



The Road From Babylon To Zion

By Joseph Herrin

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Introduction

Babylon and Zion - These names represent two groups of people that the scriptures have much to speak about. One group of people has the appearance of being very impressive. Their industriousness is legend. Their constant and unceasing labor seeks to plan and to build and to enlarge themselves until their works reach the very habitation of Yahweh God. Yet with this Babylonian people, God is not pleased. He has rejected their righteousness as filthy rags. He has rejected their labor as being works of lawlessness. He has despised the offerings they have brought before Him.

This people is impressive and glorious in the eyes of man in the same way that the massive buildings of Herod's temple awed the disciples of Yahshua the Messiah. Yahshua tried to temper His disciples' misplaced enthusiasm by telling them that not one stone would remain upon another of all that appeared so magnificent to their eyes. Even so, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, who has glorified herself and exalted herself in the eyes of all men, will be suddenly destroyed, and that with great finality.

There is another people whose outward appearance is not impressive. They are a people that follow the pattern of the One who was despised and rejected of men. They have no comely appearance that men should desire them, nor stately form that the flesh of man should be attracted to them. These people are not known for their industry, rather they are marked by their oddness. They do not fit into the systems of the world. They are outcasts and misfits and they dwell in wilderness places. Consequently many consider them to have been smitten and stricken by God, yet these Overcomers are the apple of Yahweh's eye.

These people are not renowned for their building in wood and stone. Instead, they stand out because they have undergone a spiritual transformation. The things of the world have lost their luster in their sight. They do not work and plan and strive to accumulate the goods of a passing age. They walk as aliens and strangers in the land, seeking a city whose builder is God. A world that judges by external appearance sees nothing of value, nothing that impresses, nothing that demands a second look, in this people. Yet Yahweh God, who judges the heart, is captivated by these Overcomers, these citizens of Zion, for in them He sees the image of His only begotten Son taking shape.

For a time it has been the will of God that the people of Zion dwell in Babylon. In this land of captivity He commanded Zion to be faithful and to seek righteousness. As Zion dwelt in Babylon Yahweh tested Zion's heart. Would Zion be tempted by Babylon's delicate meats and awed by Babylon's external majesty? Would Zion

become entangled by the affairs of this life, striving for that which perishes, or would she remain faithful to the One who chose her? Would Zion walk in the midst of a wicked and unbelieving people and remain true to her God?

The citizens of Babylon have hardly suspected that there was another people dwelling in their midst. Babylon has been focused on her own pursuits and endeavors and she has considered herself to be the chosen one of God. Babylon has continued to build and to enlarge her borders. She has continued to strive to attain to greater heights, and she has considered herself to be successful.

On occasion Babylon would note some member of Zion that was not involved in the same pursuits and she would think it odd. At times she might even get annoyed that there were some who did not share the same values and goals as she. At times her annoyance would turn to rage when she came to understand that the citizens of Zion were not impressed by all that Babylon had built, but that they were rather appalled by it all.

At the end of this age, now six days since Adam (six thousand years), and two days (two thousand years) since Yahshua the Messiah was crucified and rose again, Yahweh is doing a work of separation. Even as Judah and Jerusalem were released from Babylon after seventy years of captivity and were invited to return to Zion, so the people of God, the Overcomers, are being called out of spiritual Babylon.

Revelation 18:4

I heard another voice from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues..."

Though those who are heeding the call may be a mere remnant of all that dwell in Babylon, yet they are a considerable people. Many are coming out. But this separation is not devoid of difficulties. For many, Babylon has been the only home they have known. Certainly this was true of those freed from Babylon so many years ago. In seventy years a whole generation had died and another had been raised entirely in a land of captivity. Although Babylon was a land of great idolatry and spiritual harlotry, it was also a land of great material wealth and prosperity. Many who had been born in this land, even the majority, chose not to leave when they were free to return to Zion. Their hearts had grown attached to the things of the world. To travel the road to Zion meant hardship, and physical difficulty, and many dangers along the way. It was much easier to remain in the artificial security of a prosperous land, sleeping in a soft bed inside a house of luxury.

Yet many struggled with leaving simply because Babylon was all they knew. Babylon had truly been a mother to them. They had been raised in her, and Yahweh had told

them to not seek to leave until the appointed time, but rather to dwell and prosper in the land and seek the welfare of their captors. Transitions are always difficult. It is hard to hear the Spirit tell us to leave a familiar place where we have once seen Him work, and to go to another place of which we know little. In this hour it is also greatly difficult for many to leave the sheltering arms of Babylon when they have known nothing else. Many are torn about leaving, especially when they see so many of those they have known saying that things are still fine in Babylon and that they have no intention of packing up and heeding the call to come out.

Yahweh has foreshadowed many things in the pages of scripture. Those who are being called out of Babylon now can learn much from those who made the journey many years ago. Once one heeds the call and determines to come out, the first perils and difficulties have been passed, but more remain. When Ezra the priest made the journey from Babylon to Zion with those who went with him, we are told that the journey took four months and many perils lay along the way.

Ezra 8:21-23, 31

Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God to seek from Him a safe journey for us, our little ones, and all our possessions. For I was ashamed to request from the king troops and horsemen to protect us from the enemy on the way, because we had said to the king, "The hand of our God is favorably disposed to all those who seek Him, but His power and His anger are against all those who forsake Him." So we fasted and sought our God concerning this matter, and He listened to our entreaty... Then we journeyed from the river Ahava on the twelfth of the first month to go to Jerusalem; and the hand of our God was over us, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy and the ambushes by the way.

In the time I have been on this journey from Babylon to Zion I have encountered many ambushes along the way. The enemy seeks to defeat those who would set their face toward Zion. If he cannot frighten them from taking this road, he will seek to waylay them and in some means keep them from their destination. He would also seek to get these pilgrims to become wearied of the way and confused about their actual destination, to blur their vision of where they are going, that he might turn them back to what is familiar.

This book is written to encourage those at all stages of the journey: those who are just now hearing the call to come out and who are unsure of what they are to come out of; those who are torn at leaving all that is familiar to them; those who have begun the journey and who have been met by the ambushes of the enemy; and even those whose foreheads are set like flint toward their destination and who have not looked to the right or to the left, but have been pressing ever onward.

My hope is that you will be both encouraged and forewarned of some of the pitfalls and ambushes along the way. As the saying goes, “To be forewarned is to be forearmed.” May those who journey to Zion arrive at their intended end. May the citizens of Zion all rejoice together having overcome all and having received the approval of the One who has called them forth.

Chapter 1 - Babylon

It is necessary at the beginning of this book to identify what Babylon is and what she is not. There is much confusion over the identification of Babylon, yet her identification is a very important matter. If Yahweh God is calling His people out of Babylon in this hour, (and He is), then His people must understand what they are being called out from.

Some have supposed that Babylon represents a country or nation of the earth that fits some characteristic attributed to her in scripture. For example, Babylon is spoken of as a land of trade where “the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality” (Revelation 18:3). She is further described in this way:

Revelation 18:11-13

"And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more -- cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every kind of citron wood and every article of ivory and every article made from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble, and cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and cargoes of horses and chariots and slaves and human lives... saying, "Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls; for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!' And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance, and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, "What city is like the great city?"

Some have supposed that America must represent Babylon since it is the greatest consumer nation in the world. Yet others have argued that Babylon is New York City due to the scripture's repeated use of the word “city.” If this were true, then coming out of Babylon would mean that the people of God who reside in either America or New York City must depart from these places. If Babylon were merely describing a physical location then simply changing one's place of residency would fulfill the command to “come out of her, My people” (Revelation 18:4).

It is true that there is much in America and New York City that are typical of Babylon, and undoubtedly there is a judgment and plagues reserved for all such places who have been given great light and have chosen instead to walk in darkness. But Babylon is not referring specifically to America, nor to her “queen city.”

Some have supposed that Babylon refers to the actual Babylon of the Old Testament. The ancient city lies in the country of Iraq, and although it has been an uninhabited ruin for centuries, some have advanced the notion that Saddam Hussein is having Babylon rebuilt and that it will be populated once again. The ancient city is the site of much excavation and archaeological work today. But it will not be inhabited, nor will it rise to a glorious position such as she once knew in the world. The climate has changed. Bodies of water have dried up. What was once a fertile region is now a barren wasteland due to the judgment of Yahweh. Furthermore, we have Yahweh's word that the ancient city of Babylon will never be inhabited again.

Jeremiah 51:36, 37, 41-43, 61-64

Therefore thus says Yahweh, "Behold, I am going to plead your case And exact full vengeance for you; And I will dry up her sea and make her fountain dry. Babylon will become a heap of ruins, a haunt of jackals, an object of horror and hissing, without inhabitants... How Sheshak has been captured, and the praise of the whole earth been seized! How Babylon has become an object of horror among the nations! The sea has come up over Babylon; She has been engulfed with its tumultuous waves. Her cities have become an object of horror, a parched land and a desert, a land in which no man lives and through which no son of man passes... Then Jeremiah said to Seraiah, "As soon as you come to Babylon, then see that you read all these words aloud, and say, "You, O Yahweh, have promised concerning this place to cut it off, so that there will be nothing dwelling in it, whether man or beast, but it will be a perpetual desolation.' And as soon as you finish reading this scroll, you will tie a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates, and say, "Just so shall Babylon sink down and not rise again because of the calamity that I am going to bring upon her; and they will become exhausted.'" Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.

People imagine many vain things, but these scriptures should be sufficient to let all know that the ancient city of Babylon will not rise again as some mystical phoenix from the desert to once more ascend to glory. Yahweh's judgment on ancient Babylon is final. Her ruins stand now as a somber warning against spiritual Babylon and her impending judgments and plagues. She too will be broken beyond remedy, never to rise again. We must conclude that the Babylon of Revelation is not speaking of the ancient city being rebuilt.

Others have supposed that Babylon represents Rome and the Roman Catholic Church, and there is much to support this argument. The following scripture reveals more about the character of Mystery Babylon.

Revelation 17:5, 6, 9

And on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Yahshua. Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits..."

Untold numbers of saints have been martyred at the hands of Rome and the Catholic Church. Through Rome's influence many heresies and pagan practices have been mixed in with the worship of God until Christendom has become a corrupt mixture. Rome also sits on seven hills.

Many books and a myriad of sermons have gone forth proclaiming the Roman Catholic Church to be Babylon. Without a doubt there is a connection between Babylon and Rome, yet the Babylon of Revelation is more than the Roman Catholic Church. It is noted in the preceding scripture that Babylon is "the mother of harlots." Babylon has many daughters, and each one of these daughters is also Babylon. Some have argued quite convincingly that these daughters are the various denominations that populate Christendom today. Even within the denominations that have protested against the Roman Catholic Church (the Protestants), there is much of Rome left in them.

Entire books have been written to expose the false pagan practices that have become part and parcel of Christian practice today, both inside and outside of Rome. It is not just the Catholics that celebrate the Christ Mass on the historic date of the pagan festivals of Sol Invictus and Saturnalia. It is not just the Catholics that have kept the name and the date of the Spring fertility festival held in honor of the goddess Ishtar (Eostre, Astarte, Ashtoreth) which we know as Easter. It is not just the Catholics that have brought such devastation to the body of Christ by instituting the false divisions of clergy and laity. All of these things, and many more, are as typical of the harlot's daughters as they are true of the Great Harlot.

If we try to identify Babylon by her false practices, however, we will fail. These things are merely symptoms, and the outward trappings of Babylon. We must discover the root and the heart of Babylon to know how to truly come out of her. The saint could identify every false practice and every pagan influence of Babylon, and separate themselves from all such things, and still not have come out of her.

We are getting much closer to the center of things in looking at Mystery Babylon's association to the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant denominationalism. If these entities represent Babylon, the Great Harlot, and her daughters, then the call to come out of Babylon is a call to flee from Catholicism and all denominationalism.

Yet there are those who have come out of these and they are not yet free of Babylon, for Babylon at its heart represents a spiritual principle.

Let us examine one more example of that which people are identifying as Babylon in this day. This last example is also related to Rome and her heresies. Many are identifying Babylon today by outward measures, by forms of worship, forms of assembly, practices and traditions. Many are looking back to the manner and practice of the apostles and how things have deviated since those first meetings of the early saints. Certainly there is value in discerning these matters, but returning to a “New Testament form” does not insure one’s departure from Babylon, nor does holding to what is considered a deviation from the original pattern mean that one is still in Babylon.

By way of illustrating what I am speaking about, some say that home churches are the model that was portrayed in the New Testament and that large gatherings and meetings in buildings dedicated to the gathering of the saints (church buildings) is a Babylonian device and it should be avoided. The truth, however, is that there are saints meeting in homes who are indistinguishable from those who meet in church buildings. The only difference is one of form. The true distinction between Babylon and Zion is one of the heart, and it cannot be measured or quantified or described and set forth by examining traditions, practices, or forms.

This is not to say that these things are unimportant, but leaving a fellowship of believers who meet in a church building to join others who meet in someone’s home is not to be mistaken as journeying from Babylon to Zion. Neither is leaving a church that has pastors and deacons to go to a church that has a five-fold ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Nor is leaving a body that meets on Sunday to join a group that meets on the traditional Sabbath which began at sundown on Friday. Nor is leaving a group that uses the names and titles God, Lord and Jesus to join a group that uses the names and titles Elohim, Yahweh, and Yahshua.

All of these matters should be examined, and we should ask the Father to grant us wisdom and understanding in them all, but these things do not mark the boundaries of Babylon and Zion. The Pharisees sought to conform to the letter of the Law and they had an appearance of righteousness, but Yahshua testified of them that inwardly they were full of dead men’s bones. Even so, we can faithfully reproduce New Testament forms to the best of our understanding and still be considered citizens of Babylon. We should consider our Savior’s words:

Matthew 7:21-23

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'"

In this scripture we see a people who confess Yahshua as Lord and they are doing the very same activities that He did. Yahshua prophesied and so did they. Yahshua cast out demons and so did they. Yahshua performed miracles and so did they. Yet we have Yahshua's very pointed pronouncement, "Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness."

It is not enough to conform to Christ in form, or even in action. We must have an internal conformity. Yahshua lived to do the will of the Father, and so must we. Yahshua never performed any of the activities mentioned of His own initiative. He only did what the Father commanded Him to do. Yahshua never walked in lawlessness, He was every moment surrendered to the governmental will of His Father in heaven.

There are many home churches today that are doing much of their own initiative. There are many fellowships that eschew pagan practices and that name the name of Yahweh and Yahshua, yet they are full of their own plans and ambitions. There are many local bodies of believers that have five-fold ministers and who seek to pattern themselves after New Testament forms, but they are still living out of the soul of man and making decisions apart from the Spirit of God.

Leaving Babylon requires much more than simply changing forms and practices that are outwardly observable. Undoubtedly, the people of Zion will stand out from the citizens of Babylon in numerous external ways, but the real difference is inward. To leave Babylon one must be circumcised in the heart. Babylon must be removed from one's desires and passions before one can journey out from Babylon.

Babylon and Zion have actually existed side by side throughout the entire history of the Scriptures. We see Babylon and Zion in the two brothers Cain and Abel. Both men brought an offering to Yahweh. Cain brought of the fruit of the earth, while Abel brought forth of the firstlings of his flock with their fat portions. We are told that God had regard for Abel's offering, but not for Cain's.

What was the difference between Cain's offering and Abel's that God would regard one and not the other? I have heard many vain things preached regarding this story,

many saying that Cain did not bring the best of the fruit of the ground while Abel brought the best of the flock. But the scriptures do not say that Cain brought less than the best of what he had grown. I believe that he did indeed bring the very best of his produce from the ground. Why then did God despise Cain's offering?

The reason has to do with what the offerings represent. We can easily see that Abel's offering of the firstlings of his flock was in keeping with the offerings that Yahweh ordained should be brought before Him. The firstlings of the flock represent the Lamb who would be slain for the sins of the world, and we are told that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin" (Hebrews 9:22). Abel's offering found acceptance with God because it looked forward in faith to that spotless Lamb that would one day cleanse the world from all guilt and condemnation. The scriptures reveal that it was because of this faith that Abel's offering was acceptable in God's sight.

Hebrews 11:4

By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous...

Cain, however, made an offering based upon his own works that did not look to the future atonement of Yahshua. After Adam sinned, the ground was cursed and produce came forth by the sweat of man's brow. It was the fruit of his own sweat and labor that Cain presented to God as an offering and God was not impressed. Babylon always seeks to ascend to God through its own works and to thereby find acceptance and approval. Cain made an offering of the best that he had, and I am certain he was proud of the quality and quantity of the fruit. He thought, "Certainly God will have regard for my offering", but God did not. By works of the flesh no man will be justified before God. Justification is only by faith in Yahshua and HIS FINISHED WORK.

This is actually the key distinction between Babylon and Zion. Babylon initiates great works and then asks God to bless them. Babylon has the appearance of great industriousness and her progress seems evident to all. But Babylon's works are the works of man. Babylon may be doing the same kind of works that Yahshua performed, but she is doing them as she sees fit, not by command of God. Babylon is not Spirit directed, she is soul directed.

The soul of man devises many plans that seem noble and right and which find the approval of others. As we saw earlier, some of these activities include prophesying, casting out demons, and performing miracles. These activities also include feeding the hungry, proclaiming the gospel, building ministries with noble sounding purposes, and the list could go on and on.

The majority of the saints have been taught to judge things according to sight. If they observe a man casting out a demon they judge such a one to be righteous and holy and pleasing to God. If they see a person performing an authentic miracle they conclude that this person certainly bears the stamp of God's approval. If they see a person operating a charity to care for the poor, they will also assume that it must certainly be of God. Yet Yahshua said that "many" would come to Him in the day of judgment and proclaim that they did such things in His name, but He will deny even knowing them.

This is a large part of the trouble of coming out of Babylon: Babylon looks good on the outside. This is the same struggle that those who followed Messiah faced when He said, "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and the Pharisees, you can in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven." The Pharisees looked good. They prayed. They fasted. They tithed of all their substance. They meticulously kept the Law... Yet, they were relying on their own works to gain approval before a holy God.

Yahshua told the story of the Pharisee who stood proudly in the Temple and looked with disdain at the tax collector who was on his face before God. The Pharisee pompously prayed, "I thank you God that I am not like this sinner." Yet Yahshua said the sinner went home JUSTIFIED while the Pharisee found no regard before God. The sinner threw himself on the mercy of God, offering no works, making no bargains, pledging no promises, trusting wholly to the character of God to deliver him. He simply asked for mercy and he believed God would be merciful.

The paradox today is that it is often the most righteous looking people who are the chief citizens of Babylon for they are working hard to find approval before God. They are striving laboriously to appear righteous. Many a minister has spent his entire life working to find the approval of God and of men, and he has yoked the people who follow him to the same burden of works. They may accomplish many remarkable things, but before God it is all striving and dead works for they are not born out of faith in the completed work of Christ. As the Galatians who began in faith and then tried to continue in works, such ones have become severed from Christ and He has become altogether worthless to them.

Looking at a church externally, how can you tell which ones are of Babylon and which are of Zion? They may both be performing the same activities, but one body is striving to be judged as righteous, while the other is resting in the knowledge that in Christ, Yahshua the Messiah, they are already righteous. One is seeking to overcome the flesh, the world and the Devil by imitating the works of Christ, the other realizes that Christ has already overcome all and they are in Christ and He is in them. One body is expending their very life to be approved before God, and the other proclaims that they have died and their life has been hidden with God in Christ Jesus, Yahshua the Messiah.

These are things that are not easily quantified and observable, but Babylon is living life from a point of striving to be approved before God and man while Zion is resting in the life of the Son. Zion is a people of faith.

Perhaps nowhere is this identity of Babylon seen more clearly than in the judgment that was brought upon Judah and Jerusalem when they were given over into the hands of ancient Babylon. The duration of Judah's and Jerusalem's captivity was prophesied to be seventy years. This time period was arrived at based on the number of years that they had failed to let the land know its sabbath rests.

Every seven years Israel was commanded to not till the land, nor plant, nor harvest. They were to let the land enjoy a sabbath, an annual rest. They should have taken a lesson from Cain. "Give it a rest Cain. God doesn't want your sweat and your labor. He wants your faith." Even so, the people of Israel were commanded to demonstrate the principle of rest and live by faith every seventh year. They were to trust God to provide everything they needed. But man has a problem with faith. Man wants to trust in his own works to carry him through.

Judah and Jerusalem had not given the land a rest in 490 years. This means the land had missed seventy of its sabbaths. As a judgment against their lack of faith Yahweh had the people carried away into captivity and for seventy years the land knew rest. For seventy years there was no one to till and to plant and to harvest.

II Chronicles 36:20-21

Those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of Yahweh by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept sabbath until seventy years were complete.

This is the difference between Babylon and Zion. Babylon is a land of works where man must accomplish every task and fulfill every mandate. Babylon knows nothing of rest and faith. Oh yes, Babylon speaks very much about faith, but it is a faith that is rooted in man's ability. Babylon's faith is founded upon man's ability to envision some end and to see it through. Babylon is built with blueprints, and planning sessions, and organization, and fund drives, and pep rallies, and the sweat of untold men and women. This is why when all is said and done and some project has come to completion, the people of Babylon feel justified to stand and proclaim:

Daniel 4:30

"Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built... by the might of my power...?"

Zion, however, is not seeking to build anything of her own will and initiative. Zion is a people of faith. Zion knows that salvation is of the Lord, as is sanctification, and as is glorification. Zion does not labor to build a city, for she seeks a city not built with hands whose builder and maker is not man, but God. Zion does not seek to work for the approval of Yahweh, she works because she is approved by Yahweh.

Zion is a city of rest. This does not mean that those who are of Zion are doing nothing, it means that they are doing nothing of their own initiative. They are doing those works that God prepared beforehand for them. They are not dreaming up their own works, nor are they stretching out their hands to labor in fields to which they have not been sent. Austin Sparks made this very enlightening comment:

Thus it was that we were turned in that dark hour to Romans chapter six, and, almost as though He spoke in audible language, the Lord said: 'When I died, you died. When I went to the Cross I not only took your sins, but I took *you*. When I took you, I not only took you as the sinner that you might regard yourself to be, but I took you as being all that you are by nature; your good (?) as your bad; your abilities as well as your disabilities; yes, every resource of yours. I took you as a "worker", a "preacher", an organizer! My Cross means that *not even for Me can you be or do anything out from yourself*, but if there is to be anything at all it must be out from Me, and that means a life of absolute dependence and faith.'

At this point, therefore, we awoke to the fundamental principle of our Lord's own life while here, and it became the law of everything for us from that time. That principle was: "nothing of (out from) Himself", but "all things of (out from) God".

The Son can do nothing of (out from) Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing: for what things soever He doeth, then the Son also doeth in like manner' (John 5:19).

"I can of Myself do nothing: as I hear I judge" (John 5:30).

"My teaching is not Mine, but His that sent Me" (John 7:16).

We saw that this explains so many strange and - naturally - perplexing things in His behavior: acting and refusing to act; going and refusing to go; speaking and refusing to speak. Later, we came to see that this is the whole meaning of life in the Spirit, and that it is an altogether different life from the natural ways of men, even of Christian men. At the time of this seeing, it was a matter of this law becoming basic, absolute, and ultimate, and it was something totally different from what had been in all our ideas and activities in Christian life and work.

Yes, those who are of Zion are to be emptied of self, both that which they consider bad

as well as that which they consider good. Zion is to live out the words of Paul:

Galatians 2:20

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

Babylon seeks to perform godly works through human industry and effort. Babylon asks the question, "What Would Jesus Do?" and then it tries to perform that action in the power of sinful flesh. Zion, however, sees self as crucified with Christ and Christ now living in and through them. As one brother has stated, Zion says, "Watch What Jesus Does!"

We have seen that Judah and Jerusalem were given over to Babylonian captivity until the land could receive its seventy sabbaths that it had been denied. The issue of rest is the most critical distinction between these two cities. By faith in the work of Messiah Zion enters into rest. Due to unbelief Babylon endures ceaseless striving and fails to enter into the sabbath rest of God. Babylon's works are birthed in the mind, will, and emotions of man. Many of these works appear noble and some are even supernatural in nature. But due to the corrupted source from which they arise all such works are rejected by God. Many of the works of Babylon are in direct opposition to Zion and her citizens.

Yahshua said the day would come when people would kill His disciples and think they were doing God a favor. Such is the end result of the polluted well that Babylon drinks from. In the name of God and His Christ millions of saints have been martyred in the past 2,000 years. This is the work of Babylon. What a shock is in store for these who will stand before Yahshua and say, "Did we not kill the infidels and heretics in Your name?" He will reply, "When you did it to the least of these My brethren, you did it unto Me."

Perhaps now you can see more clearly why Zion and Babylon cannot be identified merely by external measurements. Tares and wheat look much alike until they bear fruit. I know some would like to have a rule of thumb to be able to tell Babylon apart from Zion. Such rules are hard to come by, but one indicator I will give. Zion is a people of faith, while Babylon walks by sight and reason.

Example after example could be given of personal encounters I have experienced with ministers and churches who would not walk by faith. When the test comes then hearts are exposed.

Yahweh will press His people forward into realms of faith without exception. We are told that "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6). The people of Zion will go forward in faith "not loving their lives unto the death" while Babylon will

shrink back.

Yes, there are many other things which characterize Babylon: her sensuality, her pride, her idolatry, her love of the world and the things in it; her persecution of the saints; her pagan practices; her heresies; her false forms and traditions, but all of these are the result of her lack of faith in Yahshua and her failure to enter into rest. This is the land that the people of God are being directed to come out from.

Babylon is many places. Babylon is America and New York City. Babylon is the Roman Catholic Church and her many denominational daughters. Babylon is all of these and more. The call to come out will impact each child of God in different ways, but the Spirit will lead all who have ears to hear.

Like Abraham who left Ur of the Chaldees to go to a land of promise he had never seen, so too are many today being called out in this hour. Abraham had to leave family and friends behind, and so too must many of those today. When Yahweh calls, we dare not disobey. We must gladly entrust ourselves into His care. It is a good and a prosperous land set before us. Yahweh's delight is in the people of Zion. As Moses said to the people of Israel when they left another land of captivity:

Deuteronomy 6:23

He brought us out from there in order to bring us in, to give us the land which He had sworn to our fathers.

The land before us is Yahweh Himself. He is our inheritance and our portion in the land. The heritage of Zion is beautiful and lovely beyond compare. May the way before you be made plain and may you know His presence as you journey along the way.

Chapter 2 - Coming Out

There is no doubt that the majority of saints today began their Christian experience in Babylon. This does not imply that all these saints were Babylon, nor walking according to Babylonish principles, for Yahweh has always had a people of faith. But for a season it seemed good to Yahweh to allow His people to dwell in Babylon, and in this place they were to seek to prosper in spirit, soul, and body and to seek the welfare of those they dwelt among.

Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7

Now these are the words of the letter which Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the rest of the elders of the exile, the priests, the prophets and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon... "Thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon, Build houses and live in them; and plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and become the fathers of sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply there and do not decrease. Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to Yahweh on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare."

In the same way, many of the citizens of Zion today have been dwelling in Babylon, and the Spirit of God has led them to walk in integrity and faithfulness while there. They have been instructed to seek the welfare of the people they have dwelt among, and this they have done. In whatever task was assigned to them they have sought to perform their duty with great faithfulness that they might please the One who called them. During this time, Babylon has benefitted greatly from the presence of the Overcomers who dwelt in her midst.

But the time has come when Yahweh has determined that His people should come out of Babylon that He might establish a pure and holy people, and that He might judge the sins of Babylon. For these two reasons His Spirit cries out:

Revelation 18:4-5

Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues; for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

When one hears the call to come out of Babylon, it would be a serious mistake to choose to delay or neglect the call. However, not all come out of Babylon at the same time. There were actually a number of pilgrimages from Babylon to Zion recorded in scripture. One such pilgrimage was attended by Nehemiah and Zerubbabel and the

number who journeyed at this time was 42,360, along with 7,337 servants. When they arrived in Jerusalem they began to rebuild the temple and they made such progress as to get the foundation laid. However, due to the obstruction of the enemies of God, the people ceased building the temple and for fourteen years no work was done. After fourteen years Yahweh sent prophets to encourage the people to finish the building of the temple, and it was at that time completed.

After this, Ezra the priest made a pilgrimage to Zion and he took many people with him, and he brought the rest of the Temple furnishings that had been carried off into Babylon under King Nebuchadnezzar. Symbolically, the removal of all the Temple utensils and implements from Babylon represents the cessation of Yahweh's working among the people of Babylon. No longer would Yahweh bless Babylon because of Zion dwelling among her, for Zion was being removed and so were the blessings of God. Hereafter Babylon would know the plagues and judgments of God.

So it is with Mystery Babylon today. Zion is being called out of her midst, and as Zion leaves, so leave the blessings of God. Judgments are soon to come upon Babylon and it would be tragic to still be found in her midst. Yet, the door is still open for those who are desirous to leave Babylon, and Zion should not act with disdain toward those who will flee, even should they flee at the last moment as from a burning house.

Yahweh has many ways of getting Zion's attention and bringing her to this journey out of Babylon. Some are like Daniel who was reading in the scriptures when the Spirit opened his eyes to understand that the time had come for the captivity of Babylon to be ended. In this hour many are having their eyes opened and they are hearing the call to come out of Babylon, and they are responding in faith and obedience.

Others are like unto Lot whom the angels took by the hand and led out of Sodom along with his family. Some are being literally thrust out of Babylon by the mercy of Yahweh. Some have become so attached to this place of familiarity that they would not willingly leave. They are torn in their emotions; their understanding of what God is doing is still very cloudy, and their will is not strong enough to bring them to come out, so Yahweh is bringing them out under strong coercion. Indeed, the citizens of Babylon are the instrument of Yahweh in many such instances as they speak to the citizens of Zion and tell them that they are no longer welcome in their midst. Many are being thrust outside the camp of Babylon, and it is in this way that they begin their pilgrimage.

Whatever the means used, Yahweh is calling His people out. The parting can be most grievous as family and friends and all that is familiar is left behind. Ahead is much uncertainty and many trials and dangers, but Yahweh goes with Zion to bring her in to the place He has prepared for her.

I have corresponded with many of the saints of God and have learned that my own experience is not unusual. As a minister, the Father was directing me to urge those people I was among to walk in faith. Various trials and tests were sent by the hand of God, particularly in the areas of health and finances, in order to elicit from the people a response of faith. My own family knew great trials, and although it was with fear and trembling, we stood firm in faith and we saw the salvation of God. Yet the other ministers whom the Father had placed me among could only see the giants and the walled cities. They saw themselves as grasshoppers in comparison to the giants in the land and great fear gripped them.

These ministers became angered that I was urging them to walk in faith and they began to rail against me. I was accused of being prideful and arrogant for thinking I had heard God speak when the rest of them denied that such a walk of faith was being demanded of them. But this is ever the response of those who have not the faith to face the giants before them. In a similar way David's elder brother Eliab accused him of mischief, pride and unfaithfulness because David was willing to face Goliath when all others were hiding behind rocks. In the same way the people of Israel picked up stones to hurl at Caleb and Joshua for urging them to trust Yahweh and go in and take possession of the good land before them.

Yahweh showed me that these ministers would eventually put me out of their midst. As I was embroiled in the midst of this controversy a book arrived that I had not even ordered, and it was from a friend. It was entitled "The Harlot Church" and the subtitle said "Come out of her My people...." The Spirit spoke to me with great clarity and said that a separation was coming and that I would be put out of the church. He said I was not to resist this separation for it was of Him. It happened just as He said.

Many are the citizens of Zion who are finding themselves forced outside the camp of mainline Christianity in this hour. It is often with sorrow and great pain that the separation comes. How painful it is to have brothers and sisters pick up rocks to stone us with. With sorrow we find that those we once broke bread with no longer will make room for us at the table. But we have this promise:

Isaiah 35:10

And the ransomed of Yahweh will return and come with joyful shouting to Zion, with everlasting joy upon their heads. They will find gladness and joy, And sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Even if Zion finds herself mistreated and rejected and persecuted by saints whose hearts are enslaved to Babylon, she is not to despise or become embittered toward them. Instead she is to have the heart of Yahshua who when being crucified said, "Father, forgive them. They know not what they do."

The Overcomers of Zion should realize that through their faithfulness and obedience Yahshua will bring deliverance and salvation to many who remain in captivity. Chip Brogden gives us these insights:

In the Book of Revelation we find that the Lord is looking among the defeated Church for overcomers who will demonstrate the victory of Christ. Overcomers are not a super-spiritual elite class, they are simply those who rise up and fulfill God's original intent for the Church as a whole. ***They are the remnant which stand for God's Will and God's Kingdom on behalf of the entire Church.*** They are living the normal Christian life, whereas the others are living far below their potential. Everyone who is born of God overcomes the world: it is there for anyone, not for a select few. The reality, however, is only a few will actually count the cost, lay down their lives, and live as Overcomers.

The obedience of the remnant will in the end result in blessing to the entire creation, including those in Babylon who have persecuted the Overcomers. We should not think this to be odd for this is the pattern of Christ.

Romans 5:8, 10

But God commends his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us... For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Yahshua's death resulted in the blessing of those who were His enemies, even you and I. Should not the obedience of Zion also result in blessing to those who are her enemies? Those who are of Zion must keep in mind that theirs is not a ministry of condemnation, but of reconciliation. In coming out of Babylon, Zion's obedience will result in the reconciliation of many.

There is much in Babylon that is greatly displeasing to the Father, and much is being said and written about these things. This is natural and right for light exposes darkness. However, in exposing darkness our heart's intent should be to bring people to the light, not to condemn them in their darkness.

John 3:17

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

II Corinthians 5:18-20

Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that

God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Zion must come out of Babylon. She does so to bring about the reconciliation of the entire creation. This is the glorious result of Zion's obedience.

Chapter 3 - Ambushed Outside the Gates of Babylon

I had barely exited Babylon when I was met with the first ambush of Satan. I encountered some brothers and sisters who had also come out of Babylon, but they had fallen into a snare of the enemy, and to this date I don't know whether they have escaped. But let me back up and give a few details leading up to this encounter.

My own departure from Babylon was very painful. The Father had told me to stand in faith in some matters and to also defend some foundational principles relating to the government of God among the flock of which I was a minister. This stand of faith, and stand upon the principles of Yahweh's kingdom, brought me into conflict with the other ministers and their wives. People who I had once shared intimately with, prayed with, fellowshiped with, broken bread with, and had walked in love with, began to call my actions and motives into question.

I was accused of very base motivations, of being prideful and arrogant, of being a gold digger, of being unloving and lacking compassion. All of this antagonism arose because I was urging others to stand in faith and because I was teaching the scriptural principles of divine government.

I experienced some very painful times and they culminated in an elders' meeting one Sunday after services where I was rejected by the consensus of the other ministers, and I was put out of my place of ministry. The words spoken to me during this meeting were unkind and filled with anger and venom. They were not words of love between friends.

Even though the Father had prepared me for this moment by telling me that it would happen, it was still a painful experience and one which left me wounded in my emotions. I have since found that this is typical of the manner in which many of the saints have departed from Babylon, and it can make the saint susceptible to an ambush of Satan if they do not choose to put on a heart of forgiveness and love toward those who have wounded them. Only a few weeks after being put out of the fellowship of which I had been a part, I encountered some saints through the Internet who had also experienced separations, yet they had left with bitterness and they wanted to entice others to share in expressions of anger, denouncement, and reviling towards Babylon.

I am not sure how I came across the website of which I speak, but I was initially drawn to it because of some insights of the Web page's creator. In many ways this brother had been given insight into the separation that is occurring among the children of God in this day. He had some thoughtful teaching, and he created a forum where people could gather and discuss topics relating to the work of God in

this hour.

I shared some of my own writings with this group and they were very well received. Having just been thrust out of my place of ministry and fellowship, I was hopeful that I would be able to find some fellowship and encouragement through this group.

Another brother was given oversight of the discussion forum on this site, and I began to notice an attitude of disdain, and even reviling, toward those who had not yet seen the same truths that the people who participated in this group had seen. At first I thought it was an aberration, but then I began to notice it more and more. I questioned the brother overseeing the discussion forum about it, and in a very shocking way he defended his attitude of mocking and reviling those who remained in what was referred to as the "Christian Religious System."

As I communicated with this brother the Spirit immediately opened my eyes to the snare of Satan. Satan wanted me to react to the pain of my expulsion from the body by donning an attitude of bitterness toward those who had cast me out. He hoped that my desire for fellowship would lead me to cast in my lot with these brothers and sisters, and to join them in an attitude of retribution and revenge by reviling the system and the people who had been the instruments of my separation.

The Spirit immediately let me know that I could not join them, nor did I even desire to do so. I knew that to embrace the same attitude would be a failure of love, and this is the most grievous of failures in the Kingdom of God. I began to try to reason with those in this group and to show them why they could not obtain the blessing of God by reviling others, but they would not receive my words, and in turn they began to revile and mock me.

I am going to insert here some excerpts from this correspondence. In these excerpts the ambush of Satan is revealed, as is the attitude he would entice others to adopt. I will first list some of the comments that troubled me that were written by the moderator of the group, as well as some of the arguments he gave defending his position. Note that CRS stands for Christian Religious System.

[comments of moderator]

And this is the greatest thing that we, as anti CRS'ers could do for the CRS, for which I have neither sympathy nor disdain. I have not been in a mainline denomination in years, so the mess doesn't move me...

I will say, that you will probably react to some of my "strong words" to others on the list, especially to those who come in and are really just "browsing" like one does on the net, not having any idea of where they have landed... I speak what I hear the Father say, and often it is not

sugar coated as most of the CRS would have words to be, for they really desire one thing from the adherents of their system. That is money...

I haven't read this yet, but have read a lot of [this man's] stuff on the prophecy list and he is a nut case! He is a freak ... If my forthrightness is too much for you, (concerning this dude) then what can I say. I don't give "religious" people much space...

This is one area that I totally disagree with you, by the way. I don't have any sadness or so called compassion for those who are "coming out" or "want to come out" of the CRS. They either need to SEE the truth of the system and SEPARATE or just stay in there till they see the light. I will not baby them in the meantime, hoping they will grow and become good little anti CRS folks. If they have been "hurt," it is too bad as far as I am concerned...

The army of God doesn't waste time with emotional junk like "feelings." It is all of the carnal mind and what is needed is for the soulish, mind junk to be cut off...

I know your perspective. You said what it was in your messages and in the Phallic Church article. You made it clear that we need to have "compassion" upon those coming out of the CRS, and be ready to minister to them as they usually are hurting, etc etc. I am not moved by this psycho babble "deep inner hurting" stuff that so many express about their terrible journeys that they have had. That is all 60's / 70's stuff and is birthed in the emotional / soulish realm. I am not interested in "making friends and influencing neighbors" as it is the basic problem with the CRS to start with. What most people want in God is another "country club" that is "Christian oriented." A place to meet their friends and "fellowship" each week. If they had to spend an hour with God alone, it would bankrupt them, spiritually. I know where you come from on this, and I have heard it many times. And yes, it is often a "breaking point" for many who have come to the [Discussion Forum] with the same desires in mind. Usually it is for themselves first, and then all their friends that they HOPE will see the light and separate. The women that have come to [the Discussion Forum] especially want to "mother" those that they see as possibly coming in behind them. It is time for many to leave their mama's breast and get on with adult life. That is too hard for most of the breast fed CRS folks to hear and digest...

Finally, I would say to you, that love is not always the essence that you have drawn it up to be in your essay. The TRUTH of Love is being

willing to tell others the truth, no matter what the outcome will be. You may want to have some "lovey dovey" dude in your fox hole with you. Go for it. In the meantime, I choose to have a LOYAL, honest, and forthright person in there with me. I especially desire one that is clear of mind, not DELUDED by his own mind and desires in God, one that is experienced in the ways of God, one that knows how to shut up and "receive," no matter how much he THINKS he knows, and one that is discerning, not having been muddled in mind by their charismatic background, so full of love and gifts, hearing all kinds of stuff "from the Lord," that they are not worth a crap in the REAL world. That, my friend, is the only warrior that I will be stuck with, in a foxhole. Know what? The time that Jesus exhibited the most love in His earthly experience (except at the Cross, of course) was when He drove the money changers out of His Father's House. I suspect that you would look upon the adventure as a bit harsh.

It seems appropriate to describe this experience as an ambush, for very suddenly and unexpectedly I was met with anger and venom that I had not anticipated. Satan's most subtle snares always mix truth with error. The people of this group had seen some truth, but they also had adopted an attitude that was foreign to the character of God. I was encouraged to join in an attitude of reviling, and those who held this mindset tried to bully me into agreement with them. But a failure to love will disqualify the saint who has set their eyes on Zion. With the following words I attempted to reason with this brother about the absolute necessity of not violating the principle of love.

I would not attempt to dissuade you from walking in the integrity of your heart. I would not dream of asking you to lessen your zeal. I would simply have you to consider, "Is there a point where you quit caring for people? Have you crossed a line at God's direction where He has told you to no longer pray for those in bondage? Has He told you that you have exceeded the point of Peter's request when he inquired how many times he should forgive his "brother?" (Yes, his brother.) Have you had to forgive more than Christ forgave you, so that you now will forgive and show patience no longer?"

These are questions I would ask. It is too easy to give up on people. The scriptures say that we are to rescue some as a branch from the burning. Are you unwilling to reach out a hand and pull a brother from the fire because you are indignant that he has taken so long to see the light of the truth?

You said yourself that Christ went to hell for you. Are you willing to go

to hell for a brother? Paul said, "I speak the truth and I lie not, I would that I should be accursed that Israel might be saved." Israel and the Jews had the JRS [Jewish Religious System] even as we have the CRS today. Paul was willing to be accursed that they might be saved. Where do we draw the line? Do we just write all of the CRS folks off and say good riddance? This was not Paul's heart.

Even Jesus wept over Jerusalem, the Jerusalem that stoned the prophets that were sent to her. He had these soulful emotions that you said you despise. Do you think that love will weaken a warrior of God? I say it will strengthen him. Love knows no boundaries. Love is extravagant. It is the love of God that surrounds us and keeps us safe. Paul said that it was the love of God that "constrained" him, holding him to the course God set before him.

No, I would not suggest that you water down the message that is burning in your heart. I would ask you what right you have to quit loving and quit caring. God said that He takes no pleasure to see the wicked punished. He is patient and bears long with all of us. Knowing this, we should all the more strive to excel in these same qualities.

I don't want to go into the battle with a brother who is motivated by anger and hatred. I want to go into battle with brothers and sisters who know the power of love and who will stick close to me and not write me off the first time they disagree with me. There is a friend that sticks closer than a brother. What was it that so united Jonathan and David's hearts? Was it a common hatred of evil? Was it a shared vision? No, it was love.

You are swinging your sword a little too freely by calling all those who are not quite where you are "freaks," "wackos," "idiots," etc... Jesus said, "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' [empty head] shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell" (Matthew 5:22).

We are told, "This you know, my beloved brethren. But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God" (James 1:19,20). David said that he did not gloat when judgment came to his enemies, rather he mourned. When King Saul perished, the man that had made David's life a misery, he eulogized him in song. Was David some kind of a mama's

boy? I think not. He knew the heart of God and did not rejoice to see his adversary stricken.

What of those who were with Saul? Did David seek to destroy them all because they had stood in opposition to him at some point? No! We even know that he would have made Abner and Amasa commanders in his army, but Joab, who was less righteous and less forgiving, slew these men whom David would have elevated over his head. Are you not rather being as Joab when you despise all those who are in the CRS and who are in the process of coming out of her? If God is willing to show patience and to grant them further time to repent and flee from Sodom, who are we to not show the same patience and forbearance?

No, I am not saying to water down the message. I am not saying to make peace with Sodom. I do not advocate any type of compromise with evil. But I say if Christ gave His very life for these same ones, should we not go out of our way to effect their deliverance? “Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted” (Galatians 6:1).

I know all too well that by the judgment I judge others, I too will be judged. This is reason enough to be patient and to seek to restore even those who are standing in opposition to themselves. Did I see the light because of my great wisdom? Did you? Was it not rather that God in His mercy revealed truth to us, while we were yet His enemies?

I will continue to stand against evil and to proclaim truth as God guides me. I will not shut my heart against my brother until God tells me to. This is all I would encourage you to do and consider as well...

We must be diligent to preserve the bonds of love and peace.

Ephesians 4:1-3

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Sadly, I was unable to persuade this brother to walk in love. I then wrote to the man who had created the website and discussion group, with the hope of persuading him to rein in those who were using his site to badger and belittle and insult others. I

expected a more moderate response from this brother as he had been a pastor for 13 years. My expectations were dashed, however, when this former pastor not only gave his full support to his site moderator, but he began to chide and speak in a demeaning and insulting fashion to me.

Satan's ambushes often find an opening in our lives through some entrance in our soul. In this case, these men had been mistreated by the churches they had been a part of and they experienced rejection and wounding. The soul of man wants to respond to this wounding with bitterness, and it wants to exact its own revenge. To follow these urges is to fall away from the path to Zion. Bitterness will lead to a defiling of our vessels, and it will eventually defile many others as well.

Hebrews 12:15

See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled...

I cannot stress enough the importance of avoiding the perils of this ambush of the enemy. It matters not if we discern all of the evils of Babylon. It matters not if we separate ourselves from all pagan practices and we conform perfectly to the pattern the Lord has determined for His church. It matters not if we discern mysteries that are hidden from the multitudes. If we fail in love then we have embraced the ultimate failure.

I Corinthians 13:1-3

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

When the soul wants to embrace error it will ultimately find some justification for doing so. In Proverbs we are told that all men are justified in their own sight. But how grievous it will be for those saints who willingly deceive themselves in order to justify a lack of love. The members of this group justified their lack of love by pointing to John chapter 17 and declaring that this passage of scripture reveals that unity among the saints will come as a result of our glorification, not because of love. They therefore looked to the coming glorification of the saints and they despised love, compassion, forgiveness, and a humble spirit.

This ambush is set before all of those who would journey from Babylon to Zion. Many are failing to make progress toward Zion due to allowing themselves to be overcome by the enemy at this point. Yes, I say that they ALLOW themselves to be

overcome, for no saint has to give in to the subtle snares of the enemy. We are the Overcomers in Christ, and our Savior has already overcome all. In Him we are adequate for every situation, every snare and trap of the enemy. We are overcome only when we allow ourselves to be so.

Make every effort on your journey to Zion to preserve love. Be quick to forgive. Remember the words of our Savior which Paul repeated to the Roman believers:

Romans 12:14

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

Chapter 4 - The Peril of Self-Pity

There is a particular peril on the road from Babylon to Zion that I have struggled with, and which I must continue to remain on guard against. It is the peril of self-pity. I often feel the tug of it's cloying tentacles as it manifests it's desire that I should wrap myself around in it's satisfying embrace. But the Father has warned me of the peril of this indulgence, and He has revealed how many Overcomers have in the end been hindered from making further progress due to this peril.

A year ago I wrote an article about what the Father had revealed to me of this matter, and much of this chapter will be drawn from that writing. Self-pity is a most hideous peril for it finds a great appeal to our soulish emotions and mind, and it would lead us to direct our will to do things that are rebellious and evil in the Father's sight.

Those who have suffered the most due to their obedience to the will of the Father are often the ones who have the greatest struggle with this peril. Those who have faced the greatest foes and risked the most for the Kingdom are often undone in the end by this subtle evil that lurks in the flesh of mankind. The Father has given us examples of those who have overcome this peril. One who inspires me greatly is Joseph, the favorite son of Jacob.

Consider Joseph. When he was a youth he was given dreams of what lay ahead in his life. He dreamed that all of his brothers, and even his father and mother, would bow down before him. He dreamed that God would raise him to an exalted position. His brothers were already jealous of him, for it was evident to them all that their father preferred him over the rest. Upon hearing these dreams they were further incensed and inspired to act out of envy toward him.

One day when Jacob sent Joseph to check on his brothers as they were tending the flocks, they saw him coming from a distance and they conspired among themselves to act wickedly and to slay Joseph. Reuben, the oldest of the brothers, talked them out of this evil, but instead the brothers decided to sell him as a slave to some passing Midianites who were heading to Egypt. Despite the tearful pleas of their brother, they cold-heartedly sold him into slavery, and Joseph was carried away into a foreign land.

I cannot imagine the agony of Joseph's soul. He was rejected in the most cruel manner by his brothers and he was removed from the father whom he loved. Once the favored son of his wealthy father, he became a slave in a land where no one knew him and where he had no rights. Certainly there was much to be pitied in Joseph's situation. Life had taken a cruel and unjust turn and there was no explanation for any of it.

We know that Joseph was sold to Potipher, the captain of Pharaoh's bodyguard, and

he proved himself faithful as a servant to Potipher. Things so prospered under Joseph's care that Potipher soon placed Joseph over everything that he owned. Potipher's house prospered under the faithful watch of this Hebrew slave. Then Potipher's wife began to take an interest in Joseph.

We are told that Joseph was a very handsome youth. Potipher's wife began to entice Joseph while her husband was away. Every day she would urge him to lie with her. Why would Joseph not do this? He was lonely. He had been rejected by his brothers. He had been sold into slavery. He could not discern why all this had happened to him. The dreams he had in earlier days seemed far from being fulfilled. In fact, it appeared that his life had taken a turn quite opposite of what God had promised. His brothers were living as the free sons of a wealthy father, and he was a slave in a foreign land.

How easy it would have been for Joseph to give in to self-pity. How easy it would have been for him to justify giving in to the enticement of Potipher's wife. After all, here was one who found him attractive when those who were closest to him had rejected him, and it seemed that his integrity before God had availed him nothing to this point. Yet Joseph remained faithful to Yahweh and he refused to give into self-pity and to yield to the temptation before him.

Joseph would have forfeited much had he given into this temptation. He never would have been found worthy to be appointed to the position Yahweh had determined for him. He never would have been made a ruler in the greatest nation on the earth. He never would have been able to provide salvation for his father's household. Joseph eventually suffered even greater things, as he was falsely accused by Potipher's wife and then thrown in prison. Many long years he spent in prison, but even there he remained faithful as his soul was laid in irons and the word of Yahweh tested him (Psalms 105:17ff).

There will come a day when all are judged for their deeds that were done in the body. We are told that many will weep and gnash their teeth together in grief.

Matthew 8:11-12

"I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

I suspect that much of the grief will arise as the saints and the sons of the kingdom are shown what Yahweh had intended for them had they proven themselves faithful. Many will realize that they threw away great honor because they gave in to self-pity when Yahweh tested them through various difficulties and trials. How many will see

that they chose to curse God and to rail against Him for His unfaithfulness toward them, when in truth He was seeking to prepare them for greater things? How many will mourn the fact that they gave in to some impulse of the flesh because they felt justified due to their harsh circumstances and misfortune?

Self-pity will be the bane of many in that day and they will truly know weeping and gnashing of teeth. They will see those who overcame similar trials being rewarded as they sit on thrones prepared for them, while those who gave in to self-pity suffer great loss as all of their works are tested by fire and consumed.

As I journeyed forth from Babylon there were many things that I suffered. My flesh grew weary from all of the slings and arrows that were hurled my way. I became tired of the wilderness places I had to journey through, and I was lonely for fellowship, for I did not know of another person where I lived whom I could share my trials with and they would fully understand.

In this state I was often troubled by black moods where I was tempted to pity myself due to my situation, and on one particular day when I was especially troubled the Spirit spoke to me. He revealed the peril I was facing and I sensed a desire from the Spirit that I should overcome this evil as well. Following are words that I wrote nearly a year ago that express what the Father spoke to me.

I had lain down for a nap yesterday evening with several issues weighing on my heart, and when I woke up I heard the voice of the Father speaking to me. I had been in a rather dark mood as I had been pondering all of the difficulties and rejection and misunderstanding I had endured over the last two years, and which I continue to face. It has been a difficult place to have been stripped of so much and to have endured so many trials, especially since it has been in isolation and lonely places that I have had to walk.

I was in a dark mood as I considered these things, and I lay down to take a nap as these things were on my mind. When I woke up the Father spoke two words to me: "self-pity." Following these words, He began to speak to me of the peril of self-pity.

Self-pity is a trap that some of the greatest of saints have fallen into, and because of its effects upon them they became disqualified for further service and their mantles were given to others. Some of these saints endured far more than other men, and they were accounted faithful, righteous, and holy, yet in the end they succumbed to the sin of self-pity and they could advance no further with the Father.

As Father spoke to me of these things, I sensed no severe correction from Him, only a desire that I would gain understanding and overcome this peril. I understood that if I gave in to self-pity, and began acting out of it, that I would not be able to go any

further with God. Again, this did not seem to come to me as a threat, nor out of anger, but as a statement of fact, and I sensed a desire from the Father that I would pass this test as well.

Over the last number of years I have endured much as Father has led me down the path He has had for me. Some things I suffered due to my own disobedience, such as getting into financial debt, while many other things I suffered because I chose to walk in obedience and truth. I have become an outcast on many levels: from my church, from my family, from friends, from Christianity itself, and I have suffered much misunderstanding and false judgment from others. I am not alone in this, for I know many others have suffered these same things in recent days, as well as have many saints down through the years, some of whose stories are recorded for our benefit.

Father reminded me of Moses, who was a very meek man and who walked in faithfulness before the Father. He shared an intimacy before God that no other man of his day knew, and yet he was falsely judged as trying to be a lord over the people and of directing people according to his own will, when in truth he was walking in obedience to Yahweh's will. The leaders of the Jewish people falsely accused him at Korah's rebellion, and at one time even his own brother and sister judged him falsely.

Moses grew tired of all of the rebellion of the people, and their unbelief grieved him. At times he felt so weighed down with the burden of the people that he gave way to self-pity. One such moment is recorded in the following scripture.

Numbers 11:11-15

So Moses said to Yahweh, "Why hast Thou been so hard on Thy servant? And why have I not found favor in Thy sight, that Thou hast laid the burden of all this people on me? Was it I who conceived all this people? Was it I who brought them forth, that Thou shouldest say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom as a nurse carries a nursing infant, to the land which Thou didst swear to their fathers'? Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me, saying, 'Give us meat that we may eat!' I alone am not able to carry all this people, because it is too burdensome for me. So if Thou art going to deal thus with me, please kill me at once, if I have found favor in Thy sight, and do not let me see my wretchedness."

Yahweh never corrected Moses for this complaint, at least there is no record of any such correction. This root of self-pity remained in Moses until it bore fruit in his life and he struck the rock when he was commanded to speak to it. It is to be noted that when Moses struck the rock that he chastised the people with his words, yet his anger

was not a righteous anger demonstrating a zeal for God. Rather, his anger was rooted in his own self-pity and his offense that the people were once again grumbling about his leadership when he was simply doing all that the Father had shown him to do. When Moses struck the rock he was in actuality demonstrating anger toward God for burdening him with a rebellious people who kept falsely judging him. His self-pity manifested in this action.

Later, we see in the story of Elijah that he too came to a point of self-pity. After spending three years in isolation, knowing that if King Ahab caught him he would kill him, he then called all Israel together to confront the prophets of Baal. Elijah was outnumbered 850 prophets to one. He knew what it was to stand alone in obedience to Yahweh. He saw Yahweh perform a great sign, and all the false prophets were killed. He then outran Ahab to Samaria and overheard Jezebel saying that she would kill him before another day had passed. In great weariness of soul and body he fled to the wilderness where he lay under a tree wanting to die.

In both of these instances, the self-pity of these men led to their mantles being given to another. Moses was replaced by Joshua and Elijah by Elisha. Even though their self-pity kept them from advancing further, these men were not rejected by Yahweh. We see that they are the two who appear with Yahshua on the mount of transfiguration. They represent the remnant who are being called forth in this day. It is therefore a caution that their same failing should be found among the remnant and also be a point of disqualification.

As I lay on my bed and considered this, I was made aware that I and many others are being tested in this regard. Many of us have endured isolation, rejection, and false judgment. Many of us have also endured members of our families rejecting the truths Yahweh has revealed to us, and we have experienced family members taking sides with others against us. To add to our temptation to self-pity, many have also experienced financial lack and we have had the necessity laid upon us of working to support our families while pursuing the fulfilling of the ministry entrusted to us by Yahweh.

I know that for myself, this has added to my complaint against God, and my feelings of self-pity. I have thought that at the very least that Father should reveal His provision where it is unnecessary for me to work and to write at the same time. I have felt like the ox that was muzzled while threshing the grain. When so many false ministers are growing fat from the offerings of the church, there is seemingly no provision at all for those who are ministering in righteousness and truth.

Father began to show me that these seeds of self-pity have been present in my mind, and if they are not uprooted and cast away that they will bear fruit and cause me to be rejected for further progress in the kingdom. I was led to confess these things and to ask Father to deliver me from the peril of self-pity.

It is interesting that both Moses' and Elijah's self-pity arose because they were being personally criticized and maligned for doing the will of Yahweh. They did not understand why reproach should fall on them for their obedience. Why should the people grumble against Moses because they did not have water? Shouldn't they look to Yahweh for water? Why did Jezebel want to kill Elijah for having the false prophets killed? Was Elijah the one who caused fire to fall from heaven and to consume the sacrifice?

In the same way, why should the remnant saints of God today be condemned and maligned for walking in obedience before the Father? Why should our reputations be besmirched and our character be a reproach? Yet it is the Father's good will.

As I thought on this, and the Father continued to minister to me, He showed me that it is proper for us to respond with righteous anger when people malign His name and character or act out of unbelief towards Him. However, in anything that touches us personally we are to demonstrate a different response: we are to turn the other cheek. There is no room for anger to be manifested in anything that touches us personally.

Father showed me that I cannot respond in anger towards family, friends, or church members for the actions or words which have been spoken against me. I am not to react in any way, but I am to follow the example of which Paul spoke.

I Corinthians 4:10-13

We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor. To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless; **and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; when we are slandered, we try to conciliate**; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now.

It is one thing to endure these things and to entertain self-pity. It is quite something else to be content with these things, seeing that this is our lot. Many of God's saints are enduring this test at this moment.

It is not by coincidence that so many circumstances seem to be conspiring against Zion at this time. Father is testing her to see if self-pity will overcome her, or if she will overcome it. The saints of Zion could respond in anger or wrath at the things coming against them. They could choose to act angrily toward those who have misjudged and mistreated them, but in doing so they would actually be striking out at God for the unfairness of the burdens placed upon Zion. It is not a rock we would

be striking, our self-pity is an expression of discontent for the difficulties the Father has chosen for us to endure.

I am amazed as I think that men such as Moses and Elijah could walk in such intimacy and faithfulness with Yahweh. They could demonstrate faithfulness when all others were unfaithful. They could have revelation and understanding of Yahweh's ways, and yet they could still fall prey to the peril of self-pity. It seems that those who endure the very most must at the end face this subtle enemy. Those who never walk in faith and who never know what it is to be called to stand alone will never know what it is to be tempted by this peril. Only those who have walked down long and difficult paths face this evil.

It would be very grievous for any of Yahweh's overcomers to be hindered by this after all they have passed through. Father has told us that we must give place to wrath, for vengeance is His and His alone. We will never be justified in acting out of personal hurt, nor of harboring pity for the difficulties and pains present in our lives. We must turn the other cheek, and speak a blessing when we are reviled; we must endure when we are persecuted; we must conciliate when we are slandered.

We are to count it all joy when we are persecuted and slandered for the sake of righteousness, for great is our reward in heaven. As Paul, we must concur that these are but momentary and light afflictions and they are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed in us.

Selah

I wrote these words nearly a year ago, but I find that I am still troubled by this peril. I must daily fight to not give in to self-pity. As I was thinking of some current trials I am facing that cause me great annoyance, and which have once more brought me to battle with this evil, I was reminded of a movie I have viewed on more than one occasion. The movie is "Lawrence of Arabia".

This movie relates the story of a British officer during one of the World Wars who was sent to the Middle East to enlist the help of the Arab peoples in the fight against the Turks. He met with much success, and it was in a great way attributable to a certain character trait that he exhibited.

Early in the movie we are shown Lawrence with some other British officers in a lounge, and he is demonstrating what others think to be some kind of parlor trick. Lawrence takes a match and holds it between finger and thumb until it burns all the way down and is finally extinguished. He then asks another officer to try it and when the match burns down to his fingers, this fellow British officer throws the match down with an exclamation of pain.

While the officers think it must be some kind of trick, Lawrence confides that the match burns his fingers just like anyone else's, but that he simply doesn't mind as much. As the movie unfolds, we see Lawrence revealed in contrast to the other British officers. When he arrives in the Middle East he must take a lengthy journey by camel. When his Arab guide stops to allow Lawrence to drink, knowing that Europeans are unaccustomed to the heat, Lawrence asks his guide if he is drinking too. When the man says "No", then Lawrence replies that he will not drink until his guide drinks.

In these instances and many more, Lawrence exhibits the trait that he will not allow the discomfort of his flesh, or its loudly clamoring desires, to dictate how he will act or respond to a situation. His own stubborn will rules over the flesh's demands.

In many ways, this is the same mindset that the saint must adopt to deal with the peril of self-pity. The Overcomer will get burned many times, by hard and unjust words, by situations where they know lack, by dreams and hopes that tarry and are delayed time after time, but the Overcomer must not mind these frustrations, bewilderments, and pains. Like Paul, we must proclaim, "I have learned to be content in ALL things."

There is a difference between Lawrence and the Overcomer that I must point out. It is not the will of man that will achieve this victory, for it is in the Spirit that the saint must walk. We are told by Paul,

Galatians 5:24-25

Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

It is the flesh that wants to host a pity party, the Spirit will never lead us to do so. If we will remain patient before the Father, in time He will heal up every wound and He will fulfill every dream that He has placed within our being. Remember, the promises of God are inherited only through faith and patience.

Hebrews 6:11-12

And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Don't allow self-pity to derail you on the road to Zion. Don't stop just short of the goal. Overcomers must overcome to the very end. The promise is there, and it is glorious beyond all comparison so that we can proclaim with Paul,

Romans 8:18

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Chapter 5 - A Snare for the Unaware

Satan is not content to simply make one run at the saint who would set their heart toward Zion. He makes repeated attempts, and he attacks on different fronts and tries to deceive the saint on various issues. Ezra gave this wonderful testimony which is recorded in Ezra 8:31, “and the hand of our God was over us, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy and the ambushes by the way.” Note that the word ambushes is plural, yet God delivered them from them all.

The encounter I wrote of in the chapter “Ambushed Outside the Gates of Babylon”, occurred a mere few weeks after I was removed from the place of ministry I had known among the children of God. Having survived the first ambush, it wasn’t long before Satan launched his next assault. Satan’s next offensive was much more subtle in nature, and I have seen untold numbers of saints become ensnared by this particular deceit.

At this time I had been writing some articles, relating to others the revelations the Spirit had been giving me as I walked a road of faith. I had written a couple of articles that spoke of how the Father uses delays in our lives to test our faith. The articles “Waiting, the Ultimate Test”, and “The Untimeliness of God” had been posted on a well trafficked Internet site that posts prophetic words and teachings, and I received an outpouring of response to these articles.

One response came from a brother who had also been waiting on God on some matters, and he was encouraged by the writings. He shared with me that he had some writings of his own and he invited me to read them. They were written with a great amount of skill and lucidity. I came to understand some things I had not previously discerned as I read what he had to say.

He had a writing on “food sacrificed to idols” that was very enlightening, and I came to understand that saints feeding on the doctrines of demons is the antitype, or fulfillment, of this expression. The key to unlocking this understanding is the following verse in Hebrews.

Hebrews 13:9

Do not be carried about with various and strange **doctrines**. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with **foods** which have not profited those who have been occupied with them

Note that the words “doctrines” and “foods” are both used to refer to the same thing in this scripture. Often the saints occupy themselves with foods (doctrines) that are not profitable to them. These teachings are often referred to as “doctrines of

demons”, and in type they are referred to as “food sacrificed to idols”.

I Timothy 4:1

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons...

Revelation 2:20

"But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols."

I very much enjoy coming to understand things in the scriptures that have been previously hidden to me. This brother had some good insights, and for a brief time I even posted some of his writings on my website. However, along with the truth he was proclaiming, I began to notice some things that disturbed me. I began to notice a wrong emphasis on the role of the Law of God, and expressions asserting that the saints of God need to keep the Law.

This is a matter that the saints often stumble in, and even the early saints were disturbed by this teaching. At one point Paul confronted Peter for being hypocritical regarding this topic, and we have his following words:

Galatians 2:11-13

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

In this one scripture we have mention of three of the early apostles who became entangled with this snare of Satan. Cephas (Peter), James, and Barnabas are all mentioned. If these apostles could fall for this deceit, then know with a certainty that the saints today are similarly susceptible. Paul's epistle to the Galatian believers was written because the entire church was being troubled by the presence of Judaizers (Messianic Jews who taught the keeping of the Law) who had come into their midst and they were leading the saints away from a walk of faith, back to a bondage to the Law.

I have recently received a book that a brother purchased for me that he encouraged me to read. The book deals with the pagan origins of many of the church's traditions and customs today, and as far as the author sticks to relating the history of such

practices, he does well. Where he gets into error is when he begins to draw applications to his findings. This author is teaching other Christian saints to return to keeping the Torah, or Law. He describes himself as being "Torah Observant" and he argues that all saints today should be so. The phrase "Torah Observant" is simply a euphemism that means Law Keeper.

I have noted a whole mass of saints that are seeking to return to being Torah Observant. This is a result of many of the saints finding out how riddled modern Christianity is with pagan practices and false doctrines. In a sincere effort to return to a foundation of truth, many saints are seeking to go back and discover how the early church walked and to conform to their beliefs and practices. Many equate a return to Jewish heritage, words, and practice as being a return to truth and a separation from apostasy (it is a mistake to equate Judaism with early Christianity). One of the things the Jews were known for was their observance of the Torah, the Law of God.

However, a return to an observance of the Law is not the same thing as fleeing from Babylon, as some would suppose. It is merely exchanging one bondage for another. Many of the early saints in Jerusalem were former adherents of Judaism. We are told that a great number of priests believed, as did multitudes of the Jewish people (Acts 6:7). Unfortunately, many of these saints did not want to transition completely to the New Covenant established in the blood of Christ. There were many who wanted to mix the Old Covenant with the New. This is a tragic mistake, and Paul in writing to the Hebrews tells them plainly that the Old Covenant has been replaced. Many of the early believers wanted to treat the New Covenant as merely an addendum to the Old. They did not want the Old to pass away.

Hebrews 8:6-7, 13

But now [Yahshua] has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second... When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

Many saints become confused because there are many New Testament scriptures that indicate that the Law is righteous and holy and it still has a purpose in this age. Indeed, the Law does have a purpose. It continues to lead people to Christ as it exposes sin and reveals unregenerate man's utter inability to conform to Yahweh's righteous and holy standards. The Law makes known man's need for a Savior. Paul is quite emphatic about this issue.

Galatians 4:21-25

Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law? For

it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman. But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise. This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.

Those who want to be under law, who want to be Torah Observant, remove themselves from a place of standing in faith to receive the promises of God and they embrace bondage and slavery as they try to keep the Law through the power of the flesh. What was given at Sinai? Was it not the Law? Do not say that this was the ceremonial or sacrificial Law only, for it was the moral Law that Moses brought down from the mountain on tablets of stone. Is not this covenant related to Hagar, slavery and the flesh? Do the saints really need to go back to this?

The children of faith are equated to Isaac and to being the true offspring of Abraham. Abraham never tried to keep the Law or be Torah Observant for the Law was given 430 years after Abraham. Why then would the saints today want to place themselves under the Law?

Many argue that it was just the sacrificial law that was done away with, and some scriptures mention specifically this portion of the Law having been fulfilled and having passed away (Hebrews 10:1-9). However, Paul states that it is not just the ceremonial or sacrificial aspects of the Law of which he is speaking.

The Law was used of God to reveal righteousness and in many places it demanded that the observant Jew should separate themselves from that which would defile them and that which was unclean. This was the portion of the Law that Peter and James and Barnabas stumbled over. The Law said which foods were clean and which were unclean. The Law said which type of people were clean and which were unclean. These apostles began to separate themselves from the Gentile believers over matters of the Law and Paul boldly confronted them over their hypocrisy.

Galatians 2:14-19

But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews? We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles; nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Yahshua the Messiah, even we have believed in Yahshua the Messiah, so that we may be justified by faith in Messiah and not by the works of the Law; since by the works

of the Law no flesh will be justified. But if, while seeking to be justified in Messiah, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Messiah then a minister of sin? May it never be! For if I rebuild what I have once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor. For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God.”

How is it that the Gentiles were living? They were certainly not Torah Observant for the Torah was given to the Jews. Paul said that Peter had been living like the Gentiles, but now he was proclaiming that the Gentiles should live like the Jews, keeping the Law. Paul says, “For through the Law I died to the Law”. Was Paul saying that he merely died to the ceremonial or sacrificial law? No! He died to the Law in its entirety.

Many saints are troubled by Yahshua’s words when He stated:

Matthew 5:18-20

For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

The key phrase in this passage is “till all is fulfilled.” Was not the Law given to reveal righteousness and to lead people to Messiah? Did Messiah fulfill the righteous requirements of the Law? He demonstrated in the following verse that He knew this was His calling. As he met John the Baptizer at the Jordan River He said,

Matthew 3:15

But Yahshua answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way ***it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.***" Then he permitted Him.

Did Yahshua succeed in fulfilling the righteous requirements of the Law? When He spoke His final words on the cross He declared that He had done so. With the words, “It is finished”, Yahshua made the bold declaration that He had fulfilled the righteous requirements of the Law!

Would it surprise you to find out that it was Pharisees who had become believers who were urging the saints to keep the Law of Moses. We are told that this is so in the following scripture:

Acts 15:5

But some 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."

The Pharisees were proud of their adherence to the Law of Moses. Paul was himself formerly a Pharisee, and he proclaimed that according to the righteousness found in the Law, he was perfect (Philippians 3:6). However, in the passage we just looked at we have Yahshua's words, "that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."

How do we get to this point of having a righteousness that exceeds the Scribes and Pharisees? Is it by keeping the letter of the Law better than they did? Absolutely not! We exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees by becoming partakers of the finished work of Christ. He becomes our righteousness.

II Corinthians 5:21

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might
become the righteousness of God in Him.

I Corinthians 1:30-31

But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom
from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so
that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE
LORD."

Yet we find that the same saints today who so scorn the Pharisees, act just like the early Pharisees found in the church as they try to place the saints back under the Law. Many are sincere in this, but they are sincerely deluded.

This man whose writings I posted to my website began to speak more and more of keeping the Law, and I tried to reason with him from the scriptures. I shared with him that it was no longer necessary to teach the Law to the saints and to encourage them to place themselves under its jurisdiction. Those who now walk in the Spirit no longer need to be held in check by an external body of legislation, for the Spirit within convicts the saint of "sin and righteousness and judgment". The Spirit accomplishes what an external body of rules never could, He brings our inner being into conformity to Christ where we DESIRE to pursue righteousness and holiness and to walk in obedience to the leading of the Spirit in all matters.

This man knew the letter of the scriptures. He set forth many arguments as to why the saints still needed to keep the Law today, and for a time I wavered in doubt. Yet the Spirit within me would not allow me to be swept away from the liberty that I

knew in Christ. This is a very hideous snare, and not to be underestimated. If the early apostles could stumble in this point, if the entire Galatian church could be troubled by the presence of the Judaisers in their midst, then we can be assured that the message of those who would place the saints under the Law has much appeal and many convincing arguments.

The problem with an external Law is that it excites the flesh of man, for sin dwells in the flesh.

Romans 7:7-11

I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "You shall not covet." But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead. I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

The Law excites the flesh to try and conform to the righteous requirements of the Law, but as Paul confessed in another place, the very things we do not want to do, we find ourselves doing. Man cannot be guided by an external Law. Man must be transformed inwardly, and He must constantly allow the life of Christ within to manifest itself in conformity to the revealed will of God.

The Overcomer who stretches out his hand to begin keeping the Law becomes ensnared in a futile exercise of the flesh. He will become bogged down in disputes and wranglings over the application of the Law in daily life, and he will join himself to many crusades against evil that are conducted according to Babylonian principles, rather than the principles of the Kingdom of God.

The Jewish religious system was well known for its lawyers. These lawyers were versed in the Law of Moses and they had created an abundance of writings that explained how the Law was to be applied in every conceivable circumstance. Many of their conclusions actually violated the intent of the Holy Spirit who authored the scriptures, and Yahshua rebuked the Jewish leaders for this evil.

The saint who sets forth to keep the Law will be forced to become a lawyer as well. I saw clearly the end result of this path when the brother of whom I have been speaking wrote to me of an event that had just occurred in the life of his family.

This family had a golden retriever that had been a family pet for many years and it

was well loved by this man's small children, as well as his wife. This dog, as it got older, did not want to be played with as much and it avoided small children that it was unfamiliar with. On one occasion it had snapped at a small child that was visiting, but had done no harm other than scaring the child. This man thought it was an aberration, and didn't know what might have been done to provoke the dog, so he did nothing.

Some time later this man had another family over visiting and the dog bit one of the children in the family, but again it was not a serious injury. This man wrote me and told me that according to the Law, he had determined that he would have to take this dog which was a family pet, and shoot it. He referred to some scriptures that related to animals that did injury to humans. He told me that he planned to take the dog out behind his house on some land they owned and shoot it.

When he declared these things to his family he was met with a great emotional response. This dog had become as a member of the family to his wife and children and they loved it dearly. It would have been greatly upsetting to his family to have the dog killed. A few days later he wrote me once again and I saw that he had arrived at a solution to his dilemma.

This man felt he had to keep the Law or he would be disobedient to Yahweh, yet he also was conscious of his family's reaction. When he wrote me he said that he had determined that the dog didn't actually bite the visiting child, but that the dog had merely "pushed the child with his teeth." Furthermore, he said that because the dog did not draw blood that the Law did not require that he kill the animal. This conclusion, he felt satisfied both the requirements of God's Law and his family.

As I read of this event in this man's life it became exceedingly apparent to me that the path this man was walking was not that which God intended for His children under the New Covenant. This man by profession was a lawyer, and in his relationship to God he had become a lawyer as well. Every decision had to be justified by some precept of Law and defended with cold logic. Yet God has called His elect to walk by the Spirit, not by the reasoning of their minds. I wrote many things to this man to show him these truths, but he would not receive them.

I asked him, since he was committed to keeping the letter of the Law as was evidenced in his willingness to kill the family pet, was he also willing to take his children out and stone them to death if they proved to be rebellious (Leviticus 20:9). Would he demand an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth in all cases of injury? What would he do when the Law of God was in conflict with the laws of the U.S.? The Law of Moses said that if a man commits adultery with a woman, both the man and woman are to be killed (Leviticus 20:10). Yet the laws of the United States would forbid such action.

In one of my first communications with this man I asked him about his assertions that the saints must keep the Law. I cited the following scripture:

John 16:7-8

"But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment..."

Under the Old Covenant it was the Law that brought conviction of sin and that pronounced what was righteous. But under the New Covenant this role is fulfilled by the Spirit. This does not lead to licentiousness as some would suppose, for the Spirit convicts of many things of which the Law could never address. The Spirit weighs the thoughts and intentions of the heart, while the Law only dealt with outward actions. Many saints today justify some action by the Law when the Spirit actually condemns the action due to the evil and selfish motive of their heart. If the saints embrace the Law they will condemn many things that Yahweh has not condemned and they will justify many things that are evil in His sight. Our only safe path is in discerning the voice of the Spirit in every circumstance and following His lead.

Romans 8:14

For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are [mature] sons of God.

Some writings that have helped me significantly in this matter have been written by J. Preston Eby, and I will include some excerpts here from his book "The Kingdom of God" which is freely available on the Internet.

A brother related how that some years ago, when he was in Chicago, on the ground of some technicality, three hundred prisoners who had been convicted of crimes were released from prison. Three hundred men with criminal instincts were turned loose upon the community by a mere technicality of law! If the Governor of any state who had the power should go to the state prisons and pardon every criminal, he would be impeached. Why, the people would not stand for it. Criminals turned loose into the homes and into the streets would multiply criminals, and crime would be even more rampant. But suppose the Governor of Illinois, in which that prison I have mentioned was located, not only had the power to pardon and let them out, but had the power to take criminality out of their hearts, and make every one of them an honest, good man—then I would say, "Governor, turn them all loose, and if there are ten thousand of them, all the better."

If we could find a man like that and place him in the jails and prisons of earth, among men who knew they were guilty of crime, and make them believe that he had the power not only to pardon, but to take the criminality out of their natures, with all the shame of their sin, and put them back in the place of honor they occupied before they committed crime, I tell you, he would be the most popular man, not only among the prison administrators and guards, but among the prisoners as well! They would be willing to build him a monument, giving him all the glory they could. Such a man would have a monument that would touch the stars. *Jesus Christ is that Man.* That is what Jesus Christ has done by making Himself King by His sacrificial love. He has gained for Himself the glory not only of removing guilt, but of removing defilement and uncleanness from every one who will trust Him. He is the Saviour of all men, and in due time shall win all hearts and purify all lives. That, my friend, is the power and glory of the Kingdom of God!

The Kingdom of God is the rule and reign of God over all. The foundation of this Kingdom is in the human heart. The world has not yet witnessed anything like the total and absolute government of God, except in the life of Jesus. But there has been an increase of His Kingdom from generation to generation and from age to age. A new order is now coming forth in the earth! The hour of the completion of the body of Christ that has been forming in the earth for the past two millenniums is now at hand. The age of the reigning of Christ in and through the manifested sons of God is now ready to be revealed. The reign of Christ in our lives is being confirmed as Father changes us, renews our minds, increases our vision, strengthens our faith, and transforms our natures. When He removed all the old religious traditions and doctrines and ideas that were not of Him, our Father was preparing us for the pure and holy and righteous reign of God in us and through us. In this new Day the love of God and the power of God shall prevail. The elect of God who are beholding the face of the Lord and being changed into His likeness are the highest expression of the Kingdom of God in the earth. To them shall be given the Kingdom and the Dominion over all things that they may reign in love, mercy, goodness, power and righteousness, *not forcing* men to obey, but *imparting* to all men the transforming grace of God in the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost without measure...

We still have those among us who thunder the letter of the law from Sinai's mount—but all such will *change their tune* if ever they stand with the Lamb of God at Calvary's hill, for there they find God removing His law from the external tables of stone to write them upon the fleshy

tables of the hearts of *new born men*, who no longer keep the law because they cringe in fear, but because the spirit of that law has become their nature, the *law of life* within them...

So laws cannot change the inner man; nor can the best of natural men follow the totality of any laws laid down in his behalf. That is why there is such torment and slavery under the law, for we have become aware now of what God defines as sin, yet we struggle with it nonetheless. But when the law is written in the heart, no longer do men try to love God contrary to nature, but now, because they possess the nature of God, love, joy and righteousness flow like a river from the heart...

In the United States today we have the Fundamentalist and Charismatic Christian movements whose burden it is to restructure government and society in the name of the Lord, not by spiritual regeneration, but by constitutional legislation. These are sincere Christians concerned for the social problems confronting the modern world who are being beguiled and deceived into accepting the premise that by partaking in the Babylonish systems of this confused world, they will be able to effect significant changes and bring about the Kingdom of God on earth. To those on the "religious right" that seems to be envisioned as a political government that will outlaw abortion, re-institute public prayer in schools and legislate Christian morality on the whole of society. It is their conviction that God's Word gives them a mandate to infiltrate and exercise godly control over all the political, social, educational and judicial institutions of the nation. They are convinced that the Bible gives us a divinely revealed pattern for social and political action...

Once a man is born again, truly born again by the Spirit of God, you need no laws to enforce righteousness upon him. Once a nation turns to the Lord it will *change the government* — but changing the government cannot turn men to the Lord! The so-called "Christian Right" in America today has the cart before the horse. They have the whole thing backwards. Their mission will fail. They cannot and will not bring America back to God through the ballot box. I tell you as a prophet of God that political action and organization by the religious people in the United States or anywhere else will not return the nation to its Christian roots and heritage. They are barking up the wrong tree. Only the mighty saving, delivering, transforming power of God can accomplish the work.

Let me illustrate. Suppose that there are two meetings going on at opposite ends of the city. Both are led by preachers. One is engaged in

spiritual ministry. The power of God is moving and men are coming to Christ, broken, weeping, contrite, repenting, calling upon the name of the Lord, their chains of sin and darkness broken, washed away by the power of God, becoming new creatures in Christ Jesus. Saints are being strengthened, the ways of the Lord are being established in hearts, the plan and purpose of God are being quickened in the consciousness of those seeking the Lord. The other preacher is heading a political movement to enlist "Christian political activists" in the project of holding demonstrations, lobbying government to put prayer back in the schools, initiate programs to get kids off of drugs, outlaw pornography, nude dancing, adult book stores, etc. Now, which of these two preachers is acting as an Ambassador of the Kingdom of Heaven; which of these preachers is doing the work of the Kingdom of God; which of these two is causing the Kingdom of God to come upon men; which of these two is introducing men to the Realm of Heaven; which is reigning in some measure with Christ from His throne of heavenly power?

There should be no doubt in any spiritual mind. The soul-saving preacher is certainly moving in a dimension of the Kingdom of God even in this present "in part" realm, whereas the politically active preacher is trying by the energy of the flesh, by the principles of the kingdoms of *this world*, and by the methodology of the law of Moses, to reform the carnal government of man. With the above truth gaining access and blooming in our hearts, let us prepare our hearts to now step beyond our present age to the more excellent glory of the *new order* which is now at hand in the Feast of Tabernacles, the third day, the Holiest of all, the manifestation of the sons of God. Let us discard the silly doctrines, methods and programs of men and evil traditions inherited from the kingdom of Babylon that we may receive of God and become His sons and daughters...

It is my deep conviction that the time appointed of the Father for the manifestation of the sons of God is nigh at hand. Sons of God shout it loud and clear! Let the earth know her redemption draweth nigh! The King of Love is coming! Hallelu-yah! The Deliverer is coming out of Zion, the whole Christ-body is being prepared, and the time is at hand. While the religious systems "play church" and the Christians "dabble in politics" trying to save the nation and the world, the royal heralds are going forth blowing their trumpets, proclaiming the message of the Kingdom in the power of the Spirit, preparing the stage for the appearing of the KING in a vast company of the sons of God — the King in the midst of the kings! What a glorious and mighty and exultant victory lies before us!

Now don't misunderstand me. I certainly am not opposed to good and godly laws in our land, nor to Christians exerting their influence for righteousness in society or government. That is all well and good and to be commended, and I praise God for it. JUST DON'T CALL IT THE KINGDOM OF GOD. It is not the Kingdom of God. It has nothing to do with the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is not good laws or religiously oriented politics in this or any other land. The Kingdom of God is "righteousness, and peace, and joy **IN THE HOLY GHOST.**" What is the difference? I will tell you! When Christians exert pressure on carnal institutions and impose their will and standards on unregenerated men, you have just another function of human government. It may be better human government. But it is still just human government. But, when those carnal institutions are *changed* because all the people in them have been transformed by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost — *then* YOU HAVE THE KINGDOM OF GOD! You have now not a legislated righteousness imposed from without, but "righteousness...in **the Holy Ghost.**" Ah, the former was imposed by the law of the statute books — the Old Covenant; the latter is the result of the laws written in the hearts of men by the Spirit of the living God — the New Covenant! The Kingdom of God offers the *solution* to both sin and death. The world needs the *solution* to its evils and sorrows, not another band aid. God is preparing a people to step forth upon the world scene in the nature, wisdom, power and glory of God's Christ. THIS IS THE POWER AND GLORY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

This is why I have consistently refused to become involved in movements, or organizations, in campaigns, crusades, and whatever work is dedicated to "anti" something. If I become a militant moralist to fight the degeneracy in our midst, if I work myself to death screaming against the communists, if I labor day and night warning God's people and the nation against politicians, the Illuminati, the world bankers, the Trilateral Commission, the United Nations, the New World Order, and all the other conspiracy theories — will it deliver even *one* soul from the power of darkness and translate him into the Kingdom of God's dear Son? Will it lead to transformation and to the glorification of as much as one life rescued from the power of hell, and raised up to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus? The answer is abundantly clear. God's purpose for His chosen ones is to become a part of THE STONE THAT IS CHRIST, which is cut out of the mountain without hands. It is a Kingdom not of this world, out of the heights and depths of God...

The great truth is that the man in Christ does not keep the *letter* of the

law, which is merely the outward husk of type and shadow, but he keeps the *spirit* of the law which is the inward law of the *spirit of life* in Christ Jesus. This results in the living expression of the nature and character of God in all things, not a keeping of external rules and regulations which give only the *appearance* of godliness. Thus the *righteousness* of the law, and not its external forms, are fulfilled in them who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. The answer to creation's deteriorating state is not to preach the keeping of the law; the answer lies in the living out of Christ, and in Him alone. When Christ comes to dwell in individuals, they will then keep Father's Kingdom laws of life within, and the whole creation will be preserved, touched, affected, and transformed. And unless He lives within individuals, it is a useless waste of time to urge them to keep God's laws...

The outward law of God is given to reveal to us the nature of God Himself. I will use one illustration from the Ten Commandments to make the point. When God says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," He is not simply trying to prevent us from enjoying the lusts of our flesh. He is telling us something about Himself — how He is. The only eternal, unchangeable, immutable, invariable, unalterable, firm, fixed, sound, solid, balanced, dependable, reliable, steady, steadfast, ethical, moral and totally trustworthy thing in the whole universe is — GOD! "Thou shalt not commit adultery" — it means that GOD HIMSELF is committed, reliable, true, dependable, faithful and trustworthy. He keeps His commitments. He keeps His covenant. He honors His word. He is faithful in all His involvements. He will not cheat on you, lie to you, deceive you, betray you, forsake you or fail you. He loves you and will take care of you, cherish you, nurture you, protect you, and cleave to you. He does not "chase skirts," He will not abandon you for greener grass on the other side of the fence. He is not adulterous, with a roving eye and a lying, cheating heart. He is love. He is good, He is faithful. He is persevering, and His nature is constant, abiding and unchanging. THAT IS HOW HE IS! When you understand the nature of one who is not adulterous in thought, desire or action, you understand something about the character of God. And that is how He wants us. His sons, to be! His law reveals His nature.

Yes, Yahweh's Law reveals His nature. But men simply want to turn His Law into rules of conduct to establish their own righteousness. Have you been conformed to the image of God if you abstain from committing adultery, but you lust after many women in your heart? Have you been conformed to the image of God if you stop short of committing adultery, but you lack faithfulness in your dealings with others, and the bottom line in your decisions is what best benefits you? Has keeping the Law in this

manner done you any good? No! We need to be transformed by the Spirit in the inner man so that Yahweh's very character becomes our character. When we are set free from self-seeking, from the never ending tendency to satisfy our own fleshly lusts and desires, then some good will have occurred in our lives. An outward Law cannot produce this change.

Having begun in faith that Christ has redeemed us from the penalty of sin, we must now continue in faith that He will produce righteousness IN us. We must see ourselves abiding in the Vine, and we must see that the Life that is in His blood is now in us, motivating and empowering us to live in complete harmony with the character of Yahweh.

I want to walk in communion and harmony with the Spirit all day long, every day. I want to know His leading and His desire, and then I want Christ to have free rein to live in me and to accomplish the desire of the Father. I want His desires to become my desires, His will my will, and His character my character. The Law, weak as it is through the flesh, will never bring about this conformity, and for the saint to place themselves back under the jurisdiction of the Law, being Torah Observant, is to commit oneself to a life of frustration and barrenness.

What does the word say? "Walk by the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). Notice that it does NOT say, "Keep the Law and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." A scripture that the Spirit has used to open my eyes to the proper role of the Law today is the following:

I Timothy 1:8-11

But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.

Yes, this is a key. The scriptures, even the New Testament, state that the Law is good, BUT one has to use it lawfully. How does one use it lawfully? They realize that the Law is NOT FOR THE RIGHTEOUS PERSON, but for those who are lawless and rebellious. The Law is only lawfully applied to those who are lawless and rebellious. If you desire to keep the Law then you are acknowledging that you are lawless and rebellious.

Paul makes it clear, the Law is not for the righteous. Are you righteous?

II Corinthians 5:21

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

I Corinthians 6:9-11

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. ***Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.***

We have become the righteousness of God through Yahshua the Messiah, therefore the Law no longer applies to us. We have died to the Law, and now we live according to the glorious Law of Life and Liberty in Yahshua the Messiah.

Are you troubled by Judaisers who would put you under the Law, who would seek to place your focus upon an external body of rules and commands? Then think on these two statements and let the full impact sink into the deepest recesses of your being:

The Law is good, if one uses it lawfully...

Law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious...

Consider these further words of J. Preston Eby:

A man who keeps his bulldog tied to a fence has no right to brag that the dog has never bitten the mailman. How *could the* dog bite the mailman? If the owner wants to brag about his dog, let him set the dog free; then everyone (including the mailman) will know the dog's true nature. There you have the difference between the law and the Kingdom of God. The law merely *restrains* evil men (like the chain on the dog) from the ability to do their evil - the Kingdom of God transforms the nature so that men *become righteous*.

Yahshua has set you free from the Law. Will you now “bite the mailman”, or will you rather choose to walk in the love of Messiah. Do you need the Law to restrain you now that you are a “new creature” in Christ.

Galatians 5:1

It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

This snare of the enemy that would seek to place the saints back under the Law, and therefore back in the realm of fleshly striving and under Satan's domain, must be faced, fully understood, and resisted to the uttermost. You cannot walk by the Spirit and walk under the dominion of the Law at the same time.

Galatians 5:4

You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

Don't fall from grace on your journey to Zion. Resist the Devil when he comes to you with this subtle deception and he will flee from you. Remember, you are children of the free woman, not the bondwoman, "only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13).

The last conversation I had with this lawyer, of whom I have been speaking in this chapter, involved a very peculiar event that happened at that time in his life. This man owned some goats, and he and his family milked the goats and they used the milk for food. One morning this man drank some goat milk and then became deathly sick. He broke out in a rash over his entire body and then he began getting a tingling in his extremities. At the same time his esophagus began to swell which made breathing difficult.

He got in his car to drive to the office of his family doctor. He phoned his wife using his cell phone to tell her where he was going. He began getting worse and worse, and breathing became more difficult. He feared that he would die in transit, and he decided to go straight to the emergency room instead of to his doctor. He was able to make it there and they took him right in.

By this time his fingers and toes were turning grey as blood was being rerouted from his extremities to his vital organs to keep them from shutting down. The emergency room staff immediately began administering drugs to counter what was occurring in his body, and for a while it was a very narrow thing that he survived. This man later determined that his goats had been eating poison ivy and that this had contaminated their milk.

Now I know that NOTHING happens in the life of the saints by accident, so I began asking the Father about this event and He showed me the following things which I shared with this man. Remember, at the beginning of this chapter that I spoke of food sacrificed to idols and the doctrines of demons. This symbolism was something this man was very familiar with, and it was the topic of one of his first writings. God uses illustrations in our lives that we can relate to.

Goats are often representative of evil. We are given an account in scripture of a great judgment where the sheep are separated from the goats. Also, in Satanism today, a horned goat head is used to symbolize Satan. The Father showed me that this event in this man's life was symbolic of spiritual truths relating to his walk.

This man drank tainted milk from a goat which is symbolic of feeding on doctrines

of demons. Paul even compares the saints focusing on elementary doctrines to the drinking of milk (I Corinthians 3:2, Hebrews 5:12). However, the milk this man drank was full of poison. The result was that death began to spread throughout his body, beginning at the extremities, but at the last it would have spread to his vital organs. A grey pallor of death was seen in his extremities as the blood was drained from them. This is symbolic of the fruit of this particular doctrine that he had embraced and was teaching to others. Instructing saints to keep the Law does not produce life, but rather it brings forth spiritual death. If left to run its course, the entire body of Christ would experience death from partaking of this doctrine.

Happily, this man was able to receive treatment that stemmed the spread of death in his body, and which allowed his body to return back to a state of health. I truly hope that this brother will also be returned to complete spiritual health and that he will discern the voice of the Spirit in this matter. To this date I have not heard that he has changed any of his teachings. Such is the mercy and patience of God toward His children.

The experience of encountering this man was given to me according to the Father's purposes. The Father wanted me to overcome this snare and to instruct others to overcome it as well. The saints who come out of Babylon are often repulsed by the flesh and carnality and lawlessness they have seen in Babylon. The lawlessness of Babylon is not the result of failing to keep the Law of Moses, for many of the churches of Babylon focus much on the Law, particularly the so-called holiness churches. The lawlessness of Babylon actually arises from a failure to submit to the Lordship of Yahshua. The Babylonian churches are not Spirit led, they are led by the soul of man. Their activities, thoughts, and judgments originate in the mind, will and emotions of man.

Lawlessness is not avoided by returning to the Law of an Old Covenant. It is accomplished by submitting to the leading of the Holy Spirit, walking in the Spirit, living by the Spirit. Life in the Spirit is a characteristic of all of the citizens of Zion.

It is my prayer that you may avoid drinking from the deadly poison of this snare that has brought death to many of the saints of God who have been called to Zion.

Chapter 6 - The Silence of the Lambs

There is a lesson I have been learning on the road to Zion. It is often a difficult lesson to walk out, but one in which I desire to prevail and succeed. It is to remain silent when others accuse falsely, and to respond with peace when I am reviled. Yahshua demonstrated in His own life that it is futile to try to defend oneself in the face of godless enemies. There is a time and place to give a defense of the gospel that we preach, but there is likewise a time to be silent before those who do not understand the experiences that we are enduring.

Isaiah 53:7

He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth;
Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before
its shearers, so He did not open His mouth.

Matthew 27:12-14

And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He did not answer. Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?" And He did not answer him with regard to even a single charge, so the governor was quite amazed.

Yes, Pilate was amazed at the restraint that Yahshua demonstrated in the face of His accusers. It is equally amazing to me that those who observed the suffering of Christ considered Him to be enduring the wrath of God due to His own sin.

Isaiah 53:4

Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we
ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Certainly, we think, God must have been interested in justifying His Son in the eyes of sinful men and women. Certainly God would intervene and pronounce from heaven, "This is My beloved Son. With Him I am well pleased." Yet during the moment of Yahshua's trial, scourging, and crucifixion there were no voices from heaven to announce Yahweh's displeasure with the Chief Priest, the Sanhedrin, the Pharisees, and the leaders of the Jews. Remarkably, Yahshua Himself remained silent.

I can understand the remarkable nature of this, for when I began enduring a firestorm of criticism for the path I was walking, there was much within me that wanted to shout out that I was merely following the leading of the Spirit. I wanted dull eared Christians to perceive what paths Yahweh will lead His faithful ones down. I wanted others to see that I was not smitten and stricken of God, but that the Father was pleased with my obedience to walk the path He had directed me down. I wanted

to give the evidences of Yahweh's leading and prove conclusively to others that this path I was walking was laid on me as obedience.

There were some instances where I tried to bring others to understand why I had been removed from my place of ministry and why I was being commanded to walk a walk of faith in regard to my family's provision. When my family: parents, a brother and sister, expressed disapproval of my walk I wanted to convince them of the reality of Yahweh's direction in my life. When fellow saints did not understand, I wanted them to see. But without exception, I was never able to bring anyone to a place of understanding. Those who did not see, still did not see after I spoke to them. Instead, I felt like I had just participated in a futile exercise of self-justification.

After a few times of sharing with others who condemned my walk, I saw the futility of trying to convince them otherwise. I felt the conviction of the Spirit that I was to not defend myself or my reputation. I was to leave my defense TOTALLY in the hands of the Father. He will vindicate all of His servants in His time.

Part of the Father's will in this is that His Overcomers should die to their own reputations. It is the Father's will that His elect should die to all that is of self and that has its roots in pride. The soul of man wants others to think well of itself. Our soul does not want others to think lowly and unworthy things about us. Self wants to be respected, but the scriptures reveal that the way to exaltation is the path of humility and suffering.

Luke 6:22, 26

"Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man... Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way."

It was the religious people of the day that rejected Yahshua. It was those who considered themselves guardians of the Law and of the holy writings of the prophets and patriarchs who condemned One who was totally righteous. Yahshua has given fair warning that all of His disciples will endure the same.

John 15:20-21

"Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me."

I know there are many who will read these words who are walking down difficult

roads due to choosing to be obedient to the voice of the Spirit. These ones will be misjudged by family and friends and other Christians who do not understand the ways of God. It is a bitter thing to have others look at your greatest trials, your greatest acts of obedience and faithfulness to God, and to esteem you as a sinner, or to consider you to be deluded. The temptation will arise to justify yourself before the eyes of others. You will want others to say "Well done!", and to encourage you on your path, but instead you will receive misunderstanding and discouragement.

Listen to the voice of the Spirit when these times come. You will hear Him speaking to you and encouraging you to rest and remain silent. He will exhort you to leave your reputation completely in the hands of the Father and to seek only His approval. If you are concerned that others do not recognize your obedience, and you are insistent that they should acknowledge your faithfulness, you will only become angry and embittered when they don't. Know this with confidence, Yahweh will in His time reveal those who are faithful and those who are not.

Consider David. He had the anointing oil poured over his head by the most revered man of God in his day. It was prophesied that he was a man after God's heart and that Yahweh would establish him as king. Did anyone acknowledge this? Did anyone honor those qualities in David that God was so pleased with? No! David's father thought so little of him that he did not even invite him to meet the prophet Samuel when Samuel told Jesse to bring all of his sons. After Samuel anointed David, Jesse sent David back out to tend sheep.

When David was sent by his father to check on the welfare of his brothers who were serving in King Saul's army, David's oldest brother Eliab despised David, and he was offended that David did not understand why no one had answered the challenge of Goliath.

I Samuel 17:28

Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger burned against David and he said, "Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your insolence and the wickedness of your heart; for you have come down in order to see the battle."

No, David's own family did not see in him the things that so captivated the heart of Yahweh. David was little esteemed in the eyes of his family. After David slew Goliath Saul brought David to be with him in his household and to be a servant to the king. Yet Saul was jealous of David because he saw that God was with him. Saul did not acknowledge that David was pleasing to God, nor did he give him honor. Instead, Saul sought to kill David without a cause. We are told that David had to flee, and his family had to flee as well. David had to take his parents to a foreign land to stay.

I Samuel 22:3-4

And David went from there to Mizpah of Moab; and he said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and my mother come and stay with you until I know what God will do for me." Then he left them with the king of Moab; and they stayed with him all the time that David was in the stronghold."

Do you think that even then David's parents acknowledged that he was God's anointed and that he was righteous in his actions? I think not. I suspect that they blamed David for having to flee from the land of their inheritance. We have these words of David in Psalm 27:

Psalms 27:9-10

Do not hide Your face from me, do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; do not abandon me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation! For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but Yahweh will take me up.

What bitterness it must have been to David for his family to forsake him and to not understand that he was suffering unjustly. I suspect David came to a point where he no longer tried to convince them of his faithfulness to God. I believe he came to a point of accepting that his obedience would only be known to Yahweh.

For many years David walked in wilderness places where he was humiliated time and again. At his lowest point, the very men who attached themselves to him spoke of stoning him. On another occasion when David and his men had faithfully guarded a wealthy man's flocks and kept all of his shepherds from harm, this man acted spitefully toward David and spoke false and insulting words about David's character and motives.

I Samuel 25:10-11

But Nabal answered David's servants and said, "Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants today who are each breaking away from his master. Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men whose origin I do not know?"

Nabal accused David of being an unfaithful servant to King Saul when David had been the most faithful of servants. Nabal accused David of having rebelliously broken off from Saul when the truth was that Saul was seeking to kill David without a reason. In great anger and exasperation, David responded from his soul and he and his men went forth with the intent to kill every member of Nabal's household. Yet God sent an intercessor in the form of Nabal's wife Abigail to keep David from taking

vengeance into his own hand. David listened to the voice of Abigail and he was genuinely grateful that he did not carry out the rash action that his soul was leading him to perform.

I Samuel 25:32-33

Then David said to Abigail, "Blessed be Yahweh God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me, and blessed be your discernment, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodshed and from avenging myself by my own hand.

The saints who journey to Zion will encounter many events similar to this one. People will deliberately interpret events in a manner that is inconsistent with the judgment of Yahweh. They will speak evil of your good works and they will reproach you for your obedience. The tendency of the flesh and soul of man is to respond in defense of one's reputation, even as David set out to do. Yet, Yahweh will send an intercessor in the form of His Spirit to counsel us to not go down this path, nor to take up the sword in defense of ourselves.

Abigail healed David's wounded spirit by telling him that he would surely see the fulfillment of all the things God had promised him. In the same way, the Spirit binds up our hurts and reminds us of the calling set before us and the surety of our inheritance if we will continue to walk faithfully before God.

The Spirit would entreat us to not use the sword in our own defense. What is the sword that we are tempted to take up? It is the tongue.

Proverbs 12:18

There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Do not allow your anguish and pain to lead you to speak rash words in defense of yourself. Do not give in to the temptation to slash and cut others in retaliation for their condemnation and misjudgment of your faithful walk. Follow the example of our faithful Savior and restrain your lips from speaking in your own defense. Give place to God to vindicate you in His own way and time. We are to count it a joy and a blessing when others speak evil of us for our obedience. We will in no way lose our reward.

I Peter 4:14

If you are reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you; for the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified.

Yes, it brings glory to God when we restrain our lips. When we are reviled we are to speak a blessing in return. When men and women do not understand, when family and friends condemn our walk, we are to entrust our reputation to the hands of the Father and in due time He will manifest His righteous servants.

Those who would be citizens of Zion must rule over their tongues.

Psalms 141:3

Set a guard, O Yahweh, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips.

Do not seek to justify yourself, but allow room for the Father to do so.

Proverbs 27:2

Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips.

The road to Zion is a pathway of humility. If you can be evil spoken of and not speak a word of rebuttal or retaliation then you have chosen righteously and are being conformed to the image of Christ. If you can earnestly pray that those who have misjudged you should be forgiven and their trespasses not held against them, then you are making progress toward Zion's gates.

It takes faith to remain silent when being falsely condemned. The saint must believe that although man judges many things falsely, Yahweh will judge with righteousness and fairness. The saint must believe his or her vindication will come, that their obedience will have its reward in the hour appointed. Only by having this faith can the saint be at peace. Only then can the lambs of God remain silent.

May you know this peace, for surely the promises of God will come. They will hasten forward and not delay.

Chapter 7 - The Endurance of the Saints

We have seen in previous chapters that the ambushes of the enemy are many, and this book cannot attempt to relate every specific snare and trap of the enemy. Yet all of the ambushes of Satan serve a purpose in the life of the Elect of God. To the extent that the saint overcomes the flesh, the world, and Satan, they are conformed to the image of Christ. Yahweh does not present tests and trials to the saint that they might fail, but that they might Overcome and share in the victory of Christ.

It is to be noted that most of the trials spoken of here relate to attitude. Will the saint allow his or her hurts and offenses to produce bitterness in their life, or will they put on a heart of forgiveness, mercy and love? Will the saint fall to the peril of self-pity, or will they put on a heart of faith and look to the joy and reward set before them? Will the saint allow their tongue to slash and cut others who stand as enemies before them, or will the saint exercise self-discipline by ruling over their tongue?

If the Father were simply interested in His Elect being born again of the Spirit, then He could easily have chosen to catch the saints up to heaven at the moment of their new birth. Yet He does not do so. He leaves the newborn saint in an often hostile environment where growth is mandatory. He causes the saint to undergo one test of faith after another in order that their faith might be perfected. A perfected faith is the object of the Father's working in our lives, and it is a most precious thing in His sight.

I Peter 1:6-7

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Yahshua the Messiah...

When we have been made outcasts, when we have been scorned and rejected, when our words have been twisted and our motives impugned, when we are persecuted for the obedience we walk in, it is in these circumstances that we have opportunity to have the life of Christ revealed to all of creation through these vessels of clay. When we have been given promises, and the promises are delayed; when we have hoped against hope for something, and the hope has tarried; when our hearts have wept with the bitterness of this cruel world and we have longed for love and justice and righteousness to break forth; it is then that patience is acquired to the perfecting of our faith.

James 1:2-4

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

It takes endurance to bring the saints to the place where they are “perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” The Father is patient in His activity toward us. If we fail the test the first time, He will bring us to the test yet again. He is persistent because He yearns for maturity and perfection in His children.

This is perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of the road to Zion. It is a seemingly endless road. It is not a road that is traversed in a moment, but a road that requires endurance if one would reach the end. The saint that goes a distance and then refuses to go any further will fail to reach the destination and receive the prize. The saint must endure to the end of the race.

Hebrews 10:36-39

For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY. BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM. But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

Note once more the use of the word endurance in this scripture. Yahweh has no pleasure in the saint that lacks endurance. The last days have been foretold to be perilous time where the love of many will fail. Many who once professed faith in God will fall away, but the Overcomers will endure to the end.

Matthew 24:12-13

“Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.”

Mark 13:13

"You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.”

I know many of those reading these words feel that they are at the end of their endurance. The way has been bitter and hard. Your heart has been broken time and again, and your hope has been deferred. Thinking about enduring yet more trials, suffering, and delays tears at your heart. Yet the reward is great for the one who

overcomes to the end. If we could see the reward we would say with Paul, “I consider that these momentary, light afflictions are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed in us.” Look at some of what is promised to the one who overcomes to the end.

Revelation 2:7

“To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.”

Revelation 2:11

“He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death [the lake of fire].”

Revelation 2:17

“To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.”

Revelation 2:26-28

"He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority from My Father; and I will give him the morning star.”

Revelation 3:5

"He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.”

Revelation 3:12

"He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.”

Revelation 3:21

"He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”

Revelation 21:1-7

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the

first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son."

Please note that these promises are all for the Overcomer. It does not say that everyone who confesses the name of Christ will receive these promises. It does not say that everyone who has at some time in their life followed Christ will partake of these things. It says, "He who overcomes." These promises are for the Overcomer, only. Many are the children of God who will fail to attain to these things and there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth among multitudes of those who filled the pews of their local church building week after week and year after year.

Did you note that Revelation 2:11 stated that "He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death"? Revelation 21:8 clearly identifies the second death as the lake of fire.

Revelation 21:8

"But for the cowardly and unbelieving..., their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

How many of the saints have been falsely taught that the lake of fire is only for those who never confessed faith in Christ? It is only the Overcomer who has been promised to be spared from the second death which is the lake of fire. Many who are of the household of God will share a place with the unbeliever, and that place is in the lake of fire. Yahshua spoke of servants in His household who acknowledged Him as Lord, but who acted in a wicked and unbelieving manner. He stated that they would share the following punishment.

Luke 12:46

The Lord of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

Look carefully at these three scriptures side by side:

But for the cowardly and unbelieving..., their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

The Lord of that [wicked] slave will come..., and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death...

If you wonder what benefit there is in your enduring so many trials, taking up your cross and following in the path of Yahshua when so many other saints treat the cross as an optional part of Christianity that they have opted out of, then consider these scriptures. These lukewarm saints will be spewed out of Yahshua's mouth. They will be assigned a portion with the unbelievers. They will endure the second death, the Lake of Fire, which purifies all those who would not voluntarily submit to the purging processes of God while in this life. They will endure the fires of purification until all that is not of Christ in their life is burned away.

[To read more of this matter of Yahweh's purpose for the Lake of Fire, I would encourage you to read the book "God's Plan of the Ages" which can be found at <http://heart4god.ws/>]

It takes endurance to be accounted as an Overcomer, and this endurance is possibly the hardest thing to attain on the Road to Zion. We are told that "for the joy set before Him, Yahshua endured the cross." What a joy is set before the Elect of God, as well. The Overcomer is promised all of the following:

To eat of the Tree of Life that is in the Paradise of God.

To be spared from the second death.

To eat of the hidden manna reserved for the Overcomers.

To be given a name written on a white stone that only the Overcomer and God know.

Authority over the nations, and the right to rule over them.

The morning star.

White raiment to clothe themselves with (Righteousness).

Their name will be confessed before Yahweh and before His angels.

They will be made a pillar in the house of God and they will not go out from there anymore.

They will have Yahweh's name written on them, and the name of the New Jerusalem, and Yahshua's new name.

They will sit with Yahshua on His throne.

They will inherit the New Heaven and New Earth, and the New

Jerusalem.

They will have every tear wiped away.

They will know death no longer.

Mourning and crying and pain will be no more.

They will be able to drink of the water of life freely.

Yahshua will be their God and the Overcomers will be His son.

Such are the awesome promises reserved for the Overcomers in Christ. Yahweh does not bestow such valuable treasures lightly. This life on earth is a proving ground to determine who will be worthy to receive such things. When Yahshua comes He will bring His reward with Him and give to each saint according to their works.

Revelation 22:12

"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done."

With all this in mind, we are exhorted to not grow weary in well doing, but to persevere.

Galatians 6:9

Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

II Thessalonians 3:13

But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good.

Hebrews 12:3

For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

We have need of this endurance on the road to Zion. It is one thing to exclaim as did Peter, "I am ready even to die with You", but can we endure a thousand deaths to the life of our soul over a prolonged period of time? This same man who said he would die with Christ asked Him, "How many times must I forgive my brother?" It is often a more difficult thing to bear up under insults and offenses over a prolonged period of time than it is to give one's life as a martyr for Christ.

You who have committed your life to Christ, do you have the endurance to be falsely judged and misunderstood by family today, and tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow, and the day after that with no end in sight? Will you graciously bear this and choose to forgive all who offend day after day? You who hope in God for some promise, will you continue to wait months, years and decades, if the promise should tarry, without becoming embittered toward God? You who are undergoing financial

lack, are you content to remain in this state of lack when you see the wicked prospering around you and you know God could do so much more for you? Will you remain patient and not murmur and complain against God?

Believe me, I know these are difficult things, and often my flesh and my soul want to cry out, "Enough! I can endure no more! I will endure no more!" Yet the Spirit within restrains me from these rebellious declarations. Inside I have felt crushed and broken time and again, but obedience demands that I do nothing but submit to the crushing of God. I know that as the hard outer shell of the old man is crushed, the sweet and aromatic fragrance of Christ is released to come forth.

It would be nice if such transformation to the image of Christ could occur in a moment of time, but for the last two thousand years man has known this rending of his being that the life of Christ might be manifested. As a seed that spends much time under the soil being subjected to drought, flood, frost and heat that the husk might be broken open and new life spring forth, even so has the germ of Divine life within man's flesh been seeking to burst forth in new life without the restraint of the shell that has hindered it and held it back for so long.

The time is near at hand for man to cast off this mortal shroud and put on immortality, to put off this body of corruption and put on incorruption. It was prophesied that after two days (two thousand years) of this torn and anguished state where our flesh and spirit have waged war in our members that Yahshua would raise us up and heal us. We are now entering the third day and the promise of Sonship is at hand, yet it is reserved for those who exercise endurance and walk as Overcomers.

Hosea 6:1-3

"Come, let us return to Yahweh. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us. He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, that we may live before Him. So let us know, let us press on to know Yahweh. His going forth is as certain as the dawn; and He will come to us like the rain, like the spring rain watering the earth."

As you journey to Zion, keep in mind these words of the apostle Paul.

Hebrews 10:36

For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

Selah

Chapter 8 - Deception Does Abound

As I have been journeying from Babylon to Zion I have noted an alarming number of saints who have fallen for the deceit of Satan. It seems that those who have been waylaid by deception far outnumber those who remain on the narrow path of truth. Much of this deception is extremely serious in nature, and many have gotten off the narrow path and are in danger of failing to achieve the goal and prize that has been set before them.

In the past few years the Father has led me to encounter one group or person after another who have fallen into deception, and He has led me to examine the teachings they espouse to discern what is good and what is evil in them. When people are deceived, they quite often have some truth mixed in with error. Often there is a great deal of truth, and those saints that are mired in deception and error have in many cases been given genuine revelation from the Spirit of God. However, a little leaven will leaven the entire lump, and a little error mixed in with truth corrupts the whole body of teaching and poisons all who feed on such a mixture.

There is a tremendous amount of deception in the Babylonian church system. Babylon has mixed the worship of Yahweh with many idols. Babylon wants to serve the One true God, and also pursue the things that satisfy the flesh and soul of man. The Feast days of Yahweh, Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles and many others have been replaced with festivals of pagan origin, Christmas, Easter, Halloween, etc.. The Babylonian church does not think twice about this substitution, nor of the myriad of other false traditions that have been imported into the life of mainstream denominations, and the abandonment of the doctrine of the apostles and prophets.

Entire books have been written that expose the pagan practices of the harlot church system and I could write volumes just declaring some of the more profound deceptions that have been foisted upon the church. But it is not Babylon that I am interested in here. There is a great body of people who have made an exit from Babylon, and who have aspired to walk in truth, but many of these saints have themselves embraced great deception and they are in danger of losing much of the reward that was placed before them.

Not all who journey out of Babylon endure to the end. Not all remain free of grotesque error and deception. We have many examples in scripture that reveal this truth. Consider Abram when he was called to come out of the land of idolatry he lived in, which was Ur of the Chaldees. Abram's father Nahor also set himself to journey with his son, and to leave the idolatry of Ur behind. Additionally Lot, Abram's nephew, began the same journey.

Abram's father Nahor failed to go the distance, however. Instead, he settled in Haran which was far short of the goal. True, he no longer lived in Ur, but neither did he

make it to the land of promise. It takes faith and patient endurance to go the whole distance to which the Father calls us. Abram continued on from Haran without his father, and Lot continued the journey with Abram.

The tragic story of Lot is well known. Upon arriving in the land of promise Abram and Lot separated for they both were very wealthy and had many flocks and servants and strife was arising between their servants. Abram gave Lot first choice regarding where he would go and Lot chose that which was pleasing to the eye and attractive to the senses. He settled in the rich and fertile plains of Sodom and Gomorrah.

When the judgment of God came upon the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot and his family were brought out at the hand of angels by the mercy of God, but Lot lost all that he owned. His wife, whose heart had become attached to Sodom, disobeyed and looked back and she was turned into a pillar of salt. Lot was a man who was now destitute. All he owned was gone and his wife was dead. He suffered tremendous loss.

The story of Abram's journey from Ur of the Chaldees is typical of the journey many are being called to in this hour. There are many who are setting forth, but not all are enduring to the end. Like Nahor and Lot, it seems that a majority of those who set forth to Zion are falling short of the promise. Many are falling short of the goal as they are falling prey to deception and error. This deception is a mark of the last days.

Matthew 24:11, 24

"Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many...

"For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect."

II Peter 2:1-3

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies... Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in their greed they will exploit you with false words...

II Peter 3:17

You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness...

The deception spoken of in these verses is not something that is for future days. It is here now. I am witnessing false prophets and false anointed ones (Christs) who are luring many into deception and into spiritual death.

This can be a difficult matter to discern, for there are many kingdom truths that are being unveiled in this hour that have been hidden from former generations. The best wine has been saved for last. I read a word that was posted on a prophetic website this week where the writer was giving a list of signs to discern heretical teachings. One of his signs of heresy was if the teaching was new. In this the author is wrong, and his tests for heresy were manmade, not of the Spirit of God.

There is much heresy, much that is false and deceptive, in traditions and doctrines of demons that have been around for generations. Being new does not make something a heresy, nor does a teaching being old and established make it truth. With Yahweh there is nothing that is truly new, but Yahweh's unfolding of truth to man is progressive. Some of the greatest saints of previous ages longed to look into the things that are being revealed in this hour, but these things were closed to them.

Daniel 12:4, 8-10

"But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time... As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, 'My lord, what will be the outcome of these events?' He said, 'Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand.'"

Daniel 8:26

"The vision of the evenings and mornings which has been told is true; But keep the vision secret, for it pertains to many days in the future."

Revelation 10:4

When the seven peals of thunder had spoken, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken and do not write them."

There are many things that are concealed and sealed up until the end time. These things will be revealed, and according to the test of heresy that this man spoke of, these truths of God would be called heresy for they have been sealed up until this time.

There are numerous reasons why truth may appear new to the church in this hour. The church has undergone a long dark age where many kingdom truths that were seen by the early apostles were lost. Much is being restored in this hour, but it is a remnant that have ears to hear. There are also few saints who are able to eat meat, for many, though they should by now be teachers, are still requiring milk as they

focus on the elementary (as in elementary school) principles of the Kingdom. What are these elementary principles?

Hebrews 5:12-6:2

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and judgment.

What do the churches focus on week after week, year after year? Is it not elementary teaching about the Christ, about repentance from dead works and faith toward Christ? Is it not elementary teachings about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection from the dead and judgment? These are all elementary things. These things equate to learning the alphabet, counting to ten, learning basic colors and shapes, reading a clock, and other things our children learn while in elementary school. It would be totally inappropriate for a high school student to still be sitting in classes where the alphabet is being taught and students are learning to write out their letters. Yet many saints have been sitting in primary school for years in their churches. They have not progressed past drinking milk to eating meat.

I recently had a Christian brother from Colorado fly out to Georgia for some business in Atlanta. He had read some of my writings and wanted to speak with me. This brother only knew the elementary principles of Christ and he became offended when he heard me declare some things he had never heard before. He began scolding me for getting away from elementary principles. He told me that all I really needed to do was focus on evangelism and Gospel 101. Everything else he declared to be a waste of time and a distraction from the true purpose of the saints which he pronounced to be the winning of souls.

This mindset is a problem among the saints of God. Many saints read the command of Christ where He stated, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit..." (Matthew 28:19), and they interpret this to mean "get people born again and baptized." But making disciples is much more than getting people born again. It would be like a hospital that closed all of its facilities except for the maternity ward where babies were born. Life isn't complete at birth. There is much left to take place. There are children to be raised, young adults to be nurtured and taught to walk

before God in the strength of their own relationship. There are adults to be equipped and released into their callings. There are the aged and wise ones who can oversee the saints and share from the storehouse of their experience of walking with God.

The "great commission", as it is often called, is not to birth babies. It is to make disciples. It is to teach the saints the elementary principles of the Kingdom and then take them beyond these things. The very next verse after the above commissioning states:

Matthew 28:20

teaching them to observe ALL that I commanded you...

Yahshua did not just teach that the saints had to be born again. This part of His message is found in a few short verses in John chapter 3. He taught much more, so that John declared:

John 21:25

And there are also many other things which Yahshua did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written.

Yahshua taught the elementary principles, but he also fully revealed the Father (John 1:18). He revealed that a mature walk that is pleasing to the Father is one in which a man is fully conformed to the image of God. God has never given up or been diverted from His original intent declared in Genesis:

Genesis 1:26

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness..."

Yahshua revealed that man in God's image will live to do the will of the Father, and only the Father's will. He will do nothing of His own initiative. Six times in the gospel of John we have Yahshua's words that "I never do anything of My own initiative. I always do the will of the Father." Newborn saints know very little of this type of life. It is the mature who have learned to discern good and evil and to separate the Spirit from the soul (Hebrews 5:14, 4:12).

Paul told the Hebrew believers that he had many things he desired to speak to them, but they could not receive them for they were yet as babes when they should have been teachers. He wanted to speak many more things of Melchisedec and how this king/priest stood as an example of Yahweh's design for the saints. He wanted to declare things that only the mature can receive, but they were not able.

Yet, like this man who came to visit me, we have those today that say, "All we really need is milk. All else is a waste of time." This is great error. Let us go on to maturity. The Father has mysteries that He wishes to reveal to us. There are things that have not been formerly heard that He wishes to declare.

There are some who do have ears to hear today, yet a common reaction they get when they share what the Spirit is revealing is that their words are heresy. Their words are not what has been heard and declared in Babylon. They are speaking truths that have been lost, and revelations that have yet to be expressed, things that have been hidden and concealed until the last days. Do not write all such things off as heresy. At least be as the noble Bereans and search the scriptures to see if these things be true. Do not say, "But this is not what my preacher has told me", or "My parents did not believe this way", or "My church holds to another doctrine."

Luke 11:9-10

"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened."

James 1:5

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

There is much truth being unveiled in this hour, and every truth is new to man at some point. Do not declare something to be heresy unless you have first tested it by the Word and by the Spirit. Yet there is much deception and heresy present today. The saints must discern the difference between the true and the false. Look at the following two scriptures side by side and you will see the narrow path that the Elect must walk.

I Thessalonians 5:19-21

Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good...

I John 4:1

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

We are not to despise prophecy and thereby grieve the Spirit, but we are to examine everything carefully. Do not throw out a word or teaching because it is new to you, but also be aware that there are many false prophets and every word must be tested to see if it is of the Spirit of Truth or the spirit of error.

There are some teachings that I have presented to the body, and because of them I have been labeled a heretic by some. Some who have called me a heretic are in places of public ministry, yet these same saints have failed the test of nobility practiced by the Bereans. They have not searched the scriptures to see whether what was proclaimed was true. In fact, some have flat out stated that they refuse to discuss certain issues with me. This is not a fulfillment of Paul's words to "examine everything carefully". It is simply being closed-minded.

At the beginning of this chapter it is necessary to declare the balance that must be attained by the Elect in this hour. We cannot be so narrow in our views that we refuse all that is new to us, for much new truth has been determined by the counsel of God to be unveiled in this hour. Yet we cannot be so open minded that we let our brains fall out. We are to not despise prophetic utterances and teachings, but we are to test them all.

In the past couple of years the Father has brought me to various encounters with individuals who were espousing particular beliefs, doctrines, and precepts. The Father desired that I should test these words, and I have done so. One such encounter occurred toward the end of a prolonged period where the Father had our family relying upon Him for every need to be met.

For a period of a year and a half the Father placed me under the command to not work in a job to receive wages. He told me to step out in faith and He would take care of my family. I have a wife and two children, and we had no money in the bank so this was a real test for our family. When the Father first placed this obedience upon me I did not know how long He would have me to walk in this manner. Ultimately it was 18 months, and during this entire time we never lacked for food, clothing, shelter, or any necessary thing.

Toward the end of this time the Father did an incredible thing. He provided for us to purchase a motorhome with cash and to live for some months in it. We spent an entire month at the beach at the orchestration of the Father, and my wife and I celebrated our 16th anniversary during this month at the very same place that we had honeymooned 16 years previously. This place was Jekyll Island, Georgia. The Father showed us that this was a time of new beginnings for my wife and me. Eight is the number of new beginnings, and two times eight is sixteen, signifying new beginning for both of us. To further corroborate this it was the sixteenth month since I had followed the Father in obedience to not work, and we had just received a gift of \$8,000 which made purchasing the motorhome and taking this trip possible.

While we were at Jekyll Island and staying at an RV park, we met another family who were wintering there. This family were "Name Keepers" and "Sabbath Keepers". This means that they held to a doctrine that taught that the divine names Yahweh and

Yahshua should be used, as well as some of the Hebrew references for deity such as Elohim and Adonai, but that other titles that have been substituted for the original names as recorded in scripture should be avoided. To this family the titles God and Lord were considered pagan and were strictly avoided. This family also believed they were to keep the Sabbath according to the Law of Moses and that no work was to be done from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday. They also practiced other aspects of the Torah such as eating kosher.

This family was in the RV park the whole time we were, but we didn't meet them until after we had been there several weeks. The husband was very outspoken in his beliefs and he invited us over for a chat. He told us all about his beliefs regarding name-keeping and he gave me several teachings in printed form, as well as some files from his computer and I began doing what Paul commanded, to examine the teachings carefully. What I found was that there was much truth in the teachings he held to, but there was also leaven present, and the leaven needed to be removed.

I did not go looking for this encounter. The Father brought it to me, and He wanted me to look at this issue. I have since found that there are a lot of people who call themselves name-keepers, and many have their own distinct beliefs that keep them separated from one another. One thing that I noted is that those who are name-keepers often think they are the only group with the truth of God, and everyone else are heretics. Some of these groups unabashedly declare that their group is the only group approved of God, and the only ones who are truly saved. This, of course, is error.

This issue of using the divine names of God as recorded in scripture was something the Father wanted me to look into. I had long been interested in it, but I had not taken the time to really dig into it. When I was still a teenager I began to go through my King James Version of the Bible and write down the actual name or title as recorded in the original Hebrew in every verse beginning with Genesis 1:1. I would look the name up in my Strong's Concordance and write it above the word substituted by the translators. This was a daunting task, however, and I never finished it. The name Yahweh alone occurs 6,828 times in the Old Testament.

I was ready and eager to look into this matter when this man broached the subject with me. I took all that he gave me and read it, comparing every statement with scriptures, and praying earnestly that the Father would lead me into truth regarding the use of divine names. The Father was faithful and the Spirit revealed many things to me during this study. The conclusions of this study can be found in an article titled "The Usage of Divine Names" which is freely available at the website <http://heart4god.ws/>.

There is some profound truth in what these groups taught, namely that the actual

name of God (Yahweh) has been obscured and lost to multitudes of professing believers due to the practice of the translators of replacing it with titular substitutes. Many saints falsely think that Yahweh's name is God or LORD. These words are titles, not names, in the same way that Dad is a title, but all Dads have proper names. I believe it has been a deceit of Satan to obscure the name of Yahweh, but it has also served the purpose of Yahweh. Knowing someone's name is a sign of intimacy and the masses of professing Christians are not intimate with Him.

However, this man, his family, and the groups of which he was a part, though they had some truth, they also had much error. They teach that it is sinful to use the title LORD to refer to Yahweh or Yahshua because Baal is often translated into English as lord. But they have overlooked numerous scriptures where the word baal was actually used in reference to Yahweh, for baal was a rather generic term that could refer to any lord or master. On the other hand, a word that they state is acceptable, Elohim, is also a generic term referring to deity and it is used in various places in scripture to refer to false gods, such as the elohim of Egypt. Their logic in accepting one term and refusing another is nonsensical.

They also teach that Jesus is a pagan name and that it was derived from either the name Zeus or Isis and it should never be used. I searched this claim with a great deal of persistence and I found it to be unsubstantiated. Other logic employed by this man, and the groups that believe as he did, is not sound. This man told me that names don't change over time or across languages, so we are only correct when we use the original form of a name recorded in scripture. This is easily disproved, for even alphabets change, and the Hebrews themselves have had several quite remarkably distinct variations of their language and alphabet. Also, it is a simple matter to show that names do change over time and across languages, sometimes quite drastically.

As I examined this matter I found that a Latin form of Yah was Iah, Yah being a form of Yahweh used in numerous places in scripture, and the word for salvation, or save, was pronounced "soose". Combining these two we get Iesus (ee-ay-soose) which literally meant "Yah's salvation" to the Greek speaking people of the Roman Empire. "Yah's Salvation" is the meaning of the name of the Son of God recorded in scripture (Matthew 1:21). If you look at Matthew 1:21 in the Greek you will find that to the Greek, Iesus, from which we get Jesus, held the meaning mentioned here. It was not as this man asserted, some devilish plot to replace the name of the Son of God with the name of a Greek or Roman god or goddess. Yahshua would have been the name Jesus was known by among the Hebrews to whom He was sent. In Hebrew Yahshua holds the same meaning as does Iesus in the Greek.

This man, his family, and the groups that teach the same things, have become islands unto themselves. They declare in many instances that you are not saved if you were

baptized in the name of Jesus, God, or Lord. This man was re-baptized after he learned the names of Yahweh and Yahshua, and he suggested that others should be as well. This man was friendly to me and my family as long as I was reading the material he gave me, but when I came back and shared some of the error in the conclusions he was espousing he became angry and did not want to talk to me anymore.

I have found this to be a pattern among those who are walking in deception. They are often very closed to an honest examination of the scriptures, and they get angry very quickly with those who do not come to agreement with them. In adopting this attitude of impatience they effectively commit themselves to remaining in deception, for they will allow no light to enter into their spirit.

This encounter was merely one of many of which the Father has brought me to in recent years. I learned much through the encounter and, through the things the Father revealed to me as I carefully examined what was being taught, I have been able to help others who were dealing with the same topic. It would have been wrong, and detrimental to my own understanding, had I simply perceived error and rejected everything this man was saying. The Father does not want us to have this type of knee jerk reaction to the things we encounter. He desires that we should be diligent and faithful in our examination of prophecies and teachings.

We should not be frightened by teachings that are new to us, nor fear that we will be swept away into deception. Those who are faithful will be led into truth by the Spirit. People who are deceived are that way for a reason. I have found that there are three things that particularly open people up to deception and error. Bitterness, a failure to walk in the truth that has been given, and rebellion against the governmental order of God will all open the saint up to deception.

I know of one brother who has a website with many teachings, and he has a small following of people. For a time he was given many revelations from the Father that were quite profound. However, a root of bitterness was present in this man's life and this led to the defiling of his ministry. I have watched as his teachings have strayed off into greater degrees of error and deception until he is now declaring that he is the Elijah for the last days, and that he is also the true apostle that replaces Judas.

Such claims should be patently absurd to the saints, but there are a small number of people who have gotten caught up in his deception and who believe his words. I visited with this man in his home, and he has a precious family. Later, when I tried to show him from scripture how his claims could not be true, he became angry and refused to discuss the issues with me, declaring that my attitude was wrong toward him and that I was attacking him. Again, an unwillingness to faithfully examine the scriptures was present and has resulted in this man being hardened against the truth

and it has kept him from coming out of deception. I believe bitterness in this man's life against fellow ministers who mistreated him was the open door that opened him up to the deceptions of Satan.

We are also told in scripture that failing to have a sincere love of the truth will lead one to embracing deception. If the saint has been given light and truth, but has failed to walk in it, even what they have will be taken away and the Father will consequently send delusion to these saints who did not love the truth.

II Thessalonians 2:10-11

Because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false...

There are other things that open the saints up to deception: rebellion against the governmental order of Yahweh; harboring idols in one's heart; and a spirit of unbelief are some of the more evident things.

In the hour in which we live it is somewhat paradoxical that truth and error will both increase alongside one another. The elect of God must not be closed to the unveiling of things previously hidden, but at the same time they must guard against the deceit of Satan. They must not despise or reject prophecies and teaching, but they must carefully examine every word. A failure in either direction will hinder the saint from reaching the goal the Father has set before them.

Guard your heart, put away bitterness, walk in the light you have been given, put on a heart of humility, and earnestly seek the Father that He might guide you into all truth and you will do well on your journey to Zion.

Chapter 9 - Conspiracy, Incorporated

The matter to be discussed in this chapter is very important. Multitudes of saints are falling for this particular trap of the enemy. Nearly every week I get a letter from someone that sends me some warning of dire things that are occurring in the world, or a link to some site where such issues are discussed. There is a whole industry that has sprung up to fulfill the desire of those who want to be kept up-to-date about the latest thing that is happening in the kingdom of darkness.

I have heard the stories about the secret societies, the Trilateral Commission, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Skull and Bones organization, the international bankers, the Bilderbergers, the Rothschilds, the Jesuits, the United Nations and its New World Order, the smart chips and digital implants, the secret prison camps, the black helicopters, and government complicity in just about every evil deed imaginable, etc., etc.. I would think it remarkable if any of the readers of this book have not heard many of the same stories.

Although I know there is a great deal of speculation and wild imagination relating to these matters, I also recognize some truth in the stories. I would not tell you that all such stories are false, nor that every conspiracy theory is the product of a suspicious and delusional mind, for there truly are many conspiracies in the world, and there are many wicked men who are pawns of Satan who are working out his evil schemes in this world. The person who believes that history is simply a product of chance is really somewhat naive. Many of the wars and events of history have been the product of collaboration and collusion among evil men who were working out their own agendas. Conspiracies are real.

The question is not whether there is truth in these stories, the question the saints should ask is, "Would the Father have me to focus on these matters?" There is a whole industry built around exploiting the interest of people, mostly Christians, who are fearful or curious about end time events, and the number of books, cassette tapes, radio broadcasts, television shows, magazines, video tapes, etc., that are put out continually to discuss these matters is legion.

I have found many saints inside and outside of Babylon to be focused on these matters. I get "emergency" e-mails from saints who have heard some new pronouncement of events that are occurring and they feel that everyone should know about it, although the reason why is often unclear, for quite often there is nothing the saint can do about this "emergency" matter.

The tone of the letters I get from people who are focused on these issues is always the same, they are full of fear. Some people are angry as well, but fear is always present.

Focusing on what evil men are doing in the world always produces fear in the hearts of God's children.

Focus is vastly important for the saint who would journey toward Zion. Our focus should be on the joy set before us, not the plans and schemes of wickedness in this world. A focus on Yahshua will produce peace and faith in the life of the saint. A focus on the conspiracies of wicked men and of angels will produce a troubled soul and stir up fear.

Consider the account of Peter and the other disciples who were crossing the Sea of Galilee on a stormy night when they saw Yahshua walking on the water. The disciples were afraid that they were soon to be under the water, drowned and dead, while Yahshua demonstrated how to put the water under His feet. Peter called out to his Master and said, "Lord, if it is really You, then bid me come to you on the water." In reply Yahshua said, "Come."

Matthew 14:29-31

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Yahshua. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Yahshua reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

Peter was able to put the stormy water under his feet while he looked to Yahshua. The scriptures say that he "walked on water and came toward Yahshua." Never before had it ever been recorded that any man had walked on water. What Peter did was extraordinary. It was miraculous, and he did it because he saw Yahshua doing it and Peter's eyes were on Yahshua.

But then Peter looked to the wind and the waves. He took his eyes off of Yahshua and looked at the raging storm around him, and we are told that "he was afraid and beginning to sink." No longer was Peter able to do the miraculous when his focus was taken off of his Savior. Instead fear gripped his heart and he began to succumb to the wind and the storm.

When Peter cried out for Yahshua to save him we are told that Yahshua immediately reached out His hand and caught Peter. I am confident that Peter's focus then returned to his Savior, that he saw his hand in Yahshua's hand, and his faith returned and he was able to return to the boat.

Notice how critical focus was to this entire episode. In the midst of the storm when Peter kept his eyes on the Savior he was able to rise above the stormy waters and place them under his feet. We live in days when many storms are stirring and they

are about to break forth upon this world with great suddenness and fury. Yet we can rise above the storms, putting them under our feet, and maintain a peace and a calm in the midst of the storm. To do so we must focus on Yahshua. If we look at the storms and make them our focus we will succumb to fear and will be overwhelmed by them. We can only walk as Overcomers as we keep our eyes on Messiah.

Many are making the storms of this world their focus. By constantly paying attention to what is going on in the world as it relates to wicked men and their schemes, these saints are filling their minds with fear and they are being assailed by doubts. As they see the schemes of evil men moving forward they become fearful of the power of these same men. Yet evil men are merely pawns in God's hands. They can do nothing without His permission. Their power is an illusion. The early apostles understood this.

Acts 4:23-29

And when they had been released, they went to their own companions, and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard this, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, "O Lord, it is Thou who didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Thy servant, didst say, 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples devise futile things? The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ.' For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur.

Did you note that it said that Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles (Romans) and the people of Israel only did what Yahweh's hand and purpose had predestined? They simply fulfilled the plan of God. It was necessary that the Messiah should suffer and then die for the sins of the people. Satan did not have a victory on the day Yahshua was crucified. It was the day of Satan's doom.

In the same way there are many people today who are raging against God and they are devising futile things. Kings (mighty ones) are taking their stand, and rulers are gathering together (conspiring). Yet not a one will prevail in their wickedness. Certainly, many saints will be martyred, even as Yahshua was martyred, but the end will be glory for the saints and judgment for the wicked.

Why focus on what wicked men are doing? The predestined purposes of Yahweh are moving forward and they cannot be turned. Has it not been prophesied that in the last days men will wax worse and worse? Has it not been foretold that wickedness

will abound? Why make this wickedness your focus? It will only bring trouble to your spirit. Instead, focus on Christ. He will put every enemy under His feet. He will rule the world with a rod of iron, and He will use His saints to accomplish these things.

Follow Yahshua's own example when people came to Him to disturb Him with news of a conspiracy being birthed by King Herod to capture Him.

Luke 13:31-32

Just at that time some Pharisees approached, saying to Him, "Go away, leave here, for Herod wants to kill You." And He said to them, "Go and tell that fox, "Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach My goal."

The Pharisees wanted Yahshua to be manipulated by fear. They wanted Him to change His plans to avoid the schemes of wicked men. But look at Yahshua's confidence. He would not allow fear to rule for even one minute. He would not focus on the schemes of wickedness. Instead He declared that nothing could be done to Him until the time set by the Father. He said, "I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach my goal." Herod could not change the timetable of God by so much as a second.

This is the confidence that God would have the Elect to walk in today. Know that it is the Father that orders the steps of the righteous. The Elect are not at the mercy of scheming men or fallen angels. Their lives are kept in the palm of the Father's hand. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ: not tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing. We are always kept in the love of God. No New World Order, no secret society, no international banker, no world government, no scheme of man, can do anything to alter the plan of Yahweh for our lives. He alone orders our steps, and He will bring us forth victorious over all.

I am not saying that we should be ignorant of the day and time we live in. It is well and good to know that things are marching forward to a great confrontation between good and evil, between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. There is nothing wrong with being aware of what is going on in the world, but we should not make it our focus. We should make Yahweh our focus, and we should know what He says about these days. Let the nations rage and peoples plot futile conspiracies. Yahweh's predestined plan will be accomplished right on time and in the exact manner that He has determined.

You can know that you live in stormy times without making the storm your focus. What possible benefit is there in staring at the wind and the waves, looking intently

to the schemes and actions of sinful men? You will only find your soul troubled as you do so and your faith will flee away. Heed the words of Paul to the Hebrew believers:

Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Yahshua, the author and perfecter of faith...

Those who run a race with diligence are those who are focused on the finish line. They are not staring at the crowds in the stadium, nor looking to the flowers and grass planted beside the race track. They are focused on the goal. In the same way the Overcomers are to focus on Christ who is the goal and sum of all things for the saint. Let us “fix our eyes” on Yahshua. Let us have our eyes fastened and immovable upon Him. Then we will rise above the storm and the waves, and we will find every enemy under our feet.

There are many people who will come to you in the same way that the Pharisees came to Yahshua, and they will tell you of some plot or conspiracy that is being hatched in this sinful world by wicked men. Don't give into the temptation to run and hide. Don't focus on the vain plots of men and their raging against God and His anointed ones. Respond as did Yahshua. Tell them a thing or two. Tell them that you will do the will of God until you have reached the end of the race, and then you will have reached your goal. It is Yahweh that determines where the finish line is for each saint, not man.

Stand firm in your confidence in God. Storms will come. Men's hearts will fail them for fear due to the calamities to come upon this world, but those whose eyes are on Yahshua will be kept in peace. Is there anything you cannot endure if you have peace?

Fix your eyes on Yahshua. Fix them and do not look to the right or to the left. Refuse the bait when people come and tell you to focus on the wind and the waves. Remain steadfast.

Fix your eyes on Yahshua.

Chapter 10 - Zion's Gates

The chapters of this book have examined many of the ambushes, traps, and snares along the road as one journeys from Babylon to Zion. Not all such hazards can be addressed in one book, and this writer has spoken only of those things that he has personally encountered. I pray that many might be helped along their own journey by the words recorded here, and that they might overcome all and reach their goal.

The first chapter of this book spoke of Babylon, and attempted to give some definition to it. It seems fitting that the last chapter should speak of Zion. Zion is the goal set before the saint, but what is Zion? We have mentioned some things that are characteristic of Zion throughout the book, and we have contrasted it with Babylon.

In chapter one it was mentioned that, at its heart, Babylon represents a spiritual principle, and we must conclude the same for Zion. If Babylon represents mankind attempting to ascend to God by their own labor, sweat, and efforts, then Zion in contrast must be a people who are at rest, resting in the finished work of Yahshua. If Babylon is typified by men and women living according to the leading of their flesh and soul, then Zion is typified by those who walk by the Spirit. If Babylon is unbelief and sin, then Zion is faith and obedience.

The pathway to Zion is the way of the cross, and those who are citizens of Zion are being conformed to the image of Christ as they submit to the purging, refining, and purification of Yahweh.

In the Old Testament, Zion was identified as one of the hills, the highest hill, in Jerusalem. It was the hill that David's throne sat upon. Yet Zion and Jerusalem were not part of Israel when David became King. This man with the heart after God had to take it by force. David saw Jerusalem and Zion as beautiful and he wanted them for his capital, his home, his dwelling place.

II Samuel 5:6-8

And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, "You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you," thinking, "David cannot come in here." Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David). Now David said on that day, "Whoever climbs up by way of the water shaft and defeats the Jebusites (the lame and the blind, who are hated by David's soul), he shall be chief and captain." Therefore they say, "The blind and the lame shall not come into the house."

What awesome prophecies and spiritual truths are revealed in these words. When David went to capture Jerusalem, the stronghold of Zion, the Jebusites who inhabited it said that the lame and the blind would be able to keep David out. David in return said that his soul hated the lame and the blind, and the saying arose that the blind and the lame would not come into the habitation of Zion (II Samuel 5:6-8). The blind represent those without spiritual vision, and the lame those who fail in obedience. Those who dwell in Zion must have spiritual vision and obedience.

It is quite striking that the manner in which historians and archaeologists have identified Zion's hill today is by finding the spring that feeds the water channel that supplied water to Zion. This water channel was the path that David's army took to enter into Zion and wrest it from the Jebusites. Astonishingly, the spring of water today is called the "Virgin's Fount".

What a picture this is of spiritual truth. One must battle to enter into Zion, and the entrance is through the Virgin's Fount. Water is for cleansing and all those who enter Zion must be cleansed. What a perfect correlation this is to John's words that the 144,000 are on Zion and they are all virgins, not having been defiled by women.

Revelation 14:1-5

Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth. These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste (virgins). These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.

It is certainly no coincidence that the spring that provides water to Zion is called the Virgin's Fount today. This depiction of those who inhabit Zion as virgins has nothing to do with men or women who are physical virgins. The scriptures are speaking of spiritual virgins. We see this symbolism used in Paul's writings.

II Corinthians 11:2

For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.

Those who are pure virgins are those who remain pure in their devotion to Christ. They are not harlots in their affections. They do not profess love of Christ and also harbor a love for the world and its idols. They have been cleansed and purified of all other loves until they are focused only upon one thing, which is Christ. The next verse reveals what constitutes unfaithfulness.

II Corinthians 11:3

But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

We are called to a pure and simple devotion to Christ. He is to be our only desire and our single pursuit. Many are the saints who profess devotion to Christ, but their lives reveal that they are devoted to other things. They labor for that which perishes, and they fail to walk in the Spirit fulfilling all obedience and walking in all truth. These are not pure virgins. In their hearts they desire Christ and something else. Self has not been crucified.

Those who are the 144,000 dwelling on Mount Zion are pure virgins in their devotion to Christ. When Yahshua calls they respond with obedience, even to the crucifying of their own flesh, will and desires. They may struggle, but in the end they will respond, "Not my will, but Your will be done."

In an earlier chapter we looked at those things that are promised to the Overcomer in Christ. The 144,000 are overcomers and will partake of all these promises. The number 144,000 does not necessarily speak of the actual number of saints anymore than virgins speaks of those who have never had sexual relations. Revelation is a book of symbols that must be interpreted by the Spirit of Yahweh. In another passage in Revelation John reveals that the 144,000 are comprised of 12,000 saints from twelve different tribes of Israel. This too is symbolic speech.

Twelve is the number of divine government and election. Yahweh chose twelve tribes to represent Him to the world. Yahshua chose twelve disciples to do the same. The 144,000 represent the elect of God who are called to rule and reign with Him. Symbolically they are 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel.

They are firstfruits unto God, the first to be conformed to the image of Christ. These have submitted voluntarily to the cross during their life on earth. They have walked in faith and chosen a path of obedience to God. They have been aliens and strangers in this world and have had no permanent home here, looking instead to the promises of God. They have not been as Esau who traded his birthright for a pot of stew, fulfilling of his fleshly desires while sacrificing his inheritance. The Overcomers have chosen Yahweh over the world.

I John 2:15-17

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

James is even more plain, and he uses language that is in perfect agreement with what John has written regarding the 144,000 virgins on Mount Zion.

James 4:4

You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

If adulteresses are those who are friends (lovers) of the world, then virgins are those who deny the world and love only Christ. Zion is a place of heavenly vision, where the saints look beyond that which their natural senses report to see into the heavenlies. That is why the blind cannot enter into Zion. The blind see only what their physical senses report. The blind live always in the physical to attain the pleasure of the moment. The blind will not choose to turn away from the pursuit of the things of this present world, for they do not see the better and more glorious inheritance that lies ahead.

Zion is a realm of purity. Babylon is a corrupt mixture which is detestable in the sight of God. Babylon mixes the pursuit of Christ with a pursuit of the world and all it offers. Zion has come out of Babylon, out of mixture, into a pure devotion to Christ.

Is Christ alone enough to satisfy you, or do you, along with the manna from heaven, also cry out for quail to satisfy your flesh? Is it sufficient in your heart to have only Christ, and to forego any demand that you have all the nice things that others have? Are you content to know lack in the things of the world, and still consider yourself rich in Christ? Or do you murmur and complain that you do not have all the luxuries that are afforded to others?

Those who do not have eyes to perceive the riches of Christ will always cry out for quail. The manna that has come down out of heaven does not satisfy them. The manna (Christ) feeds the spirit, but many saints want to feed the flesh as well. If God were to determine that you were to live as one who is destitute in this life with no home of your own, no new cars, no nice clothes, suffering lack even in the area of food, would you be satisfied?

There was a time during the 18 months that the Father forbid me to work when we

did not have any meat in the house. For a time we got down to having only a bag of grits and some butter. In the darkest hour we even went without electricity in the house and I had to cook the grits on a gas grill outside. Yet during this time the Father gave me the grace to thank Him that we had food and that we were not going hungry. I meant this with all the sincerity of my heart.

When we did not have meat I thanked Yahweh for what we did have. I did not want to be as the generation of Israelites in the wilderness that murmured and complained against God. I did not want to be disqualified from entering into the promised rest. Though I did not demand it, the Father did give us meat. It was only a short time that we were without meat, and it would have been a short time for Israel, too had they not murmured and complained. They did not have to die in the wilderness. They did not have to suffer a forty year delay to enter into the promised land.

What the Israelites underwent was a symbolic representation of the test before the saints today. Yahshua declared that He is the bread come down out of heaven. In the same way He is testing the saints to see if they will be satisfied with Him, and Him alone. All those who travel to Zion will go through wilderness places. They will know lack in some manner or another. It may be a lack of food. It may be a lack of clothing. It may be a lack of shelter. It may be enduring sickness. It may be deprivation of any number of things. Yahweh will allow us to suffer these things to see whether we are pure virgins in our hearts, or not.

Will we blubber like babies saying, “Did you bring us out to this wilderness to die?” Will we demand quail, and dream of the leeks and onions that others are eating? Or will we be satisfied with Christ, our manna, our daily bread?

I am speaking from a place of experience when I say that the test is not easy. Our flesh desires many things that compete with our devotion to Christ. We must crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts (Galatians 5). When the flesh yearns for that which is withheld by the will of God, we must buffet our body and keep it under subjection to the spirit. We must make the good confession that we are satisfied with Christ alone.

This is the purity of devotion found in the inhabitants of Zion.

The glory and fulfillment and joy and satisfaction of those who dwell in Zion is seen in this verse that we have looked at already:

Revelation 14:1

Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

Do you see it? The Lamb is standing on Mount Zion along with the 144,000. The Lamb is in the midst of Zion. The Lamb has been the focus of those who left Babylon. The Lamb has been their passion and desire. It is for the Lamb that they have endured rejection, shame, scorn, heartache, lack and many other things. It is in pursuit of the Lamb that they have known sorrow and grief. The saints of Zion have been pursuing the Lamb, and now having attained the goal they find themselves dwelling with the Lamb of God. Hallelu-Yah.

Isaiah 51:11-12

So the ransomed of Yahweh will return
And come with joyful shouting to Zion,
And everlasting joy will be on their heads. They will obtain gladness and
joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away. I, even I, am He who
comforts you.

Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore..., let us run with endurance the race that is set before us...,
fixing our eyes on Yahshua.

Yahshua is the glory of Zion. He is the joy set before every saint of God, yet many saints are blind and lame. They do not see the glory of Yahshua, nor will they make the effort to follow hard after Him. For this reason the blind and the lame will not enter the habitation of Zion.

If you see the glory of Christ, if He has become your passionate pursuit, the Lily of the Valley, the Pearl of great price, if He is that which you desperately seek, then blessed are you. May you rise up on strong legs and swift feet and pursue Him to the end.

The gates of Zion await you, and inside is the everlasting joy.



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