seeds of truth (Jeremiah 2:13).

**Jesus in His sinless walk** came to point out again and again that man is a sinner by nature, and needs deliverance through the power of God. Then every day, even regenerated man needs to rely on God's power in order to walk righteously. However these preachers teach with all the hype they can generate, appealing to the emotional wants of the hearers, again those with ears itching to hear what they want to hear. It is so easy to appeal to the flesh and twist a scripture or two or even three, and then say "I believe God is doing a new thing." Then they give the seven steps to obtaining one's desires, the desires of one's heart - which are usually in the material realm. Of course nothing is mentioned about anything that is of a so-called negative or confronting nature, or about anything to do with total surrender. Repentance, the Blood and total yieldedness are never taught within any proper structure.

Some say enough so as to mouth (or give lip service to) these words but give no real teaching. They use just enough of the right words to make the message seem of God. They may believe that they are sincere in their hearts, but the truth is that they are confused and deceived in their doctrine. The "prosperity teachers" base their doctrine on human want or greed, not God's Word, having twisted the Word to accommodate their particular bias. The message is not Godly but fleshy and humanistic, and in fact of a dark nature - for anything not of God is dark, by reason of the absence of His Light.

**People then attend teaching seminar** after teaching seminar, following their latest star preacher so as to obtain the latest keys to success in gaining their wants from God. Formula after formula is presented at these positive motivation / self-esteem classes. Each time a person goes to them they are moving further away from the true Pentecostal teaching of "experiential relationship" by the power of the Spirit in the atmosphere of Pentecost. It is this which causes the child of God to be willing to give up anything and everything if God asks it.

**The preaching of self-esteem** from a humanistic viewpoint will never give man the power to let go of the steering wheel of self-rule. These new preachers of humanistic doctrine have lowered the spiritual bar to a new level in this modern era. Holiness, ongoing sanctification, repentance, yielding, persecution and sacrifice are words that do not fit easily into the sermons of these new Charismatics. Such concepts cannot be blended with their "new word from the Lord" doctrines.

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***“. . .These new preachers of humanistic doctrine  
have lowered the spiritual bar to a new level in  
this modern era. . .”***

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**People are encouraged to give to their ministries** and are told that whatever they give financially, they will receive back 100 times as much so that they can buy whatever they desire - all based on certain selected scriptures of course!! This is simply a "give to get" approach which promotes the greed of the flesh (1 John 2:16). It is one thing to believe for

God to provide for your need of a house or a car, and just trust that all will work out, to laying down cash and expecting a return on your so-called “investment.” Godly character can never be developed in a man or woman who will not lay down their life so that God’s will can be done - in their heart and life.

Lay down little and receive little.

Lay down much and receive much. This is the truth involved in becoming more Christ-like.

**MATTHEW 16:24** Then said Jesus unto His Disciples, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself (his own ambitions, wants, ideas, plans, etc. - everything concerned with self-rule), and take up his cross, and follow Me.

**MATTHEW 16:25** For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.

**MATTHEW 16:26** For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

## 8. The Self-Esteem Doctrine

**The responsibility of the Christian** is to live for God in Christ, by the leading and power of the Holy Spirit. In this our joy may be fulfilled. For this to happen, the scriptures tell us that “*He must increase, but I must decrease*” (John 3:30). John the Baptist said these words, but they also constitute a universal and everlasting principle by which we should order our life. Self must not be allowed to rule and Christ must be Lord of all. When this righteous order governs our life, self is in Christ, this being the only secure and safe place of refuge from the flesh, our negative emotions and the devil.

**The false doctrine of self-esteem** is wrong because it appeals to our senses and fleshy emotions, and promises to build our feeling of self-worth through man-made methods. In fact the doctrine of self-esteem is humanistic and entirely man-made. Our esteem is to be built on us in Christ, and all that this pertains to, not on us alone, striving to increase our feelings of self-worth, therefore self-love:

**GALATIANS 2:20** I am crucified (have died) with Christ (Romans 6:3-5): nevertheless I live (have new life); yet not I, but Christ lives in me (leading and empowering me): and the life which I now live in the flesh (my daily walk on this earth) I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.

Jay E. Adams in his book, “The Biblical View of Self-Esteem,” says: “*Any system that proposes to solve human problems, apart from the Bible and the power of the Holy Spirit (as all of these pagan systems, including the self-worth system do) is automatically condemned by Scripture itself. Nor does this system in any way depend upon the Message of Salvation. Love, joy, and peace are discussed as if they were not the fruits of the Spirit, but merely the fruits of right views of oneself, which anyone can attain without the Bible and the Word of the Spirit in his heart.*”

*For these reasons, the self-worth system with its claims of Biblical correspondences must be rejected. It does not come from the Bible. Any resemblance between Biblical teaching and the teaching of self-worth originators is either contrived or coincidental.”<sup>13</sup>*

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***“. . . Our esteem is to be built on us in Christ, and all that this pertains to, not on us alone, striving to increase our feelings of self-worth. . .”***

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**The thought and practice** in the circles that teach the false self-esteem doctrine centre around gently pampering and pandering to the Christian, smiling and saying “God loves you, just as you are.” Yes He does love them, but He does not love where they are at. This sort of non-confrontational contact with the heathen and Christian alike, supposedly causes the elevation of self-esteem. This approach appeals to the lower base nature of man, saved or unsaved, for this nature loves the promotion of self with no personal accountability or responsibility. People then think they are doing well, and are acceptable to God Who loves them (which He does) without any expectations (or personal responsibility).

In past times, say 50 to 100 years ago, the Gospel was generally not presented as a pleasant introduction between the sinner and his Creator, his Father. It was presented as a confrontation between the sinner and his Creator, his Judge. Proper preaching delivered the Gospel message of the Bible to give the heathen God’s mind on the matter. It was that they were born dead to Him from their mother’s womb, with the terrible blight of sin causing separation from a holy God. True preaching also informed the unsaved that they were, in fact, all sinners by nature. The Gospel not only reveals these truths, it declares that man is evil, full of darkness and cannot save himself (John 3:3; Romans 3:10-12, 23).

**This Gospel has been replaced** in the Charismatic churches with a false gospel that strokes, pampers and panders to his flesh and thus the sin nature - the dark side. In the name of elevating or not affecting the people’s self-esteem in a negative way, the reality of the evil nature of man is hidden. That which is preached by these new Evangelists and Teachers then inflates the people’s minds with egotistical praise, pumping them up to such a point that the hearers start to believe the rubbish which has been spewing forth from the pulpit, all in the Name of Jesus!

Not only is the self-esteem of Christians encouraged in this false way, the presentation of the Gospel is sometimes presented in this “light” (darkness). Much is omitted of the true Gospel for the sake of not offending people’s sensitive self-esteem. Then people start to call themselves Christians because they believe they are good - for they haven’t deliberately hurt or robbed anyone. All this because the preaching they hear in the churches or on TV or at funerals is so pathetically weak. The issue of man’s sinfulness and his inability to please a holy God by his own feeble and grubby works is not addressed (Isaiah 64:6). Those who do not preach the Gospel as the Bible declares it, for fear of causing self-esteem problems, or losing valuable members, will cause many to die unsaved, having sat in their churches sometimes for many years. What a terrible indictment and what gross irresponsibility!

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***“. . . The thought and practice in the circles that teach the false self-esteem doctrine centre around gently pampering and pandering to the Christian. . . ”***

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**When man fell in the Garden**, he lost his God-consciousness and fell to the lower level of self-consciousness. Once his eyes were always on God and now they are on self. Therein lies the problem. Today man fails every time he centres his thoughts inwardly. From this consciousness of self comes selfishness, lust, greed, depression, error and all kinds of false perspectives - in other words, darkness in the mind. To infect the church with a doctrine called self-esteem is a travesty that has caused misery in the lives of millions over the years.

With this false doctrine in the churches, men and women are taught that the answer to their depression or low self-esteem is that they do not really know the true estimate of their self-worth. Therefore they need their self-esteem to be elevated, to be pumped up with anything that sounds good to the flesh. All this does is bring the Christian back to Egypt, to the Garden again, to continue to be “self” conscious, and it is a recipe for defeat. If we are to be lifted out of the valley of self, we must look upward in prayer that seeks God - for this is our redemption and He draws nigh. Again we must become God-centred not self-centred, absorbed into the black hole of self. In Christ we have been given both the pathway and the power to do this. The way is not found, however, by the preaching of self-esteem.

**To be inflated with this false doctrine** will cause us to become egotistical Christians, full of pride. What we need is the opposite, not to be absorbed with self and self-worth, but to know that all we can have that is of any real value, and even the development of our character, can only come as a result of Christ and the Spirit’s graces working through us as we yield to the Father’s will. This will give us a humble acceptance of who we are, and will develop in us a gratitude that God loves us, even as we are, and can empower us to think as He thinks and to love as He loves, as we yield to His will, His ways. Again, “*He must increase, but I must decrease*” is the key. Indeed Jesus said, “*Without Me you can do nothing*” (John 15:5). Without Him and His empowerment through the Spirit’s graces, we won’t amount to anything either. Remember that the Word tells us, “*For I say through the grace given unto me, to every man who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think . . .*” (Romans 12:3).

**So we must put every thought and intent** through the filter of God’s will on the matter, to bring “*into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*” (2 Corinthians 10:5). This is the true Pentecostal way. Charismatics hate it but Pentecostals love it, for this is the opposite of seeking the elevation of our self-esteem. Indeed we can come to realize that every good thing we do or have within us is only there because of that which God has already deposited into our lives as we flow with Him. There is nothing innately good about us. Only as we live and move in Christ by the Holy Spirit’s power can fruit be produced in us that will last for eternity (John 15:5). Then God receives the glory for every good thing we do in Him. Again, the answer is to look upward and to understand the love and goodness of our God - not to look inward so as to enthrone the sin nature by elevating self.



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***“ . . . To be inflated with this false doctrine . . . of self-esteem . . . will cause us to become egotistical Christians, full of pride. . . ”***

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**Without God's spiritual Light** and the grace of His Divine Nature, we will stumble around in darkness for we cannot see without the light of God's Word. Because we, in ourselves, have no insight or foresight, how can we be qualified to direct our own lives? The new breed of Christian Teacher promotes this false theology of self-esteem which is based on self-appraisal by a flawed individual - self. Again we say that scripture is taken out of context and misinterpreted in order to back up humanistic philosophy. Eager to receive any sugar-coated philosophy or formula, the masses digest this rotten meat into their hearts. Because it is coated with an appetizing coating they love it and swallow it, for it tastes sweet to the tongue. Eagerly looking for more, they become, in fact, addicted to it. Seminar after seminar follows. The spiritual substance of false doctrine, when in the spiritual stomach of the hearers, begins to dissolve. When it does it poisons the minds of these people against that which is true Pentecostal teaching - which always points people away from self and towards God. As a result, as we have said, they do not want to digest good doctrine that would point them continuously back to God through the message of the Cross. This is rejected because it is not sweet enough to the tongue.

Again, because self-esteem teaching centres on self, it caters for man's lower nature and will always lead to the elevation of self. A.W.Tozer said: *“If self occupies any part of the Throne, we cannot say that Jesus Christ is on the Throne of our heart. Self is man's greatest enemy. It embodies selfishness, greed, and all that opposes God. If Jesus Christ is centred on the Throne, self-will is eradicated. And until self-will is totally eradicated, there can be no Christ-centred Throne in our lives.”*

**The answer to low self-esteem** is to run to Christ and in His strength, to take on His yoke and learn from Him. Then our focus will be outwardly (and upwardly) directed, and we will come to know and understand, with humble acceptance, how great is His love for us.

**MATTHEW 11:28** Come unto Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

**MATTHEW 11:29** Take My yoke (the cross of self-denial) upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls.

**MATTHEW 11:30** For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light (as we carry this cross in God's strength).

Then too the glory will be rightly directed, being given to the One Who is the Deliverer, the Empowerer and the Giver of everything good. Amen.

## 9. The New Way to Pray

The “government of law” or “doing” will not work - empower or deliver. It is only in the “government of grace” that all things come to us who believe through the Cross of Christ. To do anything else will frustrate the grace of God (Galatians 2:21), in other words, lessen or block the benefits that have been afforded to us through the Cross.

**Under this principle of law**, as we have said, many Charismatics teach another law and this is “the law of confession.” They say that we can confess something into existence by quoting certain scriptures over and over. This comes from the belief that by doing so (by confessing scripture), the Believer is self-energized by the Word of God and he is then able to make proper demands on God’s power. Charismatic Believers do this to have a cold healed, or to bring into existence the desires of their hearts, which could be anything from a new house to a new car or a diamond ring, etc. In this, along with their desires, the Bible increasingly becomes their source and centre of attention - rather than the Author of it and seeking His will for their lives, and an intimate experiential relationship with Him.

**The teachers of this method believe** that the Christian, when born again, is given in Christ all the faith he will ever need. He must then simply speak into existence that which he “desires.” Apparently quoting scripture over and over until one becomes self-energized amounts in their eyes to “faith” activated. Don’t get us wrong, we can make proper demands on God’s power through God-given faith (developed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit). However this will not take place under the “government of law” by which God’s hand is forced. Rather it is always to come through “the government of His grace.” In this, God is always the originator, instigator and giver according to His will, and this includes timing. God’s will is not for us to be the self-led by human “desire.” It is God who leads, motivates, empowers and delivers, and it is He Who can give us Divine desire. Thus it must be God at work in us, not us in God but He in us. Let us never forget that it is by His grace, wisdom and love that we are to live our life. His desire must replace our desires - which are flawed with self-wants when we try to live our life outside of a complete yieldedness to Him. In a state of self-want and self-rule, how could God, in His wisdom, grant to the immature that which they desire? This would simply increase their pride and add fuel to the fires of false teaching within the Church.

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***“ . . . The teachers of this method believe that the Christian, when born again, is given in Christ all the faith he will ever need. He must then simply speak into existence that which he “desires.” . . . ”***

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**God always uses His wisdom** in dealing with His children, even though many, out of lustful desire, continue to quote God’s Word to the Father, demanding whatever they confess to come into existence. God still loves His people when they do this, but He hates their ways. He is relegated to a corner while they pursue what is really the accumulation of worldly desires. This is not the way of the Gospel. God is looking for Christians who will deny self, take up their cross and serve Him all the days of their life - in His strength not theirs. He will give grace to those people that will cause others to know about God’s love

in Jesus. This brings real spiritual treasure - that of souls and lives that are changed and enriched by God's grace. Indeed scripture urges us:

**COLOSSIANS 3:1** If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above (the truth, wisdom and love of God), where Christ sits on the right hand of God.

**COLOSSIANS 3:2** Set your affection on things above (things of an eternal nature), not on things on the earth (temporal, worldly things).

**2 CORINTHIANS 4:18** While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen (seen by faith, not by the human eye): for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

**We can see from these scriptures** where our attention should be focused.

**However in this new way of praying**, using "the law of confession," very little priority is given to Christlikeness, ongoing sanctification, righteousness and holiness. The reason is simple - selfish gain promotes the sin nature (1 John 1:8) and causes it to be enthroned in one's life. In this darkness, the mind of the Saint is warped and they cannot see the error of their thinking or correctly discern their lust.

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*“. . .in this new way of praying, using “the law of confession,” very little priority is given to Christlikeness, ongoing sanctification, righteousness and holiness. . .”*

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**The promised land is God's will.** To use His Divine Words to apply to our human desire and command Him to perform our will - to bring into existence something out of nothing - is both foolish and evil. People call it holy faith but what a deception. The Church has been weakened by this type of doctrine. The faith of those who "confess into existence" is not rooted in Christ and what He did at Calvary. Rather it is rooted in scripture taken out of context and turned into a formula, a button to push to make a withdrawal from heaven's ATM (Automatic Teller Machine). How wrong they are, and how disappointed they will be when heaven's ATM says "Sorry, insufficient funds."

Let us pray however, that God, through anointed preaching and teaching, will continue to correct any arrogant attitudes and beliefs we may have so that our thinking may be transformed and straightened - lest we become proud and deceived (Romans 12:2). There are many areas in our lives that need addressing by the Lord so that we may grow and mature in Christ. Therefore, before we smugly point the finger at our brothers, let us deal with the beam in our own eyes. Yet we must consider and analyze what takes place in the Church lest we too become deceived, not living for or serving God. Indeed this should always be our desire, to please the Father. We should not want to serve ourselves but God. This is the right way, the way of righteousness.

**2 CORINTHIANS 5:15** And that He died for all, that they who live (by accepting Christ) should not henceforth live unto themselves (through self-rule), but unto Him (to do His will) Who died for them, and rose again.

## 10. Kingdom Now Theology

Unfortunately within the Church and steadily gaining in popularity is a doctrine called “Kingdom Now.”

Other names for the theology of “Kingdom Now” are “Dominion Theology” and “Reconstruction Theology.” All teach (falsely) that man with God’s empowerment must take dominion of the earth and change it for the better before Jesus can come back at the Second Coming. Their emphasis is to look around (at a horizontal human level) rather than looking up (to a vertical Divine level). They are therefore focused on what can be done to patch up the environment and change society in general into a more Godly one.

**Proponents teach and believe** that it is God’s will to use them to bring governments, the armed forces and other authorities under the control of God through the “Kingdom Now” Church. In other words, God’s Kingdom will be established now, on the earth, through Christians, with the help of the Holy Spirit, before Jesus returns at His Second Coming.

They see that in order to achieve these goals, the world must be evangelized and cleansed, but this they realize cannot be done by individual churches or denominations. To achieve this, world evangelization will require the coming together of many denominations, each putting aside doctrinal differences, even fundamental ones, in the name of ecumenicalism.

Of course they teach that the Church and its Believers have been invested with the authority to “possess the land” in the Name of Jesus. And a favourite misinterpreted scripture used by these teachers and Christians is found in Ephesians 5:27:

**EPHESIANS 5:27** That **He might present it to Himself** a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish (without fault).

With this scripture they declare that we must be readied to prepare the Church so that it will be found, on Christ’s return, to be “*a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing . . . holy and without blemish.*”

**Those who espouse this doctrine** forget or overlook the phrase “*He might present.*” We will not present the Church to Jesus for He must present it to Himself, washed, cleansed and transformed at the Rapture. The Church will not be without spot or wrinkle until the Rapture. What foolishness it is to interpret this verse outside of the harmony of scripture, while neglecting the use of proper hermeneutics.

At the end of the Church Age, as we have said, scripture tells us that it is Christ Who will present to Himself “*a glorious Church*” which, with the Saints of the Old Testament, will form the Body of Christ, and dwell in heaven with our Lord. In this, the Church will have become what it was intended to be - “*holy and without blame*” in Christ (Ephesians 1:4).

Only those who are born again and remain “in Christ” shall have their part in this. Sad to say, scripture tells us that not all who call Jesus “Lord” shall be found in the Body of Christ but rather shall have their place in the Lake of Fire (Matthew 7:21-23).

**There are some with this “Kingdom Now” doctrine** who have even prophesied that in these end times of the Church Age, God will remove the evil from the earth before His return. They believe that new teachings, prophecies and interpretations of scripture are progressively being unveiled. Even though such prophecies, as we have just discussed, are not supported by scripture, they are nonetheless “canonized” as doctrine - all because the giver of the prophecy is well known in their movement, having said “Thus saith the Lord,” with maybe even an accompanying so-called vision or spiritual experience. Sometimes even a healing or two can cause such Charismatics to claim “verification” of a doctrine taught. Alternatively there could have been a dream which has been interpreted according to their doctrinal bias.

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*“. . .They believe that new teachings, prophecies and interpretations of scripture are progressively being unveiled. . .”*

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All, and we mean all things, no matter what, must line up with the Word of God. What we have highlighted here as so-called “prophecy,” when measured against the Word of God, is easily exposed as false. We must not introduce doctrine through prophecy. Biblical doctrine is exactly that - Bible doctrine. It needs no help from over-zealous preachers or those with certain biases and agendas to back up their latest spiritual experience or dream. Let all experiences be interpreted in the light of God’s holy Word, for our emotional or intellectual bias cannot hold a candle to God’s wonderful Word.

**The Bible never tells the Christian to take dominion.** A search for such a mandate will prove fruitless. The mandate of the Church is to share and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, according to the leading and under the Anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The Church’s main responsibilities are evangelism and discipleship, not the political activism that this new movement has promoted around the world.

Within this movement, Reconstructions (Dominionists) teach that the mission of the Church goes beyond the scriptural transformation of individuals to a mandate (through these teachings) to even change society! Because of this, Christians are therefore to become political and social activists. We believe, however, that God’s Kingdom will only be established and society changed with Jesus’ return at the Second Coming. He will then rule for 1,000 years with a rod of iron after dealing with the Antichrist and all those nations that came against Israel at the Battle of Armageddon (Zechariah Ch.14; Revelation 19:15; 20:4).

**Within the Kingdom Theology movement,** the doctrine of the Rapture is often shunned and called false, with the claim that those who hold to this Biblical teaching are merely “escapists.” Instead, their belief is that after the Church establishes the Kingdom of God’s rule in society, everyone in the Church will be “caught up” emotionally when Jesus returns at the Second Coming. According to this view, it is then the Church and what it does that will determine when the Lord returns. With no Rapture also comes a denial of

the seven year tribulation period in which mankind's circumstances will become progressively worse, not better (Revelation Ch.6).

**The Kingdom Now movement** contains many people who have a desire for power and therefore rule. With this goal they believe to gain ascendancy in the political arena which includes determining government policy - setting the educational agenda and other platforms that pertain to every aspect of human interaction.

Many of these people whose desire is for power justify their approach with the belief that they are following the directions of some higher authority - God. Pastors have left their churches and entered into the political arena - and this ought not be the case with Pastors who are called to a specific, God-anointed and appointed ministry. Other Christians are wasting their time chasing these secular rainbows through their endeavours to reach a so-called "noble" end.

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*“. . . Many of these people whose desire is for power justify their approach with the belief that they are following the directions of some higher authority – God. . .”*

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**Yes we are to pray for governments** and support the introduction of Godly laws into our societies. Yes we are to exercise righteous "dominion" and in proper Holy Spirit led prayer, to come against the forces of darkness in Jesus' Name when the opportunity presents itself. But the Church has not been given any general scriptural mandate to seek or foster nationwide or worldwide political dominion before Jesus' return. In fact, as the day of the return of the Lord draws closer, along with revival we believe that heresy and apostasy will also increase.

Note that we are not, as the Church, to prepare for such with a defeatist attitude, even if it is to get far worse. Rather we are to prepare to come against it. We do this by declaring God's Word, the Gospel of Jesus and Him crucified - according to the leading and by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are also told to hold on in faith that God, through His faithful servants, will raise up a standard against the evil in the Church and in the world in these end days before His return.

**Therefore let God be God in us** and let us be Spirit-led. This is the standard to raise against the darkness in the world, and the darkness in the Church. Jesus, His Blood, His Word and the power of the Holy Spirit at work in us - this is the way God has set before us, the way we are to take and the river in which we are to flow.

**Note:** There are many varied views held by the "Kingdom Now" adherents. We have tried to give a brief introduction to expose the mindset of those involved, and to present some of their end-time teachings in order to shed some light on their general thinking.

## **11. The New Gnostics**

**In the Church worldwide** new "gnostics" have emerged, especially in Charismatic circles. The word "gnostic" comes from the Greek "gnosis" which means "knowledge."

Paul had to deal with “Gnosticism” in his ministry. In the letter he wrote under the direction of the Holy Spirit to the Colossian Church, Paul sought to deal with several serious internal doctrinal problems (Colossians 1:9,10; Colossians 2:4). The Colossians needed correction because of false teaching which denied Christ’s supremacy and all sufficiency as Head of the Body, the Church. One of the problems he had involved the gnostics, a select few who set themselves above others through their possession of so-called “superior knowledge.” Their perceived idea of truth was not dependent on the Word of God - which was, in that day, the Old Testament. They felt superior to ordinary Christians who had to stumble along by faith when they had access to greater levels of knowledge - which gave them a false sense of having a superior depth of relationship with God.

**New Charismatic gnostics** also believe, like the gnostics of old, that they possess a superior knowledge. Again, as some did in the early Church, they believe they are not dependent upon the Bible. This new breed of gnostics within the Church rely on emotional experiences and their interpretation of these experiences to gain an understanding above others. They take only the parts of the Bible that seemingly agree with their interpretation in order to support their perceived experience. This is viewed by them as “superior knowledge” that would guide their steps. Let us warn you that when emotional feelings alone become the doctrine of God’s presence, then God in one’s life has been reduced to a “gnostic” type of religion, with no real relationship. What they feel and think about God is all in their minds, divorced from any kind of reality.

For instance, when people hear a voice that tells them to do something that contradicts God’s Word, and feel a “peace” because this thing is something they agree with or want to do, then this is “superior knowledge,” above and beyond the Word. The voice is obviously not that of the Holy Spirit, for He will not contradict Himself. Therefore their so-called “knowledge” is false, being based on their emotions and biased thinking.

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***“. . .They felt superior to ordinary Christians who had to stumble along by faith when they had access to greater levels of knowledge - which gave them a false sense of having a superior depth of relationship with God. . .”***

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**Let us be clear about emotions** based on our own thinking, without God influencing, empowering or illuminating our mind and heart with His truth and power. Obviously this God - factor is necessary because we find in Isaiah:

**ISAIAH 55:8** “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” says the Lord.

**ISAIAH 55:9** “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

**We cannot understand** God’s nature and character, how He thinks and how He works, from the darkness of our own thinking and the confines of our own mind. Illumination by

the Holy Spirit is needed so that our thoughts and feelings come to align themselves with the Lord - His thoughts and His ways.

Man is an emotional being, and God did create us that way, not for our own so-called pleasure and purpose, but for His pleasure and purpose (Ephesians 1:3-9). This is God's purpose for us, in Christ to know and feel His will, His power and His love.

Many in the church talk about all these things, raise their hands and try to worship God. However they do not do so in spirit (their human nature being energized by God's Divine Nature) and in truth (John 4:23).

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***“ . . . They take only the parts of the Bible that seemingly agree with their interpretation in order to support their perceived experience . . . ”***

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They think because of their deluded, emotionally-based interpretation of the goose bumps on the back of their necks that the Anointing of God was on their meeting and so validated their teaching. Or else some dream that has been spiritualized comes under the banner of “higher revelation.” Using faulty hermeneutics or no hermeneutics at all, they take scripture out of context, spiritualize it when they shouldn't, or take it literally when they should have spiritualized it, according to the harmony of scripture, etc. And on it goes. The ways, methods and doctrines are endless, but this constitutes the new gnosticism of this age - which is really not new at all.

**Jesus said that within the Church**, they would do all these things and more (2 Timothy 4:3). The same spirit behind the gnostics of Paul's day is working overtime in the modern Church today to convince people who want to be convinced that they have or can gain this “higher revelation.” In seeking such, they don't realize that this knowledge is not from God, and that in pursuing it they are actually gaining knowledge from Satan and thus digesting darkness.

Today, especially in the Charismatic churches, quite often, as we have said, a “prophetic” “Thus saith the Lord - I am doing a new thing” flows freely from their lips. New truth, new ways, lost knowledge found - all this and more are the titles under which the new “superior knowledge” teachings are located. Within them a new form of gnosticism has put perceived personal experience and personal interpretations above the absolutes of God's Word.

**Vain imaginations, bias and wants** are catered for in their false teaching. There is little respect for the Word of God as the foundation of all doctrine and the filter through which everything gained apart from the Word should be passed. This opens the door to all kinds of error which puffs up man's mind and so gives opportunity to feed the flesh, e.g. Colossians 2:18-23.

**The knowledge of God as revealed in His Word** is to go beyond and indeed supersede the reasoning of the mind, the logic of the intellect and the unstable (negative) emotions of man. Indeed God's Word is the catalyst that can cause a holy emotion to well up from deep within, not from the mind or the flesh which are both unstable, but from the centre of man's regenerated spirit, as the human nature is energized by the Divine Nature.



**There is only one way and that is the way of the Cross** - if we want to reach heaven at salvation and connect with heaven's graces in an ongoing way. We need to go to the Cross daily in order to let God transform us into the person we should be, and that is to be Christ-like in character and also in deed. Only in this way can we fulfill His desires and His purposes for our life.

Today, therefore, we must not step down to man's perception of "higher revelation." Instead we should step up to the higher ground of Calvary, the highest spiritual ground that man will ever encounter. Only at the Cross can the Blood of the Lamb wash the stain of sin from our heart and life, for it is only from here that heaven's graces flow to transform and enrich our lives. There is only one way, as Paul tried to tell the church at Colossae, and that way is Christ and Him crucified (John 10:10-11). He alone is supreme and totally sufficient for all man's needs and requirements. Superior knowledge does not reside in us but rather in Christ, and all man's attempts to gain holiness or please God by his own methods are doomed to utter failure:

**COLOSSIANS 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men (man-made doctrine: Matthew 15:9), after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ (His teachings).**

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***“. . .we must not step down to man's perception of "higher revelation." Instead we should step up to the higher ground of Calvary, the highest spiritual ground that man will ever encounter. . .”***

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Finally let us say in conclusion that Charismatics who are truly Charismatics, do not like or enjoy fellowshipping in Pentecostal services and vice versa because two different gospels are involved. The true Pentecostal message is that of the Cross, service and holiness. The Charismatic message is that of me, myself and I - self-esteem, self-gain and self-fulfillment.

**The two cannot and should not mix.** One is from the Laodicean Charismatic Church, and the other is the true Pentecostal Church found in the Book of Acts. Yes there is still some sin in it, but because the true Pentecostal doctrine of repentance is preached, there is opportunity given for the Holy Spirit to convict the sinner of his sin, and so allow the Blood of Calvary to deal with it. The sinner is then given access through the Cross to the energizing power of God's Divine Nature which they have, in Christ, been made partakers of. This is the power of His holiness in which we are to flow. Repentance from sin, however, must be taught so that we can then be forgiven and readied to receive these holy graces of God to serve Him and do His will.

**The emphasis within our Pentecostal churches** should be the love of God, repentance, conversion of souls through sharing one to one, the preaching of the Gospel, and teaching that promotes God's will and not ours in our lives. Furthermore in this end-time age of the Church, we must remember that the Kingdom of God is of a spiritual origin, and is "*not of this world*" (John 18:36). The Kingdom of God is to be, by God's grace, His spiritual rule in the hearts of yielded, sold-out-to-Jesus men and women (John

17:20-21). Only on Christ's return, called the Second Coming, will He establish His literal and physical reign. So let us as Christians follow the Spirit of Revelation and stay in, return to, or find a church that is based on true Biblical promises and not "new revelations."

Let us therefore complete this brief teaching with the warning that the Christian as a "watchman" (Isaiah 21:6) is to expose the work of the enemy in the camp - with the following attitude and reverence for God:

**1 PETER 5:6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time:**

**1 PETER 5:7 Casting all your care upon Him; for He cares for you.**

**1 PETER 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour.**

## **SPIRITUAL WARFARE**

*Background Reading: Ephesians 6:10-18*

**As Christians**, we need to realize that we do not have to succumb to the wiles of the enemy. Satan uses evil strategies and ploys to deceive people and keep them in bondage, blinded to the truth. But the only power Satan retains in Christians' lives is that which they give him, through sinning and remaining in ignorance.

It is also essential we realize that in ourselves, we have no power to defeat the enemy. Many people try to fight the devil in their own strength - their willpower - and they fail. In Christ, however, when we are living in harmony with God's Word, we can allow God's power into our lives to defeat the enemy. It is therefore not we who deal with the devil - rather, it is God's grace working through us, energizing us and giving us the power we need.

**God's grace is revealed** in the two aspects of His power which work together for the benefit of His people. The first aspect of His power is demonstrated through God supplying us with the provisions we need to run the race of faith. This includes our daily physical needs, from finances, to protection, to the healing of our body. The second describes God's power at work within us so that we are able to do His will, being empowered to resist the destructive urges of the world, the flesh (the sin nature) and the devil. This power comes through the imparted Divine Nature which energizes our human nature as we submit to the Holy Spirit.

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***“. . . the only power Satan retains in Christians' lives is that which they give him, through sinning and remaining in ignorance. . . ”***

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**If the enemy is causing havoc** in a Christian's life, they need, in faith, to take authority over that situation in the knowledge of who they are in Christ. This is done by that person

first repenting of any sin, and so eliminating any legal ground which the enemy may have. They can then pray to God in Jesus' Name to remove the devil's influence. This can be done by saying, in faith, "In the Name of Jesus, I bind the enemy's influence in this area, and I loose him from this situation," as Matthew 18:18 instructs:

**MATTHEW 18:18** Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever (evil spirit) you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven (by heaven's power); and whatsoever (evil spirit) you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (by heaven's power).

By faith, through the prayer of binding and loosing, God's power can first immobilize the enemy and then remove his influence from a particular situation.

**Note:** Normally one should seek the leading of the Spirit before undertaking such prayer.

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***“. . .It is also essential we realize that in ourselves, we have no power to defeat the enemy. Many people try to fight the devil in their own strength - their willpower - and they fail. . .”***

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**When we pray in this manner**, we are focusing on God and dealing only with Him. In other words, WE DEAL WITH GOD AND HE DEALS WITH THE DEVIL. Although we are binding the enemy in the Name of Jesus, we are, spiritually speaking, in the throneroom of grace, appropriating God's power according to His will through the prayer of binding and loosing. Through our prayer of faith, God's power deals with the enemy. Therefore anything done by us in this regard is carried out by God the Father, through the Lord Jesus Christ, via the agency of the Holy Spirit. So always remember, we do not deal directly with the devil. We deal with God through Jesus Christ, and then God's power can remove the enemy's influence. Again, we have no power in ourselves, but through Jesus we have access to God's power, indeed the corporate power of heaven, to change circumstances - the mountains that confront us (Matthew 21:21). Remember we also have the power within, through the Divine Nature, to help us change and develop our character so that we become more Christ-like.

It is the devil who blinds people from receiving the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is he who deceives and destroys. It is he who lures people into hell through lust, unbelief, vain philosophy, religion, fear, etc. We thus need to acknowledge that he is mankind's enemy, and treat him accordingly.

**Satan was originally an anointed cherub**, but now he is "the Adversary," "*the father of lies*" and the one who promotes all that is evil. He is at enmity with God and hates all that God has created, especially mankind. Satan delights in deceiving people and drawing them into hell to experience eternal torment. Therefore we should use every weapon that God has provided against him. Without faith-filled Christians using the armour and weaponry which God has given, many more people would be rushing headlong into hell. It is therefore our responsibility as soldiers of the Cross to become aware of our enemy's tactics, and to oppose him to the level of our spiritual maturity and ability in the Spirit. As

we commune with God, He will lead us in the paths of righteousness, giving us the necessary weapons of warfare. Always remember, however, in dealing with the enemy, it is not really us, but us in God, and so God through us Who accomplishes this purpose. Consequently, all the power and glory belong to Him.

**Therefore we should not become “devil-oriented.”** We need to remember, as we have said, that in spiritual warfare we are dealing with God, not the enemy and his forces. We also need to remember that God’s power is so much greater, and that indeed the enemy is a toothless lion for those who know their authority in Christ and are walking uprightly before God. So let us strive to always be balanced in our spiritual warfare, keeping our focus on the Cross, and the love and power which flows from it to us, day by day.

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***“. . .It is therefore our responsibility as soldiers of the Cross to become aware of our enemy’s tactics, and to oppose him to the level of our spiritual maturity and ability in the Spirit. . .”***

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## **Dealing With Problems**

*Background Reading: Matthew 11:28-30*

**So if you are experiencing any difficulties** in your life, do not focus on the problem. Rather, focus on the answer - the Word of God and the power given because of the Cross. When people meditate on a problem, it can easily become amplified to the point where there appears to be no solution. As a result, many lose their hope, and their faith in God to protect them and provide for their needs. In doing so, they are allowing the enemy to run roughshod over their lives and their affairs.

We are not saying we should not acknowledge that there is a problem if one exists in our lives, but we are saying we must seek for the answer to that problem in Christ.

**God teaches throughout His Word** that we are to seek Him diligently. This is especially the case when we are confronted with problems of any kind. As we seek Him with all our hearts, He will then reveal the answer to those who are open to Him, this answer being the truth needed to set us free. For this is His promise:

**MATTHEW 7:7** Ask (in faith) and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

**MATTHEW 7:8** For every one who (truly) asks receives; and he who (truly) seeks finds; and to him who (truly) knocks it shall be opened (assuming the seeker does so with a sincere heart).

**LUKE 12:32** Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom (the love, truth and wisdom of God: Matthew 6:33).

**We cannot emphasize strongly enough** that each and every Believer needs to spend time in study and in fellowship with God each day in order to gain that which is needed to live a successful life here on earth, pleasing to the Father. And true fellowship comes through speaking to the Lord, praising and worshipping Him and taking quality time to hear the gentle voice of the Spirit. This voice can come in many ways, but most of the time people will find that the Lord will speak to them primarily through the scriptures, as they hear, read and study them.

**God is our Heavenly Father** and He wants to provide for us. The main thing we need of course is truth. Through receiving and acting on the truth of His Word, we will obtain all we need. As Matthew 6:33 states:

**MATTHEW 6:33 . . . seek first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness** (*this gives the "condition" for God's Blessings; His interests are to be "first" : E.S.B.*); **and all these things** (everything you need) **shall be added unto you.**

**The devil may try to tell us** that the Bible is only a book of religious philosophy and myths. We need, however, to reject his lies by lifting up God's Word as truth - truth with the power to deliver and set free. We can then bring the devil and his lies into subjection to God's Word, and he will be placed where he belongs, under Jesus' feet.

In doing all this, we will be lifting up and glorifying the Name of Jesus - for the Name of Jesus is mighty! It will certainly set us free, along with anyone else who wants to partake of the blessings of God.

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***“ . . . When people meditate on a problem, it can easily become amplified to the point where there appears to be no solution. . . ”***

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When we pray to the Father, it is to be in the Name of Jesus, the Jesus of the Cross, our sacrifice of Atonement. And for our prayers to be focused and effective, we need a proper understanding of the Atonement - which is the suffering, death and Resurrection of Jesus.

**The Name of Jesus is supreme** - it is above all. When the Name of Jesus is spoken in faith and the conditions are met, everything must bow - every circumstance, every sickness, every disease and every mountain in a person's life. Indeed the Name of Jesus has authority over everything, as Philippians 2:10-11 tells us:

**PHILIPPIANS 2:10** **That at the Name of Jesus every knee should** (must) **bow, of things in heaven** (angels and departed Saints), **and things in (on) earth** (those living on the earth) **and things under the earth** (Satan's forces and hell's occupants),

**PHILIPPIANS 2:11** **And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

**To gain victory in our lives,** we also need to take up the cross of self-denial. Along with this again we need to focus on the Cross and Christ's finished work, and believe and trust that God has given to us in Him the new Divine Nature. When a Believer yields to the

Holy Spirit, the energies and graces of the Divine Nature are absorbed in an experiential way by the human nature, so empowering the Saint to both desire, and in faith and love to do God's will, totally and completely.

**PHILIPPIANS 2:12** Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling (so that you go on to maturity in the Lord, not backsliding or stagnating, for your salvation is your most precious possession).

**PHILIPPIANS 2:13** For it is God Who works in you (through Divine enablement) both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

**It is the grace of the Holy Spirit** which will empower us to work effectively for our Lord. Wuest comments on Philippians 2:12-13 in regard to this, and just as importantly, our role in it.

*“In verse thirteen we have divine enablement. The saints are to carry their salvation which God has given them and which thus belongs to them, to its ultimate goal, always remembering and depending upon the fact that it is God who is working in them both to will and to do of His good pleasure. The word “worketh” in the Greek means “to energize, to work effectively.” Our words “energy” and “energize” come from it. The words “to will” are the translation of a Greek word meaning “to desire,” and refer to a desire that comes from one’s emotions rather than from one’s reason. It is this desire to do the good pleasure of God that is produced by divine energy in the heart of the saint as he definitely subjects himself to the Holy Spirit’s ministry. It is God the Holy Spirit who energizes the saint, making him not only willing, but actively desirous of doing God’s sweet will. But He does not merely leave the saint with the desire to do His will. He provides the necessary power to do it. This we have in the words “to do.” The Greek construction implies habit, the habitual doing of God’s will.*

*In verse twelve, we have human responsibility, in verse thirteen, divine enablement, a perfect balance which must be kept if the Christian life is to be lived at its best. It is not a “let go and let God” affair. It is a “take hold with God” business. It is a mutual co-operation with the Holy Spirit in an interest and an activity in the things of God. The saint must not merely rest in the Holy Spirit for victory over sin and the production of a holy life. He must in addition to this dependence upon the Spirit, say a positive NO to sin and exert himself to the doing of the right. Here we have that incomprehensible and mysterious interaction between the free will of man and the sovereign grace of God.”<sup>14</sup>*

(underlines added)

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***“ . . . It is God the Holy Spirit who energizes the saint, making him not only willing, but actively desirous of doing God’s sweet will. . . ”***

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**If a Saint does not follow** the prescribed order set forth in God's Word, they will leave themselves open to attack from the enemy. But all those who flow in God's grace are promised power over sin. Then no agent of the enemy shall succeed! Indeed the power of

sin was broken at the Cross. *“It is finished”* for all those in Christ, and we can now choose to seek and follow after the Spirit of Grace and Truth.

**Another timely warning** - if Christians try to seek truth as a formula to escape from bondages (difficulties, character flaws, areas of defeat) in their life, without seeking the relationship that the Spirit desires to have with them, they will ultimately fail. This is because we need that relationship which is built on the union of two, and gives us a solid foundation of truth and love. From this stems everything else pertaining to spiritual life. The love displayed at the Cross for man still extends today through the ministry of the Holy Spirit Who was sent to be our Comforter and Teacher. It is He Who brings the essence of the Father to us so that we may commune with the Father. It is the Holy Spirit Who would empower us to love, believe and trust in our Lord - in all things, and at all times.

A formula by itself will not produce freedom. Only the love and power which flow through relationship, a relationship which is created at the Cross, will enable the truth to set us free.

## **God’s Convicting Power**

*Background Reading: Hebrews 4:12-13; John 16:7-15*

**If we have sin in our lives**, God will want to expose it. He can do this through making us aware of truth - right and wrong and the answer needed. God, however, does not condemn. He desires to restore and liberate.

**When conviction operates**, we will feel guilty of sin. The answer to this is repentance. Condemnation, on the other hand, will cause us to feel worthless and hopeless, a state of being for which there is no remedy. A feeling of condemnation can also cause a man or woman to rear up in pride and anger, and to try to justify their sin (as people have done throughout human history). The devil promotes condemnation, while God, through conviction, tries to bring us to an awareness of our sin for the purposes of repentance.

When truth is declared, God’s convicting power can show us any wrong in our lives. This is the reason we must seek truth, no matter what cost is involved. However, if people react negatively to God’s convicting power, condemnation can come into operation and cause them to feel condemned and worthless, or strange as it may seem, even to become puffed up with pride. The way people react when confronted with the truth concerning an area of wrong in their lives will determine whether or not condemnation can gain legal ground to operate. To react wrongly can, as we have said, allow condemnation to operate. To respond with humility and a desire to please God will produce repentance and subsequent liberation. And this is the purpose of God’s convicting power. It comes from the Father of Lights, and shows us the way out of our darkness and ignorance.

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***“. . .The devil promotes condemnation, while God, through conviction, tries to bring us to an awareness of our sin for the purposes of repentance. . .”***

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**Sometimes when truth is spoken in wisdom**, people may not recognize it as such because of their biased attitudes. We find that many people are closed off to truth in certain areas because they cling to traditions, beliefs and ideas that contradict God's Word. They hold such concepts in high esteem and are unwilling to consider anything which may challenge them. Then in rejecting the truth because it does not line up with their own thinking, they allow themselves to remain in bondage to such things as fear, sickness, worry, poverty (spiritual and/or physical), greed, lust, materialism, etc.

God always wants to reveal truth but for Him to do so, we need to yield to the Spirit of God by being open to His Word of direction, correction and deliverance.

**Scripture also tells us** that if people reject God's teaching and seek false teaching which is pleasing to their ears (or senses), their consciences will become seared, and thus numbed, and alienated from their thinking processes. They will then be deceived, and cause others also to be deceived.

**1 TIMOTHY 4:1** Now the Spirit speaks expressly (clearly, pointedly), that in the latter times (towards the end of the Church Age which is now) **some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits (evil spirits of deception and religion), and doctrines of devils** (doctrines inspired by demons and taught by men);

**1 TIMOTHY 4:2** **Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron** (this refers to the teachers of these demonic doctrines);

**2 TIMOTHY 4:3** **For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine** (fundamental Bible teachings - the Cross, the Blood, repentance from sin, ongoing sanctification, etc.); **but after their own lusts shall they (so-called Christians) heap to themselves teachers** (of false doctrine), **having itching ears** (to hear what their flesh craves);

**2 TIMOTHY 4:4** **And they shall turn away their ears from the truth** (because they don't want to hear it), **and shall be turned unto fables** (myths, lies, deception).

**If we reject or remain ignorant of God's Word**, we will remain in whatever bondage holds us captive. So it pays to find out what life's boundaries are, i.e. the way God wants us to live. In this way we can walk before Him in the freedom Christ has won for us. And when we walk in freedom and spiritual strength, we will be in a far better position to help others - both in leading people to salvation, and helping others progress in the Kingdom of God.

**If God reveals** that we have sin in our lives, the sin nature, in that area, will have once again ascended the throne. Therefore we will need to take account of ourselves and address the problem. We will need to make sure we are doing all the Lord has commanded. We will also need to review our priorities, and see how much or how little we are committed to Him.

**Note:** God may reveal things to us through an inner witness or through other people. Whether or not these people are ministers does not matter - we should always be open to correction and teaching. In this way, our minds can be renewed and we can live productive and consistent Christian lives.



We need to take all things that are new, and of which we are a little unsure, to the prayer closet, so that we can ask the Lord to reveal the truth concerning these things - whether they be right or wrong. This may take a commitment to seek and study, so that with the help of the Holy Spirit, illumination may come.

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***“. . .If we reject or remain ignorant of God’s Word,  
we will remain in whatever bondage holds us  
captive. . .”***

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**We should always be open** to the Lord’s direction, so that He can show us any problems in our lives and we can then make the necessary changes. Acknowledgement of any weakness or problem is the first step and this needs to be followed by true repentance. Then we can go on in God, not being held back by any past failures or ongoing weaknesses.

So it is wise to position oneself in regard to righteous living, and to be open to God’s convicting power - for when acted upon, this will bring the peace of God that passes all natural understanding into our lives. This will continue as we take up our cross of self-denial on a daily basis and follow Christ.

**PHILIPPIANS 4:7 And the peace of God, which passes (goes beyond) all (human) understanding, shall keep (and fill) your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**

**This is the wage of living God’s way.** We have peace of mind from the knowledge of who we are in Christ. This gives us confidence. With this knowledge, we can properly focus so as to flow in the power of God, yielding to the Holy Spirit so that the graces and energies of the Divine Nature become available to us to do God’s will. From this position, we are more able to help other people come to know the truth and walk in freedom. Indeed God is calling all of us to live in His Word of deliverance so we can be cleansed vessels, fit for our Master’s use:

**2 TIMOTHY 2:20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.**

**2 TIMOTHY 2:21 If a man therefore purge himself from these (attitudes and deeds of the flesh), he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet (fit) for the Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.**

**As Wuest puts it so clearly:**

*“The Christian who does not maintain a real interest in and hunger for the Word of God, and satisfy both by a constant study of that Word, is not co-operating with the Spirit, and is not giving the Spirit an opportunity to work in his life and cause him to grow in the Christian graces. The Spirit works through the Word of God that we have stored in our hearts, and not apart from it.*

*Likewise, the believer who does not actively participate in the activity necessary to the saying of YES to the will of God and of NO to sin, is not co-operating with the Spirit. And*

*the Christian who does not engage in a Holy Spirit directed ministry of some kind in the work of furthering the knowledge of the Word of God, is not co-operating with the Spirit. It is this ideal combination of a moment by moment trust in, submission to, and dependence upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and the constant interest in and participation with the Holy Spirit in the things of God, that produces the best results in the Christian's experience. This combination develops Christian men and women with a sense of responsibility, with moral courage and stamina of a high order, with a balance and poise that weathers the severest storms, with a delicate sense of tact that enables them to move among their fellowmen without riding roughshod over their tender hearts, but rather in a loving way so that their passing leaves a sense of the presence of the Lord Jesus. It develops spiritual giants, men and women who can be trusted in a time of crisis."<sup>15</sup>*

(underlines added)

These men and women, led and empowered by the Spirit, will discern truth from error.

May you have the victory in Christ.

**TIME LIMIT - Due on or before.....**

*This time limit is based on a minimum of ..... hours of study per week.  
You should allow as a general guideline, ..... hours to answer the questions.*

*TOTAL ALLOWANCE ..... hours.*

*If you are having problems completing this study within these guidelines, you may need to seek assistance from those in charge of distribution.*

## STUDY QUESTIONS

*The following questions are designed to assess how much you have understood and retained from your studies.*

*Answer and number all questions on line-ruled paper, giving two or three scriptures with each answer whenever possible. Also give an explanation, whenever possible, of how you arrived at your answer.*

*Answer these questions according to the instructions given regarding the grade you have chosen to work at, i.e. either Intermediate Grade or Ordinary Grade.*

*If you do not understand a particular question, contact those responsible for distribution.*

*For ease of correction **write the actual question down on your answer sheet before answering each question, and please print all answers to the questions.***

*Note: If you do not agree with any particular viewpoint expressed in the studies and you have another viewpoint, answer questions relating to this area in the following manner:*

*The view that the studies teach is . . . . .*

*But I believe . . . . .  
(and state the reasons why you do so)*

***Note: Remember the time limit and complete the study and your answers within the allotted period.***

*If you are studying at Intermediate Grade, you will later be eligible to do the Advanced Questions if you so desire. You will not be able to use your study books or notes to help you answer these questions. In fact all you will be able to use are Bibles and Concordances. So prepare for this by studying properly and answering these questions according to the instructions given.*

*(See letters concerning how to study.)*

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## DISCERNING TRUTH FROM ERROR

### Study Questions

1. Apart from our spiritual growth, what is a major reason we should be thoroughly grounded in God's Word?
2. Who do we as Christians have dwelling within us, and what does He bring with Him?
3. What is the most important aspect about Jesus that false religions deny, and what do some teach about Him?
4. What do we need to do in order to recognize cults, false teachers, and error within Christian teaching itself?
- 5 (a) What is the greatest sign that will show if a teaching is of God, and what else should we be mindful of when making our assessment?  
  
(b) Many people are unable to really perceive the inner witness. What then is their best safeguard?
- 6 (a) Why were the offices of the Five Fold Ministry given to the Church?  
  
(b) What then is the responsibility of the sheep and the responsibility of the shepherd?  
  
(c) What can happen when Christians try to act as their own pastors?
7. Why can't we rely on our emotions to tell us whether a teaching is correct?
8. When God's teachings are accepted and acted upon, what signs will accompany the preaching of these truths?
9. Why was Jesus, the greatest Teacher of all, unable to perform many mighty works in His own home town, and what does this tell us today?
10. If a teaching does not line up with God's Word, even if "signs" accompany it, how should we react?
11. What may happen to us if we listen to incorrect teaching without knowing the principles contained in God's Word?
12. How can our understanding of doctrine be used as a filter for other teaching?
13. What is the true foundation of all doctrine?
14. If we do not bother to fellowship with God and seek truth as God has commanded, what are we doing and what may we bring upon ourselves and others?

15. Who is responsible for our personal growth in the Lord, what is our part and what is God's part in this process?
16. What is wrong with the view that if one's good works outweigh one's bad, then this will give one entrance to heaven?
17. Don't all religions basically teach the same thing?
18. Is Islam compatible with Christianity? Explain.
19. What is Biblical hermeneutics, and why is it important?
20. What two elements are vital in studying and interpreting Scripture?
21. When the Holy Spirit brings revelation of the Word, in what context does this almost always take place?
22. Explain what is meant by the term "literal interpretation" in the context of understanding the scriptures.
- 23 (a) What does the allegorical method assume and so what does it do?  
 (b) Why is the literal method the most logical to employ?
24. Does 1 Corinthians 2:14 say that the unsaved person is unable to understand the Bible? Explain.
25. What does it mean to truly "*know*" (1 Corinthians 2:14) God's truths?
- 26 (a) If a Christian is attending a church which does not teach correctly in major areas, what should they do?  
 (b) What will happen if Christians remain in these situations?
27. What is Satan's purpose in promoting wrong teachings, etc.?
28. What often accompanies unbelief and false teaching in the local church setting?
29. Who is "the Cornerstone," and what is the foundation by which the Lord's grace is released to us?
30. How did Satan deceive Eve, and what does this show us about his nature and character?
- 31 (a) In Jesus' day, how did Satan discover that God's power was greater than his?  
 (b) When does this become a reality in people's lives?

32. Who is master of those areas of your life in which you have not allowed God to rule?
33. If we do not act on the spiritual truths which have been revealed to us, who are we giving legal ground to, and what may be the result?
34. Why does God command us to love and serve Him with total commitment?
35. When Christians do not allow the Holy Spirit to give them direction, what are they really doing?
36. What are Satan's goals and desires for mankind, and how do his methods differ from God's methods?
37. According to Romans 12:9 and 1 Thessalonians 5:22, what do all Christians need to do, and why?
38. What is the narcotic of darkness, and what effect can it have on the Christian?
39. If we do not fill our lives with God's desires for us, what will remain, and what could be the result?
- 40 (a) What is the seed we need in our hearts, and what is the heavenly water required to germinate it?  
 (b) Describe the Christian who doesn't experience this process.
- 41 (a) If we don't seek God's will and embrace it, what popular false doctrine, as taught in this study, could we take hold of?  
 (b) What lies at the basis of this false doctrine, and what particular narcotic of darkness is fed by it?  
 (c) If this false doctrine features prominently in our lives, where will our focus be and what primary Godly aims will be neglected?
42. When did the recent Pentecostal outpouring originate and what has the Pentecostal Church brought to the world in terms of enriching the Kingdom of God?
43. When did the Charismatic movement originate, what was the main failing of this movement and what caused this failing (in terms of the principle of "the unity of the Spirit")?
44. What then is the difference between the terms "Pentecostal" and "Charismatic" ?

45. When preachers teach only that which seems “positive” and therefore appeals to the senses of man (but is unbalanced), what will be the result? Give examples.
46. What is the popular definition of the word “backslider” and what is the true meaning of the word?
47. New age “Christian” teaching is man-centred not God-centred. What does this mean, and what is the true message of the Gospel?
48. Comment on the way most modern “Charismatic” churches address these doctrinal issues, giving reasons why they do so:
- (a) The Spirit Baptism.
  - (b) The problem of sin in the life of the Christian as well as the unsaved.
  - (c) Repentance and the Blood of Christ.
  - (d) The boundaries of salvation and the judgement to come.
  - (e) The blessings of God.
49. Not to teach God’s holy standards will produce a church that looks, thinks and acts like the world.
- (a) What are some of these standards and why are they not taught?
  - (b) What is wrong with this philosophy?
- 50 (a) What are some of the ways music is misused in the modern Charismatic churches?
- (b) What is the underlying problem here, and what is the only solution?
51. Was Calvary a success or a failure? Explain your answer.
- 52 (a) With the Charismatic emphasis on success, what is the way in which it is measured?
- (b) How does this differ from real spiritual victory?
- 53 (a) If the goal of our Christian life is to seek and receive God’s blessings, what are we being ruled by, and what will we be unable to properly discern?
- (b) What should we really be seeking, so that, by God’s grace, we can find and embrace it?

54. List some of the pure doctrines (or teachings) of the Pentecostal Church and what Charismatic teachings have replaced them, explaining what you mean by these teachings.
- 55 (a) What church in the Book of Revelation is a snapshot of the modern Charismatic “bless-me-club,” and why is this so?
  - (b) What does God warn about such churches, and what does this mean, practically speaking?
56. What will characterize the final end-time revival that some believe will be last to sweep the earth before the Rapture.
57. Define these words and state the relationship between them: dogma, heresy, apostasy.
58. Explain how most heresies arise and how they are able to bring deception.
59. Depending on the degree of heresy or apostasy, what problems will exist in a church?
60. What are the basic differences between humanistic psychology and what the Bible teaches?
61. If mainline methods and formulas are adopted by Pentecostal churches, it is a rejection of God’s way. Explain.
62. What is promoted when Pentecostal churches use mainline teachers and preachers, and what does this practice bring with it?
63. What forms does the “inclusion doctrine” take and what is the answer to this heresy?
- 64 (a) What are some of the problems which arise from denominationalism?
  - (b) What are some of the ways in which churches can be governed, and what should have the final say on all matters?
- 65 (a) When the Cross of Calvary and the cross of self-denial are not preached, what is usually the focus?
  - (b) What is the purpose of doctrine meant to be, and what does this tell us about formulas for personal gain?
- 66 (a) On what structure is the G12 movement based?
  - (b) What are some of the unscriptural aspects of this movement?



- 67 (a) What are some of the ways in which Christians, often through Christian teachers at seminars, are encouraged to “work the Word” ?
- (b) What does this teaching replace, what is the true object of worship here and what is wrong with this?
68. Describe the “give to get” philosophy advocated by the prosperity teachers, show why it is wrong and give the proper Biblical perspective.
- 69 (a) What is the problem with the self-esteem doctrine and why is it preached?
- (b) Where does it lead people and what is the true Biblical approach to self-esteem?
- 70 (a) What is “the law of confession” and where does this kind of prayer often place God?
- (b) Where should God be placed when we pray, and why?
71. Describe the beliefs of those who adhere to “Kingdom Now” or “Dominion Now” theology.
72. What is the mandate of the Church and how does this contravene Kingdom Now heresies?
73. What other Biblical doctrines are shunned by this movement?
74. What is “gnosticism” and by whom was it addressed in the scriptures?
75. What form does the new gnosticism take and what is the primary error involved in this false approach to the Christian faith?
76. Why do true Charismatics dislike true Pentecostal services and fellowship, and vice versa?
77. What power is available to Christians to defeat the enemy, and why do many fail in this area?
78. What are the two aspects of God’s power which are available to His people?
79. Describe the process by which we can remove any legal ground which the enemy may have in relation to our lives.
- 80 (a) Explain what happens spiritually when a person, in faith, prays the prayer of binding, or of binding and loosing.
- (b) What should we always do before praying such a prayer?

- (c) When we pray such prayers, who are we dealing with?
81. What is our responsibility as soldiers of the Cross?
  82. In any dealings with the enemy, who does the glory belong to and why?
  83. How do we keep balanced in spiritual warfare?
  84. Under what circumstances does the devil become a “toothless lion”?
  85. If we are experiencing a particular problem in our lives, on what should we focus and why?
  86. What do we need to do on a daily basis in order to gain what is needed to live a successful life here on earth?
  87. How does the Lord speak to us primarily?
  88. How are the devil and his lies brought into subjection to God’s Word?
  89. What is the Atonement, and why do we need to have a proper understanding of it?
  90. How is the Saint empowered to both desire and do God’s will?
  91. Drawing from Philippians 2:12-13, in regard to effective service for the Lord, what is our human responsibility and what is God’s responsibility?
  92. What was broken at the Cross, and what bearing does this have on the Christian?
  93. If Christians seek truth as a formula to deal with personal problems, they will ultimately fail. Why is this so, and what more is needed?
  94. If there is sin in our lives, what will God be trying to do?
  - 95 (a) Explain the difference between conviction and condemnation.
    - (b) What will determine whether people allow conviction or condemnation to operate?
    - (c) When people respond positively to conviction, what will result?
  - 96 (a) What prevents people perceiving truth as such?
    - (b) If people reject truth, what remains in place?
  97. If people do not seek truth, but only that which is pleasing to their ears, what will result?

98. How do we allow God to reveal truth to us and how does He do so?
99. If God reveals that there is sin in our lives, how should we react and what should we do about it?
- 100(a) How do we flow in the power of God?
- (b) What benefit can this bring to the Kingdom?
101. What is the ideal combination in a Christian's experience that will develop men and women of spiritual stature, people who can be trusted in a crisis?
102. At what grade did you study this booklet and answer the questions, Ordinary Grade or Intermediate Grade?
103. Do you wish to commit yourself to studying at 7 hours a week or 4 hours a week in regard to your next study?

*Note: Please send \$..... with these answers for your next study.*

*Note: Under certain circumstances, you may not feel you can commit 7 hours a week to the next study. You can then opt to study at 4 hours a week. The time limits will be adjusted accordingly. Should your situation change, you can increase your time to 7 hours a week - just notify the college or those in charge of distribution.*



## **WE BELIEVE:**

1. The Bible is the inspired, infallible and authoritative written Word of God.
2. There is one true triune God, eternally co-existent in three persons Who form the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Word and God the Holy Spirit. These three dwell together in perfect unity, forming one heavenly government called God, and each of the three divine persons we recognize to be God.
3. God the Word stripped Himself of His rightful godly privileges and became flesh, a human being called Jesus Christ. Nevertheless He remained God the Word, being both truly God and truly man.
4. Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of a virgin. He was crucified, buried, and then raised from the dead by the power of God. He now sits at the right hand of the Father, and is the only Mediator between God and man.
5. In the spiritually lost condition of men - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (are deprived of God's saving presence).
6. Salvation is found in no one else except Jesus, and there is no other name under heaven which is given to men whereby mankind can be saved.
7. In the essential need of the new birth by faith in Jesus Christ. The only means of being cleansed from sin is through repentance and faith in the precious blood of Christ.
8. Spiritual regeneration (the new birth) is brought about by making Jesus Christ Lord and Saviour, and by believing that Jesus' precious shed blood was the price needed to redeem man from sin.
9. In the Person and work of the Holy Spirit with His gifts and fruit abiding in the Church.
10. In the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues, as the Spirit gives utterance.
11. That believers should be water-baptized, as the Lord commands, by full immersion, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
12. That divine healing is provided in the New Covenant through Jesus Christ, by applying faith to God's Word of promise.
13. In the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit by Whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a holy life.
14. Jesus Himself shall descend from heaven to resurrect the righteous dead and to catch away the living saints to meet with Him in the air. This event is known as the Rapture of the Church.
15. In the second coming of Jesus Christ to the earth along with His glorified saints. This event will take place after the Rapture (the snatching away).
16. That all who accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour will enjoy everlasting life with Him.
17. That all who do not accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour will spend eternity in everlasting torment in the lake of fire, along with Satan and his forces of evil.

- 1 McDowell, J., Answers To Tough Questions: Skeptics ask about the Christian faith.
- 2 McDowell, J., Answers To Tough Questions: Skeptics ask about the Christian faith.
- 3 McDowell, J., Answers To Tough Questions: Skeptics ask about the Christian faith.
- 4 Dr. Larry Hunt, Biblical Exposition, page 13.
- 5 Kevin Connor and Ken Malmin, "Interpreting The Scriptures," pgs 3 and 5.
- 6 Kevin Connor and Ken Malmin, "Interpreting The Scriptures," pgs.7-9.
- 7 Dr. Larry Hunt, Biblical Exposition, pg.11.
- 8 Kevin Connor and Ken Malmin, Interpreting the Scriptures, pgs.15 and 18.
- 9 Dr. Larry Hunt, Bible Exposition, pg.46.
- 10 Dr. Larry Hunt, Bible Exposition, pg.47.
- 11 A. W. Tozer
- 12 D.R.McConnell, A Different Gospel.
- 13 Jay E. Adams, The Biblical View of Self-Esteem.
- 14 Wuest, K. S., Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Philippians.
- 15 Wuest, K. S., Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Untranslatable Riches from the Greek New Testament, pg.113.