

What's *Wrong*
With The Church?

Revised and Enlarged

Thomas S. Gibson

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About The Prophet



Thomas S. Gibson

I was born in 1955 in Wainwright into a christian family with two brothers and one sister. My dad was an accountant. He was confined to a wheelchair because of polio when he was young. When I was eleven we found out he had cancer. He died within a few months.

We went to a Gospel Mission church when I was young. They did not believe in prophets, apostles, or tongues. As I grew up we changed churches for various reasons. We always seemed to be changing churches every few years: Nazarene, Pentecostal (PAOC), Salvation Army, Evangelical Free. At least the Pentecostals believed in tongues.

When I was 10 or 12 I began to have some knowledge in my spirit that I was called to be something special for the Lord. But I did not understand, at that time, how I just knew this inside of me. I had no experience in the Holy Spirit revealing things to me at that time.

I went through a rebellion in my teens. I did not do anything “wrong” as many did. But I had the idea that if I rebelled against the Lord and did not do any sins such as drinking or smoking. It would be okay. I just didn’t want to obey.

I was under conviction for this rebellion. Once, in a service I went forward to accept the Lord just to get rid of the conviction I was under. I didn’t mean it, and I did not fool God for one minute!

In a short lived revival that went through Wainwright when I was turning 18, I made a commitment to serve the Lord no matter what. This time I meant it. It gave me much peace in my heart and a renewed interest in studying the Bible.

But it was in that study time that I began to realize that many of the churches I had

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gone to did not believe everything in Scripture. This started a full time Bible study in private. The Holy Spirit and the Bible were my only teachers.

It was at about this time that I was shown, by the Lord, my calling. It did not happen in a christian or even in a religious setting. I was at the Wainwright Stampede. They had rides, the stampede, and of course, carnival games.

I was walking around looking at the various games. I felt the Holy Spirit prompt me to watch a specific game, and so I did. This particular game had a wheel which they would spin, with a mouse would coming out of the hole in the centre. Because of the spinning wheel, he would run to the outside and into one of the many holes there. These outside holes were numbered from 1 to 35 (or some such number; I can't remember exactly how high the numbers went).

As I watched, I knew in my spirit that the Lord would give me the first, third, and fifth numbers out of the next five games. Of course, I did not gamble, but just watched. The Lord gave me a number, and yes, it was the correct one. The next game He gave me nothing. On the third He also gave me a number, and it was right. And so on through the fifth game, just as He had said.

I left the area and went for a long walk. During this time the Holy Spirit began to speak to me about my call to the prophetic office. I knew very little about it at that time, but the sign that the Lord had given me was clear: He had called me to the prophetic.

Even though the Lord did not give me prophecy or any type of public revelation at that time, He did talk to me and taught me about the commitment and the sacrifice of my call. I would occasionally receive dreams concerning my personal life, but nothing the Lord wanted me to give in public.

It was in 1985 or '86 that the Lord got me interested in computers. This interest came directly from Him, and not from me. I knew then that He would use them to send prophecies He gave me to the world; but I could not understand how this would happen at that time. Telecommunication (as it was called then), was at a speed of 1200 baud (or bps), and sometimes as slow as 300 baud. At that speed anyone could read it faster than it came onto your screen! And computers were not interconnected as they are now.

As the speed increased the Lord directed me to place prophecies of others (still none through me) onto a BBS (computer bulletin board service). Other computers could then phone mine and read or download them. I called it "The Full Gospel BBS." It was not very successful, and I shut it down. I started it up about a year later under the name "The Prophetic Word BBS." A little more successful, but not much.

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At that time compuserve was getting popular, and I started an account there. Then the Lord began giving me prophecies and I would place them as a file in the religious section from time to time. This would have been about 1994.

Also at about the same time with the Lord's instruction, I started looking into the idea of the internet. During this time it was totally command-line driven, and no such thing as a web site. By using special commands from the keyboard you could send email. While I did not go into the internet at that time, I kept an eye on it as I knew the Lord wanted me to go in that direction.

However, in 1996 AGT (now known as Telus) gave Wainwright local internet access, and it was in May of that year I started "The Prophetic Word" web page. All of this was with the clear direction of the Lord (from the beginning of my first computer purchase and onward). As I said earlier, I knew that I would use it to circulate the prophecies that He would give me.

I have never married and have worked in and around Wainwright all my life. Most of it as a concrete finisher for a local construction firm. But I have also worked in the oilfield as a crane operator and driven truck.

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Preface

I approach the Bible with the understanding and knowledge that it is the verbally inspired Word of God; and as such it must be received as the authoritative Word from God in **all** things.

This book is written to all who will receive it: both to the christian and to the unbeliever. The christian, because they need to hear the truth without any interpretation by those who wish to have *their* church foremost in everyone's mind; the unbeliever, because they realize that the constant differences in the various churches--all who believe in the same Bible--simple does not make any sense!

The purpose of this book is to reveal the truth in a way which does not attempt to interpret the Bible, but rather to take it at face value. What it says is what God meant to say. There is no reason or purpose in attempting an interpretation. If God had meant to say something else, He would have said something else. What need is there for **man** to interpret **God's** work? Indeed, such action could be taken as blasphemy!

Yet, do we not see this very thing in the church today? We have untold denominations which avoid, interpret, and add to the Word of God. They avoid passages because they have no answer--that is, no answer to the contradictions between their beliefs compared to the Word. They interpret because they wish to make a passage say something it does not. And they add to the Word in order to see their beliefs in the Word where it clearly is absent.

This type of activity by so-called Bible believers has got to stop. Indeed, in many churches they have a more open approach to looking at what the Word truly says. Slowly people are beginning to realize that we must not make the basis of our beliefs the facts that we have always been taught, but instead to find out by careful study of the Word what God is saying to us. It is not my purpose to belittle the beliefs of any one church, or any group of churches, but to show clearly how the teachings from the past simply do not align with the Word of God.

I have spend the last 30 years reading the Word only to find, time after time, a passage

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that not only contradicted what I was taught, but clearly contradicted what I had believed up until that point. Again and again I would have had to change my thinking in order to make sure that it aligned to the Word of God without any interpretation on my part.

In the writing of this book I try and convey to others what the Holy Spirit has been teaching me through these years.

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Introduction

A few days ago (September 2000), God gave me a title, "What's Wrong With The Church?" I knew then that this was a subject on which He wanted me to write.

At that time God told me I would have trouble with this subject, I would not want to write it the way in which He would show me. I argued with the Lord concerning this: of course I would write it as He showed me! But as He began to reveal how strongly worded much of this writing would be, God was proved correct. I did not want to put forth the subject in the way in which He was showing me. I had to bow down and repent for thinking I could soft peddle what God had wanted me to publish!

I do not take lightly what I have written here. I have carefully researched the Word of God to show that these things are so. Clearly this is something that must be told! The church has wandered away from the strict teaching that we find in the Bible into interpretations that fit with their present thinking and with the political correctness of the day.

God did not set down the words in Scripture only to have them bent out of shape by the present day church. They are meant to be taken just the way they are found. They mean exactly what they say--no more, and no less!

The main thrust in this book is to look at the present day evangelical christian churches. I am not looking solely at any one denomination, but rather at all protestant christian churches as a general entity. Not every church is guilty of everything thing that is mentioned. However, these errors are known errors in many churches.

The purpose here is to draw an exact line between what is being taught by the churches today, and what is clearly taught by the Word of God.

Over the past several weeks (September 2000), God has been giving me prophecies against the "organized church." It is now clear that He was leading me toward the writing of this work.

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We must carefully compare the written Word of God to the practices and teachings found in the churches. We cannot allow differences between the two.

The Revised and Enlarged Edition

God has now (September 2002) directed me to review and add to this work additional material which He has taught me over the last two years. This new book is the "***Revised and Enlarged***" edition.

God bless you as you read what He has been revealing to me.

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Chapter One

In The Beginning . . .

In the beginning truth was given by God through the law of Moses to man. It was to show man what was right and what was wrong; and if sin was committed how to find forgiveness with God. As long as this was followed, man had a relationship with God. This was the truth of the Old Testament.

Over time it became perverted by changes made by man. To see evidence of this lets look at two quotes of Jesus concerning the teachings of His day.

12 Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Matthew 16:12

25 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. Matthew 23:25

The Pharisees and Sadducees had altered the original teachings of the law to the point where Jesus had said, "beware of the leaven of ... the Pharisees and Sadducees."

They interpreted the Word of God to their own thinking and to their own ends. This was in the time of the Old Testament.

Now in the New Testament we have been given further truth. The Lamb of God (Jesus Christ) has come to die for us. In place of temporary sacrifices we now have "**The Permanent Sacrifice.**" And with this great revelation we have come into the church age—the age in which we still are living.

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In the beginning of this time we find that the church was totally in one accord. They would not even consider the idea that the truth should be split into sects or denominations.

32 And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own; but all things were common property to them. Acts 4:32

That's how it started. There was a complete dedication to the things of the Lord. No one would even consider their own desires. It was important that these things be not changed from the original church dedication. We have been given a warning in the New Testament to prevent the errors made by the Pharisees and Sadducees. This is found in Hebrews:

1 For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. Hebrews 2:1

But we have now come to the place where the one church which was founded on the Blood of Jesus Christ has become many denominations and sects. We have drifted a long ways from what was first founded! Each sect interprets the Word of God to determine what it means. As we will see, not one of these denominations really believes the Word of God for what it says.

This began back in the days of the Apostle Paul. We find this warning in the letters to the church:

6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel;
7 which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ.
8 But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. Galatians 1:6-8

And as it began back in those days, now it has now accelerated to the point where church denominations are so numerous that they are almost impossible to count. Each church puts its own spin on what it reads. In essence, they wish to twist the Scriptures to say what they have already decided it must say!

I have heard (and heard again), of many sermons preached on why a particular passage of Scripture does not mean what it literally says. It has come to the place where many denominations sit down and determine what they believe, and then search the Bible to find out what part of a verse they can misquote to back it up. They grab a verse here and a verse there and come up with almost any belief system you can imagine! But what does the Word say about this?

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15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15

We find that we must carefully study, *in context*, each passage. It is an error to grab a verse, or a part of a verse without studying the context in which it is stated. I encourage all those who read this to have a Bible ready to look up the entire passage when I quote from the Word of God.

In the chapters that follow I have taken broad themes and discussed them with an outlook of how the average christian evangelical church views it compared to what the Bible clearly states. The purpose here is to establish the direction that the church has taken compared to the truth of God's Word.

This is not meant to be a demeaning book. But it must be highly critical when there are clear and well defined differences between God's Word and the churches who claim to follow it.

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Chapter Two

Salvation and Baptism

Surely the evangelical churches have not turn away from the basics of the gospel of Christ. This is one area in which we should all agree. But as we look at the Scriptures and compare them to the practices and beliefs of the church today we will see that there are a few differences between them.

Have we taken anything out of the Biblical salvation plan? How about adding to that plan?

Lets first look at the common statement which is heard in so many churches. These are the words "ask Jesus into your heart." It sounds great. It must be in the Bible. But have you looked? I have, and so have others. Look all you want, it is not there. There are no Scriptures I can quote here. It is an argument of silence. Here we have found that the church has indeed added at least one thing to salvation.

If we are not to ask Jesus into our heart what are we to do? What does the Bible say we must do to be saved?

9 that if you confess with you mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved;
10 for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. Romans 10:9-10

There is no question here of how to be saved. It is spelled out clearly. Confess Jesus as Lord of your life with your mouth. True, evangelical churches today believe this. So why add the comment of asking Jesus into your heart? It is preached in almost all of the evangelical churches that I know of. And yet where do we find this? Only in the church and not in the Word. It is these errors that have crept into the system and they show how easily problems can occur.

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Another area that has been of concern to me is the Blood--Jesus' Blood. I doubt seriously that any church would deny that the Blood that Jesus shed for our sin is part of salvation. However, I cannot begin to count the many, many, many times I have heard salvation preached from the pulpit, and the Blood not even mentioned. This is serious. While it is not denied, it is however, avoided.

22 And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Hebrews 9:22

If we begin to avoid the focal point of salvation (the Blood) then how can we believe we are leading people to the truth? The very focal point of the entire Bible is the Blood of Jesus. We must not belittle this. It is the most important point that can be made.

If satan, (and it is satan), can tempt us to avoid an important subject such as this, he has made an inroad to the perversion of the salvation message.

I am not trying to nitpick in this chapter. I fully believe that if we can be tempted to avoid a subject as important as the Blood of Jesus, then we also can be slowly led away to the point of no longer mentioning the Blood at all. This will eventually lead to the salvation message no longer containing the most important, and necessary, ingredient. It will simply be dropped from the message, and satan will have achieved an important goal.

This is how all perversions of Scripture happen. Satan slowly works at having a subject avoided, then later at having it dropped completely from our list of beliefs.

We can find another area of difference between the churches and the Bible. It is an area that has been taken out of the Biblical salvation process and made into a religious ceremony: that is baptism.

16 He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. Mark 16:16

Clearly we see here that baptism is part of salvation. It is not found anywhere in Scripture except as part of repentance, and therefore at the beginning of the salvation walk. And yet this is not where it is found in most churches. I do not know of any church which has not ripped out baptism and placed it in its own ceremony long after the person has been saved. Nowhere in the verses of the Bible can we find any example of this occurring.

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Let us look at what Peter said by the Spirit:

21 And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you--not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience--through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I Peter 3:21

Here in I Peter we see another example of a Scripture which places baptism at salvation, and further, does not leave any room to place it elsewhere. But does this mean if a person is not baptized he is lost? Lets look at the thief which hung beside Jesus on the cross.

39 And one of the criminals who hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!"

40 But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?"

41 "And we indeed justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong."

42 And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!"

43 And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

Luke 23:39-43

Here was a person who could not be baptized, and yet was saved. So it is the repentance which is important. We must realize that if a person cannot be baptized, (because there is no time or because of circumstances), you are not lost.

And yet baptism is commanded in Scripture at the time of repentance. It is time the church returned to the ways of the Bible.

Lets look at one other passage.

26 But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, "Arise and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a desert road).

27 And he arose and went; and behold, there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship.

28 And he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah.

29 And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot."

30 And when Philip had run up, he heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

31 And he said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me? And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

32 Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this:

"He was led as a sheep to slaughter;
And as a Lamb before its shearer is silent,
So He does not open His mouth.

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33 "In humiliation His judgment was taken away;
Who shall relate His generation?
For His life is removed from the earth.

34 And the eunuch answered Philip and said, "Please tell me, of whom does this prophet say this? Of himself, or of someone else?"

35 And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him.

36 And as they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?"

37 And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

38 And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch; and he baptized him.

39 And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, but went on his way rejoicing.

40 But Philip found himself at Azotus; and as he passed through he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities, until he came to Caesarea.

It is obvious from this passage that when Philip preached Jesus to the eunuch that he preached baptism as the way of repentance. Indeed, if we would take the time to look at the many other verses on this subject we would find that baptism was always taken as the step of repentance from the time of John the Baptist.

We have allowed satan to deceive us to the point of removing an aspect of salvation from the Bible and placing it in its own special ceremony months later. It is only in our modern religious churches that we have taken this act of repentance and made it into a separate commandment.

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Chapter Three

Communion

Communion is accepted in all evangelical churches. There is little or no difference in the way it is viewed or practiced. But I believe that even in this commonly accepted New Testament commandment there has been a serious error.

Communion has been changed in at least one way in most churches from the way in which it is presented in Scripture. Let look at what Jesus said when He first introduced this New Testament commandment.

26 And while they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you;

28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.

29 "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." Matthew 26:26-29

Now there are some churches who accept the communion table accurately. But not all have done so. Some have added something here. It is the idea that the bread and the cup are symbolic of Christ's Body and Blood.

So where do we find this symbolism? Is it anywhere in Scripture? The facts are very simple. Jesus referred to His taking of the bread with this statement: "this **is** My Body." How can we get symbolism out of "this **is**?" He states positively that it **is** His Body. This statement makes it clear and leaves no room for doubt. There can be no symbolism.

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What about the Blood? It states the same thing. Jesus said "this **is** My Blood." So we again find that there is no room for symbolism.

But does this make any real difference? Could it even be important? To find the answers to these questions we will have to go to I Corinthians and look what the Apostle Paul stated by the Holy Spirit concerning communion.

23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread;

24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

25 In the same way He took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

26 For as often as you eat this bread or drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

27 Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.

28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink the cup.

29 For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly.

30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.

31 But if we judge ourselves rightly, we should not be judged.

32 But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord in order that we may not be condemned along with the world. I Corinthians 11:23-32

Here we find that not only is it stated that this **is** the Body and this **is** the Blood of Jesus, but also that we can be judged if we eat it in an unworthy manner. This is important. We certainly do not want to eat it in an unworthy manner, because it is clearly stated that we can be weak, sick and even die (sleep), when we do so.

So what is eating and drinking unworthily? Certainly those who eat and drink the communion who have departed from the ways of the Lord, or have never repented and become a christian, would be considered to be eating and drinking unworthily. This is what most people believe it means. And it certainly does refer to this; but is it limited to that?

Is this the only way in which you can eat and drink of the communion table in an unworthy manner? Or to go further, would eating the bread and drinking the cup without accepting the Body and Blood of Jesus in them (only accepting a symbolism) be unworthy?

It is stated in verses 24 and 25 that this **is** the Body and it **is** the Blood! Therefore, how can we get away from this lack of symbolism? Clearly we cannot. Again, we have found that the Bible is clear on this point. Stating that this **is**, makes a clear point that cannot be avoided.

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We also find the judgment for not rightly discerning (or wise understanding) in verses 29 and 30. This judgment is very serious. It even goes as far as to state that there are a number in the Corinthian church that are weak and sick, and even dead because of their not judging the body rightly.

While making these statements here may upset some, we may find a passage in the Bible that will upset them even more. It is found coming from the mouth of Jesus.

51 "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh."

52 The Jews therefore began to argue with one another, saying, "how can this man give us His flesh to eat?"

53 Jesus therefore said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves.

54 "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

55 "For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.

56 "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.

57 "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

58 "This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate, and died, he who eats this bread shall live forever."

59 These things He said in the synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum.

60 Many therefore of His disciples, when they heard this said, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?" John 6:51-60

This is a difficult statement indeed. How can we, after reading this, even consider that there could be any symbolism in the communion table? We cannot not. That is clear.

Jesus prophesied of the coming communion--without symbolism. He leaves no room at all for other beliefs. It must be His Body and His Blood that we eat and drink. As we read such passages from the Bible we realize that some churches have made a clear and sinful departure from the written Word of God.

Again, as I said above, I wish to make it clear that there are some churches who do accept this without an attempt to symbolize the Body and the Blood of the Lord Jesus. This is good. But I have placed this chapter here because there are so many churches that do add symbolism where the Scripture teaching is clearly against it.

We need to repent of this sin, and move on with Jesus in a clear conscience.

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Chapter Four

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The first two chapters of the book of Acts very much puts the baptism of the Spirit into perspective for us today. Through fasting and prayer the apostles waited expectantly for the power from on high to appear. They could not know what form or in what way He would appear. But appear He would because Jesus had prophesied it.

- 1 And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.
- 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.
- 3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them.
- 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. Acts 2:1-4

As we continue to read through the second chapter of Acts, and also through subsequent chapters, we see that all those who were baptized in repentance (See Chapter One) also received the Holy Spirit. But there was an exception to this receiving the baptism of power at the same time they were baptized in repentance. This is found in Act 19.

- 1 And it came about that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found some disciples,
- 2 and he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."
- 3 And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism."
- 4 And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, Jesus."
- 5 And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Acts 19:1-5

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Here we find that only those who were baptized into John's baptism had not received the power of the Holy Spirit. They were baptized into repentance, and had not been baptized into Jesus because they had not yet heard about Him. Then after finding out about Jesus they were re-baptized into Jesus Name and also receive the power from on high.

This is how the Lord has placed the power of God in the church. The baptism of repentance should also bring about the infilling of the Holy Spirit with the power and manifestations.

However, in many churches today, somewhat like those in Ephesus, they do not know about the Holy Spirit; or at least, they do not believe it. Therefore they do not receive the very power they need to serve the Lord.

This is a sad state. It is very clear in Scripture, but they close their minds and their eyes so they cannot believe or receive it. Without opening up their Bibles and believing what is plainly there, they are missing out on one of the greatest joy's of the christian life.

We should note that the church did not expand and grow in power until the day of Pentecost. It was this infusion of power from on high that empowered the church in the book of Acts.

Unless we receive this we are mentally refusing many chapters in the Bible. And while all of us may cringe at the thought of ripping out pages of a Bible and throwing them away, we do this in a mental area when we will not accept what is plainly written there.

As far as the receiving of the Holy Spirit is concerned we need to note that there are several types of manifestations that a person can received. Usually one receives tongues and sometimes some other manifestation as well.

4 Now there are a varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord.

6 And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons.

7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

8 For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit;

9 to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,

10 and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.

11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills. I Corinthians 12:4-11

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All of these manifestations of the Holy Spirit should be working in the body of Christ, that is, in the church, in order that they receive edification and direction from the Lord Jesus.

From time to time churches seem to be so taken by the manifestations of the Spirit that they have begun to abuse this power. The apostle Paul had to speak to the Corinth church about this.

26 What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and let one interpret;

28 but if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God.

29 And let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment.

30 But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, let the first keep silent.

31 For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted;

32 and the spirits of the prophets are subject to prophets;

33 for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

I Corinthians 14:26-33

Several important points are made here through Paul. Order is important. Let each one speak one at a time, and not at the same time to the confusion of the others. If someone speaks in tongues, let someone interpret before going onto the next one with a revelation or a tongue.

Secondly, a person who wants to speak in tongues may just be praying to the Lord, and not have a revelation for all. In this case there would be no interpretation given by God. This person should be quiet in the church and speak at home to the Lord in tongues.

Another point is that the spirits of the prophets are subject to them. That is, when they have a prophecy they can "hold it" until the appropriate time to give it in an orderly way.

As a prophet myself, I have commonly noticed this. As the Holy Spirit comes strong on me with some prophecy I can "hold it" until the time is right. This may be waiting for a turn, or in many cases with me, waiting till I run (at home) for my pocket tape recorder to record it. This way I can type from the tape and keep the prophecy. Very early on in my receiving of prophecies the Lord taught me this and emphasized it to me.

Most, if not all, charismatic churches accept these things I have mentioned above.

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Most, if not all of the non-charismatic churches refuse to receive these passages from Scripture; or any of the many other passages that I could quote along these same lines. But it is still in the Bible whether they accept it or not.

Unless the church can come to the place of receiving the Holy Spirit when they repent, they have left behind the strength they need to walk the christian walk. Is it any wonder there is so little power in the churches these days?

What's Wrong With The Church

Chapter Five

The Great Commission

The great commission is one subject all evangelical churches seem to agree on. Or do they? It might depend on how much of it they are willing to accept.

Let's look at Jesus words found in Mark.

14 And afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table; and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen.

15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

16 "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but He who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

17 "And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues;

18 they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." Mark 16:14-18

Will the churches readily accept this statement of Jesus? Some will go as far as to argue that it does not even belong in the Bible. This comes from the fact that a few (but not all) of the oldest manuscripts do not contain it. They, of course, fail to mention that some of the oldest manuscripts do contain it!

In any case, I will quote from other passages of Scripture for each and every point so that there is no doubt that all of these comments of Jesus can be shown to be accurate.

8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. Acts 1:8

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The first point is that we are to preach the gospel throughout the whole earth. I know of no church that will not readily agree to this statement. But do they practise it?

Let look at Jesus actions.

10 And it happened that as He was reclining at the table in the house, behold many tax-gatherers and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples.

11 And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why is your Teacher eating with the tax-gatherers and sinners?"

12 But when He heard this, He said, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick.

13 "But go and learn what this means, "I desire compassion, and not sacrifice, for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Matthew 9:10-13

Here we see that Jesus went to the sinners. He did not call them to come to His church! He went out and found them, ate with them, and preached the gospel to them.

This is what is missing in many churches. They will go to extreme lengths to ask people to come to church and to ask them to come to special evangelical services. But will they go out and seek the lost where they are, and bring them the gospel?

This done on the streets, in the bars, or anywhere you can find sinners! Occasionally one can find some churches who do this; but unfortunately, it is very rare. They will give to missions all over the world, but will not get their "hands dirty" by preaching the gospel to those on the streets, in the bars, or wherever you can find the lost.

Jesus' second point is that we are to believe and be baptized. This is covered in chapter two in detail. Those who disbelieve are condemned.

We find this in John:

18 He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. John 3:18

Clearly it is a foundation of the gospel that those who do not believe, that is, refuse to believe, are condemned. While evangelical churches do not disagree with this, they also fail to mention it. It has been avoided. Speaking of condemnation and judgment has not been "politically correct." And we wouldn't want to make the people uncomfortable in the churches pews--now would we?

But the real problem comes with Jesus' next point: the signs! This has become a problem for many churches. You see, the signs that Jesus mentions are not occurring in the churches. We now must ask why?

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I feel very strongly that the main reason is the contradictions between the churches and the Bible (which is what this book is all about), and the lack of the baptism of the Holy Spirit which was discussed in the last chapter.

As we look at the signs we shall see what type of church Jesus instituted on this earth—that is, the original church, the book of Acts type of church. It would be a great study for all of those reading this book to look at Acts from one end to the other, and compare it to today's church. Especially in the context of the power of the Holy Spirit within the church.

17 And the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." Luke 10:17

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. Acts 2:4

19 "Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall injure you." Luke 10:19

16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. James 5: 16

These signs **must follow** those who believe!! And this is important: that the signs **follow!** We are to follow Jesus, and the signs will follow us. If we will seek the signs, and not the Lord, we have got it all backward. I cannot over emphasize this. We follow the Lord Jesus by the Holy Spirit's guidance. Then as we do so, the signs **will follow us!**

If we look at the last verse that I quoted we can get to the bottom of why we are not seeing these signs *following* those who believe. It's the fourth word, *sin*. We have looked to church doctrine to guide us; we have not looked to the Bible. We have followed the teachings of man, and not the teachings of God!

If things are to change, we must change. God is still giving the power and the signs to those who will not compromise His Own Word.

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Chapter Six

Money, Money, Money!

There are certain groups of “christians” ministries which have fallen into the trap of the love of money. They make claims of one hundred fold return for giving to the Lord. This usually translates as giving to them. In the Word we read:

10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.
I Timothy 6:10

These are very strong words as to the motivation of ones heart. But what of the claim that the Word promises one hundred fold return? Is this Scripture? Let's look at what Jesus has to say.

29 Jesus said, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake,
30 But that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life. Mark 10:29-30

It is important here to realize that Jesus said, “for My sake and for the gospel's sake.” Therefore, it is the **motive** for giving that is very important. To give up money or goods for the sake of receiving a hundred times more is not the same as giving up for the gospel's sake. It is the heart's motive that is important here.

Those who give up for Jesus' sake shall indeed see a hundred fold return for their sacrifice. That's what it says! Those who give up for the selfish reason of gaining finances in this earth will not receive this blessing. Their hearts have the wrong motive. They are not giving up for the gospel's sake, but for their own sake!

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We have been sold a bill of goods from the devil, through many false ministers and many deceived ministers, that we should lust after money in this earth and that this is acceptable to God. Many will go so far as to twist this Scripture to fit into the world's own selfish lust for finances and worldly gain.

We must remember that the Bible still says the love of money is sin. It also says a lot about what is gain with the Lord and what is gain with the world.

6 But godliness actually is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment.

7 For we have brought nothing into this world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.

8 And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.

9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.

I Timothy 6:6-10

Wow! These verses lay in on the line! There is no getting around it. The love of money is sin! It is only by godliness and contentment with what we have that we can obtain gain from God. We are to be content with food and covering. Anything else is an extra blessing from God.

Yet many christians are trying to get ahead in this world. But for what purpose? Can they use this money in the age to come? Of course not! They have been deceive with a great deception which believes that the ways of the world are acceptable to God. They are not; and they never can be.

Why do we not hear prosperity preachers preach this passage quoted above? Does it make them nervous? I think it does, and for good reason. It would prick their consciences very hard!

Now there are many preachers that go on and on about giving to their work. They say that they are always in need of money to support the work they are doing for Christ. Does this stand up to the scriptural teachings? Lets look at what Jesus said to His disciples about preparing for the ministry.

8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons; freely you received, freely give.

9 Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts,

10 or a bag for your journey, or even two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for the worker is worthy of his support. Matthew 10:8-10

It is obvious that Jesus expected them to take nothing extra for their journey. They were to walk by faith that He would meet their every need along the way. Freely they

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had received and freely they would give again. Certainly none of them begged for money from the pulpit. They would not even consider such evil deeds. If they had need of something, the Lord would take care of it.

This is almost totally lacking in the church today. Indeed, it has gone even further. Selling various products has become commonplace in the ministry. As many say, "For a minimum donation of . . .," and then you get some product. This is a thinly veiled way of merchandising God and we should wonder what spirit is operating here. How can they say they have the Holy Spirit when they act like they have a worldly spirit?

Jesus had an interesting solution to such things in His day.

14 And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers seated.

15 And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the moneychangers, and overturned their tables;

16 and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a house of merchandise." John 2:14-16

If that's how Jesus reacted to the selling of goods in the church and ministry. How do you think He would react to what is going on today? Yes, He would be looking for something to make a whip out of! Can you imagine how the people would react to this Jesus of the Bible, compared to the One they are trying to sell!

Now I am not against prosperity. But the prosperity of God is different from the prosperity of man. God believes in saving!

19 Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;

21 for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Matthew 6:19-21

Clearly there is only one place to save, to lay up treasure, and it is not on this earth but in the heaven which we shall inherit. That is the only place where we should save.

In this life we are not to love money. This is the world's security. They act and believe that they can meet their every need with it. But they have forgotten that there is an eternity ahead, and nothing they have here will go with them to the beyond.

They have been deceived greatly by their own selfish desires. It is these same desires that have crept into the church and have so perverted the teachings of many ministries.

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5 Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you."

6 so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?" Hebrews 13:5-6

With these verses I have come to the absolute conclusion that while God may indeed bless us with money for various reasons, we are not to seek it. It is the seeking that is the sin, for this seeking reveals our hearts desire—that we are in love with it. Whenever God provides money or goods for us, let us be content, concentrating on service to the Lord (freely giving because we have freely received), knowing that He shall meet our every need as they arise.

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Chapter Seven

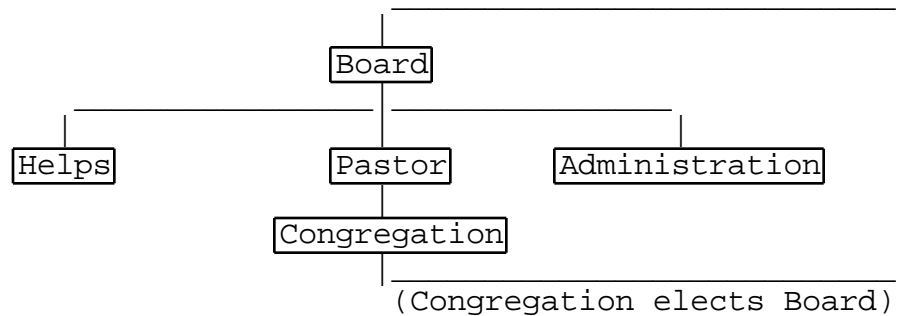
Leadership of the Church Body

Today's church leadership consists mainly of the Board (elected by the members), and the Pastor (chosen by the board or by the members). The Board answers to the members of the church; the members of the church answer to the Pastor; the Pastor answers to the Board.

Everyone answers to someone else and we have a circle. Everyone is elected. And we end up with a democracy which satisfies the government for a religious organization that is tax exempt; and it satisfies the world which loves to see democracy in action.

But is this compatible with the New Testament church that is given to us in the Bible? Does God support a democracy?

Let's look at the church leadership as we find it in most evangelical churches today.



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Here we can see the circle that I was referring to above. It is a democracy circle.

But God has not given us a democratic church in the Bible. He has always had a theocratic type of government—that is, the Lord Jesus Himself rules His church. Clearly democracy in the church cannot be compatible with Scripture, but rather, we are using modern thinking to design the leadership of the church today.

But what is the true leadership of the New Testament church?

In order to understand the references to foundations that we find in the following passage we need to understand how they made a foundation for a building in those days. They did not use concrete and steel as we do. Instead they built the foundation using blocks of stone. The most perfectly squared stone was the cornerstone. From there the rest of the foundation stones were aligned to it, making a straight stone foundation upon which the building was erected.

To find the scriptural church foundation we need to look at Ephesians:

19 So then you are no longer stranger and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,
20 having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,
21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; Ephesians 2:19-21

We see that Christ Jesus is the cornerstone, and the apostles and prophets that **He appoints** are the rest of the foundation. Therefore, if a church does not accept the apostle and prophet, they are clearly eliminating most of their own foundation. How can such a church stand? Clearly it cannot!

We need to understand that the apostle and prophet have not been eliminated from the new testament church. However, they have been eliminated from most churches today! This is a very grievous error. If we eliminate such offices from the church, we can no longer build this church in God's Biblical order!

Once we have realized that the foundation is made up of Jesus Christ as the cornerstone and the rest of the foundation as the apostles and prophets, we can look at the rest of the leadership of the church that we find in the Bible.

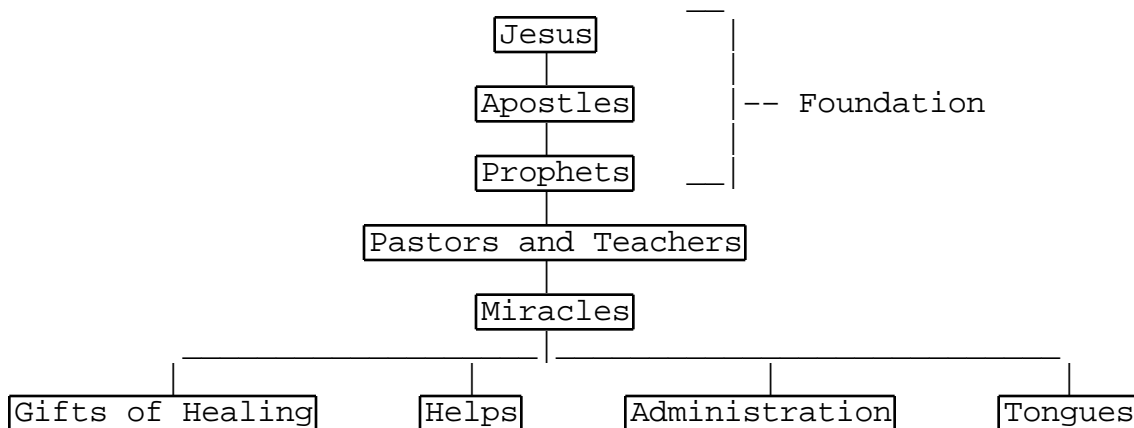
What's Wrong With The Church

28 And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. I Corinthians 12:28

11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, Ephesians 4:11

It should be pointed out that I placed pastors and teachers together. The reason for this is that a pastor, in Biblical terms, is a shepherd and teacher of the congregation.

If we put all of this into a chart it will look like this:



Here we find the true church leadership starts with Jesus and continues with those whom He has appointed within the church. In the quote from Ephesians above we see that Jesus appoints people to these areas; they are not elected or chosen by men.

You will notice that in I Corinthians 12:28 that Gifts of Healing, Helps, Administration, and Tongues, are put together into one level.

However, we would be seriously in error if we took the above chart and put man in charge. Man cannot and must not be in charge of the church.

In any position that God chooses to place a man--whether apostle, prophet, pastor, teacher, or whatever--that man must submit to the leading of the Lord. It must be the Lord who is in charge through the man. Any man that God calls must be in submission to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

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Then as the Lord works through the ones whom He has appointed, the church will be lead by Jesus above. It is important to realize that every person should submit to the Holy Spirit's leading, and therefore, each and everyone will be working together as the Lord directs.

This is the true church that God has ordained, being in total submission to Him. I personally do not know of any church that follows it. But if we wish to have a church that truly submits to the Lord Jesus Christ, instead of to each other, we will have to conform to this model of submission that we find in the Bible!

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Chapter Eight

Leadership of the Local Church

Now let us look at the leadership of the local church. This has always been assumed to be the pastor; however, there are no Scripture for this. Indeed, the word pastor only appears once in the entire New Testament in Ephesians chapter 4. The pastor is a shepherd, teaching and guiding the sheep. He is never referred to as a leader of the local assembly.

As we look at the Scriptures we will find that the apostles appointed, as the Holy Spirit directed, elders who are the leadership of the local body.

21 And after they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,
22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."
23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they believed.
24 And they passed through Pisidia and came into Pamphylia. Acts 14:21-24

Here we see that Paul and Barnabus were setting up elders in the churches before they moved on to other cities. The elders were left in charge of the local church.

5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you,
6 namely, if any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion.
7 For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain,
8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled,

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9 holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.
Titus 1:5-9

Here Paul leaves Titus in charge to set up elders in every city. Starting in verse 6 we see the requirements for one to be an elder. These are strict requirements that must always be met.

1 Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed,
2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;
3 not yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.
4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.
5 You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. I Peter 5:1-5

Here Peter exhorts the elders not to exercise power, but in humility to the Lord, lead and shepherd the flock. Humility and living as an example is the only way to truly shepherd the flock. Exercising power is never allowed by those in the leadership of the church.

17 Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. I Timothy 5:17

Elders are the main, but not the only, preachers and teachers of the congregation.

16 For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus in order that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.
17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church.
18 And when they had come to him, he said to them, "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time,
19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews;
20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house,
21 solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.
22 "And now, behold, bound in spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there,
23 except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me.
24 "But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

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25 "And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will see my face no more.

26 "Therefore I testify to you this day, that I am innocent of the blood of all men.

27 "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.

28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

29 "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;

30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

31 "therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.

32 "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

33 "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes.

34 "You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me.

35 "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Acts 20:16-35

Here Paul needed to talk to the leadership of the local church. He therefore called together the elders of the church.

27 Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.

28 And one of them named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius.

29 and in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea.

30 And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabus and Saul to the elders.

Acts 11:27-30

Here again we see that when sending to the church they sent it to the elders who were obviously the leadership of that church.

14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; James 5:14

When the leadership of a church was to pray and anoint a person it was the elders that did so.

1 And some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

2 And when Paul and Barnabus had great dissention and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabus and certain others of them should go up to

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Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.

3 Therefore, being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brethren.

4 And when they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them.

5 But certain ones of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed, stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses."

6 And the apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter. Acts 15:1-6

19 "Therefore, it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles,

20 but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood.

21 "For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

22 Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabus--Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren, Acts 15:19-22

Whenever there was a question of doctrine it was to the apostles and the elders of the church that the question was directed. They then took this before the Lord and reported back what He answered.

The elders were clearly the leadership within the local assembly. They were the main preachers and teachers, guiding the local church in all things.

I think it is clear that the four fold ministry (also called the five fold ministry--see chapter 9) was part of the congregation, preached or taught from time to time, but were themselves just part of the local church.

They continued in whatever work God gave them to do, and would submit to the elders of the local church, and of course, to the apostles within the Body of Christ.

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Chapter Nine

The Role of the Four Fold Ministry

As discussed in the last chapter the four fold ministry takes part in the local church.

(For the purpose of this book I am referring to this as the four fold ministry, as opposed to the five fold ministry. The reason for this is that some christians [including me], combine pastors and teachers under one heading.)

We need, therefore, to examine Scripture to find the role of each of the four fold ministries as they did their part within the church body. We understand that each one of them must submit to the Lord and His direction in their lives.

19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

20 having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,

21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; Ephesians 2:19-21

The very foundation of the church is Jesus, and with Him the apostles and prophets. This shows the importance of these two parts of the four fold ministries.

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

12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13

What's Wrong With The Church

Let us look at each of the callings within the four fold ministry to see what Scripture says about their individual roles.

Apostles

1 And some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

2 And when Paul and Barnabus had great dissention and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabus and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.

3 Therefore, being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brethren.

4 And when they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them.

5 But certain ones of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed, stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses."

6 And the apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter.

7 And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.

8 "And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to the, giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us;

9 and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith.

10 "Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?

11 "But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are." Acts 15:1-11

The apostles are the highest calling among men (see chapter 7). It is their place to call upon God and follow Him in all questions of doctrine. They are to give direction to the church.

Prophets

27 Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.

28 And one of them named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius. Acts 11:27-28

3 But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. I Corinthians 14:3

A prophet receives words, dreams, or visions from the Lord concerning future events for edification (to build up), exhortation (to give warnings), and consolation.

What's Wrong With The Church

Evangelists

8 And on the next day we departed and came to Caesarea; and entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him. Acts 21:8

26 But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, "Arise and go south to the road that descend from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a desert road.)

27 And he arose and went; and behold, there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship.

28 And he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah.

29 And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot."

30 And when Philip had run up, he heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

31 And he said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Acts 8:26-31

Here is an example of an evangelist. Philip is called to preach and teach the word outside of the church. The church is evangelized—they have already received Christ. Evangelists go to the world to show them the way of the gospel. They go wherever sinners are found.

Pastors and Teachers

35 But Paul and Barnabus stayed in Antioch, teaching and preaching, with many others also, the word of the Lord. Acts 15:35

Paul and Barnabus, along with many others, preached and taught the Word of God to the people. This is the call of the teacher within the church. Pastor means to shepherd or guide the people. This includes teaching, but is not limited to it.

So we see that the four fold ministry is within the church, each doing their part for the Lord as He directs them. The Word clearly places the apostles as the leadership along with the elders, who are chosen by the Lord as the ones who direct the local assembly.

We also see from the Scriptures that each one must operate in humility and obedience to the Holy Spirit. In this way there will be unity within the various callings.

What's Wrong With The Church

Chapter Ten

Pride in Leadership

Pride is a problem of the flesh that seems to affect all types of ministries. It sneaks up on you as a thought of “how much **you** are doing for the Lord,” and then the next thing you know you are lifted up in pride without realizing that it has happened. It is a most destructive sin; it can and does destroy ministries throughout the church.

You can be walking in pride and not even be aware of it. It comes to you from satan starting in the form of noticing how much you can and are accomplishing for Jesus.

Jesus spoke concerning pride in the leadership of the church in His day:

5 “But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries, and lengthen the tassels of their garments.

6 “And they love the place of honor at banquets, and the chief seats in the synagogues, 7 and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called by men, Rabbi.

8 “But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers.

9 “And do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.

10 “And do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ.

11 “But the greatest among you shall be your servant.

12 “And whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.” Matthew 23:5-12

The concept of not being called by a title, such as pastor, does not seem to exist in the churches today. Just being called by a title will bring pride up in our flesh. I have personally been guilty of this, and the Lord took strong action against me for it. It almost cost me my prophetic call. You see, there is no room in that type of call for your flesh to take over. I have found that I must be constantly on guard against this.

What's Wrong With The Church

It is a spiritual principle that if you exalt yourself in the ministry, God will bring you down. We are to humbly follow the Lord and not seek our own gain, that is, to be noticed by men to be doing good. It is enough for the Lord Jesus to see us and He knows of our good deeds. No one else needs to know!

5 You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,

7 casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.

8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. I Peter 5:5-8

These verses clearly show how dangerous and how easily we can step into pride. Pride always seek the approval of man; humility always seeks the approval of God.

10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ. Galatians 1:10

Be careful of who you are trying to please. Seek only to serve the Lord and do His will. As long as the Lord knows you are obedient, that is all that is necessary. No one else needs to here about it. If God wants you to be exalted in front of men, He will take care of it. All boasting comes from pride which results in the exalting of ourselves instead of the exalting of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What's Wrong With The Church

Chapter Eleven

Subjection Within the Body of Christ

In my many years of study in the Bible I have come to realize that the Kingdom of God is willing submission to all those in proper authority over you. This is a theme that is throughout the Scriptures. The demonic kingdom is the opposite: forced domination of those you can overpower.

15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise,
16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil.
17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,
19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;
20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;
21 and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Ephesians 5:15-21

The leadership within the church (see chapter 7) works in the body of Christ only if Christians will submit to the leadership that God has placed over them. This requires a humility within the people to submit to that leadership.

God will not force anyone to serve Him. He desires for us to do so, but it is our willing submission to His will that brings us into the true service of the Lord. It is only when the whole body of Christ is in submission to Jesus first, and then also to those He has placed over us on this earth, that we can have a truly unified church.

What's Wrong With The Church

The attempts to compromise the gospel by agreements between various denominations cannot bring about the unity we see in the book of Acts. We must not compromise the gospel at any cost! We must return to a true Biblical based church.

As well as the submission to the leadership found in the Bible for the church, we find also a parallel submission for the family.

22 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.

24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her;

26 that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.

28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;

29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church,

30 because we are members of His body.

31 For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to His wife; and the two shall become one flesh.

32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she fear her husband.

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

2 Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise),

3 that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.

4 And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Ephesians 5:22-6:4

This makes it clear that children are to submit to their parents, wives to their husbands, and husbands to Christ. And, of course, Christ Jesus submits to God the Father. This is the submission that is required of us within the family.

What's Wrong With The Church

There is yet another submission that is found in the Bible.

5 Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ;

6 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

7 With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men,

8 knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

9 And, masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him. Ephesians 6:5-9

So we are to submit to earthly authority, including your boss. We are not to rise up in revolt against them for any reason, not even to gain higher wages. Treat them properly. This is not the way of the world, but it is clearly the way of God.

What's Wrong With The Church

Chapter Twelve

Adultery!

It is rare that a church takes a strong stand against adultery. I know that some churches do, but they seem to be in the minority.

Adultery is one of the most obvious signs of immorality in the church. In this chapter I will not bother to go into each and every type of immorality that can be found. However, I wish to make a point concerning divorce and remarriage. The world is doing more and more of this. So many have demanded that this be allowed in the church, in spite of what Scripture says. This is now done frequently, even in many evangelical churches.

3 And some Pharisees came to Him, testing Him, and saying, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause at all?"

4 And He answered and said, "Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female,

5 and said, 'For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh'?

6 consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."

7 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate and divorce her?"

8 He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way.

9 "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery." Matthew 19:3-9

So we can see that the only case for acceptance of divorce and remarriage is unfaithfulness from your partner. Jesus makes a strong and clear statement here. There can be no doubt as to the sin of remarriage after divorce.

What's Wrong With The Church

10 But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband

11 (but if she does leave, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not send his wife away. I Corinthians 7:10-11

Again, this passage makes it clear. So why is divorce and remarriage pushed in so many churches? The answer is the unmistakable desire for church-goers (dare I say christians?), to be like the world--and to be allowed to sin like them.

Have they read the Scripture? Yes, but they are looking for someone, preacher or whoever, to give them a long explanation of why the Bible does not mean what it actually says. This one they will listen to; the others they will scoff at. They have made up their minds to be like the world, and not like Christ.

What about you?

What's Wrong With The Church

Chapter Thirteen

So What Happened to Brotherly Love?

As we look at the church, we see more and more, that they have become like the world in many areas. Brotherly love is one of the areas that has been sacrificed to be like the world. One example of this today is the lawsuit situation.

The world has become lawsuit happy. They sue at the drop of a hat! But what about christians? Should they be arguing over finances; and launching law suits?

Let's look a what Paul, through the Holy Spirit, had to say.

- 1 Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?
 - 2 Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law court?
 - 3 Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, matters of this life?
 - 4 If then you have law courts dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church?
 - 5 I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren,
 - 6 but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?
 - 7 Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?
 - 8 On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud, and that your brethren.
- I Corinthians 6:1-8

This puts it quite plainly. We are not to be suing each other. It is fine if we can find someone who is wise to moderate a case between us; but if not, our attitude should be to let it go. After all, whatever dispute we may have is minor compared to the matters of eternity!

What's Wrong With The Church

If we cannot, with the love of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit, be kind enough to let the other one win, we have not learned the love of God or submission to the Holy Spirit. It does not matter who is right. The whole attitude of wanting to win and getting back at some else, no matter what the cause, is not of heaven but of hell. Does not the Word say we should seek each others welfare?

24 Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor. I Corinthians 10:24

So it is quite clear that we must look to each other in love, to do what is better for the other one, and not what we would wish to do in our selfish flesh.

It has become an unfortunate fact that brotherly love is slowly being eroded by satan in the church. We seem to be pulled more and more by the world in all things. And yet love is the basis of all associations within the body of Christ, and from the body of Christ to others. How could we, in the light of Scripture, have allowed ourselves to be so pulled by the world and still use the name of Jesus? More and more I hear of christians who are going to court to get justice because they feel they are right.

Let's look into the Word to see what our attitude should be to the evil that we find in the world around us.

14 Bless those who persecute you: bless and curse not.

15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

20 "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head."

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:14-21

So here, with these verse, we go even further. We must not only avoid looking for revenge, but go out of our way to help our enemies. If there is a need of judgment against someone, God will take care of it; it is not our business!

Verse 19 makes another point. If we take revenge we will not be leaving room for the judgments of God. So if we do take revenge against someone, that person has been judged by our evil actions, and God will not judge him any further. But if we will love our enemies, we can show the love of God to the world.

No wonder so many will have nothing to do with the church when all they see is the same selfishness of the world in us. Love and forgiveness is always right; judgment belongs only in the hands of God!

What's Wrong With The Church

Chapter Fourteen

Conclusion

As we have seen over the last thirteen chapters, the churches have not only begun to stray from the doctrines of the Bible, but they have strayed considerably in many areas. The Word warns us of this happening in the last days.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; II Timothy 4:3

This is a very serious warning. To stray from the doctrines of the Word of God means to move away from the God to whom we are responsible. After all He created us, didn't He? And since He did, we are responsible to His Word in every respect.

These things are not hidden in Scripture but are printed plainly for all to see. It is our flesh that does not want to see them. Therefore, we have created our own denominations, with their own set of beliefs: one church differing from another over Scripture that is very clear in meaning.

This problem occurred in Paul's day. We see that he gave a warning to the church at Corinth about the divisions there.

10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

11 For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you.

12 Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ."

What's Wrong With The Church

13 Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I Corinthians 1:10-13

How were we baptized? In the name of our denomination? I hope not! We are baptized into the Name of Jesus. And the Word of Jesus (the Bible) is our text book. If we agree to all that is in this Book, then we can all be one with the Lord.

Certainly, we are not to go along with many of the movements that wish to bring various denominations together by further compromising of the gospel. This would be error upon error. We must go back to the Bible as our only source of our beliefs.

8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. Colossians 2:8

But if the evangelical churches have strayed so much from the Word, what do we do? The Word says we should come out from among those of the world; but what about the worldly church?

16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people,

17 "Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you.

18 "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to me," says the Lord Almighty. II Corinthians 6:16-18

So has the church become so worldly that we must come out from among them, as we would come out from the world?

This entire book was prompted by the Holy Spirit after I began to receive several prophecies against the church [Prophecies such as 2000 08 12.3 and others like this; available from my web site: prophetic-word.org]. Indeed, the Lord has been teaching me for several months that He has not been happy with the departure of the church from the doctrines found in His Word.

It was during this time that God began to teach me that He wanted me to write a book about this. He sent me to study the Bible throughout the New Testament; looking at what most evangelical churches believe, and what the Bible says. The difference was staggering!

How long can this go on before God begins to do something?

17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? I Peter 4:17

What's Wrong With The Church

It is clear that God will judge the churches. We must therefore be careful to follow the Bible and not the doctrines of men!

I do not believe that we must come out from among those churches who will repent and return to the gospel according to the Bible. But those who continue to interpret what the Bible says, (to make it say what they want), we must leave alone. How can we have fellowship with such perversions of Scripture?

In this book I have endeavoured to outline only basic beliefs of the various evangelical churches which differ significantly from the Bible. To be sure, I could write on concerning various beliefs which are not basic, or which are not very clear in Scripture.

It is perfectly acceptable for christians to have varying opinions on some points in the Bible which are not made clear in our minds while on this earth. What is not acceptable, is when the point is plainly in the Bible and so many churches have long explanations of why the it does not mean what it clearly says. If God said it, He meant it!

It is my prayer that God will bless and guide every one of you in your daily christian walk.

THE END