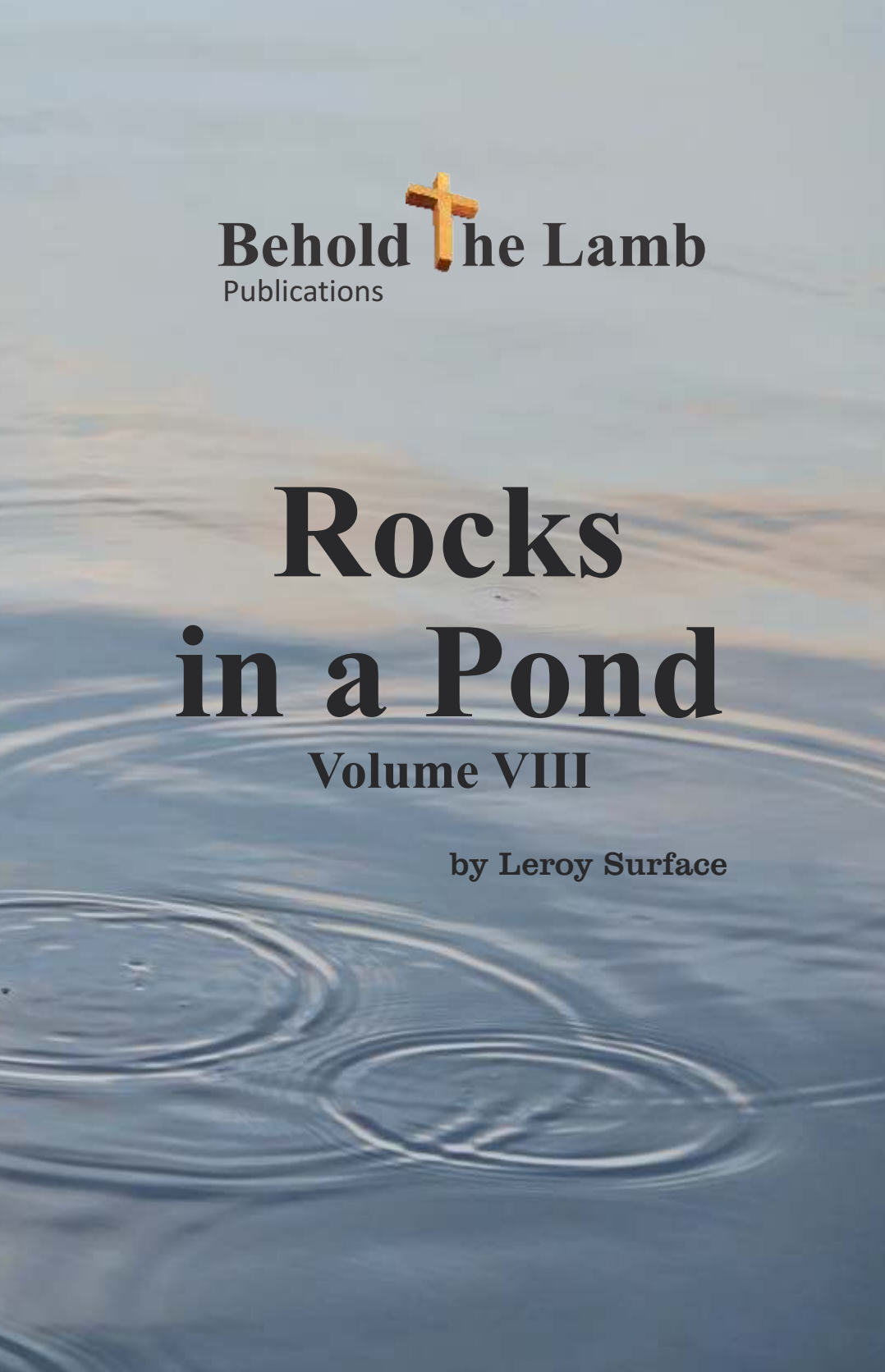




Behold  **the Lamb**
Publications

Rocks in a Pond

Volume VIII

by Leroy Surface

Rocks in a Pond - VIII

“If you will say what I say, one day you will throw a rock into a pond, and the ripples will wash up on the shores of every nation.”

God spoke these words to me in a dream the spring of 1992. He had already given me the revelation of *“The Cross and the Blood”* in the spring of 1991, and the “blood” of Jesus Christ had purified my heart from all sinful thoughts and imaginations in a moment of time.

During the next twenty years, I wrote and preached everything I understood about the cross and the blood, with mixed results. I told a friend, “I know the answer to the sin problem in the heart of man, but it takes years to teach it to the people.” I was aware of the words of the apostle Paul; *“I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ”* II Corinthians 11:3. My prayer became, *“Oh God, please give me the simplicity that is in Christ.”*

When God answered my prayer He gave me understanding of *“The Christ”* who came into the world to *“make and end of sins”* and *“bring in everlasting righteousness”* Daniel 9:24-25. Peter gave the simplicity when he said to Jesus, *“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”* Matthew 16:16. Jesus answered him, *“This revelation of who I am is the rock I will build my church upon”* Matthew 16:18. I had found



Leroy Surface

“the rock,” but I did not know what “the pond” was. Another three years passed before I felt led of God to purchase a full page in an internationally famous Christian magazine, and “piggyback” my message to their people. I had found “the pond,” and when I began throwing the “gospel rock” into “the pond,” our outreach



Keith Surface

doubled every year for the next five years. Today, eight years later, “Behold the Lamb” publications go to many thousands of people every month in America, with “ripples” going into almost 160 foreign nations, free of charge.

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.” I John 5:1

Rocks in a Pond

Volume 8

Table of Contents

The More Sure Word of prophecy	1
The Seventieth Week of Daniel	6
The Reality of a Believer	11
Obedient Children	16
Strange Fire	20
Jesus is “The Christ”	25
Where is God?	29

The More Sure Word of Prophecy

Published in September 2021 Charisma Magazine

“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Matthew 16:16

With the words above, Peter gave his statement of faith in response to the questioning of Jesus. Jesus told Peter this was a revelation from the Father, because *“flesh and blood hath not revealed this to thee”* Matthew 16:17. He quickly established that this revelation is the *“rock”* upon which He would build His church, and the *“gates of hell”* would never prevail against anyone who had this revelation of who Jesus is.

Peter’s revelation that “Jesus is the Christ” was not given to him by man. Neither was it taught in the synagogues of that day. In fact, anyone who openly professed to believe such a thing would have been immediately expelled from the synagogue, and taken before the council to be tried as a heretic. For this reason, Jesus *“charged his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ”* Matthew 16:20. So, how did Peter receive his revelation of Jesus?

Peter’s revelation was not received supernaturally, even though it was not received through flesh and blood. Peter, along with every Jew in Israel at that time, knew the prophecies of the scriptures. The entire nation was expecting the imminent coming of one called *“The Messiah the Prince”* Daniel 9:25, who would come to *“make an end of sins”* and *“bring in everlasting righteousness”* Daniel 9:24. Luke described the atmosphere in Israel the same year in which Jesus was baptized by John; *“...the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not”* Luke 3:15.

Peter’s revelation came by simply studying the scriptures pertaining to the coming redeemer and observing the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. He reached the undeniable conclusion that Jesus of Nazareth and *“the Christ”* of eternity were one and the same, hence, *“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* This is the basis for “saving faith.” It does not require a supernatural manifestation through dreams or visions to be saved. It does take more, however,

than simply repeating a prayer with a preacher and professing to believe Jesus is the Son of God. What Peter understood could never be taken from him, not even in his worst failure. Six days later, Peter, along with James and John, had the most amazing supernatural experience of their three and a half years with Jesus.

“And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light” Matthew 17:2.

Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus in the transfiguration. They had come to speak with Jesus concerning His death on the cross Luke 9:30-31. Peter was so overwhelmed by the glory of it all that he proposed building three tabernacles on the mountain; *“one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah”* Matthew 17:4. Suddenly a bright cloud covered the mountain, and God spoke out of the cloud saying, *“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him”* Matthew 17:5. Peter, James, and John fell on their faces in fear of the things they were seeing and hearing. When Jesus raised them up, however, *“they saw no man, save Jesus only”* Matthew 17:8. The meek and lowly Jesus of Nazareth was shown to be exalted so much higher than Moses and Elijah, and so much greater than the Law and prophets.

“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.” II Peter 1:16

Those who seek greatness very often invent stories about themselves which are nothing more than *“cunningly devised fables.”* There are famous healing ministries who have never seen a true miracle wrought at their hands. There are those who are famous for their prophecies, who have never heard a word from God. In either case, their followers overlook their failures because of the façade they have built around themselves. In the 1940's and 50's God sent numerous men with true gifts of healing and miracles. Sadly, some of these descended into quarrels about who had the greatest miracles or who owned the largest tent. The presence of God was taken from

these, and we entered into a time of gimmickry and fakery which continues to this very day. When Peter, James, and John told *about “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus,”* they did not need to fabricate. His glory shone forth as *“a city set on a hill that cannot be hid”* Matthew 5:14. His fame reached into all the land because of his words and miracles. *“Never spake a man as this man”* John 7:47; *“What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out”* Luke 4:36; *“What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”* Mark 4:41.

*For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, **This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.** And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.”* II Peter 1:17-18

Peter, James, and John were eyewitnesses of the events on the Mount of Transfiguration. They saw with their own eyes as His face shown as the sun, and his clothing became *“as white as the light.”* They saw Moses and Elijah, and heard them speak with our Lord. They heard the voice of His Father giving Him honor and glory, *“This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased”* II Peter 1:17. Having seen and heard all these wonderful things, Peter makes an astounding statement in the next verse: ***“We have also a more sure word of prophecy.”***

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:” II Peter 1:19

What could possibly be more certain than the appearing of Moses and Elijah? Or a voice from heaven confirming that Jesus is the Son of God? At first it may seem ridiculous to consider such a thing. Many unbelievers think they would believe if only an angel from heaven would come to them, or an audible voice would speak to them. Peter, the “eyewitness of His majesty,” who along with James and John saw and heard things no other human has ever seen or heard, spoke clearly of *“the prophecy of the scripture”* as *“the more sure word of prophecy.”* It should be noticed that Peter had believed

the prophecy of the scriptures when he said to Jesus, *“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”* Matthew 16:16. This was six days before his faith was confirmed on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Many spirits; many voices; One Word of God

I received a vision from the Lord over fifty years ago in July, 1969. I give it exactly as I published it years ago.

A woman was standing in a large clearing in a wooded area. I knew that she represented the church as the bride of Christ. A bird came out of the sky and circled above her for a time. Finally it lit on her head and I heard a voice speak saying *“Thou art a son of God.”* I was amazed. I thought to myself, *“It happened to her just like it happened to Jesus at the Jordan River.”* After this, the woman brought a pedestal into the midst of the clearing and stood upon it. It was a pedestal of the kind the ancient Greeks placed their idols on, and she stood upon it and began calling a multitude of people to come to her. She said, *“Look to me, I'm the one the spirit came upon. Look to me, I'm the one the voice spoke to.”* It soon became evident that she was manifesting a wrong spirit as she continued to exalt herself and point the people to herself. I asked the question, *“How can she have a wrong spirit when it happened to her just as it did to Jesus.”* I heard the Spirit of the Lord give this answer. *“It didn't happen to her as it did to Jesus. The Holy Ghost came upon Jesus in the form of a dove. You didn't see a dove but only a bird. A voice from heaven spoke to Jesus. You didn't hear a voice from heaven, but only a voice. Always remember this, as there are many birds, but only one dove, so there are many spirits, but only one Holy Ghost, and there are many voices, but only one Word of God.”* As I came out of the vision I heard these words from Revelation 18:2, saying, *“Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.”*

Almost immediately after this vision, I began to see those who were teaching the people how to speak in tongues, and how to prophesy. I knew by this that the *“unclean and hateful bird”* was even then seeking to replace the Holy Dove in the churches. We are the

generation which Jesus spoke of when He said, *“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect”* Matthew 24:24.

No Private Interpretation

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” II Peter 1:19-21

One day I quoted from I John, *“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not...”* I John 3:5-6. Someone said to me “that is just your interpretation.” I had given no interpretation; I had only quoted what John said. Anything different would be a *“private interpretation.”* Peter said, *“Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”* These were the Old Testament prophets who prophesied of Jesus. Daniel said Christ would come to *“make an end of sins”* Daniel 9:24-25. The Apostle John said, *“Whosoever abideth in Him (Christ) sinneth not”* I John 3:6. John the Baptist introduced Jesus to the Jews as *“the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world”* John 1:29. The Apostle Paul told us, *“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ...”* II Corinthians 5:17-18. How do you “interpret” these verses? The scriptures are not to be “interpreted;” they are to be believed. You can trust the original King James Version of the scriptures. If there are things you don’t understand, don’t seek a “user-friendly” version. Instead, get an original Strong’s Concordance and study the meaning of words you may not understand. If you refuse “private interpretations,” and believe exactly what the prophets and Apostles said about Jesus, and what He accomplished for us through His death on the cross, you will discover for yourself the truth, which Jesus said, *“Shall make you free”* John 8:32.

The Seventieth Week of Daniel: Christ? ...or Antichrist?

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The 70 weeks prophecy which was brought to Daniel by the angel Gabriel is undoubtedly one of the most important prophecies ever given unto man. Rightly understood, it reveals the promise and purpose of Christ to all generations. Yet, in our generation, it has been twisted to hide the great promise of Christ and instead exalts a theological figure called “the antichrist.”

*“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to **finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.**”* Daniel 9:24 KJV

As the 70 years of captivity were about to finish, Daniel was seeking God for understanding of what would come next. The angel Gabriel appeared to Daniel and began to tell him of another 490 years (“seventy weeks” of years) which were determined on the Jews and Jerusalem. Before these 490 years passed, the six things listed in bold type in the text above, would be accomplished.

“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.” Daniel 9:25 KJV

“*The Messiah the Prince*” is the subject of this entire prophecy. This verse gave the Jews understanding of the exact year the Messiah would appear in ministry. The 490 years would begin with a decree to “*restore and to build Jerusalem.*” From the year of that decree until the Messiah appeared would be 483 years. We can prove the year the decree was given by subtracting 483 years from the year the Holy Ghost came upon Jesus of Nazareth at John’s baptism. Every Jew was expecting their Messiah that year because they understood

the prophecy, but they refused to believe Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ.

“And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.” Daniel 9:26 KJV

The “*threescore and two weeks*” plus the “*seven weeks*” in verse 25 actually marked the end of 69 weeks, or 483 years. When the Holy Ghost came upon Jesus at the Jordan River the 70th week of this prophecy began. Jesus was crucified in the middle of this 70th week, which was when He was “*cut off, but not for Himself.*” This verse does not introduce another prince to come. This entire prophecy is about the coming of “*the Messiah the Prince.*” The “*people of the prince that shall come*” were the Jews, of whom John said, “*He came unto his own, and his own received him not*” John 1:11. The word “*destroy*” in this verse was translated from the Hebrew word “*shâchath*,” which is defined by Strong’s Hebrew dictionary as “*to decay, that is, (causatively) ruin (literally or figuratively),*” and should have been translated as “*corrupt.*” The Jews “*corrupted the city and the sanctuary*” before Titus and the Romans could come in “*like a flood*” in 70 A.D.

“And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.” Daniel 9:27 KJV

The purpose of this message is to show who the word “he” refers to in this verse. For eighteen centuries, from Christ until the late nineteenth century, great men of God understood the 70th week of Daniel’s prophecy to be the ministry of Jesus Christ. Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Augustine and Eusebius all agreed this verse speaks of the ministry of Christ. Reformers such as John Wycliff, Martin Luther, and John Calvin agreed. Almost every commentary written before the twentieth century, including

Matthew Henry, Adam Clarke, Jamieson Fausset and Brown, John Wesley and Albert Barnes taught the 70 weeks prophecy was fulfilled and finished in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

It was with the advent of the modern versions of the bible in the late nineteenth century that many began to pervert the simplicity of this prophecy, and give the 70th week to “The Antichrist” instead of “*The Christ.*” To do so is a horrible error that blinds multitudes to the purpose of Jesus’ death on the cross, and actually makes God out to be a liar. If the 70th week is about “The Antichrist” and “The Great Tribulation,” then God’s promise that Christ would come before 490 years “...to **finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy**” Daniel 9:24 was a lie. If these six things were not fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus Christ and His death on the cross, we are, as Paul said, “*of all men most miserable*” I Corinthians 15:19; we are lost and perishing without hope.

There are two “*cunningly devised fables*” which have been created from the perverted view of Daniel 9:27. The first is the doctrine of “The Antichrist.” The Apostle John is the only one who spoke of “antichrist” in the scriptures, but he never mentioned “The Antichrist.” Jesus warned of the coming of “*great tribulation,*” but He did not mention anything at all similar to the modern doctrine of “The Great Tribulation.” Both of these doctrines were created from the imaginations of men to explain Daniel 9:27, which begins with the words “*And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week.*” This cannot possibly speak of one called “The Antichrist,” or a seven year “great tribulation.” According to John there were “*many antichrists*” I John 2:18 with “*the spirit of antichrist*” I John 4:3, but never “The Antichrist.” The word “*antichrist*” in the scriptures was never used in connection with a political figure or a world leader. Clearly John was speaking of false teachers, and false prophets, who were filling the churches at the end of the first century and perverting the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Great Tribulation? or “The Great Tribulation?”

*“For then shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And **except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved**: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. **For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets**, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before.”* Matthew 24:21-25

Jesus is the only one in the New Testament who spoke of “*great tribulation*,” but never “The Great Tribulation.” His description is simple; great loss of life and the arising of false Christs and false prophets. This will take place during the sixth trumpet during the 3 ½ years before the second coming of Jesus to earth. Concerning the loss of life, 1/3 of all living will be slain worldwide Revelation 9:14-15, and 2/3 of the inhabitants of Israel will also perish Zechariah 13:8-9. Concerning the false Christs and the false prophets, they are even now making their voices heard in much of the church, preparing for that horrible day which is very near. Those who have been deceived by the lie have taken Daniel 9:27 as an outline and filled it out of their own imaginations. They have turned the time of “*great tribulation*” spoken of by Jesus into a great doctrinal fable called “The Great Tribulation.” They have taken the ministry of Jesus in the 70th week and given it to an imaginary figure called “The Antichrist.” They can tell you step by step what “The Antichrist” will do, and many have become very wealthy doing so with their many books and movies. They have given an erroneous explanation of what Gabriel described in 52 words Daniel 9:27, and of which Jesus spoke 98 words Matthew 24:21-25. They have given us a religious population that is more excited about the coming of “The Antichrist” than they are the return of Jesus Christ.

*“**And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week...**”* The Messiah the Prince is the only one these words can possibly speak of. He did not “make a covenant,” but He “confirmed *the* covenant”

which God gave to Abraham, saying, “...and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” Genesis 22:18. The Apostle Paul said Christ is that seed of Abraham Galatians 3:16.

“...and in the midst of the week **he** shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease...” When Christ died in the exact middle of the 70th week, the veil in the temple was rent from top to bottom, indicating that God Himself had brought an end to the sacrifice system. The blood of Christ was shed once for our sin, and the scripture records, “Now where remission of these is, **there is no more offering for sin.**” Hebrews 10:18.

“...and for the overspreading of abominations **he** shall make it desolate...” Only days before His death on the cross Jesus spoke with broken heart to Jerusalem, “...how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! **Behold, your house is left unto you desolate**” Matthew 23:37-38. Jesus explained what desolation is in the next verse; “For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” Matthew 23:39.

“...even until the consummation, **and that determined** shall be poured upon the desolate” Daniel 9:27. The word “consummation” was translated from a Hebrew word which means “complete destruction.” The same Hebrew word was translated “consumption” in both Isaiah 10:23 and Isaiah 28:22; “I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts a consumption, **even determined** upon the whole earth.” This speaks of the time of “great tribulation” Matthew 24:21 of which Jesus forewarned, in which 1/3 of all living will be slain Revelation 9:15, and 2/3 of the “house of Israel” will also perish Zechariah 13:8, but 1/3 will “look unto Him whom they pierced” Zechariah 12:10 and be saved just before Jesus Christ returns to destroy those who fight against Jerusalem.

The Reality of a Believer

Published in November 2021 Charisma Magazine

The following is my answer to an inmate who wrote with sincere questions about our message of “freedom from sin.”

Roger, The “*freedom from sin*” that I preach is a work of grace, and not of works. Jesus promised to give “*rest*” to those who come to Him. The apostle Paul says, “*For we which have believed do enter into rest*” Hebrews 4:3 and “*He that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works*” Hebrews 4:10. When the apostle says in verse eleven, “*Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest,*” he is not speaking of our works. The word “*labour*” was translated from the Greek word “*spoudazo,*” which means “*to use speed.*” Don’t hesitate; be quick to believe what God has said in the gospel of Christ and cease from your own works.

It is a common error to believe that we are “*saved by grace,*” but “*kept*” through our own works or efforts. Jude closes his short epistle saying, “*Now unto him that is able to **keep you from falling,** and to **present you faultless** before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy...*” Jude 1:24. The words “*from falling*” were translated from the Greek word “*aptaistos,*” which means “*not stumbling,* that is, (figuratively) *without sin.*” Roger, it is a mistake for anyone to think they can “*keep themselves*” from sinning through their will power. Only Christ can keep us, which He does absolutely as long as we abide in Him.

Roger, you wrote, “*I do have victory over sin more than ever before because the truth is setting me free from faith to faith.*” We must understand that our wonderful salvation is not based upon “*victory over sin,*” but “*freedom from sin.*” “*Victory over*” is an “*active*” term, which requires our effort. “*Freedom from*” is a passive term, which requires our rest. I realize this is hard to comprehend, but I illustrate as follows;

A man-eating lion is loose in my house. If I am to live in that house, one of two things must happen. **1.** I must have power over the lion,

which means I must be a trained lion tamer. If I have that power over the lion, I can keep him at bay. I can make him lie down, roll over, sit up and beg, but there is one thing I cannot do. I cannot rest in sleep, because if I am not “*ever vigilant*,” the man-eating lion will kill me. **2.** I am not a lion tamer. If I must live in the house with the lion, I will soon be devoured, but I know a “*lion killer*,” so I bring Him into my house and he kills the lion and takes his carcass out of my house. Now, I can rest without fear of the lion, because the lion is dead. Christ did not come into the world to tame the lion (sin), but to kill the lion. In fact, He came into the world to destroy Satan Hebrews 2:14 and nail sin to His cross I Peter 2:24. He did this for “*whosoever*” will believe and trust in Him who did it through His death on the cross.

Roger, you also wrote, “*...reality shows me that we don’t “abide” in Christ 100% of the time, and so we make the foolish choice to sin.*” We must have a correct view of what “*reality*” is. The apostle Paul says, “*...we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the **things which are seen are temporal**; but the **things which are not seen are eternal***” II Corinthians 4:18. We look at the things around us, and think they are the “*reality*” because we can see them with our eyes, touch them with our hands, smell them, hear them, etc. These are not the reality, however, because they will all pass away. The “*reality*” is that which is eternal. The “*new heavens and earth*” will be the reality of which the present heavens and earth is only the image. The “*new man in Christ Jesus*” is the reality, and the gospel of Christ is the reality. If our experience does not match the word of God, the “*word of God*” is still the “*reality*,” and our experience is the lie.

When God first began teaching me the “*truth as it is in Jesus*” Ephesians 4:21, I argued with Him. Concerning I John 3:9, “*Whosoever is born of God doeth not commit sin...*,” I said, “*I know by experience that those who are born of God do sin.*” The Spirit of God rebuked me sharply; “*You do not know anything by experience; you only know by my word.*” Let God be true, and every man a liar. As long as we judge what reality is by our experience, we must

continue in sin, because we will never be free. I made a choice almost twenty-five years ago to “*believe God*” even when I did not understand. It was when I believed without understanding, and without “*experience*” to prop me up, that God gave me understanding, and with that understanding came glorious freedom from sin.

Roger, again, you wrote, “...so we make the foolish choice to sin.” When Christ has taken our sin away, which condition is received by grace through faith, and not by works ^{Ephesians 2:8}, we do not have the “*choice*” to sin, because our hearts have been “*purified by faith*” ^{Acts 15:8-9}. Jesus told us that everything that defiles a man “*comes out of the heart.*”

*“For from within, **out of the heart of men**, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man”* ^{Mark 7:21-23}.

All these evil things are in the heart of man until such time that Christ, who “*came into the world to make an end of sins*” ^{Daniel 9:24-25}, takes sin out of the heart of those who believe and trust in Him to do it. Those “*evil things*” Jesus spoke of in this text are not in the heart of those who “*know the truth*” ^{John 8:32} and “*trust in Him*” ^{Ephesians 1:12-13}.

I come to the part of your letter that asks how long since I have sinned. On pages ten and eleven of the booklet “*Is a Christian also a sinner,*” which I have sent to you, I go into some detail concerning what the apostle John called “*sin unto death*” and “*sin not unto death.*” When sin is taken out of the heart of man, it is impossible for that person to “*sin a sin that is unto death*” unless they have been moved away from Christ. John told us to pray for those among the believers that “*sin a sin **not unto death***” ^{I John 5:16}. He continued to say “*There is a sin **unto death**; I do not say that you should pray for it*” ^{verse 16}, and in the seventeenth verse, “*There is a sin **not unto death.***”

The sins that are “unto death” are clearly listed; “*Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God*” 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. These are the sins that it is impossible for the children of God to commit, because these things are not in the heart of those who are “born of God.” Sadly, I did commit some of these sins after I was “born again” and even “filled with the Holy Ghost,” but I was first “moved away from Christ” before any of these things were possible. I was backslidden and lost during that horrible time which came into my life almost forty years ago. If I had died during that time, I would have been eternally damned. It was after I was forgiven and even restored to ministry that I began a desperate search to find the answer for the sin problem that is in the heart of man. My mind was sometimes tormented by the horrible sins I had committed and even though I was not sinning, my mind was still troubled with sinful thoughts. It was in the spring of 1991 that the understanding of Hebrews 9:13-14 shone into my heart as a great light. “*For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*” In a moment of time the Holy Ghost fell upon me and the filth that troubled me at nights turned off like you would turn off a faucet. I can honestly say that since that day, I have been free.

Have I sinned since that day? Not a single sin “that is unto death.” Those are the sins that require sin in the heart to commit, and those whose heart is pure cannot commit them. “Sins not unto death” are a different story. These do not consist of the “evil fruit on a corrupt tree,” but of “lack of fruit on a good tree.” The apostle Paul says, “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law*” Galatians 5:22-23. A lack of any of these in a child of God’s life is what John calls a “sin not unto death.” Certainly, there have been many times that I have not shown enough love, joy, peace,

etc. Oftentimes not gentle enough or patience enough, and sometimes not meek enough. These are the things that John told us to pray for one another concerning. If a person “*dies in sin*” they will be lost eternally because of those “*sins unto death*” that are still in their heart. Concerning the “*works of the flesh*,” Paul says, “*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; **Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that **they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God*****” Galatians 5:19-21. How many times must the apostles tell us these things before we believe them, and how many times must they tell us that Christ died to take these things away before we will believe the truth and trust in Christ?

Many people have been deceived to believe that a man or woman could die in the act of adultery, and Christ would receive them “*if their faith is grounded in the cross of Christ.*” That is about the most ridiculous thing I have ever heard. The cross of Christ is the end of sin for those who trust in Christ “*who loved us, and gave Himself for us*” Galatians 2:20.

It is hard for people to believe the truth when they first hear it because it is foolishness to them. They know they are not “*strong enough*” to live free from sin, so their first inclination is to believe that it is only the “*self-righteous*” who would believe such a thing. It is a wrong understanding of “*grace*” that actually blinds the people. They think we are “*covered by grace*,” or that we “*go to heaven by grace*.” Neither of these is true. The truth is that we are “*made free from sin*” by grace. It is not by works. In my early experience, several years before I backslid into sin, I went to the extremes trying to “*sanctify myself*,” and “*crucify my flesh*.” I fasted more days than I ate for three years straight. During the same time, I gave over 50% of my income to the church, and tried to pray several hours a day. Many of those around me thought I was the most consecrated young man they knew, but they didn’t know the

struggle that was in my heart. This intense disciplined lifestyle actually helped in my backsliding, because a person can maintain such a lifestyle only for a period of time. Before I was “*made free from sin,*” which is the promise of the gospel of Christ, I had to cease from my own works ^{Hebrews 4:10}. I had to “*believe God,*” which is to “*believe the record that God gave of His Son*” ^{1 John 5:10}. God gave His record through the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New Testament. It is called “*the testimony of Jesus.*” Roger, the “*glorious liberty*” you seek is the gift of God to fallen man. It must be received as a gift, which means it is “*by grace*” and “*not by works.*” Believe and trust in Christ, who has already done the work. Spend time in His presence every day until you live “*in His presence.*” Very soon, you will say with the apostle Paul, “*I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me...*” ^{Galatians 2:20}.

Obedient Children

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Disobedience to God is the root cause of all the hurt and pain that is in the world today. Adam’s disobedience in the Garden of Eden brought the entrance of sin into the world, and man was driven out of paradise to forever have his existence in an earth which was cursed because of sin. The Apostle Paul addressed this issue to the Romans, writing, “*Wherefore, as by **one man** sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*” ^{Romans 5:12}. That “*one man*” was the first man Adam. The apostle expands on this, saying “*For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so **by the obedience of one** shall many be **made righteous***” ^{Romans 5:19}. Notice there is a second “*one man*” in this verse. Paul said to the Corinthians, “*The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven*” ^{1 Corinthians 15:47}. Paul continues in the next verse, “*As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they*

also that are heavenly” I Corinthians 15:48. The first man Adam was disobedient, and **was capable of disobedience** even before he disobeyed God. The second man was the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was *“obedient...even to the death of the cross”* Philippians 2:8.

When God created Adam in His image and after His likeness, He gave him a “free will,” which means Adam could choose which course of life to take. As a test for man, God placed two trees in the midst of the Garden of Eden; the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Only one commandment was given to Adam, and that was to not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, *“for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”* Genesis 2:17. We know the record, that Adam disobeyed God, with the result that through his disobedience, *“sin entered into the world, and death by sin”* Romans 5:12. It was through Adam’s disobedience that *“many were made sinners”* Romans 5:19. In this we clearly see that Adam was **capable of disobedience** even before he disobeyed. If Adam had eaten from the tree of life, I believe the tree of knowledge of good and evil would have been removed from the garden and the serpent would have been banished forever. The one commandment would have been fulfilled, and the entire earth today would be the paradise of God, inhabited with obedient children of God. Instead, through the disobedience of Adam, the entire heavens and earth were cursed by sin, and must come to their end. The Apostle Peter described in detail what that “end” shall be:

*“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which **the heavens shall pass away with a great noise**, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, **the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.**”* II Peter 3:10

*“Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for **new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.**”*

II Peter 3:13

The promise of a new heavens and a new earth was first given through the prophet Isaiah: *“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind”* Isaiah 65:17. It will be a *“new heavens and a new earth wherein*

dwelleth righteousness.” The inhabitants will be those whom Christ has “*made righteous*” Romans 5:19. They will have no sin, and will not be “capable” of disobedience. If this were not so, the new heavens and new earth would become as sinful and corrupt as is this present evil world.

All the promises of redemption are true to those who abide “*in Christ.*” Sadly, many having once known Christ, do not abide in him. This will not be the case in the “*new heavens and new earth.*” Its inhabitants will spend eternity “*in Christ.*” We see the glory of abiding “*in Christ*” when we consider the effect on those who abide in him today.

*“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for **his seed** (those born of God) **remaineth** (abide) **in him** (Christ): and **he cannot sin**, because he is born of God.”* I John 3:9

This is, without a doubt, one of the most misunderstood verses in the New Testament. The words “*cannot sin*” are a great stumbling block to those who are merely religious, but to those who are “*born of God*” and “*abide in Christ*” I John 3:6, they are the source of glorious liberty to love and serve God. The word “*cannot*” as translated from the Greek is defined as “*absolutely not able or possible.*” When the Law says we “*cannot sin,*” it is a commandment with severe penalties attached for those who we do sin. On the other hand, when the gospel says those who are born of God “*cannot sin,*” it speaks of the disability of those who “*abide in Christ*” to continue in sin. This disability is produced by a lack of sin in the heart, which sin is taken away from those who abide in Christ.

It is important to understand the difference between what man calls sin and what God calls sin. The scribes and Pharisees had a “sin-test” which not even Jesus could pass. They said, “*We know that this man is a sinner*” John 9:24. His sin? He had healed a blind man on the Sabbath day. You will never pass the “sin test” given by man. The scripture is very clear concerning the sins a child of God who abides in Christ “*cannot*” do.

The Apostle Paul listed ten things a person **cannot be** and enter the new heavens and new earth. He said, *“Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God”* I Corinthians 6:9-10. Paul also gave the remedy: *“And **such were some of you: but ye are washed** (by blood Revelation 5:1), **but ye are sanctified** (by blood Hebrews 13:12), **but ye are justified** (by blood Romans 5:9) in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God”* I Corinthians 6:11.

To the Galatians, Paul listed seventeen things a person **cannot do**; they are, *“...adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that **they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God**”* Galatians 5:19-21. Furthermore, Paul said, *“Let no man deceive you with vain words: for **because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience**”* Ephesians 5:6.

Consider that a turtle does not have the ability to fly. It does not abstain from flying through effort, but through inability. It is the same concerning the things which the apostles said those who abide in Christ “*cannot*” do. John told us Christ *“...was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not...”* I John 3:5-6. The scripture is clear! Since Christ came to take away our sin, those who abide in him do not sin. They cannot because sin has been taken away, out of their heart and out of their nature.

Peter says we are the “*elect, according to the foreknowledge of God...*” I Peter 1:2. The New Covenant “elect” are those who are “born of God” and “*conformed to the image of His Son*” Romans 8:29. They are “*obedient children*” I Peter 1:14, and not as Adam, who was disobedient. God is their Father, and they are holy because their Father in heaven is holy I Peter 1:15-17. Disobedience has no place in those who abide in Christ, just as the children of disobedience will

have no place in the new heavens and new earth. Those who were once *“the children of disobedience”* Ephesians 2:2 have been sanctified *“unto obedience”* by the same sacrifice of the Son of God that has saved us from sin.

Now just a few very serious words concerning capability. To those who profess Jesus Christ as savior; are you capable of those sins which the Apostle Paul said *“shall not inherit the kingdom of God?”* Any preacher who says we could die in the act of adultery and be received by God if we believe in Jesus is a liar and a deceiver. God sent Jesus Christ to the cross to *“make an end of sins”* Daniel 9:24-25. He paid the ultimate price to *“take away the sin of the world”* John 1:29. With this in mind, consider the admonition of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, which was a very sinful church; *“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”* II Corinthians 13:5. Are you *“in the faith”* that was once delivered to the saints?

“Only one life will soon be past; only what’s done by Christ will last.”

Strange Fire

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The dedication of the tabernacle was a glorious day for the children of Israel. Much care was given in its construction, God having said to Moses, *“See that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount”* Hebrews 8:5 and Exodus 25:40. Every offering was prepared for sacrifice explicitly according to that which God had showed to Moses. On this great day of dedication, it would be seen whether God had in fact spoken to Moses. When the congregation gathered early that day, Moses had said to them, *“This is the thing which the LORD commanded that ye should do: and the glory of the LORD shall appear unto you.”* If Moses and Aaron did everything according to the pattern he had seen on the mountain with

God, the glory of God would supernaturally appear. Every burnt offering in the past had been offered with fire provided by man. This day was different. They carried no fire into the tabernacle, and they placed no fire under the offering. After they had prepared the offerings for sacrifice, and laid them upon the altar, the scripture says, they “...came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.” Leviticus 9:23-24

This would indeed have been a wonderful day if it had ended with the shouts of worship and praise to God. Sadly, the two eldest sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, who were destined to service in the tabernacle, sought to receive glory for themselves. Their immediate duty was to keep the fire burning which God had kindled. They were to put wood on the fire every morning and see to it that the fire of God would not go out forever. “*The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out*” Leviticus 6:13.

Disregarding all that Moses had instructed them, Nadab and Abihu “took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not” Leviticus 10:1. In others words, they did not have the fire of God, so they kindled their own fire. Anytime a minister without the fire of God pretends before the people to have the fire, they are offering what God calls “strange fire.”

“...And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.” Leviticus 10:1-2

These two young men could have had the fire of God, but they did that “which he commanded them not.” It was not their place to offer sacrifice to God on that day. They simply wanted the glory for themselves. The fire of God, which God kindled at the dedication of the tabernacle, was to be kept burning forever. If the fire went out, the ministers would have nothing but “strange fire” to offer. In fact, the fire did go out at Shiloh when the two evil sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were the priests appointed to keep the fire burning.

The scripture says they “*were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD*” I Samuel 2:12. Hophni and Phinehas were also given charge of the Ark of the Covenant. As God judged the nation because of the sins of Eli and his sons, Israel was defeated in battle, the Ark of God was taken by the Philistines, and Hophni and Phinehas were slain. When Eli heard the ark was taken, he fell backwards, broke his neck, and died. That same day the wife of Phinehas died in childbirth, and with her last breath, she named the child Ichabod, saying, “*the glory is departed from Israel.*”

God once again kindled the fire on the altar when Solomon dedicated the Temple in Jerusalem. II Chronicles 7:1-3. Certainly, the fire of God on the altar in Jerusalem was short lived, because Solomon the king later turned from the true God of Israel to follow after the gods Ashtoreth, and Milcom. He also built high places to worship Chemosh, and Molech I Kings 11:5-7. “*And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods*” I Kings 11:8. God’s judgment against Solomon was to “*rend the kingdom*” from him and give it to a servant of Solomon’s named Jeroboam I Kings 11:11. This He did during the reign of Solomon’s son, Rheoboam I Kings 12:20.

God had promised to bless Jeroboam as king of Israel if he would serve Him. Instead, Jeroboam immediately turned the people away from Jehovah to worship the golden calves at Bethel. When Ahab became king, he built altars to Baal throughout the land, and in the days of Elijah, the people did not know who God was. The day came, after a 3 ½ year drought which was decreed by the prophet Elijah, when the people were ready to listen. Elijah challenged the people, “*How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him*” I Kings 18:21. The people had no answer. Elijah again challenged them, saying “*the God that answereth by fire, let him be God.*” Elijah understood that if he repaired the altar which was fallen down, and offered the acceptable sacrifice at the time of the evening sacrifice, God would answer by fire. He always had, and He always will. When the fire of God fell

from heaven to consume Elijah's sacrifice, the people shouted *"The LORD, He is God."*

After Christ died and shed His precious blood to *"put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself"* Hebrews 9:26, God answered by fire on the Day of Pentecost. *"And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance"* Acts 2:3-4. This time, however, the fire was not on the altar in the Temple, but upon the blood-washed men and women who gathered that day. As long as the fire of God was kept burning, the *"world was turned upside down"* by the gospel they preached and the mighty works which God did. Within that first generation, however, as the eye-witness apostles were taken out, false teachers with *"strange fire"* entered in and the move of God was over. Within three hundred years, the church entered into 1200 years of darkness, which ended with the reformation of the 16th century.

Approximately 350 years after the reformation, God sent the "latter day" outpouring of the Holy Ghost. On January 1, 1991 in the city of Topeka Kansas in a bible school led by Charles Parham, God poured out His Spirit, and the fire of God was once again was on the altar. In 1906, a "second wave" of the outpouring came to the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, led by William Seymour. For the first sixty years of the 20th century the Pentecostal movement was like living in the book of Acts. Consider the Wales revival led by Evan Roberts in 1904, and the Hebrides Revival in 1949, led by Duncan Campbell. These were marked by such a powerful conviction for sin that entire communities were brought to repentance even before hearing the preacher. They were like the 3000 Jews on the Day of Pentecost, crying *"What shall we do?"* Acts 2:37.

Other revivals were marked by supernatural miracles and healings. Isaiah had prophesied *"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the*

wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert” Isaiah 35:6. For five decades Raymond T Ritchie preached the gospel and saw thousands of miraculous healings. After his revival in Houston Texas in 1923 he had a parade 13 blocks long of those who were healed. It took a large truck to carry the crutches of the crippled that were healed. Smith Wigglesworth from England reportedly saw fourteen people raised from the dead. In 1944, God anointed a 9-year-old boy called “Little David Walker” to preach the gospel and do miracles. I personally saw him at age 14 in the Houston Music Hall as God used him to heal the deaf, blind, and the lame. With great authority he cast out unclean spirits. Almost immediately after World War II, God called and anointed many to heal the sick and do miracles. Among them was Oral Roberts, William Branham T.L. Osborne, Jack Coe, and others too numerous to mention. I saw huge goiters disappear from the necks of women with a touch from Oral Roberts. William Branham had creative miracles, which included the creation of eyeballs in a baby born blind to blind parents. T.L. Osborne preached to hundreds of thousands in third world nations, and saw some of the most incredible miracles ever witnessed. Tommy Hicks went to Argentina in 1954, and saw the nation opened to him after the dictator Juan Peron received a healing miracle. All these 20th century revivals were possible because the fire of God was on the altar. Sadly, sometime in the decade of the sixties, the fire went out, and many resorted to the “*strange fire*” of Nadab and Abihu.

When the fire went out, the great revival of miracles ceased, and many charlatans arose in the 60’s to deceive the people with gimmicks. Some of the “greats” which once had the fire turned to other methods to continue in their ministry. This can certainly be “*strange fire*.” In 1968, two of the greatest ministers of miracles I knew suddenly received a revelation of prosperity. They continued to do big things for the rest of their lives, but the “fire of God” was gone. They were reduced to preaching “prosperity pacts” and “seed faith” to receive the money to stay relevant. I personally witnessed an even greater sign of “strange fire” in the late sixties and early seventies when preachers who once had the fire of God began

teaching people “how to speak in tongues.” Within another decade, they were teaching the people how to prophecy, and began to fill the churches with false prophets. Teaching “how to do” anything the Holy Ghost is sent to do is “*strange fire*.” One America ministry claims to see more people baptized with the Holy Ghost than any ministry in history. They give a formula of exactly what to do, and tell the seekers, “*If you start it, God will finish it.*” NO! If you “start it,” it is strange fire. Anything that originates with man must be “strange fire.” I’ve seen the strange fire in the fad revivals for several decades. Uncontrollable laughing, barking like dogs, squealing like eagles, and claiming these to be the manifestations of the Holy Ghost is certainly “strange fire.” It is obvious to even the casual observer that something has gone terribly wrong in the church today. Thousands of congregations start their services with a sinner’s prayer, “*because we are all sinners, who must sin every day,*” unaware that if they die in their sins they will be eternally lost. There must be those, like Elijah, who will “*repair the altar that is fallen down,*” and offer the acceptable sacrifice. Our offering is not a bullock, it is our own body, a “*living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service*” Romans 12:1. If we offer this sacrifice, God will once again “answer by fire.”

Jesus is “The Christ”

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“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God:”

John 5:1

With this simple statement, the Apostle John delivers to us the gospel message which shook the world in his generation; “Jesus is the Christ.” These four words are the only hope to save America and the world around us today. Jesus told us, however, that these words can only be received and understood by revelation. When Peter said to Jesus, “*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*” Matthew 16:16,

Jesus said to him, as I paraphrase, *“You are blessed, Peter! The Father in Heaven has revealed this to you! This revelation of who I am is the rock I will build my church upon, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”*

Every Jew in Jerusalem and in all of Judea had heard of the coming of “The Christ” for their entire lifetime. It was preached almost every Sabbath Day in the Synagogues, and they even knew by the scriptures of the prophet Daniel the exact year that He would appear. The Jews dearly loved the thought of seeing “the Christ,” their Messiah. They knew by heart the prophecy of His appearing. He would *“...finish the transgression, make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness...”* Daniel 9:24, among other things. It is true they did not know how He would do these things, but the prospect of “freedom” from the tyranny of Rome was enough to excite the entire nation, and this was the year for Him to appear.

“The people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;” Luke 3:15

Consider the promise: He would *“make an end of sins”* and *“bring in everlasting righteousness.”* Look at it again: *“No more sinning”* I John 3:5-6 but *“righteousness, peace, and joy”* Romans 14:17. There would be no more “struggle” to stop sinning, because the same one who died on the cross to *“take away our sin”* John 1:29, is the same one who said to us *“Come to me, and I will give you rest”* Matthew 11:28. Our glorious rest is not “in sin,” but rather “from sin.” Sin has no more dominion over those who believe ***“Jesus is the Christ”*** with a clear understanding of what Christ came into the world to do. Those who continue in sin and say, “grace abounds” Romans 6:1-2, are ignorant of who Christ is and what He came into the world to do. They teach the people, “We are all sinners, who must sin every day,” absolutely blinded to the fact if this is so, they are also lost and perishing with the world around them. How do I know this? Because Christ came into the world to make an end of sins, and ***“Jesus is the Christ.”***

The religious leaders of Israel so hated Jesus of Nazareth that they sought to destroy anyone who believed ***“Jesus is the Christ.”*** These

four words meant something in that day, and those who dared to speak them publicly sometimes forfeited their own lives on this earth. The reality of these four words was such, however, that everyone who believed them was instantly transformed. Consider Saul of Tarsus for a moment. He was born a Jew, “...*circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee*” Philippians 3:5. Saul had everything going for him. He said he “*profited above others in the Jews religion*” Galatians 1:14. It is in the next verse in Philippians that we find a great contradiction; “*Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless*” Philippians 3:6. This is the equivalent of a person who professes to know Christ, but also professes to “be a sinner who sins every day.

Saul of Tarsus, one who was “*blameless*” under the Law of Moses, was filled with hatred for Jesus of Nazareth and for everyone who trusted in Him. Here again is the contradiction; Saul loved “the Christ,” and longed for His appearing, while at the same time he hated Jesus. The “power” of “***Jesus is the Christ***” was proven while Saul was on a journey to Damascus with authority from the high priest to arrest the Christians, and bring them to Jerusalem to stand trial for heresy. He was so filled with hatred for the disciples of Jesus that he “*breathed out threatening’s and slaughter against them*” Acts 9:1. Saul of Tarsus was a murderer. The record of what happened next is best given by the scriptures:

“And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” Acts 9:3-6

It takes less than thirty seconds to read the account, and that’s how long it took to transform Saul of Tarsus from a “Jesus hater” to a “Jesus lover.” He heard the voice from heaven, “*Why persecuteth*

thou me?” He questioned, “*Who are you, Lord?*” Saul knew it was the Lord, but he did not know who “the Lord” was. The answer came, “*I am Jesus...*” It blasted into his innermost being like a foghorn, and instantly Saul of Tarsus knew that “***Jesus is the Christ.***” In that same instant, everything he would later preach as “*the revelation of Jesus Christ*” was fulfilled in him as he lay on the Damascus road. His “*old man*” was crucified, and buried with Christ. A “*new man*” was quickened with Christ. The Apostle John would later say “*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God*” I John 5:1. When Saul of Tarsus stood to his feet that day, he was a new man, a child of God, “*washed, sanctified, and justified*” I Corinthians 6:11, and no longer a sinner. Christ was now living in him. He stood up with a commission from Jesus Christ. Saul had asked “What will you have me to do?” The answer came immediately...

“...rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” Acts 26:16-18

Within thirty seconds Saul of Tarsus was transformed from a “*wretched old man*” Romans 7:24 into a child of God with a “purpose.” We must understand that true Christianity is not a “philosophy of religion.” If we reduce it to a philosophy, it is the weakest of all religions, but true Christianity is not a “religion;” it is “life,” and Christ is our life Galatians 2:20. Christ is not a sinner, and those who “*abide in Him do not commit sin*” I John 3:5-6. This is an absolute truth of the gospel of Christ, which we must preach if we are to see the people “saved from sin.” Our nation is held in the balances with no possible political answer. The future, whether good or evil, is in the hands of the church. What will we do with it?

In the great awakening of the 18th century, Jonathan Edwards preached the message “*Sinners in the hands of an angry God*” with such power and conviction that grown men fell into the aisles crying, “*My God Mister Edwards, what can we do?*” A hundred years later in the second “great awakening,” Charles Surgeon preached a message titled “*Turn or Burn*,” which pointed the sinner to Jesus Christ as the only one who could “turn them” from their sin. This also is the message we must preach today...

Where is God?

The following is a portion of a message we published in the September 2022 issue of Newsmax Magazine. Look for our page every month for the foreseeable future, as we reach out to turn America back to Jesus Christ.

“Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.” Hosea 6:1

I graduated from high school in 1957. In those days, we began every school day by repeating the Lord’s Prayer, and pledging allegiance “*to the flag of the United States of America, **one nation, under God, indivisible**, with liberty and justice for all.*” This morning exercise was concluded by a scripture reading from the King James Version of the bible over the P.A. system. Sixty five years later, I can still hear the voice of the young lady who read the scriptures every day. This particular morning she read from the first Psalm; “*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper*” Psalms 1:1-3. It is the next verse, however, that I remember so clearly; “***The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away***”

Psalms 1:4. I cannot explain the impact those words have had on me in my lifetime.

In those days there was a small minority of people who hated Jesus Christ and every mention of God. They believed the influence of God in the public schools was unconstitutional, and began to bring lawsuits against the public schools. The Supreme Court in the 1960's agreed, and ruled against school sponsored prayer and bible readings, and thus the "war against God" in the schools began. It continued until the Ten Commandments were forbidden to the schools, and in effect the great majority of our children have received no moral or spiritual influence toward godliness in the public school systems in America. Almost sixty years have passed since school sponsored prayers and bible readings were taken away, and the result is a nation that is no longer "under God," and is deeply divided. In our public schools, our children are still morally influenced, but not by God. Where is God? He has been "cast out." In many schools today, the student reading from the bible has been replaced by a "drag queen story hour," designed to glamorize the LGBTQ lifestyle to our innocent children. Some in our elementary schools claim a right to teach the children about sex change and alternative lifestyles as early as kindergarten.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Galatians 6:7

America is even now reaping the harvest from the seeds which were planted over a generation ago. We have succeeded in destroying ourselves. The Supreme Court took school sponsored prayer, bible reading, and the Ten Commandments out of the public schools. The court approved abortion on demand in 1973, and later approved the pornographers "freedom of expression," which polluted the minds of our youth. In 2015, they approved "gay marriage, which also paved the way for the forced acceptance of the LGBTQ lifestyle. Meanwhile, in the "church," surveys show 68% of the men, and 54% of the pastors regularly consume pornography. As one who has preached the gospel of Christ for 58 years, my judgment is that the modern church has utterly failed to "keep" America, and as *"the salt that lost its savor,"* it has been *"trodden under foot of men"* Matthew 5:13.

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