

A Vision of Two Revivals
By: Steven H. Atherton and Richard D. Eutsler, Sr.

There is much excitement in Christianity today about revival. Prayers for and songs about revival are everywhere and remarkable stories of revival in Florida, Toronto and all over the world have energized evangelical Christians world-wide. But is this move of the spirit, the work of God's Holy Spirit? Personally, I have not been a part of any of the large "revivals" that have been widely reported and therefore am in no position to judge any of them, individually. That said, the vision that I am about to share, the Word itself, and my personal experience with Christians, so-called, does not lead me to such a rosy picture concerning the revivals that are sweeping across the globe today.

The Vision of the Two Mountains

Many many years ago the Lord gave my friend and teacher Richard D. Eutsler, Sr. a vision. In that vision, Richard was standing on a hill and there were two mountains before him. The one mountain had a great highway leading up to a beautiful golden castle with a banner reading - Peace Love Joy Happiness. On top of the other mountain was a little humble cave and a narrow path that led to it (up which people had to climb single file). Between the two mountains was a great valley and people filled the valley.

And behind him he heard (as it were) a voice saying, "Son of man, speak unto the people of the valley and command them this day to choose which path they will follow."

As he spake, he saw that the people began to mill about and as he watched the people began to walk up the great path to the golden castle and one or two started up the little path to the cave. And he marveled at it.

Again the voice spake unto him saying, "Son of man, speak unto the grass of the field and command it to dry up, that there be no bread in the land."

And he spake and the people of the valley began to mill around and become very agitated.

Again the voice said, "Son of man speak unto the people of the valley and command them this day to choose which path they will follow." And there began more to go up the wide path and a few up the other.

A third time, the voice spake unto him saying, "Son of man, speak unto the wells of the valley that they dry up that there be no water in the valley."

And again he spake and as he spake the people in the valley became quite agitated and the voice said unto him "son of man speak unto the people of the valley and command them this day to choose which path they will follow" and as he did this a great rush of people went up the wide path and a little trickle up the other.

And while he stood marveling at these things and wondering what they signified, the voice spake unto him again asking him, "Son of man, do you understand these things?"

And he said "no."

And the voice said "watch and see"

And as he watched, the great castle began to fade out and in its place was a huge skull with flames coming out of its mouth and Hell Death and Pride were its banners. And a great mass of people were walking into it, blind to what they were walking into. And he looked and beheld on the other mountain as the cave faded out it was replaced with a little tabernacle (tent). And when he looked through the tabernacle he saw heaven.

And he said, "Lord what does this mean?"

And the Lord said "The grass is the Bread, my Word. The people have rejected my Word so I will take my Word out of their mouths and out of their hearts, and their ears will not hear it and they will choose another word.

The wells and the water is my Spirit. They rejected my Spirit for another spirit so I will give them other spirits and they will follow other spirits and they will go to hell. They will choose that which looks good in their eyes and not discern with the Spirit that which is truly good.

As Richard says, he has watched this come to pass. He has gone all over this country and preached this and spoken it and nobody wants to hear it. They do not have ears to hear.

Now what does all of this mean for the church today and how does this vision fit with God's Word? What follows is a Biblical analysis of the church today that shows how this Vision is coming to pass. It is shared in the hope that it will help you to choose wisely. Let him that hath ears to hear hear.

The Church Rejects THE WORD

As in all things concerning the Lord, I shall begin with our standard, the Word of God (Jesus). John 1:1-14. Does the scripture not command us to "try the spirits" (I John 4:1) and inform us that we have a "more sure word of prophecy" (referring to the

Scripture) than that which Peter, John and James heard from Heaven at the transfiguration of Jesus on the Mount, namely the Scripture. II Peter 1:16-21.

Sadly, when Christians turn to the Bible today, each turns to a different version or standard. Can you imagine the mess we would make if we were building a house together and each used a different standard? Is the same not true of the household of faith?

The present confusion over standards, stands in stark contrast to our forefathers, who for hundreds of years (regardless of the church/denomination where they attended) shared the same standard, namely the 1611 King James Bible (KJV). Has Christ been divided? (I Corinthians 1:13.) Is He no longer the same yesterday, today and forever? (Hebrews 13:8.) Has His hand been shortened that He is no longer able to preserve His Word? (Psalm 12:6-7.) To those who KNOW the Lord, the answer to all these questions is NO!

By contrast, those who are alienated from the Lord in unbelief, place a high value on the work of modern scholars and archeologists. Such are those who Paul warned us about, when he said that they are "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." II Timothy 3:7. These are they who, because of their education and training, see themselves as the keeper of the light of God's Word. The fact that their collective wisdom changes so much over time is explainable to them because they see man's knowledge of God as evolving over time.

This entire line of reasoning turns God's Word on its head and bears no relationship to how God operates as the following passage illustrates:

Luke 10:17 & 21-22 (bold print emphasis added)

17 ¶ And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

....

21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that **thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes**: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

22 All things are delivered to me of my Father: and **no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.**

See also Matthew 11:25-27. When God reveals something to someone, He exposes the matter and makes it clear. Is that not how Paul received the Word? See Galatians

1:12 - 2:9 and Ephesians 3:1-5. Likewise, it is how the other Apostles, Moses and the Prophets all received the Word.

By contrast, modern scholars would have you believe that because they now have access to more ancient manuscripts than those that Luther and Tyndale had access to, they have been able to correct errors made by earlier translators who relied upon faulty manuscripts. But why, I ask, is older more reliable?

If you know your history, then you know that immediately prior to the Reformation, Western Europe was flooded with Greek-speaking Christians fleeing muslim armies in the East (Constantinople fell to the muslims in 1453) and Hebrew-speaking Jews fleeing their expulsion from Spain in 1492. These refugees brought their Greek New Testament and Hebrew Old Testament with them.

The Scriptures they brought with them had been preserved by their forebears. The Greeks received the New Testament nearly 1,400 years earlier from the Apostle Paul's ministry to the Gentiles. The Jews from their forefathers who dwelt in Jerusalem prior to the Jewish diaspora that followed the destruction of the temple and the crushing of the Jewish rebellion against Rome. When these refugees fled their homes, do you think they brought 1,400 year old copies with them or more recent ones? I suspect you know the answer. Did that somehow make the more recent copies that they carried with them suspect? I think not. (By contrast, the earlier manuscripts relied upon by "scholars" come from sources and/or regions of the world that make them suspect, but alas, that is an issue for another day.)

Now, let us consider the witness of God in the history that I have begun to describe above. When the Greek and Hebrew refugees entered into Northwestern Europe they had to learn new tongues (i.e. German, Dutch, French and English). This meant that Northwestern Europe, for the first time in its history, not only had the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament in the original tongues, but they also had people who spoke their languages fluently whose native tongues were Greek and Hebrew. As a consequence, the Word of God was made available to the people of Northwestern Europe in their own languages for the first time, sparking the Protestant Reformation.

The move of God's Spirit, commonly known as the Protestant Reformation, not only transformed the lives of millions of people, but also those kingdoms -- which had been quite base in comparison to those in the Americas, Asia, Middle East and Africa -- into the mightiest and most enlightened in all the world. And was not the Kingdom of England, particularly after it embraced the KJV as its universal standard, the chief of all? Was this radical transformation of "base" Northwestern Europe not the very fulfillment of the Word of God as expressed in the following passages:

1 Corinthians 1:27-29 (bold print emphasis added)

27 But God hath chosen the **foolish things of the world** to confound the

wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28 And **base things of the world**, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence. .

Deuteronomy 28:1-2 & 7-14 (bold print emphasis added)

1 ¶ And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that **the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:**

2 And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.

...

7 The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways.

8 The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

9 The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways.

10 **And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee.**

11 And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers to give thee.

12 The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and **thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.**

13 **And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath;** if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them:

14 And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

While the latter passage is referring directly to Israel and not Northwestern Europe, the Word does not limit such blessings to Israel, but says:

11 The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

12 ¶ Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance. Psalm 33:11-12.

Sadly, pride (much like we read occurred with the children of Israel throughout the Old Testament) has caused Northwestern Europe, and those of us who trace our lineages to that region of the world, to attribute the work of God's grace amongst our forefathers to some greatness (or great wickedness to those who constantly want to apologize for our forefathers) on our own part, which is why the grace of God has been pulled back from our nations.

Finally, I would like to make one last historical point in favor of the King James Version. Is anyone going to argue that modern scholars are more faithful than those, like Luther and Tyndale, who hazarded their lives for the Word of God's sake? I think not! Why then should we PAY (pun intended for modern scholars "own" their versions unlike the KJV which is freely available to all) them any heed? Are not the modern scholars of that sort who Jesus drove out of the temple, referring to those who "bought and sold" in His Father's House, as having turned it into a "den of thieves". Matthew 21:12-13, Mark 11:15-17 and Luke 19:44-46.

Some might think (or even perhaps argue) that the newer versions say the same thing, they just use more modern English or words simpler to understand. The truth, however, is that the modern versions differ fundamentally. Rather than belabor the point, let me highlight one verse that almost all Christians know, namely John 3:16. In the King James Version (KJV), it says

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him SHOULD not perish, but have everlasting life. (Emphasis added.)

Other versions say something different. The NIV, for example, says "that whoever believeth in him SHALL not perish, but have eternal life." (Emphasis added.)

Well, which is it? SHALL is an absolute guarantee, whereas SHOULD basically means that the person who believes in Jesus will be utterly without excuse if he or she perishes. Is this difference not fundamental? Therefore, both the KJV and NIV cannot be right. Both can be wrong, but no more than one can be right.

The KJV provokes the believer to fear God and earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. The others (NIV in this instance), coddle the

believer, smothering his need to contend for the faith by making him believe that he is already guaranteed his place in Heaven. Which do you think is more likely of God?

I could go on and on illustrating fundamental differences, but for brevity's sake will not do so here. Simply bear in mind, as you read, that some of the doctrinal issues highlighted below may be due, at least in part, to the Bible version that you read. That is one of the reasons why I have quoted extensively from the KJV so that you can compare what it says to the version that you may use.

While you think on these things, let me remind you that the Scripture teaches that Jesus is the Word of God:

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John 1:14.

Since Jesus is the Word of God, does it not then follow that the differing versions of the Word are "false Christs" and those who promote them, in His name, deceivers? Did not the Lord warn us of such, when He said:

Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them. Luke 21:8. See also Matthew 24:4-5

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. See also Mark 13:22.

From this perspective, could there be any more fundamental fulfillment of the following Word of the Lord, spoken in the Vision, than the proliferation of Bible versions we find today?

The grass is the bread, my word. The people have rejected my Word so I will take my Word out of their mouths and out of their hearts and their ears will not hear it and they will choose another word.

The Church Rejects God's Holy Spirit

As the old adage says "one thing leads to another," and so it is with the Vision. The logical consequence of Christians' rejection of the Word is the rejection of God's Holy Spirit in favor of other spirits.

Why does this follow you might ask? Because Jesus Christ, as the passages quoted below establish, is the "chief corner stone" of the "spiritual house" that God is building for His habitation through the Spirit:

Ephesians 2:18-22 (bold text emphasis added)

18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, **Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone**;

21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

22 **In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.**

I Peter 2:4-8 (bold text emphasis added)

4 ¶ To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

5 **Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house**, an holy priesthood, **to offer up spiritual sacrifices**, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a **chief corner stone**, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

Therefore, when Christians, so-called, reject God's "chief corner stone" they are rejecting the Lord and their labor can only be in vain, as the following Scripture makes plain:

Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it.... Psalm 127:1

Is this not what the Jewish church did in Jesus' day? Does the following passage leave any doubt?.

Acts 4:8-12

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised

from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Is the end of the Jews who rejected Christ, the same one you want for yourself? Your family? Your congregation? Has not the Gentile Church come full circle to the place where the Jews were when they crucified Christ? Is that not just what Jesus warned us would happen when He asked: "when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8.

The house that man builds is carnal not spiritual. Consequently, rather than being a habitation for God, through the Spirit, the house that man builds is a habitation for "seducing spirits" that appeal to and inhabit man's cursed flesh.

In order to justify the people in their carnal homes, false teachers propagate "doctrines of devils" that appeal to the carnal mind and impart unholy spirits. Is this not precisely what the Apostle Paul warned us would happen in the "latter times":

1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

THE FAITH that Paul is referring to is faith in the Word of God (Jesus). Thus the departing that Paul is warning us of does not mean that these people stop going to church. If that were the case we would not have to be warned. No, these people continue to refer to themselves as Christians, but they are alienated from Him (i.e His Word) and walk in a spirit that is not His Holy Spirit.

Is this not precisely what the Lord, in the following excerpt from the Vision, said would come to pass?

The wells and the water is my Spirit. They rejected my Spirit for another spirit so I will give them other spirits and they will follow other spirits and they will go to hell. They will choose that which looks good in their eyes and not discern with the Spirit that which is truly good.

And do not the people receive it because they can "see" with their natural "eyes" the manifestation of a spirit and it is pleasing to their carnal minds because it lifts them up in pride and exalts them?

Is this not in accordance with Jesus' and the Apostle Paul's warnings as proclaimed in the following passages:

For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. Mark 13:22. See also Matthew 24:24.

II Corinthians 11:13-15

13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

By contrast, let us consider how exalted Paul makes the Apostolic calling sound in this passage from I Corinthians 4:9-13:

9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised.

11 Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace;

12 And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:

13 Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

Did not Jesus' ministry, as recorded in the Gospels, demonstrate the same, in stark contrast to the religious leaders of His day who judged and condemned Him?

Now which of the above passages better describe the leaders of this great latter day Christian Revival that the church, so-called, is afire about? Are you still so sure that the movement they are leading is of God?

The Church Embraces "Doctrines of Devils"

Paul warned us (in I Timothy 4:1 quoted above) that in the "latter times" some, in the church, would give heed to "doctrines of devils" in order to justify themselves in their rejection of God's Holy Spirit in favor of "seducing spirits." So what are some of these "doctrines of devils" that have been embraced by the church, so-called, today? There are many. For brevity's sake let me highlight three:

1. The Prosperity Gospel.
2. Personal Holiness (or your natural body is the temple of the Holy Spirit).

3. The Church IS the Bride of Christ.

Each of these enjoy wide acceptance in different segments of Christianity worldwide. All seduce people into acceptance by fleshy appeals.

1. The Prosperity Gospel.

The prosperity gospel, as it is often called, has been around from the beginning, but seems to have entered a new period of very broad appeal. Its central tenet is that God wants you to be prosperous in ways that the world acknowledges – most importantly in the form of making money, but also in more general terms it justifies enjoying the "good life." By contrast, the Bible makes clear that prosperity is no measure of godliness.

For example, the Apostle Paul, referring to those who pervert the way of the Lord (I Timothy 6:1-5), states that they suppose "that gain is godliness" (I Timothy 6:5) and commands Timothy to "withdraw" himself from such, saying:

- 6 ¶ But godliness with contentment is great gain.
- 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.
- 8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.
- 9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.
- 10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.
- 11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.
- 12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

The passage is relatively self-explanatory and certainly does not teach that it is evil to have money or be rich, for it is the "love" of money and not "money" itself that is the root of all evil. But let me focus on one word that is often overlooked, namely the word WILL. In verse 9 it does not say that the rich fall into temptation and a snare, but rather they that WILL be rich. While there are many who are rich, who never think they have enough and therefore the passage applies to them, the use of the word WILL makes it clear that the passage applies to all (no matter their financial status) whose WILL it is to be rich. Is not the central pitch of the "prosperity gospel" designed to catch just such people?

By contrast, in verse 8 above Paul admonishes us to be "content" with "food and raiment". Does this not accord with the Lord's commands set forth in Matthew 6, a part of which are excerpted below:

19 ¶ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

...

24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

25 ¶ Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

[In verses 26-30, Jesus chastises His audience reminding them that if your Heavenly Father provides food to the birds and lilies to dress up the grass of the field, how much more will he feed and clothe you,]

30 ... O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things [referring to food and raiment] shall be added unto you.

While many things could be taught from these verses, let me make three points. First, Jesus is commanding us to not lay up treasures upon earth, whereas the prosperity gospel is all about securing for yourself treasures on this earth. Second, He commands us to "take no thought" for what we shall eat or drink or be clothed. In so saying, we are to stand in stark contrast to the Gentiles (Gentiles is simply another word for unbeliever in the context of this passage), who are preoccupied with such thoughts (does this not describe most church-goers today?), and therefore are unable to "seek ... first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness" as we are commanded to do. Third, Jesus practiced what He preached for He was content, having food and raiment, even without a place "to lay his head." Matthew 8:20. Does any of this fit with the "prosperity gospel" being preached?

In direct contradiction to the "prosperity gospel" message, the scripture makes it clear that prosperity often leads the individual away from, rather than closer to, the Lord.

Did that not occur with Solomon? Is that not one of, if not the central point of both of the following passages?

Luke 16:19-26 (Lazarus and the rich man)

19 ¶ There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

Matthew 19:16-26 (the rich young ruler)

16 ¶ And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

19 Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

23 ¶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

25 When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?

26 But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

An important point that is often missed in this latter passage is that Jesus said it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of "a needle" not "the needle" than it is for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God. The significance of this distinction is that the "eye of the needle" refers to the little door in the large gate that led to ancient walled cities, like Jerusalem. By contrast, the "eye of a needle" literally refers to the eye of a sewing needle. This is why his disciples were "exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?"

Some miss this distinction and therefore erroneously teach, as I formerly did, that Jesus was referring to the "eye of the needle" which would be opened unto those who were welcome, after the gate to the city had been closed. While there is some variation amongst teachers, the gist of this teaching is that the rich man must unload all of his belongings, just like the camel, and get down on his knees in order to enter into the Kingdom of God. The part of the practice that the teaching left out is that once the camel crawled through the eye of the needle, its master would pass all of the goods it had been carrying, through the opening or leave someone outside to guard the goods overnight until the gate was opened. Travelers were not of a mind to "lose" all their valuables. The same was true of the "rich young ruler" as it is with most of those who have riches in this world.

By contrast to this false teaching, the truth is that Jesus said exactly what He meant, namely it is easier for a camel to pass through the "eye of a needle" than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God. This, his disciples knew (as do we), was clearly impossible, which is why his disciples were "exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?" Jesus' answer – "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" – rightly divided the Word, for salvation is wholly the work of God, not man. This latter point is often hard for those who have succeeded in this world to swallow because many are accustomed to attributing their success to some skill, gift, talent or attribute that they have.

It is for this reason, amongst others, that Paul commanded Timothy to

17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. I Timothy 6:17-19.

Similarly, it is why Agur, in wisdom, stated in Proverbs 30 as follows:

7 ¶ Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die:
8 Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches;
feed me with food convenient for me:
9 Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be
poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

Are not Agur's words sound counsel for the great majority of us? And do not they confirm Paul's admonition from above that "godliness with contentment is great gain." I Timothy 6:6.

Can there be any remaining doubt then that the "prosperity gospel" is not of God? Nonetheless, it should be no wonder that "seducing spirits" bear witness of those that preach this "doctrine of devils," or else how would the people be deceived?

2. Personal Holiness.

Many churches are fond of preaching holiness or on living a holy life. Holiness is good, but what does it mean and how does one walk in it?

Many modern day Pharisees (this is particularly true of holiness pentecostals, but increasingly other denominations as well) would have you believe that your holiness is measured against the Law of Moses. In so doing, they take a smorgasbord approach to the law, saying that some apply (i.e. the Ten Commandments) while others do not (i.e. the animal sacrifices performed by the priests in the temple, and the dietary restrictions). In so doing, they speak "lies in hypocrisy" for they not only change "the law," but they also do not keep the law that they preach, nor can they, as the following passages make clear:

James 2:10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

Romans 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

Romans 3:19-23 (emphasis, in bold, added)

19 ¶ Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto

all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works?

Nay: but by the law of faith.

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Paul, who knew the law far better than any of us, faced fierce opposition from such which is why he warned Timothy how these Christian Pharisees have "turned aside" from the Word, which teaches that "the end of the commandment is charity of out a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned . . . unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." I Timothy 1:5-7. Paul's mention of the fact that they know not "whereof they affirm" is a reference to their missing the purpose of the law, namely that it was given to serve as "our schoolmaster" to teach us that we are all guilty of sin. The purpose of this lesson is to show us our need for a Savior that we might be brought "unto Christ" to be "justified by faith." Galatians 3:21-24. By contrast, those who preach that we are to perform the law as some sort of second "blessing" fail to heed Paul's admonition that "after faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (referring to the law). Galatians 3:25. Consequently, they become "blind leaders of the blind" and both they and those that follow them fall into the ditch. Matthew 15:14-15.

Others, particularly modern day Sadducees, do not preach the law so much as they preach the traditions of men (i.e. touch not, taste not) and/or the philosophies of men (i.e. psychology) as doctrines. The Apostle Paul warned against such when he said:

Colossians 2:6-9 & 16-23 (emphasis, in bold, added)

6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

...

- 16 ¶ Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:**
17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.
- 18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,**
19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.
- 20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,**
21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not;
22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?
23 Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

Most, however, are not pure Pharisees nor pure Sadducees, but rather incorporate some of the errors of both in order to justify themselves, even as the following passage, which highlights an encounter between Jesus and the Pharisees and scribes, suggests:

Mark 7:1-23 (emphasis, in bold, added)

- 1 ¶ Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.
2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault.
3 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.
4 And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables.
5 **Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?**
6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.
7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.
8 **For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of**

men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:

11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free.

12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;

13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

14 And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand:

15 There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

16 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

17 And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

18 And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that **whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him;**

19 Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

20 And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

The truth is, about the only time these different groups agree upon anything, is when they join together to reject those who preach the truth (Jesus). John 14:6. Is that not what happened at Jesus' trial? Is the same not true today?

One point that the above-quoted passages make exceedingly clear is that holiness, as with all things in the Lord, is walked in by faith and cannot be measured by the law nor any fleshly measure. Was that not Peter's point when he preached unto those in the Temple (after healing the beggar who had been lame from his mother's womb at the Gate called Beautiful, Acts 3:1-11), saying:

Acts 3:12-13 & 16

12 ¶ And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

...

16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Did not Paul preach the same to the fallen Galatian church when he said

Galatians 3:1-5

1 ¶ O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

4 Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.

5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

True holiness simply means to be totally separated from this world unto Christ. When the believer walks perfectly in it, he becomes one with Jesus and with His Father in accordance with Jesus' prayer, recorded in John 17 and excerpted below:

20 ¶ Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

We know that it can be achieved because the Church of the Thessalonians (alone amongst the churches that Paul wrote to) did it, as the opening passages to both Paul's epistles to the Thessalonians make clear:

Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is **in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ**: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. I Thessalonians 1:1 (emphasis added).

Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians **in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**: II Thessalonians 1:1 (emphasis added).

To achieve true holiness, however, one must "lose his life" for Christ's sake as the Scripture says:

Matthew 16:25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

See also Mark 8:35, Luke 9:24 and Luke 17:33. Thus nothing short of total commitment is required. Moreover, it takes utter humility; for no man will "lose his life" if he thinks that some part of his life is worth saving. It is here that the Scripture separates the men from the boys.

Baptism and its Relation to Holiness

While not equivalent to holiness, a proper understanding of baptism is critical to walking in true holiness. Again, this is an area of much confusion in the church today.

Just as God is one and yet comprised of three parts (Father, Word and Holy Spirit); so man is one and yet three parts (body, soul and spirit). The same is true of baptism. There is one baptism (Ephesians 4:5) comprised of three parts (blood, water and spirit). This is what the Scripture refers to in the following passages:

I John 5:7-8

7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Matthew 28:19

These verses confirm the triune nature of baptism, just as Jesus did in his discourse with Nicodemus, excerpted below:

John 3:3-5

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

So how does all this fit together and what does it have to do with holiness? Let me explain briefly.

Baptism of Blood

The baptism of blood is the baptism unto repentance. It occurs when you believe the Gospel. The Gospel's stand is that man is so evil (i.e. sinful by nature) that the only way for any of us to be saved was for God the Father to send His Son (Jesus Christ) to live a perfect, sinless life amongst us – thereby qualifying Him to be the perfect sacrifice or Lamb of God – and then willingly lay down His life for us, becoming a cursed thing on the cross that all the sins of the world might come upon Him, that the blood of His sacrifice could be a propitiation for all of our sins for all time. Furthermore, after spending three days in Hell, He crossed the great gulf fixed to Abraham's bosom, bringing all of those who had died in faith before His death with Him to Heaven, even as He promises He will raise us from the dead unto life eternal if we will but believe on Him.

At the baptism of blood, the Father washes our soul in the precious blood of His Son Jesus Christ, and breathes His Spirit into our "soul" causing us to become a "living soul" once again. It is this "breath of life" that causes our souls, that had been dead in trespasses and sins, to be made alive again, and enables us to "see" (i.e. perceive or understand) the things of the Kingdom of God as Jesus spoke of in John 3:3 above. Thus we see that the baptism of blood is for the benefit of man's soul. It is performed by God the Father, who washes us (i.e. our souls) in the blood of His dear Son Jesus.

Unless and until one is "born again" of the "blood" one is yet in the flesh, alienated from God, and can never be holy. This is an important point often missed today, because there are many in the church, so-called, who have believed "another gospel" rather than THE GOSPEL. This is what Paul was referring to when he wrote:

Galatians 1:6-9

6 ¶ I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

When one believes "another gospel" you may receive something or someone (i.e. a demonic spirit) but it is not Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit. And you are yet alienated from God, unwashed by the Blood of the Lamb.

Baptism of Water

The baptism of water is not a baptism of repentance, as many teach in the church today, but rather a baptism into the Body of Jesus Christ. At water baptism, you (referring to your soul or mind), by faith, are buried with Christ in the "likeness of his death" that you might be raised by faith in the power of God, whose Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead, "in the likeness of his resurrection." Romans 6:5. In water baptism, we walk out of the water, by faith reckoning ourselves "dead indeed unto sin" (referring to our carnal man), "but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:11.

Water baptism, therefore, is where that "circumcision of the heart" (Romans 2:29) occurs that separates you (referring to your soul, which is the seat of your will or intellect) from that which is evil (namely your cursed flesh) unto God. It was this battle that Paul was referring to when he warned the church at Colosse to

8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

Colossians 2:8-12.

The end of water baptism is that you, when you reckon yourself "dead indeed unto sin," lose your life for Christ's sake and, by faith in the power of God, are "delivered ... from the power of darkness" being "translated ... into the kingdom of his dear Son." Colossians 1:13.

While a minister may be the person who dunks you, it is the Holy Spirit of God that translates you into the resurrected Body of Jesus Christ. This operation is for your body, as you put off the old man (i.e. your flesh) and put on the new man (i.e. the Body of Jesus Christ) until such time as we receive our new, eternal, incorruptible bodies in Heaven. This is a critical step on the path to true "holiness". It is also what Jesus was

referring to in John 3:5 when He said that a man must be "born of water."

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the immersion of your spirit into God's Holy Spirit. It is performed by Jesus Christ. Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8 and Luke 3:16. It is the "born ... of the Spirit" that Jesus spoke of to Nicodemus and it, together with being "born of the water," is what enables the believer to "enter into the kingdom of God." John 3:5. To "enter into the kingdom of God" is to walk in "demonstration of the Spirit and of power" as Paul did (I Corinthians 2:4). It is what the early church did following the day of Pentecost and as recorded throughout the Book of Acts, and it is the birthright of all believers as Jesus made clear when He said

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. John 14:12.

As with each of the baptisms, God often (but not always), uses a minister as an intermediary. What is different about the baptism of the Holy Spirit is that God only gave authority to His Apostles to serve as His intermediaries, for it is only by the "laying on of the apostles' hands [that] the Holy Ghost [is] given." Acts 8:18. (I suggest that you read Acts 8:5-25 for context, for it shows that Philip, who was a deacon who had been baptized in the Holy Spirit himself, was able to do many miracles, but that did not mean he had authority to impart the baptism of the Holy Spirit.)

Is it any wonder then that the church, which has nearly uniformly rejected the apostles, is so divided over the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Some teach that there is no baptism of the Holy Spirit. Others teach that anyone can lay hands on a believer to impart the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Both are wrong. That leaves part of the church devoid of the power of God, and another part receiving "seducing spirits" that masquerade as God's Holy Spirit.

When the believer has been "born again" or "baptized" in the blood, water and Spirit, the believer is complete and entire, wanting nothing. He is fully equipped to walk in true holiness, that is, being wholly separated unto God and becoming one with Jesus Christ and God the Father, as the church of the Thessalonians did. Baptism does not make the believer holy, for the believer must yet choose to walk by faith, else all the churches Paul established would have been IN Christ Jesus and IN God the Father. Nonetheless, a proper understanding of baptism is critical to becoming "holy" in the Lord.

Why, you might ask? Well does not the scripture teach that the Body of Jesus Christ is the temple of the Holy Spirit? Is that not what Jesus said, when the Jews asked for a sign:

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

21 But he spake of the temple of his body. John 2:19-21.

By contrast, do not most people today believe that their cursed, carnal bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit? Is this not yet another "doctrine of devils", for if your carnal body were the temple of the Holy Spirit, then how could Paul say -

Romans 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

Moreover, why would Jesus never command us to love Him with our carnal bodies? After all, is not the first commandment as follows?

Mark 12:30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

Furthermore, why would we be repeatedly commanded to NOT walk or live after "the flesh" for to do so brings about condemnation and death? See e.g. Romans 8:1-5 & 8:13, Galatians 3:3 and II Peter 2:10.

The truth is that those preaching holiness by the law or otherwise after the flesh often have a "form" of godliness as Paul said (read II Timothy 3:1-9), but they deny the power thereof. Most importantly, by their doctrines of personal holiness after the flesh, they deny the power and sufficiency of the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. While they may look really good after the flesh, their focus is on themselves and what they do, not on the Lord and what He does. As a consequence, they have no idea what Paul meant when he said:

1 Timothy 1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

Or what Paul was referring to when he said:

24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. Romans 7:24-25.

In other words, they do not know THE GOSPEL, namely that they themselves are utterly depraved sinners who must trust daily in the sufficiency of the blood of Jesus Christ to cover all their sins. It is for this reason that Paul warns Timothy to turn away from such. II Timothy 3:5.

Sadly, the churches are full of such people and pastors are often the worst offenders. Jude refers to some of these when he says that "certain men" have crept into the church "unawares" who are preordained unto condemnation. They are "ungodly men," who turn the "grace of God" (which covers all of our sins and saves us) into "lasciviousness." Jude 1:4. In other words, these are men who are destined for hell who come against those that preach the grace of God, accusing us of teaching lasciviousness because we deny that the law (or worse yet, the commandments and traditions of men) is the standard by which Christians should be judged. They "slanderosly" report of us, as those in times past did of Paul, that we teach "let us do evil that good may come." Romans 3:8.

Given their focus on the law as it pertains to what we do in the flesh, is it any wonder that they look good to our natural eyes? Otherwise, how would they be able to creep in to the church unawares? Jude 1:4. That is why Jude reports that these types have "men's persons in admiration because of advantage." Jude 1:16. Is it any wonder that they deceive the people, much like the scribes and Pharisees did the Jews in Jesus' day? Did not Jesus say unto the Pharisees that they were of their father, the devil. John 8:44. Therefore, once again, we have Satan lifting up those that are his as though they are the Lord's to deceive the undiscerning.

3. Bride of Christ.

Lastly, but perhaps most deadly of all the doctrines of devils out there today, is the teaching that the Church IS the bride of Christ. This doctrine emanates from that church which is the great "whore" spoken of in Revelation 17-19, whose last head shall be THE ANTICHRIST. The acceptance of the doctrine that the church is the bride of Christ is central to Christians, so-called, putting into power the Antichrist.

In direct, contradiction to this doctrine of devils, the following passages from the KJV make clear that New Jerusalem is the bride of Christ:

Revelation 21:1-2 & 9-10

1 ¶ And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

....

9 ¶ And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.
10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God....

Far from bring a bride, the following Scriptures make it absolutely clear that the Church IS the resurrected Body of Jesus Christ:

Ephesians 1:17-23

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:
18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,
19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,
20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,
21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:
22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,
23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

I Corinthians 12:12-14

12 ¶ For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.
13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.
14 For the body is not one member, but many.

Romans 12:4-5

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:
5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Ephesians 4:4-16

4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;
5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Sadly, contrary to the above Scriptures, most Christians today believe that they are the bride of Christ. As such, in the spirit, they become just like the homosexuals who they love to hate. The significance of this error cannot be understated, particularly given the fact that the scripture is crystal clear that homosexuality is an abomination to the Lord. See e.g. Genesis 18:16 to 19:25, Matthew 11:20-24, Romans 1:19-32, I Corinthians 6:9-11 and Jude 1:7.

The way this doctrinal error manifests itself most markedly is by the loss of the power of God. The Body of Christ, as contrasted with the "bride", moves forward in Christ Jesus doing the works of God by faith, even as Christ did. This is what the early church did, as recorded in the Book of Acts, and is His promise to all who will believe on Him.

12 ¶ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. John 14:12-14.

The key to walking in this promise is that one must dwell IN His name (i.e. the Body of Jesus Christ) by faith.

This does not mean that we use His name as some kind of magician's "mantra" as is common today. Instead, we must "earnestly contend [in other words, we must fight] for THE FAITH which was once delivered unto the saints." Jude 1:3. Ultimately, this leads the believer to "cease from his own works," which are nothing but vanity, and enter into God's "rest" (i.e. the Body of Jesus Christ) where the works that the believer does are the "works of God" and not his own. Hebrews 4:9-10. Is this not what Jesus testified that He did when He said?

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. John 14:10.

Does not this hearken back to our earlier discussions on the meaning of baptism and the Body of Christ being the temple of the Holy Spirit? For when you have been baptized and are one with Jesus Christ and God the Father, then does not that same Holy Spirit that did the works in and through Jesus, do the same through you? No longer do you walk by faith in your abilities, but rather "can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth" you. Philippians 4:13.

In contrast to the Body of Christ, the bride church is selfish and carnal, constantly demanding attention. Jesus described such when he said:

16 ¶ But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,
17 And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. Matthew 11:16-17.

Furthermore, rather than walking in the power of God, it cowers in the trenches praying for God (or one of their idols, the false prophets, after whose lying signs and wonders they constantly seek) to do everything for them.

Those in the bride church have forgotten that the scripture teaches –

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Rather than believing God and doing His works by faith, as David did when he slew Goliath, the bride church cannot believe and is constantly seeking after a sign.

Did not Jesus say that "an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign"? See Matthew 12:39, Matthew 16:4 and Mark 8:12. Does that not aptly describe the church of today?

Has not the bride church departed from the Lord through an "evil heart of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:12), manifested by its rejection of His Word? Has the bride church not gone a whoring after other lovers, namely the "seducing spirits" spoken of above and that Paul warned us would come to pass in the "latter times"? I Timothy 4:1.

The result, in the church, is the "falling away" that Paul warned would immediately precede the rise of the Antichrist (aka the son of perdition), as set forth in the passages quoted below:

II Thessalonians 2:1-4

- 1 ¶ Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,
- 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.
- 3 ¶ 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;
- 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

II Timothy 3:1-9

- 1 ¶ This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.
- 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
- 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,
- 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;
- 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.
- 6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,
- 7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.
- 8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.
- 9 But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.

Bear in mind that the "men" spoken of in verse 2 are not those outside of the church, so-called, but rather those in the church.

Read in this context, it does not paint a very attractive picture of the “church” in the “last days.” Far from being a hallelujah party waiting for Jesus’ arrival, the “last days” church will have come full circle – looking much like the Jewish church of Jesus’ day that crucified Him. That church was anticipating his arrival to justify them. When He arrived He justified His Father and those, mostly ungodly sinners that were alienated from the church of His day, who believed on Him (i.e. the blood of His sacrifice) for their justification. Those that believed in their own righteousness (i.e. their works after the flesh) were the ones responsible for crucifying Him that “the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, [might] be required of [that] generation” as Jesus said. Luke 11:50. And so it shall be in these last days.

Truly, there is a revival that is taking place across the globe that is a revival of the Lord. Its central tenets are faith, not in our own works, but rather in the Blood of the Lamb. It is witnessed by the power of God’s Holy Spirit, confirming the Word preached with signs following. It is known by its love. Not felios or eros, but rather the agape love of God. It is the revival of the few and is embodied in the Church of Philadelphia described in Revelation 3:7-12.

The Lord is bringing that Church of Philadelphia together as we speak. It shall go forth in unity, with Jesus Christ and God the Father, ministering the Word of God in love and power and it shall be rejected by the great multitudes in the “last days” church. When the Church of Philadelphia has completed His mission and are too few in number to hold back the Antichrist any longer, the members of that church shall be “caught up” with the Lord in the clouds and then shall the Antichrist be revealed. I Thessalonians 4:13-18, II Thessalonians 2:1-12, Revelation 3:10 and I Corinthians 15:51-58. Unfortunately, it will be the Christians, so-called, that have rejected God’s Word, as ministered by His Church of Philadelphia, in favor of another word, and His Spirit in favor of another spirit, that will usher in the reign of the Antichrist. Thankfully, the grace of God will yet be sufficient to save many of them through the trial of the Great Tribulation that follows. Oh, but how great shall be that trial and woe unto those who receive the mark of the beast! Let him that hath ears to hear, hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.