

The Great Falling Away

by Jeremy James



In Acts 16:17, we see how the Apostle Paul, exasperated by the mediumistic ramblings of the little girl who was following them around, finally turned and spoke to the demon inside her: **“I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.”**

What was she saying that so annoyed him? According to many translations, including the KJV, she was saying, **“These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.”** But this is not correct. Demons cannot be trusted to tell the truth about anything. Rather she was saying: “These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us **a** way of salvation.”

The original manuscripts confirm that this is the case. In his literal translation of the Bible, Young translates her words as follows: “These men are servants of the Most High God, who declare to us **a** way of salvation.”

One path of many?

Why is this important? Well, apart from the need for scrupulous accuracy in our handling of God’s Word, her actual statement, with the indefinite article, is a proposition straight for the New Age movement. In both the ancient pagan and modern neo-pagan religions, there are many paths to salvation. They teach that each person chooses the one that best suits their spiritual needs, their individuality or ‘state of consciousness’ as they put it.

The demon which possessed the little girl could see that Paul and Silas were not simply teaching a new way of salvation, but were claiming that it was the only way. The Enemy will not tolerate this! He hates the Gospel of salvation, but he hates just as intensely the claim that it is the **ONLY** way.

Properly taught, the Gospel leaves one in no doubt that there is no way to salvation except through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. All of the worldly religions, faiths and philosophies are utterly devoid of truth.

The False Gospel of ‘core truths’

Alas, this is not how the Gospel is preached today. The modern Gospel confines itself instead to certain core truths. A person becomes a believer, they say, when he accepts these truths. In reality, the convert has found “a way of salvation” but has not truly realized that faith in the blood of Christ is the only way of salvation. Somewhere in his heart he still sees, however faintly, some intrinsic goodness in those who have not yet come to Christ. He cannot accept that they are lost.

The convert has found religion, in this case Christianity, but he is not saved. He may feel tranquil and secure within himself, but he has not been born again. He is still in darkness, unregenerated, alienated from God. He has become one of those to whom the Lord will say on Judgment day, “I never knew you.”

This is unbelievably sad. How else can we put it? But if the Gospel that is preached is the modern Ecumenical gospel, the one based on certain core truths and not the Word of God, then this is the outcome. It cannot be otherwise.

We need to look closely at what is happening here. The evangelical church began preaching the modern Gospel with the famous “altar call” in the 1950s. The crusades by Billy Graham were designed by the Enemy to popularize a gospel message which sounded authentic, even urgent or dramatic, but which lacked the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. The ‘conviction’ was only at an emotional level, the product of skillful manipulation by an orator who knew how to “work” his audience.



Billy Graham giving a Masonic handshake.

Unregenerated pastors

As the years passed, the pews in churches across America began to fill with ‘believers’ who weren’t born again. They liked what they had found and turned up every Sunday for some edifying preaching and heartwarming songs, but in many cases they were listening to leaders who were not themselves regenerated. Before long there were few left in these churches who could distinguish between those who had truly found Christ and those who had merely found religion.

In our paper on the *Tabernacle and the Offerings* (#84) we gave a quote by Vance Havner where he painted a picture of the world that differed greatly from the one which preachers at that time (1969) were describing:

“The depths of present-day human depravity are too vile for any word in our language to describe. We are seeing not ordinary moral corruption, but evil double-distilled and compounded in weird, uncanny, and demonic combinations and concoctions of iniquity never heard of a generation ago.”

Havner preached the true Gospel, not the modern gospel. This enabled him to see the world as it really is. He never shirked from denouncing the wickedness that his fellow preachers could barely discern. This is a characteristic of those who preach the true Gospel, a characteristic which, for this reason, is seldom evident in any of our churches today.



Vance Havner (1901-1986)

The True Church

The true church dwells here and there within the great congregation we call the professing church. All who are born again are members of the true church. The Apostle Peter referred to them as “**living stones**” (1 Peter 2:5), which, collectively, are “**fitly framed together,**” according to the Apostle Paul, to form a holy temple:

**“In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth
unto an holy temple in the Lord:”
(Ephesians 2:21)**

In his commentary on Ephesians (1937), H A Ironside gave an insightful analysis of this temple and its development. In doing so he quietly spelt out a truth which is hardly ever mentioned today, a truth of immense importance which ought to be studied by all believers and proclaimed to the ends of the earth:

“But now, as we said, the temple is not yet finished. As long as there are still poor sinners to be brought in, the temple is not complete. If you should ask for my opinion as to how near we are to the finished temple, I would say that I think there are very few more stones to be put in, just one here and there in the roof, and then it will be complete. It might be that the last living stone to be placed in the building will be placed there today, and then the work will be done.” [p.83]

“...the apostles and prophets were to lay the foundation, and if I understand the Word of God aright, this blessed temple of the living God, this wonderful church He is erecting, has been building for nineteen hundred years, and it is now just about completed, and you do not put a foundation on the roof. It is away down there nineteen hundred stories below, and the temple has been rising upon that foundation all through the years. We are now just putting the finishing touches on the roof. We are gathering in poor sinners, just one and another here and there. They are not coming in large numbers these days, but those that are coming are being built in upon the roof, and it will not be long until it will be complete and then we will all go to heaven.” [p.108]



H.A. Ironside

We would encourage our readers to soak up the message in these words. Dr Ironside put it so simply that we could easily overlook the magnitude of what he’s saying. Given that more than 80 years have passed since he shared it, his message is even more pressing today – and more alarming – than it was in 1937. We might summarize it as follows:

The church that Christ is building, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, is near to completion. Only a few more “living stones” (born-again believers) are scheduled to be added to the topmost part of this astonishing creation. When the last one is in place, the Rapture will occur.

Science knows nothing about this structure. Nothing! And yet, within a few years of its completion, the very foundations of the earth will shake.

The seven phases of the church in history

The Word of God puts all of this in an historical perspective for our benefit. The descriptions of the seven churches in the Book of Revelation are applicable, not only to the spiritual condition of individual churches at a given moment in time, but to the condition of the visible church as a whole over the course of history. Bible scholars have also discerned a close correspondence between each of the seven churches in Revelation and the seven parables that our Lord used to describe “the kingdom of heaven” in chapter 13 of the Gospel of Matthew.

It is generally agreed that the seven parables refer to the church on earth. Since they speak of changing conditions, they cannot apply to the church (or saints) in heaven, or to the church in the Millennium. Therefore they must have an historical application. Since the church only came into being on Pentecost, they are pointing to the future condition of the church at different stages in history. If this is so then we should be able to look back and see how well they match the pattern in Revelation.

The following table is designed to show how the parables and the seven churches described in Revelation align with the actual history of the church over the past two thousand years (Dates are approximate):

: the Church at Ephesus, c.50 - 132 AD

[from the foundation of the church at Ephesus to the Second Jewish Revolt]

The Apostolic Era and After [duration = c.80 years]

During this period the Church was struggling to build a solid foundation and avoid the heresies which assailed it from all sides: “...thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars...Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent...” (Revelation 2:2-5)

Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:3-23). This parable speaks of the four ways in which the Word of God is received. The Church of Christ took root from the seed which fell on good ground.

: the Church at Smyrna, 132 - 325 AD

[from the Second Jewish Revolt to the end of Persecution]

The Roman Persecution [duration = c.195 years]

Soundly established, the Church was then subjected to dreadful persecution for a time: “I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty...Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer...” (Revelation 2:9-10)

Parable of the Wheat and the Tares (Matthew 13:24-30). The subtle counterfeiters arrived on the scene and formulated the rules and institutions which would give them control.

: the Church at Pergamos, 325 - 604 AD

[from the end of Persecution to Pope Gregory I]

The Age of Constantine [duration = c.280 years]

The emperor Constantine effectively ended the persecution of Christians at the Council of Nicea in 325 AD. In 380 AD the western Emperor, Valentinian II, and the eastern Emperor, Theodosius I, made the institutional church the official religion of the Empire. Their decree even enabled the church to persecute non-believers. Following the grab for power by senior prelates in Rome, Constantinople and elsewhere, the Church lost much of its original vitality. The Word of God was slowly enclosed by the word of man. Christ refers to this as the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, from the word *nikao*, meaning to conquer, and *laos*, meaning the people. Thus the power structures in Rome and certain other cities oppressed the true believers: “So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate...” (Revelation 2:15)

Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32). The official religion of the Empire grew rapidly in power and influence under state patronage. The entire fabric of society across Europe and Asia was shaped in a thousand ways by this hugely influential institution.

: the Church at Thyatira, 604 - 1517 AD

[from Pope Gregory I to Martin Luther]

The Dark Ages [duration = c.900 years]

The power center in Rome was now controlling the Church and corrupting the true gospel. It was ruled by a false prophet and dominated by a sacrificial rite that was pagan in nature: “Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.” (Revelation 2:20)

Parable of the Leaven in Three Measures of Meal (Matthew 13:33). Leaven is corruption. The woman, the false church of Rome, added leaven to the doctrines of Christianity until they were tainted throughout with her counterfeit teaching. This Jezebel, who thought of herself as a prophetess who could add to God’s Word – and has done so shamelessly through her ‘traditions’ and her Papal Bulls – also went so far as to teach idolatry and the ‘sacrifice’ of the Mass.

: the Church at Sardis, 1517 - 1738 AD

[from Martin Luther to the Wesleyan Revival]

The Reformation [duration = c.220 years]

For the most part, the Church was moribund during this period. The Reformation, which should have greatly rejuvenated the true Church of Christ, was concerned mainly with political issues: “I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.” (Revelation 3:1)

Parable of the Treasure hidden in a Field (Matthew 13:44): The Reformation brought a renewed understanding of the true Gospel and the exclusive authority of God’s Word. This was the “treasure” hidden in one of the many fields controlled by Rome.



The great price that Christ paid for his Bride.

: the Church at Philadelphia, 1738 - 1900 AD

[from the Wesleyan Revival to Extreme Pentecostalism]

The Missionary Age [duration = c.160 years]

The Church was rejuvenated during this period, with the widespread dissemination of the King James Bible (“my word”) and a marked increase in evangelism and missionary work: “...thou hast a little strength, and has kept my word, and hast not denied my name...” (Revelation 3:8)

Parable of the Pearl of Great Price (Matthew 13:45-46). Grounded firmly in the Word, the Church, knowing it was “bought with a price” (1 Corinthians 6:20), came truly alive during this period.

: the Church at Laodicea, 1900 AD - unknown

[from Extreme Pentecostalism to the Great Falling Away]

The Manmade Laodicean Church

This is the age we are now in. The zeal of the previous age has been lost and faith among professing believers, where it exists at all, is only lukewarm. They have neither a zeal for truth nor a hatred of lies. This is a condition which is very displeasing to our Lord: “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” (Revelation 3:15-16).

Parable of the Net Cast into the Sea (Matthew 13:47-50), which makes a radical distinction between true and false believers. In addition, when Christ explained the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares (Matthew 13:34-43) he did so in a way which runs parallel to the Parable of the Net Cast into the Sea. In each case he refers to judgment in the End Time, where the good are separated from the bad. The latter are then cast “into a furnace of fire” and there shall be “wailing and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 13:42 and 13:50).



Emperor Theodosius I



Emperor Valentinian II

As you can see, all of the verses in chapter 13 of Matthew which deal with the kingdom parables – verses 3-50 – are incorporated into this historical overview. What is more, when we recognize that verses 42 and 50 connect two of the parables, we can see that they follow the same sequence as the seven churches described in chapters 2 and 3 of the Book of Revelation.

Heeding the lessons of history

It behoves us therefore, in this time of great spiritual darkness upon the earth, to weigh carefully what our Heavenly Father has revealed in these passages of Scripture. In our opinion, they are immensely important. For example, they support the view expressed by Dr Ironside (in the passages quoted above) that the number of truly born-again believers who are now being added to the church has dwindled to a trickle. Perhaps there is still some activity in places like China and Iran, but overall the picture is one of marked and continuing decline.

This is hardly surprising since the Church of Laodicea is, from both an institutional and a spiritual perspective, a lifeless or comatose entity. Yes, it contains a remnant of true believers – otherwise it would not be a church at all – but it serves only itself. It differs little from the broad Anglican church, which made peace with the world about two centuries ago.

We should note the fairly strict duration of each church ‘age’. If we exclude the long period of domination and oppression by the false church of Rome (604-1517 AD), the average duration of the five remaining ages was only 187 years. Given that the Laodicean church has been in existence for 120 years or so, we may reasonably expect Christ to return by the end of the century, if not sooner: **“For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.” (Romans 9:28)**

Watch for the Signs

Our Lord told us to watch for the signs. One of the strongest of these, in view of the grim scenarios depicted in the Book of Revelation, is the destructive capability that the Wicked now possess from advances in technology (**“For their heart studieth destruction” - Proverbs 24:2**). It has reached the stage where they can spray the skies over the entire earth with many types of designer toxins and genetically modified organisms. It is also possible, through the science of genetics, to introduce harmful plant varieties and other modified substances into the human food chain. They also have virtually unlimited opportunities to spread slow-acting pathogens, hormones, and nano-grade metallic particles via vaccines. The threat of mass sterilization is now very real.

All of these can be deployed by stealth, like silent weapons in a silent war. Such destructive potential has only become available in recent decades. What is more, it can be developed and deployed under the cover of secret military operations known only to a few. The recent creation of mega-corporations can also facilitate similar clandestine activities. These, in turn, can be controlled and co-ordinated by a surprisingly small number of people, bound together by vows of secrecy. (Is it any wonder that the Bible warns against the binding power of secret vows, oaths and blood-covenants?)



Many preachers and pastors will scoff at such *conspiracies*. The Word of God warned of “**scoffers**” in the “**last days**” (**2 Peter 3:3**). These are professing Christians who strenuously deny the imminent return of Christ. We may think of this as a direct denial only, but they deny it also when they scoff at the evidence. They dismiss as preposterous the idea that the Enemy is preparing a worldwide crisis which will drive most of mankind into the arms of the Antichrist.

Pastors who scoff at obvious conspiracies like international Marxism, the cult of Freemasonry, or the subversive Ecumenism of the Catholic Church, are leading their flocks into harm’s way. Jesus asked that we be as wise as serpents (Matthew 10:16), but a great many skip over this verse, just as they skip over many others.

The Great Falling Away

This brings us to the crucial sign which the Apostle Paul gave in his second letter to the Thessalonians:

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;*” (2 Thessalonians 2:3)

This is one of the rare occasions when the KJV is less than precise. In this instance, an indefinite article is used in English instead of the definite article found in the original Greek. Paul is speaking about “the falling away,” not “a falling away.”

When he was last with them in person he explained to the Thessalonians the doctrine of the Rapture. He now needed to address it again, this time in writing, since they had allowed some mischief-makers to confuse them. The Rapture could occur at any time, he intimated, but when it did it would be followed almost immediately by two major events: (a) a great falling away and (b) the appearance of the Antichrist.



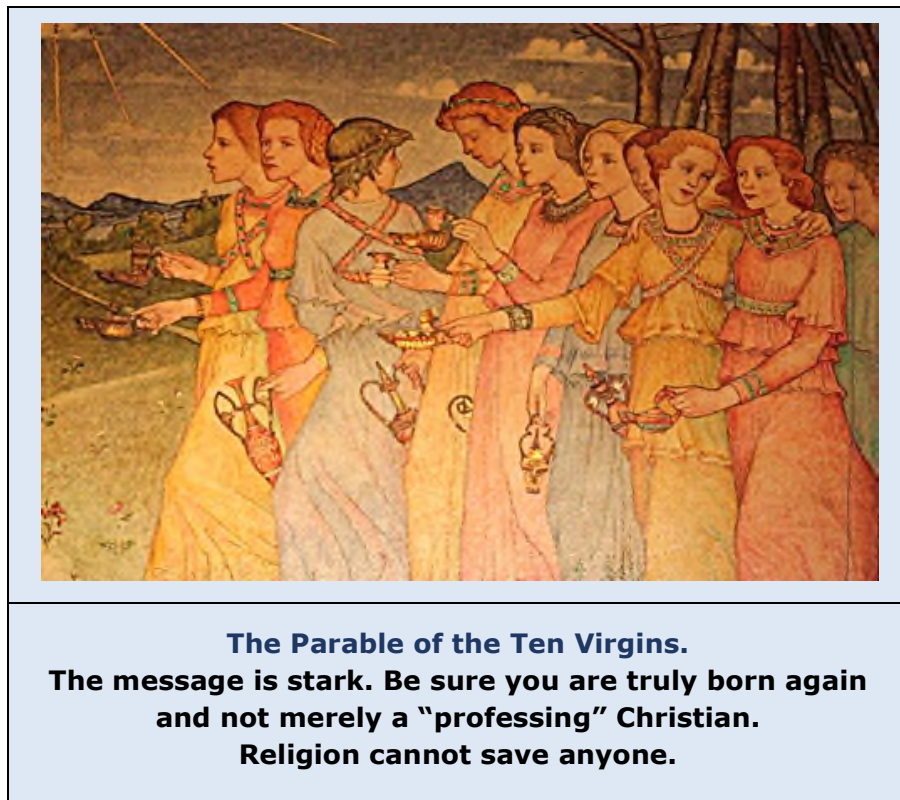
The Antichrist will be on earth for several decades before his identity becomes known, though virtually nobody will recognize him as such, at least initially.

The other major event will be a general *apostasia* or falling away from the faith by the vast majority of professing Christians. If it is to constitute a sign, as Paul implies, it will have to be fairly sudden – a lurch into oblivion, as it were – which would have horrified all true believers were the church, the Bride of Christ, still on earth.

The spiritual decay that leads to the great falling away will occur mainly in the latter part of the Laodicean age. However, given the way Christ described it in the Book of Revelation, the Laodicean church was sliding into apostasy almost from the start.

It is hard to say what kind of event will trigger the great falling away. Since Paul places the *apostasia* before the emergence of the Antichrist, we may infer that it precedes any general acceptance of the false messiah. It may be surprisingly simple, such as a formal declaration of unity by all who “profess Christ”, not unlike the ecumenical document *Evangelicals and Catholics Together* (1994), but more sweeping in scope, to the point where the true Gospel is entirely erased. A compact of this kind might even admit Muslims as monotheists and people of faith, thereby making Allah the LORD God of the Bible.

Any general acceptance of such a compact, steeped in gross heresy, would certainly constitute a great falling away!



The term “*apostasia*”

We need to examine carefully, in context, what Paul meant by *apostasia*. (“**Except the falling away come first**” – “*ean mê elthêi hê apostasia prôton.*”) Many eminent commentators have addressed this question but few can equal F B Hole for clarity and precision. His teaching on this topic, which may be found in his ***Commentary on Paul’s Epistles: Galatians to Philemon***, deserves the most careful attention. For this reason we reproduce a large portion of it below:

Let us be clear as to what apostasy means. It is not just a course of backsliding, a growing cold on the part of Christians, as a result of which the world invades the church, dragging into its bosom a whole train of attendant evils. It is rather a complete forsaking of the truth of God, a total abandonment of the ancient foundations of the faith. There have been all too often in the history of the church distortions and perversions of truth, which might be compared to the transplanting of shrubs and the lopping of trees which largely spoil the effect of an otherwise beautiful and symmetrical garden. Apostasy is not like that. It is rather like a landslide of such dimensions that the whole garden is obliterated.

...The fact is, that what will precede His advent in glory is a total abandonment of the faith by those who formerly professed to hold it. This apostasy will pave the way for the revelation of a great personage, who will be the direct representative of Satan, called here “the man of sin,” for in him sin will find its highest expression. This man will be marked by the most arrogant self-exaltation. He will oppose God by claiming himself to be God. A claim such as this would be impossible amongst people calling themselves Christian – it would merely excite ridicule – were the way not prepared for it by the apostasy.

The apostasy then will be of such a nature that the minds of men will be prepared to accept such gigantic claims on the part of a mere man as quite possible and reasonable. The deification of man will be the logical and reasonable outcome of the movement. This throws a flood of light as to what the main drift of the apostasy will be. God will be dethroned and man will be enthroned!



A well-known painting by Michelangelo which subtly predicts the *apostasia*.

Having dealt in general terms with the apostasy, he then goes on to consider the change in 'religious thinking' that would be needed before this could happen. He identifies the doctrine of evolution as a major catalyst, the widely held belief that man continues to "evolve" and is thus capable of reaching a godlike state:

Let us survey great Christendom today in the light of these facts. Without a doubt we see very ominous signs of the approach of the apostasy. The coming events cast their shadows before. The whole drift of "advanced" religious thinking and teaching is in the direction which this scripture indicates. If God be admitted at all into the scheme of their thinking, He is relegated to the far distance and evolution is made to entirely fill the foreground. Evolution is only the flimsy creation of their own minds, yet they have endowed it with wonderful powers and mankind is supposed to be the very crown and fruition of all its workings. Man therefore is to them of supreme importance and not God. Moreover, they expect that evolutionary processes will not stop with man as he is today, but continue until a super-man will be produced. How simple and natural then it will be to acclaim the man of sin when he appears as the super-man long expected!

Paul was warning that the mystery of iniquity, which hid itself so successfully from the eyes of mankind, would one day burst forth in a raging torrent of lawlessness:

...Paul knew right well that "the mystery of iniquity" was already at work, as he tells us in verse 7. The meaning of this is that "iniquity" or "lawlessness" in its "mystery" or "secret" form was even then moving in men's hearts. The lawless self-assertion which is to blaze forth in the light of day at the end of the dispensation was there at the beginning, though hidden in the dark. Hence the warning was necessary.

It is much more necessary then for us upon whom the end of the age is come. Let us take heed to it. *[He wrote this in the 1940s]*

Have we all got clearly fixed in our minds thus far that the apostasy and the revelation of the man of sin must precede the day of the Lord? Human evil must reach its flood-tide height before the Lord deals with it in judgment.

He then goes on to discuss a truth of the utmost importance to every believer today. The Rapture must precede the "full-blown" apostasy, he says. Otherwise the presence on earth of the Holy Spirit would impede the prophesied outpouring of lawlessness:

If we have this clear, we shall not have difficulty in seeing that the coming of the Lord for His saints and our gathering together unto Him in the air must precede full-blown apostasy. The true saints of God never apostatize. As long as the true church of God is here a witness is maintained on earth in the energy of the Holy Spirit, and the apostasy in its fulness is hindered – its chariot wheels drive heavily, for the brake presses hard against them.

When the brake is suddenly taken off by the rapture of the saints to heaven, the chariot will bound forward to the final crash that awaits it.

...Lawlessness is the very essence of sin. It is the refusal of all controlling authority and restraint, and therefore in deadly opposition to God. The lawlessness, which has long been at work in Christendom in a mysterious or hidden way like a suppressed fire, is going to blaze forth in the lawless one.

But this will only be when the saints of God are removed from the scene of conflict by the coming of the Lord for them. At present the forces of evil are under restraint – restraint is the meaning of the two words *withholdeth* and *letteth* in verses 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7. There is “*He* who restrains” and also “*what* restrains.” The former doubtless refers to the Holy Spirit of God, who is at this time personally upon earth as He never was before and will not be again. The latter, we believe, refers to the presence of the church on earth; the church being the house of God wherein the Holy Ghost is dwelling.

Next he discusses a glorious truth which is rarely if ever mentioned, and certainly never celebrated, in the lukewarm Laodicean church:

We have probably but little conception of how great is the restraint placed upon the working of lawlessness by the presence [*on earth*] of the saints of God. They may be poor and feeble but the Spirit of God who indwells them is almighty. Occasionally this restraint is manifested in quite unmistakable style, as when, for instance, a spiritist seance has been a failure because of the presence in the building of some definite and earnest Christian. This we believe has happened more than once. Have not many of us noticed how the flow of ungodly conversation in a room or office is stopped by the sudden entrance of an out-and-out servant of Christ?

When the Church is raptured to heaven, and therefore the Holy Spirit no longer has a *house* on earth, the consequences will be very serious and very immediate. The repressed lawlessness will burst forth in the lawless one and for a brief moment the working of Satan will have full scope. This coming lawless man will be inspired by Satan and exhibit his energy in every particular. Notice how sweeping are the expressions used. Satan will support him with ALL power, even to signs and wonders of falsehood, so that EVERY possible deceit of unrighteousness will be brought to bear upon men who have been left behind to perish.

He describes the awesome power of Satan on earth after the Holy Spirit, the Restrainer, has departed. The perfectly obedient man, Christ Jesus, will arrive on earth seven years later and personally subjugate the most lawless and rebellious of all men, the Antichrist:

This tremendous energy of Satan will continue but for a short time. The lawless one being revealed on earth, he will be speedily dealt with. The Lord Jesus being revealed from heaven, He will utterly destroy him, casting him alive into the lake of fire, as Revelation 19:20 shows. How appropriate it is that this utterly lawless and disobedient man, the very personification of Satanic energy, shall be dealt with personally by the Lord Jesus, the wholly subject and obedient Man, the personification of the power and majesty of God. No intermediary shall be allowed to intervene in that conflict!



F B Hole (1874 – 1964)

He then makes some telling observations about God's judgment in the End Time. Many will protest that His ways are unfair, just as they did in Ezekiel 18:25 & 29. They will vehemently deny that God has the right to judge mankind or to punish unrighteousness, but man in his fallen condition can never bring himself acknowledge the righteousness of God:

We must also notice how just are all the dealings of God with men. Those who will fall a prey to all this deceit of unrighteousness, are just those who when they heard the truth did not love it. Loving not the truth, they did not believe it, rather they had pleasure in unrighteousness. And now the deceit of unrighteousness captures them; they believe the lie, and they all fall under the judgment of God. Formerly God sent them the truth, the Gospel was sounded into their ears by men who preached it “with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven” (1 Peter 1:12). Now God sends them a strong delusion. He does for them what of old He had to do for rebellious Israel, when He “blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart” (John 12:40; and see Acts 28:26-27). Is God unrighteous in acting thus? On the contrary; He is acting in righteousness of the strictest and most exact kind.

He concludes by summarizing the matter in few pithy sentences:

...There will be first the *catching away* of the true saints of God. Then the *falling away* of corrupt and forsaken Christendom. Lastly the *sweeping away* of the whole nauseous thing in the judgment of God.

No hope is held out here for Gospel-rejectors. No second chance after the coming of the Lord for His people is hinted at. The solemn statement is, “that they ALL might be damned who believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

From FB Hole’s examination of the great falling away we can see how a poisonous apostasy was fermenting beneath the surface of the professing church for many years. This will burst forth with explosive force only when the true church or Remnant has left the earth. Up to that point the Holy Spirit had been restraining this Vesuvian pressure. We were given a preview of the restraining power of the Holy Spirit when, just before the Flood – the last great worldwide judgment – the LORD said, “**My spirit shall not always strive with man...**” (Genesis 6:3).

The eruption, when it occurs, will seem like a quantum leap in consciousness, a joyous illumination, to most of mankind. There will be a general expectation that such a change must augur the imminent arrival on earth of God himself in human form. Thus, when he appears on the scene, the Antichrist will already have a massive audience sitting and waiting, thirsting for his every word.

A Spiritual Diagnosis

Just how advanced is the existing state of decay within the professing church? Hitherto we have gauged this mainly by its vulnerability to attack. We know that the danger it faces is cleverly camouflaged, like a crocodile moving through the murky waters of the Nile. Up to now we've had to peer through the darkness and watch for his predatory eyes gleaming in the moonlight. Those pretty 'jewels' denoted the presence of a deadly menace gliding near the surface. From time to time we could hear a brief thrashing and the stifled cry of another helpless victim, of whom nothing remained the next day.

All of this changed utterly in 2020 when the crocodile came out of the water and, as it were, smiled at the camera. He made no effort to conceal his presence but gorged on his victim in the full light of day. After years of furtive stalking, he seemed delighted to be able to rip and tear as he pleased, knowing that none of his future victims – being deaf and blind – would sound the alarm.

The Serpent did just that in 2020 when he ordered the churches of the world to shut their doors, to end corporate worship, to stop celebrating the Lord's Supper, to refrain from sharing the Gospel, and much else besides. And the professing church – deaf and blind – complied!



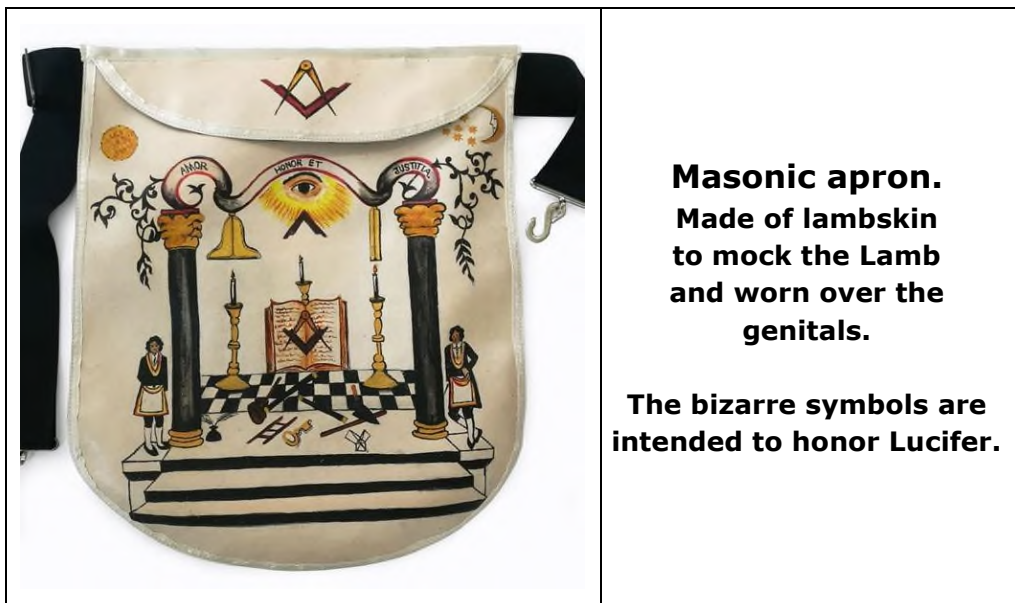
The Serpent's Lie

For the past two thousand years tyrants and their armies have failed to do this, but the Serpent came up with a lie – a shallow, thinly-disguised lie – and the pastors of the world did everything the Serpent demanded. They could have challenged the lie, but they didn't. They could have expressed, loudly and publicly, their dissatisfaction with these outrageous demands, but they didn't make a sound. They could have challenged this gross violation of our duty to God by requesting a judicial review, but they didn't do that either. It is very easy to sum up everything they did in defense of God's Word because, to their shame, they did nothing.

Happily, there were a few pastors here and there who opposed this spiritual attack and grieved the violence inflicted on the church, but the vast majority did not. Indeed, many even exhorted their congregations to observe with great diligence the restrictions imposed by the state, as though to show to the world how loyal and obedient they were.

The state must be obeyed, they said. It's the law and the law must be observed. Christians cannot challenge the authority of the civil government.

Really? There is not a single verse in Scripture which requires that we fall down before tyrants. Only the vilest of men shut down churches and permit liquor stores to stay open. The Word of God tells us that **“The wicked walk on every side when the vilest men are exalted.” (Psalm 12:8)**. When your civil leaders mock and blaspheme the LORD, your allegiance is to the LORD, not to man.



Since when do Freemasons have the right to threaten pastors who lead their assembled flocks in worship? Since when do men who revere Osiris and the gods of Ancient Egypt have the right to bully a servant of the Living God? Since when does a mayor of New York have the right to threaten to close down permanently any church that dared to open its doors, as de Blasio did? (“evil double-distilled...in...demonic combinations” – Havner.)

The pastors of America bowed before their Masonic masters. After all, they reasoned, the ‘lockdown’ would last only a few weeks. Then, having made obeisance to Osiris, they could go back to serving the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Who were they trying to fool?

The prophet Daniel was faced with a similar lockdown. He just had to be a good boy for 30 days and do what his civil lord and master demanded. It was the law, you know. Besides, what would happen if men of reputation like himself decided to disobey a royal edict? Why, the world would be in chaos and thousands of lives would be lost.

Nevertheless, the same pastors who preach the story of Daniel, and purport to believe the truth it portrays, are more than happy to play *Zoom* for a few weeks and ignore what the Holy Spirit commissioned them to do. Those who profess to uphold the Gospel and preach Christ crucified are content, for a time, to submit to Osiris and deny Christ Jesus.

This is nothing but hypocrisy. Have they no shame?



The Lord's Supper

Consider the Lord's Supper, a rite of great spiritual significance in the life of every true believer. When was this last celebrated by an assembled congregation in the United States... or Europe... or Australia? Jesus asked that we come together regularly and respectfully remember his work on Calvary, seeing in the bread his flesh and in the wine his blood.

The Romans tried to stop the Christians doing the same during the great persecutions under such Emperors as Diocletian, Valerian and Decius. Rather than execute all offenders, they gave them an opportunity to offer incense or a libation to the gods of Rome and, when they did so, provided them with a certificate known as a *libellus*. This could be produced later as proof that the bearer had complied with the religious laws of Rome.

The Freemasons and Marxists who imposed the 'lockdown' had much the same idea, putting Christians in a position where they could either deny Christ (and have a peaceful life) or honor and uphold his holy name (and suffer the consequences).

It is a sign of how severely backslidden the professing church has become that the Lord's Supper could be treated with so little respect. Had it not occurred to the pastors and preachers concerned that their conduct might be displeasing to God? Did it even occur to them to reflect prayerfully on what His Word teaches regarding the unique spiritual standing of this ceremony?

Consequences

Seemingly the thousands of pastors who presided over this sinful neglect were certain their inaction would have no consequences. But they were mistaken.

How do we know? Let's turn to the first letter to the Corinthians. In it Paul tells of the just retribution that certain Corinthian Christians brought on themselves when they treated the Lord's Supper with disrespect:

“For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.” (1 Corinthians 11:29-30)

In this context, “sleep” means death.

This ceremony is so precious in the eyes of the Father that those who participated in it “**unworthily**” – and showed disrespect for His Son – suffered serious ill health as a result, and some even died.

How “worthy” are those pastors who, having committed themselves to celebrating this holy ceremony with their assembled congregation on a regular basis, are suddenly prepared to stop doing so for several months?

The cult of Freemasonry in Washington DC, aided and abetted by the Masonic governors who administer the various states, said, “Stop!” – and they stopped! They didn't even bother to challenge the idiocy of the edict or request convincing scientific evidence that the celebration of the Lord's Supper – in an open park, for example – would endanger ANYONE.



These are the people who are secretly attacking Christianity and trying to shut down our churches.

The dark cult of Osiris conspired against Christianity, inventing spurious and imaginary devices to impede and stamp out Christian worship. Christians everywhere should see that this for what it is, a sinister scheme concocted by Satan and his team of blasphemers here on earth.

We are not ignorant of their devices. We understand the vile purpose behind their devious schemes, their infantile lies, and their shameless mockery of all that is holy.

Three days' journey

Another passage of Scripture sheds further light on the sublime and immutable standing of Christian worship in the eyes of an awesomely Holy God:

“And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.” (Exodus 5:3)

The God of heaven and earth was calling his people out of Egypt. Three days' journey, from Goshen to the Sinai desert, would have taken them beyond the borders of Egypt, to a place where they could corporately worship the LORD. Note the closing words, “lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.” If they failed to do as the LORD commanded, divine judgment would fall on the Israelites, not just the Egyptians!



The Israelites would have been unable to sacrifice to the LORD in Egypt since the animals prescribed for this purpose were sacred to the Egyptians and could not be used in sacrifice. So, in order to worship the LORD, they had to put themselves beyond the legislative reach of Egypt. And yet, if they failed to do so, the LORD would subject them to severe retribution by the sword of their enemies or by sending a deadly plague among them, with a high rate of mortality.

How many preachers today expound this passage as they should? It was an incredible privilege for the Israelites to be selected by the LORD and set apart to worship Him. However, having accepted that remarkable honor, they would suffer dire retribution if they failed to continue as agreed and fulfil their obligation.

**“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name;
worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.”**

- Psalm 29:2

While Calvary settled forever the question of sacrifice, it did not diminish in any way the beauty of holiness – expressed through heartfelt worship. All true worship exalts and magnifies in the eyes of the Father the perfect sacrifice made by His Son on Calvary. This is as special, even delightful, to the Father today as it was at the time of the Exodus.

The modern Pharaohs – the grand wizards of Freemasonry who worship Osiris – despise Christian worship. They want to put an end to it, not by assailing it directly, but by inducing Christians to remain in Egypt and submit to their pagan demands. The grand wizards make the rules which the rest of society must obey – “because it’s the law.” So Christians are willing to submit to their authority and jettison their fidelity to the One True God. After all, though living in Egypt, they can still ‘Zoom’ and satisfy whatever hankering they may have for ‘worship.’

Would they have sacrificed a lamb with a serious defect? And yet they have no problem offering synthetic cyber worship and expecting it to please God.



Looking again at Daniel’s example

Look again at Daniel. He went to his room to worship the Living God three times a day – just as he always did. And he faced toward Jerusalem – just as he always did. And he opened his windows – just as he always did. And he prayed aloud – just as he always did. As far as he was concerned, no law made by man could violate his right to worship the LORD, just as he always did. Even if it cost him his life.

Paul was speaking to each of us today – and to the lukewarm soul of the wretched Laodicean church – when he said:

“Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.” (2 Thessalonians 2:15) ... “that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men:” (2 Thessalonians 3:2)

We must heed what the Word of God is saying – “Stand fast!”

The unreasonable and wicked men of today, the hidden army of Marxists and Freemasons who are doing all they can to make Christian worship untenable, are skilled manipulators and conmen. Most professing Christians don't even know the church is under attack. And the few who do are unwilling to believe the attack is highly organized or that the people behind it, men and women of repute – who look so normal and sound so genuine – are in reality liars and deceivers.

This is why Christians today are unwilling to give the LORD the glory due unto His name, to come before Him and worship in the beauty of holiness, to go into His tabernacles and worship at His footstool (Psalm 132:7). Wicked and unreasonable men have conjured up idiotic laws to dissuade them, to keep them in bondage and make them subject to the whims and blasphemies of the grand wizards and their gods.



Paul preaching in the Areopagus in Athens.

The lost are abandoned

Lost souls, too, are forgotten. They have been abandoned. They don't count any more. Their salvation is not "essential." Just keep the liquor stores open.

The grand wizards forbid evangelism, so the pastors and preachers – who should be railing against this obscenity – merely roll over and do as they're told.

It's appalling to think that, after the passage of nearly two thousand years, the professing church has been reduced to this, an exclusive club which even its own members don't bother to attend.

How will the lost find Christ if the professing church continues to behave like this? -

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?” (Romans 10:13-15)

CONCLUSION

What does the Word of God ask us to do as we see the day approaching? –

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:25).

And what does the Enemy ask us to do: Forsake the assembling of yourselves together and abandon Christian fellowship.

Which voice are our pastors and preachers listening to?

As for professing Christians, who once assembled together in worship, can they seriously believe they are a royal priesthood? Are they showing forth the praises of him that saved them? -

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:” (1 Peter 2:9)

We walk in darkness when we allow those who live in darkness to interpret the Word of God on our behalf and tell us what it means. Since when do Freemasons and Marxists decide what we, as Christians, can and cannot do? Since when do they determine what is acceptable to God? Those who claim to walk with Jesus but take directions from the servants of darkness are aliens from the commonwealth of Christ:

“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” (1 John 1:6-7)

Note those words well – **“we have fellowship one with another”**. Fellowship! Not craven isolation before a *Zoom* camera.

Shame on all those so-called pastors who refuse to see this for what it is, who choose instead to take instruction from the children of disobedience. As the Word of God says, they are liars. They do not know Him:

“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” (1 John 2:3-4)

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June 12, 2020**

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